

## THE ASSOCIATED PRESS STATEMENT OF NEWS VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

For more than 170 years, *the people* of The Associated Press have had the privilege of bringing news and information to the world. We have gone to great lengths, overcome great obstacles – and, too often, made great sacrifices – to ensure that the news was reported quickly, accurately and honestly, in a balanced and impartial way. Our efforts have been rewarded with trust: *More than half the world's population sees AP news content on any given day.*

In the 21st century, that news is transmitted in more ways than ever before – online and mobile, in print and on the air, in words, video, photographs, interactives, graphics, data and audio. No matter the platform, we insist on the highest standards of integrity and ethical behavior as we gather and deliver the news.

We abhor inaccuracies, carelessness, bias or distortions. We will not knowingly introduce rumor or false information into material intended for publication or broadcast; nor will we distort visual content. Quotations must be accurate and precise. *We preserve the appropriate professional distance from those we cover.*

We always strive to identify all the sources of our information. We shield them with anonymity only when they insist upon it for a valid reason and when they provide vital information – not opinion or speculation; when there is no other way to obtain that information; and when *we are confident the source is reliable and in a position to know.* We don't plagiarize, and *we respect copyright.*

We avoid behavior or activities that create as a conflict of interest that compromise our ability to report the news fairly and accurately, uninfluenced by any person or action.

*We clearly identify advertising on our platforms, and keep AP commercial activities separate from our newsroom.*

We don't misidentify or misrepresent ourselves to get a story. When we seek an interview, we identify ourselves as AP journalists. *We balance the newsworthiness of a story with respect for privacy and safety interests when pursuing images.*

We don't pay newsmakers for interviews, to take their photographs or to film or record them. *We do not provide full lists of questions in advance or allow interview subjects to approve our text or images before publication.*

We must be fair. Whenever we portray someone in a negative light, we must make a real effort to obtain a response from that person.

When mistakes are made, they must be corrected – fully, quickly, *transparently* and ungrudgingly.

*Automatically produced content must be thoroughly checked and transparent, and the sources of data clearly identified.*

It is the responsibility of every one of us to ensure that these standards are upheld. Any time a question is raised about any aspect of our work, it should be taken seriously.

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The policies set forth in these pages are central to the AP's mission. *Any failure to abide by them could result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, depending on the gravity of the infraction.*

### **ANONYMOUS SOURCES**

Transparency is critical to our credibility with the public and our subscribers. Whenever possible, we pursue information on the record. When a newsmaker insists on background or off-the-record ground rules, we must adhere to a strict set of guidelines, enforced by AP news managers.

Under AP's rules, material from anonymous sources may be used only if:

1. The material is information and not opinion or speculation, and is vital to the report.
2. The information is not available except under the conditions of anonymity imposed by the source.
3. The source is reliable, and in a position to have *direct knowledge of* the information.

Reporters who intend to use material from anonymous sources must get approval from their news manager before sending the story to the desk. The manager is responsible for vetting the material and making sure it meets AP guidelines. The manager must know the identity of the source, and is obligated, like the reporter, to keep the source's identity confidential. Only after they are assured that the source material has been vetted by a manager should editors and producers allow it to be used.

Reporters should proceed with interviews on the assumption they are on the record. If the source wants to set conditions, these should be negotiated at the start of the interview. At the end of the interview, the reporter should try once again to move onto the record some or all of the information that was given on a background basis.

The AP routinely seeks and requires more than one source *when sourcing is anonymous*. Stories should be held while attempts are made to reach additional sources for confirmation or elaboration. In rare cases, one source will be sufficient – when material comes from an authoritative figure who provides information so detailed that there is no question of its accuracy.

We must explain in the story why the source requested anonymity. And, when it's relevant, we must describe the source's motive for disclosing the information. If the story hinges on documents, as opposed to interviews, the reporter must describe how the documents were obtained, at least to the extent possible.

The story also must provide attribution that establishes the source's credibility; simply quoting "a source" is not allowed. We should be as descriptive as possible: "according to top White House aides" or "a senior official in the British Foreign Office." The description of a source must never be altered without consulting the reporter.

We must not say that a person declined comment when that person the person is already quoted anonymously. And we should not attribute information to anonymous sources when it is obvious or well known. We should just state the information as fact.

