

The NCRA/ANREC Codes of Conduct

Introduction

Campus and community radio stations play a vital and unique role in our communities. As community-access and volunteer-driven, not-for-profit local media organizations, we serve the public interest by providing programming that serves the needs and interests of our communities in ways that are different from commercial and public radio, including in process, style and substance.

The NCRA/ANREC Codes of Conduct

These Codes of Conduct set out the guiding principles and policies for programming on those NCRA/ANREC member stations that agree to adopt them. They also outline the minimum operational standards for participating stations.

The Codes were developed by the NCRA/ANREC, in consultation with staff and volunteers from member stations and based on many of our stations' existing policies. They reflect a broad variety of community standards, since these stations' policies were developed with the input of members of our communities.

NCRA/ANREC Guidelines and Best Practices

The Codes are complemented by NCRA/ANREC Guidelines and Best Practices.

Application and Administration of the Codes

These Codes are intended for members of the NCRA/ANREC, but following them is not a requirement of membership. Members are encouraged to adopt them, and all those that do so will adopt them as a condition of license.

Members that choose to accept the Codes as a condition of license will notify the Commission of their choice, either directly or through the NCRA/ANREC. They will be referred to collectively below as "community radio broadcasters," "we" or "our."

For participating stations, the Codes replace the CAB Code of Ethics. They do not replace any other existing laws, regulations, policies or conditions of license; they are complementary.

When a complaint is made to a community radio broadcaster that has adopted these Codes, the station will use them to resolve complaints, in conjunction with the station's own policies. When a complaint involving a community radio broadcaster is made to the CRTC, the Commission will review and adjudicate the complaint against the standards of the Codes.

As community radio broadcasters, we are responsible for the application of these Codes at our stations and for ensuring that all applicable CRTC regulations and policies are followed. This includes training our paid staff and volunteers to understand and comply with these regulations, policies, and the content of these Codes; developing and implementing procedures to monitor our programming; taking action if our programming does not comply with the requirements; and making every reasonable effort to ensure that guests and callers also follow these requirements.

Currently, the NCRA/ANREC does not have the capacity to adjudicate these Codes, particularly in the handling and resolution of complaints. However it is our intention that these Codes be reviewed, in consultation with the Commission, after they have been in operation for three years. At that time, we can also evaluate whether the NCRA/ANREC can play an intermediary role in their continued implementation. Until that time, the CRTC will administer the Codes, and consult with the NCRA/ANREC on broad issues that arise in their administration and interpretation.

To create public awareness of these Codes, the NCRA/ANREC will work with the CRTC to distribute copies to interested parties, post the Codes on the NCRA/ANREC website, and encourage community broadcasters to broadcast public service announcements.

Guiding Principles of our Stations

NCRA/ANREC members are united by the following guiding principles:

- We enhance the diversity of local programming available to the public and present programs that expand the variety of viewpoints broadcast in Canada.

- We provide community-based programming to an audience that is diverse in ethnicity, culture, gender, language, sexual orientation, age, and physical and mental ability.
- We promote community ownership, access and participation in station programming, operations, and governance.
- We recognize that media can in many instances reinforce the social and economic inequities that oppress marginalized groups in our society and, as a result, we recognise our responsibility to serve the needs of socially, culturally, politically and economically disadvantaged groups in our communities.
- We abide by the NCRA/ANREC Statement of Principles, found here: <http://ncra.ca/our-mission>
- We each develop our own programming, operations, and governance policies and standards that reflect the values of our communities. We are guided by our own policies and standards, as well as by these Codes, CRTC policy decisions, regulations, and other applicable laws.
- We demonstrate independence in programming as well as in editorial and management decisions.
- We support local and emerging artists.

CODE ONE: Programming

- 1.1 We will create written programming policies that respect and reflect the communities we serve and make these documents available publicly.
- 1.2 We will comply with s. 3 of the *Radio Regulations*, which requires broadcasters to refrain from broadcasting “any abusive comment that, when taken in context, tends or is likely to expose an individual or a group or class of individuals to hatred or contempt on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age or mental or physical disability.”

- 1.3 We will adhere to part 6 of the Canadian Association of Broadcaster's Equitable Portrayal Code found here: <http://www.cbsc.ca/english/codes/epc.php#code>.¹
- 1.4 We will facilitate the informed exchange of perspectives and ideas amongst members of our communities on issues that the communities themselves deem to be important. We will ensure that a variety of opinions and perspectives are expressed in a fair and reasonable manner throughout our program schedule. In doing so, we are not required to provide extensive or equal airtime to every point of view or present every facet of every argument, nor are we required to acknowledge or present opinions that are abusive, contrary to law or that undermine the dignity or human rights of marginalized communities.
- 1.5 We recognize that minority language (whether French, English or an indigenous language) and third-language programming is an important part of many of our stations and the communities we serve. Where applicable, we will develop policies and procedures to encourage and support minority and third language programming at our stations.
- 1.6 For all types of spoken word programming, we will quickly acknowledge and publicly correct errors.
- 1.7 In producing news and public affairs programming, we will:
 - a. not present information that is false or misleading; and
 - b. clearly distinguish factual material from commentary, analysis and opinion.
- 1.8 In producing other types of spoken word programming, such as documentaries, feature programs, and interviews, we will adhere to the provisions in section 1.7 except when the content is intended as a work of parody or satire, or is a work of fiction.

