PRINCIPLES OF ETHICAL JOURNALISM

TEGNA is committed to the highest ethical standards and dedicated to the principles of truth, independence, public interest, fair play and integrity. These principles apply to everything we do, from gathering information to reporting and producing content. To apply these principles, stop, think and get input from a variety of perspectives. If you are unsure about something, ask. Mistakes are best avoided by working together.

All employees who gather, report, produce and distribute news and information on any platform must read and familiarize themselves with this document, the TEGNA Ethics Policy and the Social Media Policy.

TRUTH

■ Report the news accurately, thoroughly and in context on all platforms.
■ Whenever possible, work to stop the spread of provably false information. Label false information clearly and in context. When correcting falsehoods, avoid amplifying misinformation.
■ Vet sources, verify facts and challenge your own assumptions before reporting news. Hold factual information on all platforms to the same standards of accuracy.
■ Hold government and law enforcement sources to the same accuracy standards as other sources, and verify official reports by seeking multiple perspectives and sources.
■ Seek sufficient understanding of the communities, individuals and stories we cover to inform the public. Be persistent in the pursuit of the whole story.
■ Be honest. Do not mislead sources, story subjects or the public.
■ Attribute information received from others, and be transparent with sourcing. Never plagiarize.
■ Keep your word.
■ Do not misstate your identity or intentions.
■ Do not intentionally slant the news.
■ Always value being accurate over being first.

INDEPENDENCE

■ Remain free of outside interests, investments, business relationships or personal relationships that may compromise the credibility of our news reports.
■ Avoid potential conflicts of interest and improper obligations to news sources, newsmakers and advertisers. Avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest as a journalist.
■ Do not use your position as a journalist or social media accounts for personal profit.
■ Promptly disclose potential conflicts of interest to news managers.
■ Do not accept gifts, meals, entertainment or anything of value from any individuals or organizations that may be covered by our stations.
■ Be transparent about paid or sponsored content. Differentiate advertising from news.
■ Do not allow sponsors of news to determine, change or restrict content.
■ Do not make political contributions, participate in political advocacy or publicly share political views.
■ Do not engage in political commentary on any platform without prior management approval.
■ When commentary is approved, it should be clearly identified and differentiated from news.
PUBLIC INTEREST

- Uphold and defend the First Amendment.
- Be vigilant watchdogs of government and institutions that affect the public. Fight to ensure that the public’s business is conducted in public.
- Provide the news and information that people need to function as effective citizens.
- Seek solutions as well as expose problems and wrongdoing.
- Be inclusive. Make editorial decisions with input from a variety of voices that reflect your community. Seek multiple perspectives from sources of different backgrounds.
- Cover all communities with respect and balance. Seek various perspectives within communities.
- Create content and provide news coverage that is representative of the diverse viewpoints and perspectives of the community you serve.
- Provide editorial and community leadership.
- Seek to promote understanding of complex issues.
- Be advocates for our communities.

FAIR PLAY

- Treat people with dignity, respect and compassion.
- Identify race and ethnicity evenly and only when relevant and critical to understanding the story.
- Be fair when covering initial criminal allegations; minimize harm, and be judicious when using mugshots, including considering if your newsroom will cover a case to resolution.
- Be fair with people unaccustomed to dealing with the media.
- Correct errors promptly.
- Explain our journalistic processes to our audience.
- Seek all sides relevant to a story.
- Use unnamed sources as the sole basis for broadcast or published information only as a last resort when it best serves the public’s right to know, and only with prior management approval.

INTEGRITY

- Act honorably, transparently and ethically in dealing with news sources, the public and our colleagues.
- Obey the law.
- Use technological tools with skill and thoughtfulness. Do not skew facts, distort reality or sensationalize events.
- Do not report something known to be false or manipulate images or sound in misleading ways. Do not present images that are re-enacted without informing the audience.
- Use hidden cameras or similar techniques only if there is no other way to tell a significant story effectively, and only with management approval.
- Take responsibility for your decisions and consider the possible consequences of your actions.
- Always do the right thing.