Stories that use anonymous sources must carry a reporter's byline. If a reporter other than the bylined staffer contributes anonymous material to a story, that reporter should be given credit as a contributor to the story.

All complaints and questions about the authenticity or veracity of anonymous material – from inside or outside the AP – must be promptly brought to the news manager's attention.

Not everyone understands “off the record” or “on background” to mean the same things. Before any interview in which any degree of anonymity is expected, there should be a discussion in which the ground rules are set explicitly.

These are the AP's definitions:

On the record. The information can be used with no caveats, quoting the source by name.

Off the record. The information cannot be used for publication.

Background. The information can be published but only under conditions negotiated with the source. Generally, the sources do not want their names published but will agree to a description of their position. AP reporters should object vigorously when a source wants to brief a group of reporters on background and try to persuade the source to put the briefing on the record.

Deep background. The information can be used but without attribution. The source does not want to be identified in any way, even on condition of anonymity.

In general, information obtained under any of these circumstances can be pursued with other sources to be placed on the record.

### **ANONYMOUS SOURCES IN MATERIAL FROM OTHER NEWS SOURCES**

Reports from other news organizations based on anonymous sources require the most careful scrutiny when we consider them for our report.

AP's basic rules for anonymous source material apply to material from other news outlets just as they do in our own reporting: The material must be factual and obtainable no other way. The story must be truly significant and newsworthy. Use of anonymous material must be authorized by a manager. The story we produce must be balanced, and comment must be sought.

Further, before picking up such a story we must make a bona fide effort to get it on the record, or, at a minimum, confirm it through our own reporting. We shouldn't hesitate to hold the story if we have any doubts. If another outlet's anonymous material is ultimately used, it must be attributed to the originating news organization and note its description of the source.

### **ATTRIBUTION**

*Anything in the AP news report that could reasonably be disputed should be attributed. We should give the full name of a source and as*

much information as needed to identify the source and explain why the person's credible. Where appropriate, include a source's age; title; name of company, organization or government department; and hometown.

If we quote someone from a written document – a report, email or news release -- we should say so. Information taken from the internet must be vetted according to our standards of accuracy and attributed to the original source. File, library or archive photos, audio or videos must be identified as such.

For lengthy stories, attribution can be contained in an extended editor's note detailing interviews, research and methodology.

## **AUDIO**

AP's audio content always must be accurate. We do not alter or manipulate newsmaker actuality in any way, except as provided below:

With the permission of a manager, overly long pauses by news subjects may be shortened.

To make sound clearer, the AP does permit the use of subtle, standard audio processing methods: normalization of levels, general volume adjustments, equalization and reduction of extraneous sounds such as telephone line noise. AP permits fading in and out of the start and end of sound bites. However, the use of these methods must not conceal, obscure, remove or otherwise alter the content of the audio.

*Bleeping is allowed, with a manager's permission, to cover obscenities when there is no option but to use a piece of audio containing an obscenity. An employee with questions about the use of such methods*

or the AP's requirements and limitations on audio editing should contact the desk supervisor prior to the transmission of any audio.

We don't use sound effects or substitute video or audio from one event to another. We do not "cheat" sound by adding audio to embellish or fabricate an event. A senior editor must be consulted prior to the introduction of any neutral sound (ambient sound that does not affect the editorial meaning but corrects a technical fault).

Voice reports by AP correspondents may be edited to remove pauses or stumbles.

## **BYLINES AND DATELINES**

A dateline tells the reader where we obtained the basic information for a story. A byline tells the reader who wrote the story.

*On short, un-bylined stories (routine speeches, game stories, announcements, etc.), the dateline generally should reflect where the story took place. However, when a story is longer, contains multiple elements, has analytical material or occurs at a place that is difficult for reporters to access, the dateline should be where the staffer covering the story is located.*

When a datelined story contains supplementary information obtained in another location – say, when an official in Washington comments on a disaster elsewhere – we should note it in the story. The dateline for video, photos or audio must be the location where the events depicted actually occurred. For voice work, the dateline must be the location from which the reporter is speaking; if that is not possible, the reporter should not use a dateline. If a reporter covers a story in one location but does a live report from another location, the dateline is the filing point.



