

TOPIC BRIEF: **JOURNALISTIC INTEGRITY**

Topic Summary

Our news operations and content are guided by our dedication to high-quality journalism and editorial integrity. This means a commitment to fairness, compelling storytelling, and accuracy across ABC News and ESPN.

ABC NEWS

ABC News' commitment to the straightforward pursuit of accurate news drives all our work across platforms in established and new and emerging technologies. It is our responsibility to uphold the principles of fairness and integrity as we gather and report the news. Company policies on business ethics, fairness, and insider trading apply to all employees in every division and support journalistic integrity in ABC News' operations globally.

It is the mission of ABC News to inform the public on matters of interest and importance to them. The credibility we have with our audience is important to this mission and we, therefore, attach great value to the maintenance of our fairness and integrity—both real and perceived—as we gather and report the news.

ABC News:

- Commits to the **independence of our editorial decision-making** from commercial, political, and other interests of the company's management or owners, as well as from the interests of external stakeholders. It works to provide accurate and useful information across our platforms and to present a plurality of voices, stories, and points of view in our news content.
- **Focuses on research quality** (e.g., thoroughness, diligence, control) and integrity. Plagiarism violates ABC News' standards, as does the acceptance of payments, gifts, or favors that might compromise or appear to compromise the independence and integrity of ABC News.
- **Conducts standards and ethics training** for new hires and annual training sessions on updated standards for ABC News journalists.
- **Implements measures to protect correspondents and other employees reporting in high-risk regions and situations.** This can include individual or group training prior to assignments, use of experienced teams, counseling during and after assignments, protective equipment, and use of experienced guides who are accustomed to local conditions. We also provide insurance

in case of illness, occupational injury, and loss of life. Assignments to crisis regions are voluntary and employees are not penalized for refusing or terminating a dangerous assignment.

- **Listens to audience concerns and grievances** about ABC News reporting. Feedback is collected through a number of mechanisms, including email and voicemail (visit our [ABC News contact page](#) for information). We review concerns and grievances and, when appropriate, issue updates, clarifications, or corrections.

While operations are based in the U.S., ABC News is a global organization with offices and correspondents in locations around the world. Policies and practices to support journalistic integrity apply to ABC News' operations globally.

Independence of content and/or transparency of potential bias

ABC News journalists are hired to report and record news events, not to participate in them. Journalists are instructed to remain professionally detached in all situations and not take action that would be seen as favoring one side or the other. We take particular care to act in a neutral and professional manner where the passions of others are engaged or aroused.

We all share a commitment to accuracy and fairness in reporting the news. We are committed to seeking out knowledgeable and credible sources of information, as well as reaching out for and carefully evaluating comments from those accused of wrongdoing and others with relevant information and perspectives on the matters that we are covering. When ABC News covers stories about Disney or other affiliated or subsidiary companies, we make clear disclosures about the relationship.

Protection of privacy and limitation of harm

News staffers receive extensive guidance and training on privacy concerns and other legal issues through legal and standards training sessions. And as a regular part of our news gathering process, there are targeted reporting meetings to discuss journalistic and legal issues.

ESPN

ESPN maintains standards of ethics for journalistic integrity, similar to those of ABC News. Part of ESPN's mission, through its various platforms (on-air, online, in audio, podcasts, social media, etc.), is to provide credible, timely, contextual, and trustworthy information through its ESPN-produced news programs, digital news sites and shows, studio news productions and news event coverage. This mission is supported by detailed editorial guidelines intended to protect ESPN's journalistic credibility and is enhanced by the oversight of the ESPN Editorial Board.

ESPN's Universal News Group gathers sports news for our platforms, including linear, digital, and social media. It works closely with show producers, digital editors, and reporters around the globe to provide information and context to all platforms.

Governance

Senior ABC News editorial and management executives oversee media ethics and guidelines at ABC News. ESPN's Editorial Board meets regularly to review coverage policies and procedures for ESPN and reviews ESPN's performance against these policies and procedures on an ongoing basis. ESPN's Editorial Board also regularly reviews and provides training on guidelines for personnel. Ultimately, every member of the ESPN editorial teams is responsible for upholding the reputation and integrity of ESPN reporting on a daily basis.

Additional Resources

[Standards of Business Conduct](#)