

*The Code*  
OF THE  
NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
BROADCASTERS



*Adopted*  
BY THE  
**17<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention**  
**of the NAB**

*July 11, 1939*

## Children's Programs

Programs designed specifically for children reach impressionable minds and influence social attitudes, aptitudes and approaches and, therefore, they require the closest supervision of broadcasters in the selection and control of material, characterization and plot.

This does not mean that the vigor and vitality common to a child's imagination and love of adventure should be removed. It does mean that programs should be based upon sound social concepts and presented with a superior degree of craftsmanship; that these programs should reflect respect for parents, adult authority, law and order, clean living, high morals, fair play and honorable behavior. Such programs must not contain sequences involving horror or torture or use of the supernatural or superstitious or any other material which might reasonably be regarded as likely to over-stimulate the child listener, or be prejudicial to sound character development. No advertising appeal which would encourage activities of a dangerous social nature will be permitted.

To establish acceptable and improving standards for children's programs, the National Association of Broadcasters will continuously engage in studies and consultations with parent and child study groups. The results of these studies will be made available for application to all children's programs.

## Controversial Public Issues

As part of their public service, networks and stations shall provide time for the presentation of public questions including those of controversial nature. Such time shall be allotted with due regard to all the other elements of balanced program schedules and to the degree of public interest in the questions to be presented. Broadcasters shall use their best efforts to allot such time with fairness to all elements in a given controversy.

Time for the presentation of controversial issues shall not be sold, except for political broadcasts. There are three fundamental reasons for this refusal to sell time for public discussion and, in its stead, providing time for it without charge. First, it is a public duty of broadcasters to bring such discussion to the radio audience regardless of the willingness of others to pay for it. Second, should time be sold for the discussion of controversial issues, it would have to be sold, in fairness, to all with the ability and desire to buy at any given time. Consequently, all possibility of regulating the amount of discussion on the air in proportion to other elements of properly balanced programming or of allotting the available periods with due regard to listener interest in the topics to be discussed would be surrendered. Third, and by far the most important, should time be sold for the discussion of controversial public issues and for the propagation of the views of individuals or groups, a powerful public forum would inevitably gravitate almost wholly into the hands of those with the greater means to buy it.

The political broadcasts excepted above are any broadcasts in connection with a political campaign in behalf of or against the candidacy of a legally qualified candidate for nomination or election to public office, or in behalf of or against a public proposal which is subject to ballot. This exception is made because at certain times the contending parties want to use and are entitled to use more time than broadcasters could possibly afford to give away.

Nothing in the prohibition against selling time for the presentation of controversial public issues shall be interpreted as barring sponsorship of the public forum type of program when such a program is regularly presented as a series of fair-sided discussions of public issues and when control of the fairness of the program rests wholly with the broadcasting station or network.

## **Educational Broadcasting**

While all radio programs possess some educational values, broadcasters nevertheless desire to

be of assistance in helping toward more specific educational efforts, and will continue to use their time and facilities to that end and, in co-operation with appropriate groups, will continue their search for improving applications of radio as an educational adjunct.

## **News**

News shall be presented with fairness and accuracy and the broadcasting station or network shall satisfy itself that the arrangements made for obtaining news insure this result. Since the number of broadcasting channels is limited, news broadcasts shall not be editorial. This means that news shall not be selected for the purpose of furthering or hindering either side of any controversial public issue nor shall it be colored by the opinions or desires of the station or network management, the editor or others engaged in its preparation or the person actually delivering it over the air, or, in the case of sponsored news broadcasts, the advertiser.

The fundamental purpose of news dissemination in a democracy is to enable people to know what is happening and to understand the meaning of events so that they may form their own conclusions and, therefore, nothing in the foregoing shall be understood as preventing news broadcasters from analyzing and elucidating news so long as such analysis and elucidation are free of bias.

News commentators as well as all other newscasters shall be governed by these provisions.

## **Religious Broadcasts**

Radio, which reaches men of all creeds and races simultaneously, may not be used to convey attacks upon another's race or religion. Rather it should be the purpose of the religious broadcast to promote the spiritual harmony and understanding of mankind and to administer broadly to the varied religious needs of the community.

# Commercial Programs and Length of Commercial Copy

Acceptance of programs and announcements shall be limited to products and services offered by individuals and firms engaged in legitimate commerce; whose products, services, radio advertising, testimonials and other statements comply with pertinent legal requirements, fair trade practices and accepted standards of good taste.

Brief handling of commercial copy is recommended procedure at all times.

Member stations shall hold the length of commercial copy, including that devoted to contests and offers, to the following number of minutes and seconds:

### *Daytime*

Fifteen-minute programs . . .	3:15
Thirty-minute programs . . . .	4:30
Sixty-minute programs . . . . .	9:00

### *Nighttime*

Fifteen-minute programs . . .	2:30
Thirty-minute programs . . . .	3:00
Sixty-minute programs . . . . .	6:00

### *Exceptions:*

The above limitations do not apply to participation programs, announcement programs, "musical clocks," shoppers' guides and local programs falling within these general classifications.

Because of the varying economic and social conditions throughout the United States, members of the NAB shall have the right to present to the NAB for special ruling local situations which in the opinion of the member may justify exceptions to the above prescribed limitations.

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## ***Resolution***

### **Adopted by the 17th Annual Convention National Association of Broadcasters**

To clarify the phrase "Accepted Standards of Good Taste" and the canons of good practice set forth in the NAB Code, therefore be it **RESOLVED**:

That member stations shall not accept for advertising:

1. Any spirituous or "hard" liquor.
  2. Any remedy or other product the sale of which or the method of sale of which constitutes a violation of law.
  3. Any fortune-telling, mind-reading, or character-reading, by handwriting, numerology, palm-reading, or astrology, or advertising related thereto.
  4. Schools that offer questionable or untrue promises of employment as inducements for enrollment.
  5. Matrimonial agencies.
  6. Offers of "homework" except by firms of unquestioned responsibility.
  7. Any "dopester," tip-sheet or race track publications.
  8. All forms of speculative finance. Before member stations may accept any financial advertising, it shall be fully ascertained that such advertising and such advertised services comply with all pertinent federal, state and local laws.
  9. Cures and products claiming to cure.
  10. Advertising statements or claims member stations know to be false, deceptive or grossly exaggerated.
  11. Continuity which describes, repellently, any functions or symptomatic results of disturbances, or relief granted such disturbances through use of any product.
  12. Unfair attacks upon competitors, competing products, or upon other industries, professions or institutions.
  13. Misleading statements of price or value, or misleading comparisons of price or value.
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