For text stories with datelines, bylines may be used only if the journalist was in the datelined location. If a reporter in the field works with another staffer and both deserve bylines, the name of the staffer in the field normally goes first and a tag line gives each staffer's location. We give bylines in text stories to photographers, broadcast reporters and video journalists who provide information without which there would be no story.

For stories without datelines, the byline goes to the writer, with credit in a tag line to the reporters who contributed substantial information.

For staffers who do voice or on-camera work, we do not use pseudonyms or "air names." Any exceptions – for instance, if a staffer has been known professionally by an air name for some time – must be approved by a manager.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The AP respects and encourages the rights of its employees to participate actively in civic, charitable, religious, public, social or neighborhood organizations.

However, AP employees must avoid behavior or activities that *could* create a conflict of interest or compromise our ability to report the news fairly and accurately, uninfluenced by any person or action.

Nothing in this policy is intended to abridge any rights provided by the National Labor Relations Act.

Here is a sampler of AP practices on questions involving possible conflict of interest. It is not all-inclusive; if you are unsure whether an

activity may constitute a conflict or the appearance of a conflict, consult your manager at the onset.

### Expressions of opinion

Those who work for the AP must be mindful that opinions they express may damage the AP's reputation as an unbiased source of news. They must refrain from declaring their views on contentious public issues in any public forum, whether through blogs, social networks, comments pages, petitions, bumper stickers or lapel buttons. They must not take part in demonstrations in support of causes or movements- or contribute to them in any way.

### Favors

Employees must not ask news sources or others they meet in a professional capacity to extend jobs or other benefits to anyone. They also must not offer jobs, internships or any benefits of being an AP employee to news sources.

### Financial interests

*To avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of any such conflict, AP employees must abide by the following rules and guidelines when making personal investment and financial decisions.*

**Inside information:** *All employees may not act upon, or inform any other person of, information gained in the course of AP employment, unless and until that information becomes known to the general public. Employees must comply with federal and local laws concerning securities and financial transactions, including those prohibiting actions based upon inside information.*

**Family investments:** *Employees are expected to make every effort to ensure that no spouse or other member of their household has investment or business interests that could pose a conflict of interest. Such a conflict may make it inappropriate for the employee to accept certain assignments. Employees must consult with their managers before accepting any such assignment.*

**Divestiture:** *Employees might be asked to divest or to suspend any activity involving their holdings. They will have one year from the date of request to do so.*

**For business reporters and editors:** *Employees who regularly write or edit business news must not own stock or have any personal financial investment or involvement with any company, enterprise or industry that they regularly cover for the AP. A technology writer, for example, must not own any technology equities.*

*New business staff members should immediately disclose such holdings to their manager or to HR. Staff members who are temporarily assigned to such coverage must immediately notify a manager of possible conflicts to determine whether the assignment is appropriate.*

*Writers and editors who cover the stock markets may not own stock in any individual company. They may invest in publicly available diversified mutual funds.*

*Business news employees must avoid speculative, short-term investment activities such as day-trading individual stocks or commodities.*

## Freelance work:

Individuals who seek to engage in non-AP work are subject to the following restrictions:

- Freelance work must not represent a conflict of interest for either the employee or the AP.
- Such activities may not interfere with the employees' job responsibilities, including availability for newsgathering.
- Such activities may not exploit the name of The Associated Press or the employee's position with the AP without permission of the AP.
- Employees who wish to use material they accumulated in their AP work - notes, stories (either written or broadcast), images, videotape, graphics - for other-than-AP uses must seek written AP approval, copyright clearance and a license to syndicate. This approval must be received prior to submission to any outside publisher, purchaser, *organization* or broadcaster, or to posting on websites or social networks. Under no circumstances should the AP incur expenses for research material that is not used for AP purposes.

## Free tickets

*We do not accept free tickets to sports, entertainment or other events for anything other than coverage purposes. If we obtain tickets for a member or subscriber as a courtesy, they must be paid for, and the member or subscriber should reimburse the AP.*

## Gifts

Associated Press offices and staffers often are sent or offered gifts by sources, public relations agencies, corporations and others. Sometimes these are designed to encourage or influence AP news coverage or

business; sometimes they are gift bags handed out routinely to journalists covering a particular event.

