

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF CENSORSHIP

WASHINGTON, D. C.

# CODE OF WARTIME PRACTICES

## *For American Broadcasters*



EDITION OF JUNE 15, 1942

UNITED STATES

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

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Five months have passed since the Office of Censorship issued the Code of Wartime Practices for American Broadcasters. This is a revision of that Code, combining original provisions with supplemental suggestions and interpretations which have developed out of our experience in working with the broadcasting industry.

The broad approach to the problem of voluntary censorship remains unchanged. In sum, this approach is that it is the responsibility of every American to help prevent the dissemination of information which will be of value to the enemy and inimical to the war effort. It is true now, as it was 5 months ago, that the broadcasting industry must be awake to the dangers inherent in (1) news broadcasts and (2) routine programming.

To combat these dangers effectively, broadcast management must be in complete control of all programming every minute of every day of operation. That accomplished, the broadcasting industry will have fulfilled an important wartime obligation.

Radio station managements will continue to function as their own censors. The facilities of the Office of Censorship are at their disposal 24 hours a day to assist them with consultation and advice when any doubt arises as to the application of this Code. The following are the principal advisory guideposts which are intended to aid them in discharging their censorship responsibilities:

## I. NEWS BROADCASTS

Radio, because of the international character of its transmissions, should edit all news broadcasts in the light of this Code's suggestions and of its own specialized knowledge, regardless of the medium or means through which such news is obtained.

It is requested that news in any of the following classifications be kept off the air, *unless released or authorized for release by appropriate authority*:

(a) **Weather.**—All weather data, either forecasts, summaries, recapitulations, or any details of weather conditions.

Stations should refrain from broadcasting any news relating to the results of weather phenomena such as tornadoes, hurricanes, storms, etc., unless it is specifically authorized for broadcast by the Office of Censorship. Occasionally, it is possible to clear such news, but for security reasons this office cannot authorize blanket clearance in advance. Each case must be considered individually in the light of the extent to which the enemy will be benefited if such information is broadcast. Confusion and inequalities of competition can be avoided if stations will consult the Office of Censorship promptly in all such cases, either directly or through their news service.

*Exceptions:* Emergency warnings may be broadcast when specifically released for broadcast by Weather Bureau authorities.

Announcements regarding flood conditions may be broadcast provided they contain no reference to weather conditions.

Information concerning hazardous road conditions may be broadcast when requested by a Federal, State or Municipal source, if it avoids reference to weather.

NOTE.—Special events reporters covering sports events are cautioned especially against the mention of weather conditions in describing contests, announcing their schedules, suspensions, or cancellations.

(b) **Troops.**—Type and movements of United States Army, Navy and Marine Corps Units, within or without continental United States, including information concerning—

Location.	Routes.
Identity.	Schedules.
Composition.	Assembly for Embarkation.
Equipment.	Prospective Embarkation.
Strength.	Actual Embarkation.
Destination.	

Such information regarding troops of friendly nations on American soil.

Revelation of possible future military operations by identifying an individual known for a specialized activity.

*Exceptions:* Troops in training camps in United States and units assigned to domestic police duty, as regards location and general character. Names, addresses of troops in domestic camps (if they do not give location of units disposed for tactical purposes or predict troop movements or embarkations). Names of individuals stationed in combat areas outside the United States (after presence of American troops in area has been announced and if their military units are not identified). Names of naval personnel should not be linked with their ships or bases.

(c) **Ships (Convoys, etc.).**—Type and movements of United States Navy, or merchant vessels, or transports, of convoys, of neutral vessels, or vessels of nations opposing the Axis powers in any waters, including information concerning—

Identity.	Port of Departure.
Location.	Ports of Call.
Port of Arrival.	Nature of Cargoes.
Time of Arrival.	Assembly.
Prospect of Arrival.	Personnel.
Enemy naval or merchant vessels in any waters, their	
Type.	Location.
Identity.	Movements.
Secret information or instructions about sea defenses, such as—	
Buoys, lights and other guides to navigators.	
Mine fields and other harbor defenses.	
Ship construction—	
Type.	
Number.	
Size.	
Advance information on dates of launchings, commissionings.	
Physical description, technical details of shipyards.	

*Exceptions:* Information made public outside United States and origin stated. Movements of merchant vessels on Great Lakes or other sheltered inland waterways unless specific instances require special ruling.

(d) **Damage by enemy land or sea attacks.**—Information on damage to military objectives in continental United States or possessions, including—

Docks.  
Railroads.  
Airfields.

Public utilities.  
Industrial plants engaged in war work.