¹ This commitment is based on the current version of the Equitable Portrayal Code as of July 2011, with the understanding that any proposal to edit or replace it will involve a public proceeding and an opportunity for the NCRA/ANREC and our members to participate and provide input before a new version will be incorporated into our Codes.

Potentially Offensive Content

- 1.9 We will develop specific programming policies about content that may offend some listeners, including:
 - a. coarse language, including words and expressions that are socially constructed or interpreted as insulting, rude, vulgar, or showing significant disrespect;
 - b. graphic sexually explicit material; and
 - c. graphic depictions of physical harm, or threats of physical harm, to people or groups of people, particularly in programming aimed at or likely to be heard by children.

- 1.10 We will develop programming policies that are mindful of children's access to adult-oriented material, which is defined as material described in 1.9 that is particularly graphic and/or explicit, and dominant and/or frequent. We will generally restrict broadcast of such programming to hours when children are less likely to be listening, generally between the hours of 9:00pm and 6:00am unless it can be reasonably demonstrated that:
 - a. the educational and artistic value of the programming renders it appropriate for children and youth;
 - b. the content is integral to the meaning of the programming as a whole; and
 - c. the removal of such content would render the programming ineffective in achieving its intended social, educational or artistic objectives.

- 1.11 If we broadcast material described in 1.9, we will provide listener advisories that:
 - a. inform listeners about the context and the substance of the content to allow them to make informed decisions about the suitability of the programming for themselves and dependents;
 - b. precede the start of individual programming segments containing content that may offend if they are isolated within programs that do not otherwise contain such content;

- c. precede the start of all programs that contain repeated instances of or focus primarily on potentially offensive subject matter, with repetitions of the advisory several times per hour; and
- d. may be repeated fewer times per hour for programs broadcast between 9pm and midnight depending on the amount, type and degree of potentially offensive content and in accordance with station policies.

CODE TWO: Complaints

- 2.1 We acknowledge the rights of our listeners, members and volunteers to make complaints about our programming or alleged non-compliance with relevant regulations, policies or these Codes.
- 2.2 We will create procedures for the management of listener and community complaints, and make these procedures available to the public.
- 2.3 We will designate staff and/or dedicated volunteers who will be responsible for managing complaints processes, and provide those individuals with training in the principles described in this Code, as well as the station's own procedures for managing complaints.
- 2.4 We may request that a complaint be made in writing, particularly in cases that involve potential violations of law, such as defamation.
- 2.5 We will make every reasonable effort to resolve complaints, except where a complaint is clearly frivolous, without sufficient grounds or not made in good faith.
- 2.6 We recognize that our sector's mandate to provide programming targeted to specialized communities provides context that may be appropriate to consider in assessing complaints about balance.
- 2.7 Stations delivering programming in third and minority languages will develop and implement policies to encourage the fair handling of complaints involving such programming.
- 2.8 We will ensure that:
 - a. all complaint details and the resolution process are documented;
 - b. all complaints are dealt with promptly and respectfully;
 - c. audio loggers are checked to verify complaints about programming and retained until the complaint is resolved;
 - d. we inform programmers about complaints that involve their programming and give them an opportunity to respond to the concerns raised by these complaints;

- e. we inform management, staff and involved volunteers about the complaint resolution; and
 - f. we advise complainants who are not satisfied with our treatment of their complaint that it may be taken to the CRTC.
- 2.9 We will conform to section 8(5) of the Radio Regulations, 1986, which says that that program logs shall be kept for four weeks from the date of broadcast. If a complaint is received after that four-week period has elapsed, the station will attempt to understand and address the complaint but will inform the complainant that the audio log may no longer be available and that may limit the station's ability to assess and respond to the complaint.

CODE THREE: Sponsorships and Advertising

- 3.1 We will ensure that all on-air sponsorship messages and advertising are distinguishable from other programming content.
- 3.2 We will adhere to the programming guidelines set out in these Codes when determining the content of any contests, promotions, sponsorship messages, and advertising that we broadcast.
- 3.3 We will adhere to the provisions of the CAB's Broadcast Code for Advertising to Children² as amended from time to time and approved by the Commission.

CODE FOUR: Paid Employees and Volunteers

- 4.1 We will be particularly sensitive to employment equity issues in order to reflect fully the communities we serve and consider these issues in our hiring practices and in all other aspects of our management and human resources.

² This commitment is based on the current version of the Broadcast Code for Advertising to Children as of July 2011, with the understanding that any proposal to edit or replace it will involve a public proceeding and an opportunity for the NCRA/ANREC and our members to participate and provide input before a new version will be incorporated into our Codes.