Whatever the intent, we cannot accept such items; an exception is made for trinkets like caps or mugs that have nominal value, approximately \$25 or less. Otherwise, gifts should be politely refused and returned, or if that is impracticable, they should be given to charity.

Books, DVDs and other items received for review may be kept for a staff member's professional reference or donated to charities, but may not be sold or raffled off for personal gain. In cases where restrictions forbid transfer to third parties, these items should be discarded. Items of more than nominal value that are provided for testing, such as electronics, must be returned.

*AP staff should pay their expenses at meals with news sources. When several journalists are invited to an event with news value, such as a dinner with a senior official, staff may accept so long as an effort is made to reciprocate with the official or a staff member.*

AP and its employees may accept discounts from companies only if those discounts are standard and offered to other customers.

We do not accept unsolicited contest awards from *non-journalistic* organizations or any organization that has a *policy* or financial interest in our coverage; nor do we enter such contests.

The aim in all matters involving contests should be to underscore the AP's reputation for objectivity.

#### Official scorers

Employees may not serve as official scorers at sports covered by AP.

## Outside appearances

Employees frequently appear on radio and TV news programs as panelists asking questions of newsmakers; such appearances are encouraged.

However, there is potential for conflict if staffers are asked to give their opinions on issues or personalities of the day. Advance discussion and clearance from a staffer's supervisor are required.

Employees may speak or teach at the invitation of news industry groups and educational institutions. The AP accepts reimbursement of expenses for such appearances if the event is one that AP would not routinely participate in. *AP staffers may accept honoraria, with a supervisor's approval, for appearances and teaching that require substantial preparation. We do not normally accept honoraria for routine speeches and panel discussions.* We avoid addressing, or accepting fees or expenses from, governmental bodies; trade, lobbying or special interest groups; businesses, or labor groups; or any group that would pose a conflict of interest.

## Political activities

Editorial employees are expected to be scrupulous in avoiding any political activity, whether they cover politics regularly or not. They may not run for political office or accept political appointment; nor may they perform public relations work for politicians or their groups. Under no circumstances should they donate money to political organizations or political campaigns. They should use great discretion in joining or making contributions to other organizations that may take political stands.

Non-editorial employees must refrain from political activity *and contributions* unless they obtain approval from a manager.

A supervisor must be informed when a spouse or other members of an employee's household have any ongoing involvement in political causes, either professionally or personally.

### Trips

If a reporting trip is organized, and we think the trip is newsworthy, we go and pay our way. If we have a chance to interview a newsmaker on a charter or private jet, we reimburse the news source for the reasonable rate of the costs incurred - for example, standard airfare. There may be exceptional circumstances, such as a military trip, where it is difficult to make other travel arrangements or calculate the costs. Consult a manager for exceptions.

### **CORRECTIONS:**

Staffers must notify supervisory editors as soon as possible of *serious* errors or potential errors, whether in their work or that of a colleague. Every effort should be made to contact the staffer and supervisor before a correction is sent.

When we're wrong, we must say so as soon as possible. *When we make a correction, we point it out both to subscriber editors (e.g. in Editor's notes, metadata, advisories to TV newsrooms) and in ways that news consumers can see it (bottom-of-story corrections, correction notes on graphics, photo captions, etc.)*

A correction must always be labeled a correction. We do not use euphemisms such as "recasts," "fixes," "clarifies," "minor edits" or "changes" when correcting a factual error.

When we correct an error from a previous day, we ask subscribers that used the erroneous information to carry the correction as well.

For live broadcasts, we correct errors in the same newscast if at all possible. If not, we make a correction in the next appropriate live segment. Audio correspondent reports that contain factual errors are eliminated and, when possible, replaced with corrected reports.

## **DATA**

*Data for stories and visual presentations must be vetted for integrity and validity. Data should be assessed in terms of the methodology behind it, sample sizes, when it was collected and the availability of other data to confirm or challenge it.*

*Combining more than one dataset into a presentation should be done carefully and transparently. Avoid percentage and percent change comparisons from a small base, including raw numbers when appropriate for perspective.*

*We must distinguish carefully between correlations and causal relationships.*



## FABRICATIONS

Nothing in our news report – words, photos, graphics, sound or video – may be fabricated. We don't use *pseudonyms (except for established literary names or noms de guerre, which should be identified as such)*, composite characters or fictional names, ages, places or dates.

