



# Community Channel 6 (CC6) Editorial Policy

June 2010

## **Community Channel 6 (CC6) EDITORIAL POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Editorial Policy for Community Channel 6 (“CC6”) applies to all who provide content for the channel regardless of who is the creator, what is produced or where it is produced; regardless of whether or not the creator/producer is in-

house or independent, public service or commercial, and regardless of how that content is received providing it is for broadcast on the channel, its website or any other medium that CC6 may choose to employ.

The Policy is to guide content providers through what can be a complex editorial landscape, to produce programmes that meet the highest ethical editorial standards and satisfy legal requirements that will indemnify the station.

The guidelines are approved by the Management of Columbus Communications (Grenada) Ltd, the Company which operates Community Channel 6 (“Management”), and will be reviewed periodically according to their determination.

The Policy applies to all technologies used and as the media landscape evolves, will include all forms of new media that may be employed, whether interactive services, mobile devices, podcasts, webcasts or any other medium that will be created from new technologies.

Any proposal to operate outside the Policy must be approved by Management.

### **OBJECTIVE:**

CC6 aims to balance the right of freedom of expression with the responsibilities of respecting privacy, protecting children, and preserving the good character of those who become part of our productions.

We also aim to deal with controversial issues along the lines of truth, accuracy, fairness and the public’s right to know.

Our Editorial Policy is the mission statement for the values and standards that the channel has set over the years and seeks to maintain.

## **SECTION I**

### **TRUTH AND ACCURACY**

Community Channel 6 will always strive to establish the truth about an event or individual, as accuracy takes precedence over breaking a story. Get the facts right. Always make every effort possible to get the facts from all angles. Check, double check and recheck all facts to ensure accuracy and balance.

### **FAIRNESS**

To be fair, subject matters must be approached with an open mind, all efforts must be made to contact parties relevant to a story, and sources must be treated with utmost professionalism to ensure there is mutual respect.

## **SECTION II**

### **DAILY NEWS GATHERING**

Always strive to be at an event and gather the information first hand. If this is not possible, talk to at least two people who were there. Do not rely on any single source to get information. All efforts must be made to record all interviews and discussions, in addition to hand written notes. Accurate, reliable and relevant notes must be taken at all interviews. The written notes can be used in a defense if that ever becomes necessary.

The first rule of documentation is a date line. All documents – electronic or otherwise – must have the date it was generated or prepared. Following on this the time and place of generation of the document must also be noted. All documents including notepads, tapes, DVDs, CDs and such like, must be clearly labeled for easy identification.

When soliciting information, it must be made absolutely clear that you are a reporter and do not engage in any type of deception to obtain information. Be sure to make it known that information may be used in a newscast. When someone says information is ‘off the record’ this means the information cannot be broadcast.

## **SOURCES**

Proper records must be kept of all conversations with sources and if anonymity is requested, this must be strictly observed.

The normal procedure is to identify or name sources during broadcast, but it is understood that this could sometimes compromise or lead to serious consequences for an individual or organization. It is imperative that sources be protected.

If, however, an anonymous source gives information of serious or controversial allegations against an individual, something about who they are must be included in the news item, but not in a way to reveal their identity. Also, their identity must be revealed to the News Director. If the source does not wish to be identified to the News Director, the information cannot be broadcast. In addition, consistent with the section in this Policy on *Substantiating*, every effort must be made to contact the subject of the allegation or the subject's attorney before the story is broadcast.

Be sure to come to an agreement with sources requesting confidentiality or an anonymous source, exactly how they wish to be identified in the news. Some description of who they are – without revealing identity - must be included to give authenticity to a report.

## **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Never use personal information, even an email address or telephone number, without prior consent from the individual to whom the data belongs.

If necessary to use personal information, be sure to have an understanding with the person to whom the information belongs, how it will be used and whether or not it will become part of an in-house or other database.

## **SUBSTANTIATING**

All information must be verified before a story is broadcast. When allegations of a serious or controversial nature are made about any individual, all records of the conversation, documents, notes and any other material relating to the subject must be kept for at least three years.

Every possible effort must be made to contact the subject of the allegation or the subject's attorney before the story is broadcast.

If information is obtained from a third party source – like a website or such like – there must be verification that the posting came from the individual or organization to which it is attributed, and that the information is a true reflection of the intended message.



Do not use third party information except it can be proven to be accurate and the source credible.

### **THIRD PARTY MATERIAL AS NEWS**

Information of any type or material of any type provided for news by a third party must be credible and reliable. This material could be statistics or audit reports, financial reports, weather reports, affidavits, or any such type of material or information.

It is not the policy of Community Channel 6 to use audio and/or video reports or photographs from any third party.

Use of any third party material must be cleared by the Director of News & Current Affairs.

If it is justifiable or can be justified that it is absolutely necessary to use third party material, it must be clearly attributed on screen.

Community Channel 6 will not use in its newscasts any third party material which we are capable of capturing.

### **USE OF LIBRARY OR ARCHIVED MATERIAL**

The use of library or archived material for news should be avoided except it is editorially justifiable.

Archived material should be clearly labeled on screen with its original date where possible whenever it is necessary for them to be used.

Archived material depicting trauma, distress, or sadness must not be used without first advising the subject(s), and should only be used if editorially justifiable.

### **REPORTING STATISTICS**

Statistics whether on crime, finances, health or any other matter, should be reported in context and must be attributed to its source. Do not give or make any attempt to give financial, health or other advice in a news item, except cautionary statements quoted directly from the source providing it is relevant and necessary at the time of the broadcast.

