

## **On-Air Guidelines**

Revised November 6, 2017

The text below sets forth Maine Public's guidelines for all non-news and public affairs on-air personnel including announcers, producers, program hosts, freelancers and volunteers. These guidelines are designed to protect Maine Public's standards of quality and sound, as well as to maintain the trust Maine Public's has with its audience for credibility, integrity, and impartiality. All on-air personnel are required to observe, review and sign these guidelines annually as a condition for on-air work and/or presence.

### **News Personnel Code of Ethics**

Personnel (reporters and producers) are required to observe Maine Public's adopted code of journalistic ethics, the [Society for Professional Journalists Code of Ethics](#). All Maine Public on-air news and public affairs personnel are required to review and sign the Maine Public code of ethics annually as a condition for on-air work and/or presence.

### **Social Media Guidelines**

Employees of Maine Public are required to be aware of and follow our social media guidelines; <http://mainepublic.org/social-media-guidelines> which outlines the need to keep in mind that an individual identified as an employee of Maine Public should conduct themselves accordingly on social media.

### **Competition / Exclusivity**

On-air personnel must alert management of plans in advance to offer their on-air production services or any program material to another broadcast/news media outlet. Management reserves the right to approve or disallow such arrangement(s) on a case by case basis.

### **Program Funding**

On-air personnel should not solicit or enter into negotiations regarding program funding of any sort without first notifying and receiving written approval from Maine Public Development Management. On-air personnel should refer any inquiries they may receive about on-air underwriting support to Maine Public Development. On-air personnel who are not employees of Maine Public must coordinate any program funding support with Maine Public Development.

### **Miscellaneous Operational Guidelines**

Any significant change in a program's designated format must be discussed with management in advance, for both consideration/approval purposes, and, if approved, to allow for quick evaluation and feedback.

### **Political and Religious Neutrality**

Maine Public maintains a very high standard of integrity in maintaining political and religious neutrality in its programming. On-air personnel are not allowed to use this public resource to further personal agendas of any kind. On-air personnel should not make religious or political

calls to action, editorialize, include content or personally endorse views and opinions on sensitive or controversial issues.

### **Personal Use of Maine Public Services**

On-air personnel are not allowed to air personal grievances on Maine Public services. This includes presenting views or introducing content that endorses, compares or criticizes commercial products, institutions, companies, organizations, or individuals. In addition, on-air personnel should not dedicate programming or musical selections without prior knowledge of and approval from management.

*Maine Public does not allow the use of Maine Public services for personal gain, financial or otherwise. On-air personnel should not include any content in Maine Public services or use the services to promote any off-air activities, appearances or interests for which they may stand to gain, financially or otherwise.*

### **Derogatory and Slanderous Content**

On-air personnel should not make or include any derogatory remarks or content directed at specific individuals or groups of persons or entity, or make or include any slanderous statements that make a false claim, with or without malicious intent, expressly stated or implied to be factual, that may harm the reputation, character or good name of an individual, business, product, group, government or nation.

### **Lotteries, Contests and Promotions**

On-air personnel will not undertake any sort of on-air lottery, contest or special promotional activity without first consulting with station management. This activity may be illegal, and it must be in adherence with station on-air aesthetics.

### **Indecency / Obscenity**

On-air personnel shall follow the separate Maine Public policy addressing this issue.

Summary: On-air personnel will not allow any content which is indecent to air before 10 p.m., and will permit indecent material after 10 p.m. (in "safe harbor") only with advance management approval. On-air personnel will not allow any obscene programming in any part of our schedule.

Indecent programming is defined as material that depicts or describes sexual or excretory organs or activities in a patently offensive manner as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium. Going further, any other use of the "F-Word" or of the other six of the infamous "7 Dirty Words" (sh\_t, p\_ss, c\_nt, c\_cks\_ck\_r, m\_th\_rf\_ck\_r, t\_ts), or even other offensively dirty or profane words should be considered as indecent. Obscene programming, by contrast, is banned completely.

Obscenity is defined as material that appeals to the prurient interest (that is, arouses lewd and lascivious thoughts and desires), is patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards, and lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

### **Conflict of Interest / Plugola / Payola**

No producer will make any mention on-air of any event, activity or cause that he or she (also including spouse, family member or companion) is connected to in any way. This includes concerts, public appearances, commercial establishments/ventures, political organizations/causes/beliefs/agendas or any other non-broadcast activities/associations of the producer. Using the public air waves for individual gain (monetary or other, including material goods, services, gifts, recognition or other valuable consideration) is illegal and against station policy.

On-air personnel will not air any recorded material on Maine Public air for which they are being compensated, either by monetary means, material goods, services or other valuable consideration or gain. On-air personnel will also not make any mention of establishments or entities for which they are compensated in any way. Compensation includes but is not limited to monetary or material goods or services, including free musical recordings, free concert tickets, meals and travel, etc.

FCC guidelines require that any such financial or other personal relationships (by either the on-air personnel or the employer/station) must be properly and fully disclosed over the air, and therefore any personal relationships must be disclosed fully to management prior to any such airing so as to ensure proper and timely on-air disclosure will be made. However, in keeping with our standards and guidelines, Maine Public does not allow personal use or gain from the public airways.

### **Communications Act**

Maine Public on-air personnel must be familiar with Sections 317 and 507 of the Communications Act. Maine Public on-air personnel are prohibited from accepting any money, service or other valuable consideration from any person other than the company for broadcasting any material over the station. Every on-air individual having any voice in the selection of broadcast matter is prohibited from:

- 1) Engaging in any outside business or economic activity which would create a conflict of interest in the selection of broadcast matter;
- 2) Accepting any favors, loans, entertainment or other consideration from any person seeking the airing of any broadcast matter in return therefore; and
- 3) Promoting over the air, except by means of an appropriate commercial announcement, any activity or matter in which the on-air individual has a direct or indirect financial interest.

On-air personnel will comply with the provisions of Sections 317 and 507 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended. Any person who violates Section 507 of the Act is subject to the penalties set forth in Section 507(g), consisting of a fine up to \$10,000.00; imprisonment up to one year, or both.

On-air personnel will comply with the policy of Maine Public to prohibit every on-air individual having any voice in the selection of broadcast matter from (a) engaging in any outside business or economic activity which would create a conflict of interest in the selection of broadcast matter; (b) accepting any favors, loans, entertainment or other consideration from persons seeking the airing of any broadcast matter, in return therefore; and (c) promoting over the air (except by means of an appropriate commercial/disclosure announcement) any activity or matter in which the on-air individual has a direct or indirect financial interest.