We don't stage or re-enact events for the camera or microphone.

*Virtual reality presentations must consist of real, unmanipulated imagery and sound.*

## GRAPHICS AND INTERACTIVES:

We use only authoritative sources. We do not project, surmise or estimate in a graphic. We create work only from what we know. *Except as authorized by a manager, we do not use graphics provided by others for which we lack the underlying data.*

We create charts at visually proper perspectives to give an accurate representation of data. The information must be clear and concise. We do not skew or alter data to fit a visual need.

We credit our sources on every interactive and graphic, including graphics for which AP journalists have created the database.

## IMAGES

AP images must always be accurate. We do not alter or digitally manipulate the content of a photo or video except as stated below.

*We avoid the use of generic photos or video that could be mistaken for imagery photographed for the specific story at hand, or that could unfairly link people in the images to illicit activity.*

## Photos

No element should be *digitally altered* except as described below.

Minor adjustments to photos are acceptable. These include cropping, dodging and burning, conversion into grayscale, elimination of dust on camera sensors and scratches on scanned negatives or scanned prints and normal toning and color adjustments. These should be limited to those minimally necessary for clear and accurate reproduction and that restore the authentic nature of the photograph. Changes in density, contrast, color and saturation levels that substantially alter the original scene are not acceptable. Backgrounds should not be digitally blurred or eliminated by burning down or by aggressive toning. The removal of “red eye” from photographs is not permissible.

Employees with questions about the use of such methods or the AP's requirements and limitations on photo editing should contact a senior photo editor prior to the transmission of any image.

Photo-based graphics, including those for television, often involve combining various photographic elements, which may mean altering portions of each photograph. The background of a photograph, for example, may be removed to leave the headshot of the newsmaker. This may then be combined with a logo representing the person's company or industry, and the two elements may be layered over a neutral background.

Such compositions must not misrepresent the facts and must not result in an image that looks like a photograph – it must clearly be a graphic.

Similarly, when we alter photos to use as graphics online, we retain the integrity of the image, limiting the changes to cropping, masking and adding elements like logos.

It is permissible to display photos online using techniques such as 360-degree panoramas or dissolves as long as they do not alter the original images.

## Video

For video, the AP permits the use of subtle, standard methods of improving technical quality, such as adjusting video and audio levels, color correcting due to white balance, eliminating buzzing, hums, clicks, pops, or overly long pauses or other technical faults, and equalization of audio to make the sound clearer \_ provided the use of these methods does not conceal, obscure, remove or otherwise alter the content of the image.

Video can produced with titles and logos, the images toned and the audio quality improved.

*When editing audio within a video, generally the specific audio associated with each video shot must be used without alteration. However in cases where music is the principal ambient sound – e.g. when the video portrays a marching band or an orchestra playing - audio may be laid unbroken and video images edited over the top, provided the video was shot contemporaneously and the meaning of the scene is not altered.*

## Obscuring identities

*We should not use mosaics or blurring to grant anonymity in any AP-created images. Instead we should shoot the subject in silhouette or use*

*other photo or video techniques - such as using the person's shadow naturally cast on a wall or ground – to achieve the goal of anonymity. Exceptions may be granted rarely, when other anonymity techniques have failed, with permission of a senior manager. Images may be treated so that end-users of our content cannot readjust the levels to bring a shadowed face into view.* In cases in which anonymity is deemed essential for the safety of the interviewee, the voices of silhouetted persons being interviewed may be digitally distorted with a manager's permission strictly for purposes of hiding identity. However any such alteration will be noted and disclosed in the accompanying script or shot list.

*When approved by a manager, the AP allows the use of material from third parties, such as government authorities, where faces are digitally obscured. In such cases, it must be stated in the shot-list, or caption and special instructions, who is responsible for the obscuring of a face. Similarly, the caption or shot-list must clearly disclose any other manipulation of imagery by a source that otherwise would not be allowed under AP guidelines.*

### Posing and re-enactments

We do not stage, pose or re-enact events except in the circumstances described here. When we shoot B-roll “walking shot” video, “environmental” portraits of subjects at work, home, etc., or photograph subjects in a studio, care should be taken to avoid misleading viewers to believe that the moment was spontaneously captured in the course of gathering the news. The precise circumstances of such portraiture must be revealed in the shot-list or caption and special instructions box so it can't be mistaken as an attempt to deceive.

