

ETHICS GUIDELINES

Associated Reporters Abroad (The ARA Network)

Associated Reporters Abroad (ARA) aims to provide our clients with services that meet the highest standards of journalism. It is the responsibility of all journalists in our network to gather and report information *accurately, honestly, fairly, respectfully and impartially*. All journalists must be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know.

ARA's mission will not permit bias through distortion, withholding, or manipulation of facts or elements of stories. Because facts can be subject to different interpretations, ARA strives to present all information in an ethical manner that conveys – fairly and honestly – the widest range of views applicable.

All journalists working for the ARA Network accept these standards and will:

- Strive to present our print, broadcast and multimedia news material in a way that is balanced, accurate, and fair to ensure and maintain public trust.
- Evaluate information solely on its merits as news, rejecting sensationalism, or misleading emphasis in any form.
- Clearly label opinion and commentary.
- Promptly acknowledge and correct errors of fact, bias or omission.
- Avoid making false representations to obtain materials from those who might otherwise object to providing them.
- Protect confidential sources. Contributors should only promise confidentiality only with the intention of keeping that promise, and do so only in cases of absolute necessity.
- Accurately attribute material and quotes and never plagiarize.
- Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, creed, age, disability, sexual orientation, physical appearance or social status except in cases when it is relevant.
- Inform news sources when conversations or interviews are being recorded.
- Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information except when traditional methods will not yield information vital to the public. Identify themselves as a journalist, avoid posing as anyone else.
- Not, except in exceptional circumstances, submit questions in advance for an interview, and avoid having quotes or parts of stories released to your sources before publication or broadcast. Individual quotes may be read back to a source to assure accuracy.
- Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief or when gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort.
- Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or attention.
- Understand that only an overriding public need to know can justify intrusion into privacy.
- Respect everyone's right to a fair trial but balance it with the public's right to be informed. Be cautious about identifying juvenile suspects or victims of sex crimes.
- Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived.
- Remain free of associations and activities that may compromise integrity or damage credibility. Resist pressure by advertisers and special interests to influence news coverage. Make no promises to report or promote materials without true news value.
- Refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment, and shun secondary employment, political involvement, public office and service in community organizations if it will compromise journalistic integrity.
- Avoid misleading re-enactments to tell a story; if it is necessary to stage a re-enactment, clearly label it as such.

ARA consulted the US-based Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Code of Ethics to draft this code, and has incorporated parts of it into these ethical guidelines for contributors and partners. A copy of the SPJ guidelines is available at spj.org/ethicscode.asp.