

NAB STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR AMERICAN BROADCASTERS

(Effective July 1, 1948)

THE BROADCASTERS' CREED

We Believe:

That American Broadcasting is a living symbol of democracy; a significant and necessary instrument for maintaining freedom of expression, as established by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

That its influence in the arts, in science, in education, in commerce and upon the public welfare, generally, is of such magnitude that the only proper measure of its responsibility is the common good of the whole people;

That it is our obligation to serve the people in such manner as to reflect credit upon our profession, and to encourage aspiration toward a better estate for all mankind; by making available to every person in America, such programs as will perpetuate the traditional leadership of the United States in all phases of the broadcasting art;

That we should make full and ingenious use of man's store of knowledge, his talents and his skills; and exercise critical and discerning judgment concerning all broadcasting operations to the end that we may, intelligently and sympathetically:

¶ Observe the proprieties and customs of civilized society;

¶ Respect the rights and sensitivities of all people;

¶ Honor the sanctity of marriage and the home;

¶ Protect and uphold the dignity and brotherhood of all mankind;

¶ Enrich the daily life of the people through the factual reporting and analysis of the news, and through programs of education, entertainment and information;

¶ Provide for the fair discussion of matters of general public concern; engage in works directed toward the common good; and volunteer our aid and comfort in times of stress and emergency;

¶ Contribute to the economic welfare of all, by expanding the channels of trade; by encouraging the development and conservation of natural resources; and by bringing together the buyer and seller through the broadcasting of information pertaining to goods and services.

Therefore:

As a guide for the achievement of our purposes, we subscribe to the following Standards of Practice*:

* Standards for broadcasting can never be final or complete. Broadcasting is a creative art, still in the process of development, and as such it must always seek new ways to achieve greater advances. Therefore, any standards promulgated must be subject to change.

PROGRAM STANDARDS

News

News reporting should be factual, fair and without bias. Commentary and analysis should be clearly identified as such.

Good taste should prevail in the selection and handling of news. Morbid, sensational or alarming details not essential to the factual report, especially in connection with stories of crime or sex, should be avoided. News should be broadcast in such a manner as to avoid panic and unnecessary alarm.

Broadcasters should exercise due care in their supervision of content, format, and presentation of news broadcasts originated by them; and in their selection of newscasters, commentators and analysts.

Broadcasters should exercise particular discrimination in the acceptance and placement of advertising in news programs. Such advertising should be appropriate to the program, both as to content and presentation, and should be distinctly set apart from the news content.

In programs of news, news commentary and news analysis which are less than ten minutes in length, no more than two commercial announcements should be used and they should be given at or near the beginning and end of the program.

Agricultural and market newscasts should be governed by the same general standards applicable to news broadcasts.

Political Broadcasts**

Political broadcasts, or the dramatization of political issues designed to influence an election, should, if accepted, be properly identified as such.

Public Affairs and Issues

A broadcaster, in allotting time for the presentation of public questions, including those of a controversial nature, should use his best efforts to insure fair presentation. Such time should be allotted with due regard to all other elements of balanced program schedules, and to the degree of interest on the part of the public in the questions to be presented.

Discussions of controversial public issues should be presented on programs specifically intended for that purpose, and they should be clearly identified as such.

The presentation of controversial public issues should be made by properly identified persons or groups.

Freedom of expression of opinion in broadcasts of controversial

** Because of the present confusion concerning the laws with respect to political broadcasts, broadcasters are advised to consult their lawyers in all cases where they have the least doubt as to the proper method of handling.

public issues should be carefully maintained, but the right should be reserved to refuse them for non-compliance with laws such as those prohibiting defamation and sedition.

Religious Programs

Broadcasting, which reaches men of all creeds simultaneously, should avoid attacks upon religion.

Religious programs should be presented respectfully and accurately, and without prejudice or ridicule.

Religious programs should be presented by responsible individuals, groups and organizations.

Religious programs should place emphasis on broad religious truths, excluding the presentation of controversial or partisan views not directly or necessarily related to religion or morality.

Children's Programs

Children's programs should be based upon sound social concepts and should reflect respect for parents, law and order, clean living, high morals, fair play and honorable behavior.

They should convey the commonly accepted moral, social and ethical ideals characteristic of American life.

They should contribute to the healthy development of personality and character.

There should be no appeals urging children to purchase the product in order to keep the program on the air, or which for any purpose encourage children to enter strange places or to converse with strangers.

Educational

Every radio program performs an educational function. Broadcasters should recognize the great responsibilities thus imposed, in planning their programs, to insure the most beneficial service to all listeners.

Broadcasters should cooperate with educators and with educational groups in developing improved techniques of broadcasting, as well as those processes of education best calculated to produce expert and skillful personnel.

Crime and Mystery Programs

In determining the acceptability of any program containing any element of crime, horror or mystery, due consideration should be given to the possible effect on all members of the family.

If the techniques and methods of crime are presented it should be done in such a way as not to encourage imitation; criminals should be punished, specifically or by implication; and programs which tend to make the commission of

crime attractive should not be permitted.

Such programs should avoid the following subject matter:

¶ Detailed presentation of brutal killings, torture or physical agony, horror, the use of supernatural or climatic incidents likely to terrify or excite unduly.

¶ Episodes involving the kidnaping of children.

¶ Sound effects calculated to mislead, shock or unduly alarm the listener.

¶ Disrespectful portrayal of law enforcement; and characterization of officers of the law as stupid or ridiculous.

¶ Suicide as a satisfactory solution to any problem.

General

Sound effects and expressions characteristically associated with news broadcasts (such as "bulletin," "flash," etc.) should be reserved for announcement of news, and the use of any deceptive techniques in connection with fictional events and non-news programs should be unacceptable.

When plot development requires the use of material which depends upon physical or mental handicaps it should be used in such a way as to spare the sensibilities of sufferers from similar defects.

The regular and recurrent broadcasting, in advance of sports events, of information relating to prevailing odds, the effect of which could be expected to encourage gambling, should not be permitted.

Simulation of court atmosphere or use of the term "Court" in a program title should be done only in such a manner as to eliminate the possibility of creating the false impression that the proceedings broadcast are vested with judicial or official authority.

In cases of programs broadcast over multiple station facilities, the originating station should assume responsibility for conforming such programs to these Standards of Practice.

ADVERTISING STANDARDS

Advertising is the life blood of the free, competitive American system of broadcasting. It makes possible the presentation, to all the American people, of the finest programs of entertainment, information and culture.

(Continued on page 38)