Counter-measures or plans of defense.

(e) **Action at sea.**—Information about the sinking or damaging of Navy, or merchant vessels or transports in any waters.

*Exception:* Information made public outside United States and origin stated.

*Appropriate authority:* For news about naval action AGAINST United States vessels in or near American waters: Naval Office of Public Relations, Washington; for news about action BY United States vessels or aircraft against the enemy in or near American waters: Naval commander in district where action occurs or Naval Office of Public Relations, Washington.

(f) **Enemy air attack.**—Estimates of number of planes involved; number of bombs dropped; damage to—

Fortifications.  
Docks.  
Railroads.  
Ships.  
Airfields.

Public utilities.  
Industrial plants engaged in war work.  
All other military objectives.

Warnings or reports of impending air raids; remote ad lib broadcasts dealing with raids, during or after action.

Mention of any raid in the continental United States during its course by stations OUTSIDE the zone of action, unless expressly announced for broadcast by the War Department in Washington.

News which plays up horror or sensationalism; deals with or refers to unconfirmed reports or versions; refers to exact routes taken by enemy planes, or describes countermeasures of defense, such as troop mobilization or movements, or the number and location of antiaircraft guns or searchlights in action.

*Exceptions:* After an air raid, general descriptions of action after all-clear has been given. Nothing in this request is intended to prevent or curtail constructive reporting or programming of such matters as feats of heroism, incidents of personal courage, or response to duty by the military or by civilian defense workers.

(g) **Planes.**—

*Air Units.*—Military air units of the United States and the United Nations as to—

Disposition.  
Missions.  
Movements.

New characteristics.  
Strength.

*Aircraft.*—New or current military aircraft or information concerning their—

Armament.  
Construction.  
Performance.

Equipment.  
Cargo.

*Civil Air Patrol.*—Nature and extent of military activities and missions.

*Miscellaneous.*—Movements of personnel or material or other activities by commercial airlines for military purposes, including changes of schedules occasioned thereby.

Activities, operations, and installations of United States and United Nations Air Forces Ferrying Commands, or commercial companies operating services for, or in cooperation with such Ferrying Commands.

Commercial airline planes in international traffic.

*Exception:* When made public outside continental United States and origin stated.

(h) **Fortifications and Bases.**—The location of forts, other fortifications, their nature and number, including—

Antiaircraft guns.

Barrage balloons and all other air defense installations.

Bomb shelters.

Camouflaged objects.

Coast-defense emplacements.

Information concerning installations by American military units outside the continental United States.

(i) **Production.**—

*Plants.*—Specifications which saboteurs could use to gain access to or damage war production plants.

*Exact estimates* of the amount, schedules, or delivery date of future production or exact reports of current production.

*Contracts.*—Exact amounts involved in new contracts for war production and the specific nature or the specifications of such production.

*Statistics.*—Any statistical information which would disclose the amounts of strategic or critical materials produced, imported or in reserve, such as tin, rubber, aluminum, uranium, zinc, chromium, manganese, tungsten, silk, platinum, cork, quinine, copper, optical glasses, mercury, high octane gasoline. Disclosure of movements of such materials and of munitions.

*Sabotage.*—Information indicating sabotage in reporting industrial accidents.

*Secret Designs.*—Any information about new or secret military designs, formulas, or experiments, secret manufacturing processes or secret factory designs, either for war production, or capable of adaptation for war production.

*Roundups.*—Nation-wide or regional roundups of current war production or war contract procurement data; local roundups disclosing total number of war production plants and the nature of their production.

*Type of production.*—Nature of production should be generalized as follows: tanks, planes, parts, motorized vehicles, uniform equipment, ordnance, munitions, vessels.

*Exceptions:* Information about the award of contracts when officially announced by the War Production Board, the Government agency executing the contract, a Member of Congress, or when disclosed in public records.

(j) **Unconfirmed Reports, Rumors.**—The spread of rumors in such way that they will be accepted as facts will render aid and comfort to the enemy. The same is true of enemy propaganda or material calculated by the enemy to bring about division among the United Nations. Enemy claims of ship sinkings, or of other damage to our forces should be weighed carefully and the sources clearly identified, if broadcast. Equal caution should be used in handling so-called "atrocities" stories. Interviews with service men or civilians from combat zones should be submitted for authority either to the Office of Censorship or to the appropriate Army or Navy public relations officer.

(k) **Communications.**—Information concerning the establishment of new international points of communication.

(l) **General.**—

*Aliens.*—Names of persons arrested, questioned or interned as enemy aliens; names of persons moved to resettlement centers; location and description of internment camps; location and description of resettlement centers.