## User-generated and internet content

*When obtaining imagery from the internet or any other source, we must be certain it is accurate, un-manipulated, shows what it is said to show and that we have the right to use it. When acquiring user-generated content, we must give priority to the safety of providers and caution them against taking risks. We should credit them appropriately.*

## Offensive and gory content

*AP does not seek to sanitize news events; sometimes a gory or disturbing image is essential to cover a story. However, such imagery must be appropriate and newsworthy, not gratuitous. Care must be taken with images that could be offensive toward religions, nationalities or ethnic groups. In some cases, we may decide not to send such material to consumer-facing platforms, but to distribute it to subscribers -- with appropriate warnings -- for them to decide on its usage.*

*Special warnings to consumers about disturbing content may be needed for online and virtual reality content. In the rare case that an obscene image is necessary to tell the story, we may blur the portion of the image considered offensive. This must be approved by a manager.*

## MUSIC

*Music added to AP productions must not have an editorial effect, such as evoking sympathy, suspicion or ridicule. We must have rights to use the material.*

## **OBSCENITIES, PROFANITIES, VULGARITIES, HATE AND PROPAGANDA**

*AP resists being used as a conduit for speech or images that espouse hate or spread propaganda. When hate speech or images are the basis of a news story, it is often sufficient to briefly refer to the speech or images in a text story rather than carry the speech or propaganda at length or redistribute the images. A senior manager must vet any material showing hostages or conveying kidnappers' statements or demands. Quoting from such materials should be kept to the minimum necessary to convey the story and must note that the hostage is speaking under duress.*

We do not use obscenities, racial epithets or other offensive slurs in stories unless they are part of direct quotations and there is a compelling reason for them. *We do not run imagery of such slurs; a manager must be consulted regarding any exceptions.*

*If a story cannot be told without reference to slurs, we must first try to find a way to give the reader a sense of what was said without using the specific word or phrase. If a profanity, obscenity or vulgarity is used, the content must be flagged at the top, advising editors of what the offensive material is.*

Recognizing that standards differ around the world and from platform to platform, we tailor our advisories and selection of video and audio according to customer needs.

We do not refer readers to websites that are obscene, racist or otherwise offensive, and we must not directly link from stories to such sites.

We link our text content to the least offensive image necessary to tell the story. For photo galleries and interactive presentations we alert

readers to the nature of the material in the link and on the opening page of the gallery or interactive.

## **PRIVACY OF VICTIMS**

We generally do not identify, in text or images, those who say they have been sexually assaulted or subjected to extreme abuse. We may identify victims of sexual assault or extreme abuse when victims publicly identify themselves.

We generally do not identify minors who are accused of crimes or who are witnesses to them. Identification of such minors must be approved by a manager; it may depend on the severity of the alleged crime; whether police have formally released the juvenile's name; and whether the juvenile has been formally charged as an adult. Other considerations might include public safety, such as when the youth is the subject of a manhunt; or widespread publication of the juvenile suspect's name, making the identity de facto public knowledge.

## **QUOTATIONS**

Quotes must not be taken out of context. We do not alter quotations, even to correct grammatical errors or word usage. If a quotation is flawed because of grammar or lack of clarity, it may be paraphrased in a way that is completely true to the original quote. If a quote's meaning is too murky to be paraphrased accurately, it should not be used. Ellipses should be used rarely *and must not alter the speaker's meaning*.

When relevant, stories should provide information about the setting in which a quotation was obtained – for example, a press conference, phone interview or hallway conversation with the reporter. The

source's affect and body language – perhaps a smile or deprecatory gesture – is sometimes as important as the quotation itself.

Use of regional dialects with nonstandard spellings should generally be limited to a writer's effort to convey a special tone or sense of place. In this case, as in interviews with a people not speaking their native language, it is especially important that their ideas be accurately conveyed. Always, we must be careful not to mock the people we quote.

Quotes from one language to another must be translated faithfully. If appropriate, we should note the language spoken.

