

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BROADCASTING SERVICES

1. Preamble

The fundamental principle to be upheld is that the freedom of all broadcasting licensees is indivisible from, and subject to, the same restraints as those relevant to the individual person, and is founded on the individual's right to be informed and to freely receive and disseminate opinions.

2. General

Broadcasting licensees shall -

- (a) not broadcast any material which is indecent, obscene or offensive to public morals or offensive to the religious convictions or feelings of any section of the population or likely to prejudice the safety of the State or the public order or relations between sections of the population;
- (b) not, without due care and sensitivity present material which depicts or relates to brutality, violence, atrocities, drug abuse and obscenity;
- (c) exercise due care and responsibility in the presentation of programmes where a large number of children are likely to be part of the audience.

3. News

- (1) Broadcasting licensees shall report news truthfully, accurately and objectively.
- (2) News shall be presented in the correct context and in a balanced manner, without intentional or negligent departure from the facts, whether by -
 - (a) distortion, exaggeration or misrepresentation;
 - (b) material omission; or
 - (c) summarization.
- (3) Only that which may reasonably be true, having due regard to the source of the news, may be presented as fact, and such facts shall be broadcast fairly with due regard to context and importance. Where a report is not based on fact or is founded on opinion, supposition, rumors or allegations, it shall be presented in such manner as to indicate clearly that such is the case.
- (4) Where there is reason to doubt the correctness of a report and it is practicable to verify the correctness thereof, it shall be verified. Where such verification is not practicable, that fact shall be mentioned in the report.
- (5) Where it subsequently appears that a broadcast report was incorrect in a material respect, it shall be rectified forthwith, without reservation or delay. The rectification shall be presented with such a degree of prominence and timing as may be adequate and fair so as to readily attract attention.

- (6) Reports, photograph or video material relating to matters involving indecency or obscenity shall be presented with due sensitivity, due regard being had to the prevailing moral climate. In particular, broadcasting licensees shall avoid the broadcasting of obscene and lascivious matter.
- (7) The identity of rape victims and Other victims of sexual violence shall not be divulged in any broadcast without the prior consent of the victim concerned.

4 Comment

- (1) Broadcasting licensees shall be entitled to comment on and criticize events of public importance.
- (2) Comment shall be presented in such manner that it appears clearly to be comment, and shall be made on facts truly stated or fairly indicated and referred to.
- (3) Comment shall be an honest expression of opinion.

5. Controversial issues of public importance

- (1) In presenting a programme in which controversial issues of public importance are discussed, a broadcasting licensee shall make reasonable efforts to fairly present significant points of view either in the same programme or in a subsequent programme forming part of the same series of programmes presented within a reasonable period of time and in substantially the same time slot.
- (2) A person whose views have been criticized in a broadcasting programme on a controversial issue of public importance shall be given a reasonable opportunity by the broadcasting licensee to reply to such criticism, should that person so request.

6. Elections

During any period starting, in respect of National Assembly Elections, on the day of election and ending on the day poll is to be taken, all licensees shall comply with such guidelines as shall be issued by the Authority.

7. Privacy

In so far as both news and comment are concerned, broadcasting licensees shall exercise exceptional care and consideration in matters involving the private lives and private concerns of individuals, bearing in mind that the right to privacy may be overridden by a legitimate public interest.

8. Paying a criminal for information

No payment shall be made to persons involved in crime or other notorious behaviour, or to persons who have been engaged in crime or other notorious behaviour, in order to obtain information concerning any such behaviour, unless compelling societal interests indicate the contrary.