### **CORRECTING MISTAKES**

Factual errors in the newscast must be acknowledged and corrected as soon as possible. It must be very clear what the error was, and the correct information must also be clearly presented. If the error is of a legal nature, then the matter must be referred through the News Director to the Channel's legal advisor.

## **CHILDREN IN REPORTS**

Children must not be interviewed without the expressed permission of parents or legal guardians. Children must not be interviewed in matters of stress, trauma, or sadness. Child victims of abuse or crime must not be identified or cause to be identified through any type of description in the news. Children should not be shown in the news in any type of circumstance which compromises their rights or causes them embarrassment or any type of distress.

## **SUICIDES, MENTAL ILLNESS**

Incidents of a nature where the subject may be mentally ill must be handled with utmost sensitivity. Events surrounding a suicide or any attempt at self harm must not be reported in detail, as people with similar tendencies may find it attractive.

## **DISCRIMINATION**

Avoid stereotyping, inappropriate or unnecessary references to age, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, physical or mental disabilities, culture, appearance or any other type of description which can be seen as discriminatory, except it is editorially necessary to do so.

Reporters, camera operators, editors and all who contribute to news production must not assume that their personal convictions on religion, culture or social values are the norm.

Do not subscribe to negative perceptions about national figures. These have no place in news.

All descriptions of individuals must be neutral, relevant, and in a language that is not offensive.

## **MISSING PEOPLE**

Certain descriptions of an individual can be editorially acceptable in a missing person report. Some information, however, can be withheld if it is deemed detrimental or embarrassing to the person, even if that information was provided by the police, relatives or other authoritative source.

## **CRIME**

Stick to the facts and avoid descriptive terms like “brutally gunned down” or other such clichés. The objective is to give a clear picture of what happened, not to whip up any emotional frenzy or seek to influence views of the victim, perpetrator, police or anyone else associated with the crime.

Do not use legal terms in reporting a crime. Murder – is for the court to decide; cause of death – is for the pathologist to determine; motive – is for the police to establish.

### **DEMONSTRATIONS**

Similar to reporting on crime, state the bare facts and avoid descriptive terms that can influence views or emotions.

### **AUDIENCE AND VIEWERSHIP SENSITIVITY**

Community Channel 6 will not broadcast material that might seriously impair the physical, mental or moral development of children, and will ensure material that might be unsuitable for children and our wider viewing audience is appropriately scheduled or simply not aired. Community Channel 6 will be sensitive to and keep in touch with the expectations of our audiences for all of our programs.

### **POLITICS**

It is extremely important to maintain impartiality when reporting on political matters. A CC6 News Night story must never show bias toward any political party, politician or political issue, regardless of the political climate in which the story is generated.

When requesting interviews with politicians, be very clear what the subject matter is and how the information will be used. The politician has the right to refuse an interview for news, and while a no comment is also a comment, off the record strictly prohibits use of any information given and must be respected as such.

Never use deception or promises for a politician to grant an interview.

If a politician refuses an interview, be very clear in the story what efforts were made to establish contact and whether or not a reason was given for the refusal.

If an interview is granted, be sure to use the information within the context it was given.

Always bear in mind that politicians may be very concerned about how issues may affect votes, therefore to maintain objectivity refrain from language which will seem to promote, defend or attack their cause.

### **PARLIAMENT**

All rules of Parliament laid down for coverage must be observed at all times whether broadcasting or recording the events inside the Upper or Lower House.

Parliamentary material must only be used for factual broadcasts, reference, research or educational purposes.

## **PROFILING POLITICIANS**

Any request to interview or profile a politician must be cleared with the Director of News and Current Affairs. CC6 News Night strictly prohibits acceptance of any gifts or favours from any politician in return for any type of news story, whether the subject is the individual making the offer or another person or group.

If it is necessary to call upon the expertise of a politician outside his/her political field, the circumstance must not be used for political mileage or to give undue prominence. No payment or promise should be made to the politician for these contributions.

## **ELECTIONS**

Accurate, Balanced and credible reporting can be severely tested during elections, as scrutiny of the news is heightened at this time.

Regardless of political party, reporters cannot participate in campaigns, appear on any political platform, seen to be dressed in party colours or publicly give support to any party in any manner that can compromise CC6 News Night.

Politicians may try to promote their own interests but all reporting must be strictly impartial regardless of the personal political views of reporters.

Any political law or code of conduct for reporters must also be strictly observed during this period.

## **POLITICAL POLLS**

The findings of polls should not be reported as facts. The poll must be attributed to whoever conducted it and the party or politician who commissioned it. The reporter must be careful not to use language that gives any credibility to or casts aspersions on a particular poll.

## **CONCLUSION:**

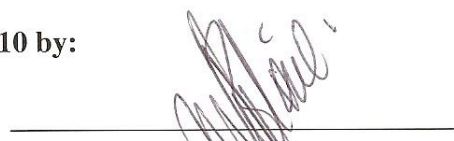
This policy is not exhaustive and may not cover every circumstance or situation in detail, but provides the general editorial policy guidelines of Columbus Communications (Grenada) Ltd, Community Channel 6. This policy must be strictly observed in carrying out duties for the Community Channel.

Disciplinary action, or in the case of contracted parties termination of contract and/or recovery of any damages incurred, will be taken against any individual who disregards any element of this policy or the spirit of the policy without the written permission of Management.

Authorized this 15<sup>th</sup> day of June in the year 2010 by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kurleigh Prescod', is written over a horizontal line.

Kurleigh Prescod  
General Manager

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Beverley Sinclair', is written over a horizontal line.

Beverley Sinclair  
Director of News & Current Affairs