Internal editing of audio soundbites of newsmakers is not permitted. Shortened soundbites by cutaway or other video transition are permitted as long as the speaker's meaning is not altered or misconstrued.

## **RESPONSES**

We must make significant efforts to reach anyone who may be portrayed in a negative way in our content, and we must give them a reasonable amount of time to get back to us before we send our reports. What is “reasonable” may depend on the urgency and competitiveness of the story. If we don't reach the parties involved, we must explain in the story what efforts were made to do so.

## ***SOCIAL NETWORKS***

*The use of social media by AP's journalists is held to the same high standards as reporting, communication and distribution over any other medium. Those standards include, but are not limited to:*



- *Avoiding expressions of opinion on contentious issues, even in supposedly password-protected conversations.*
- *When publishing to AP's branded accounts, staffers should get explicit permission from a senior manager before distributing third-party copyrighted material.*
- *Not disseminating rumors and unconfirmed reports, and attributing information.*
- *Carefully verifying information and content before it is distributed.*
- *Transparently correcting errors on all platforms on which the erroneous material was distributed.*

*AP journalists are encouraged to maintain accounts on social networks, and must identify themselves in their profiles as being with AP if they use the accounts for work in any way. We must not share AP proprietary or confidential information or include political affiliations or preferences. If we retweet or otherwise share opinionated material by others, we should add language that makes it clear that we're simply reporting someone else's opinions.*

*In social posts related to sports and entertainment, we must steer clear of trash-talking directed at teams, athletes and celebrities.*

*Staffers are encouraged to share AP content in all formats to social platforms. We should do so by using the "share" buttons on apps, browsers and sites that cause an item to be posted, or by posting a link to the content. We should not manually upload or copy and paste published photos, videos or the full text of published stories into social accounts. Staffers should not upload directly to social networks images they captured that closely resemble those the AP is publishing.*

*Staffers may share content from other news organizations, but we should be mindful of potential competitive issues and refrain from*

*sharing unconfirmed material. We should also keep in mind that denouncing fellow users, newsmakers or anyone else can reflect badly on AP and may one day harm a colleague's ability to get important information from a source.*

*AP journalists who have confirmed urgent breaking news should not share that information over social accounts until they have provided it to the appropriate AP desk and done any immediate reporting work that is asked of them. Exclusive material and important tips should not be shared online before the related story has been published.*

*We may follow or friend sources or newsmakers, but when doing so with politicians or political causes, we should try to connect with accounts on both sides of a given issue or campaign. AP managers should not issue friend requests to subordinates; otherwise, friend requests among AP employees are fine.*

*Employees must not post any information that might endanger a colleague, and shouldn't post about a missing or detained AP staffer without clearance from senior AP managers.*

*Posts and tweets aimed at gathering opinions for a story must make clear that we are looking for voices on all sides of an issue.*

*If an AP tweet or social media posting contains an error of fact, emphasis or tone, the tweet or posting promptly should be removed from the platform where it occurred, followed by a note acknowledging the deletion and a substitute corrected tweet or posting issued where appropriate.*

## USE OF OTHERS' MATERIAL

An AP staffer who reports and writes a story must use original content, language and phrasing. We do not plagiarize, meaning that we do not take the work of others and pass it off as our own. *When we match a report that a news outlet was first with due to significant reporting effort, we should mention that the other outlet first reported it.*

At the same time, it is common for AP staffers to include in their work passages from previous AP stories by other writers – generally background, or boilerplate. This is acceptable if the passages are short. Regardless, the reporter writing the story is responsible for the factual and contextual accuracy of the material.

Also, the AP often has the right to use material from its members and subscribers; as with material from other news media, *we credit it.*

*Unless we are clearly retransmitting in full a story by a member outlet,* we do not transmit stories in their original form; we rewrite them, so that the approach, content, structure and length meet our requirements and reflect the broader audience we serve.

Under no circumstances can news releases be published in their original form; we can use information, quotes *and properly cleared images* from releases, but we must judge the material's credibility, augment it with information from other sources, and then prepare our own stories, with the release material duly credited.

For video, if another broadcaster's material is required and distributed, we advise the name of that broadcaster on the accompanying shot list. Pickups of audio and of television graphics are credited in billboards/captions when the source requests it.