*Art Objects, Historical Data.*—Information disclosing the new location of national archives, or of public or private art treasures.

*Casualties.*—Mention of specific military units and exact locations in broadcasting information about casualties from a station's primary area, as obtained from nearest of kin. Identification of naval casualties with their ships, unless such ships have been officially reported damaged or lost.

*Diplomatic Information.*—Information about the movements of the President of the United States or of official, military, or diplomatic missions or agents of the United States or of any other nation opposing the Axis powers—routes, schedules, destinations within or without continental United States. Premature disclosure of diplomatic negotiations or conversations.

*Lend-Lease War Material.*—Information about production, amounts, dates, and method of delivery, destination or routes, of Lend-Lease war material.

## II. PROGRAMS

The following suggestions are made in order that broadcasters will have a pattern to follow in accomplishing the most important censorship function of program operation: keeping the microphone under the complete control of the station management, or its authorized representatives.

(a) **Request Programs.**—*Music.*—No telephoned or telegraphed requests for musical selections should be accepted. No requests for musical selections made by word-of-mouth at the origin of broadcast, whether studio or remote, should be honored.

*Talk.*—No telephoned or telegraphed requests for service announcements should be honored, except as hereinafter qualified. Such service announcements would include information relating to—

Lost pets.

"Swap" ads.

Mass meetings.

Club meetings.

Club programs, etc.

No telephoned, telegraphed or word-of-mouth dedications of program features or segments thereof should be broadcast.

*Exceptions:* Emergency announcements (such as those seeking blood donors, doctors, lost persons, lost property, etc.) may be handled in conventional manner if the broadcaster confirms their origin. They should emanate from the police, the Red Cross, or similar recognized governmental or civilian agency.

Service announcements may be honored when source is checked and material is submitted in writing, subject to rewriting by station continuity staff. Requests for the broadcast of greetings or other programs to commemorate personal anniversaries may be honored if the actual broadcast is not made on the anniversary date or at the time or on the date designated in the request.

ALL requests, subject to the above qualifications, may be honored when submitted via mail, or otherwise in writing if they are held for an unspecified length of time and if the broadcaster staggers the order in which such requests are honored, rewriting any text which may be broadcast.

(b) **Quiz Programs.**—It is requested that all audience-participation type quiz programs originating from remote points, either by wire, transcription or short wave, be discontinued, except as qualified hereinafter. Any program which permits the public accessibility to an open microphone is dangerous and should be carefully supervised. Because of the nature of quiz programs, in which the public is not only permitted access to the microphone but encouraged to speak into it, the danger of usurpation by the enemy is enhanced. The greatest danger here lies in the informal interview conducted in a small group—10 to 25 people. In larger groups, where participants are selected from a theater audience, for example, the danger is not so great.

Generally speaking, any quiz program originating remotely, wherein the group is small, wherein no arrangement exists for investigating the background of participants, and wherein extraneous background noises cannot be eliminated at the discretion of the broadcaster, should be discontinued. Included in this classification are all such productions as man-in-the-street interviews, airport interviews, train terminal interviews, and so forth.

In all studio-audience type quiz shows, where the audience from which interviewees are to be selected numbers less than 50 people, program conductors are asked to exercise special care. They should devise a method whereby no individual seeking participation can be *guaranteed* participation.

(c) **Forums and Interviews.**—During forums in which the general public is permitted extemporaneous comment, panel discussions in which more than two persons participate, and interviews conducted by authorized employees of the broadcasting company, broadcasters should devise methods guaranteeing against the release of any information which might aid the enemy as described in Section I of the Code. If there is doubt concerning the acceptability of material to be used in interviews, complete scripts should be submitted to the Office of Censorship for review.

(d) **Commentaries and Descriptions** (ad lib).—Special events reporters should study carefully the restrictions suggested in Section I of the Code, especially those referring to interviews and descriptions following enemy offensive action. Reporters and commentators

should guard against use of descriptive material which might be employed by the enemy in plotting an area for attack.

If special programs which might be considered doubtful enterprises in view of our effort to keep information of value from the enemy are planned, outlines should be submitted to the Office of Censorship for review.

Caution is advised against reporting, under the guise of opinion, speculation or prediction, any fact which has not been released by an appropriate authority.

(e) **Dramatic Programs.**—Radio is requested to avoid dramatic programs which attempt to portray the horrors of war, and sound effects which might be mistaken for air raid alarms, or for any other defense alarms.

(f) **Commercial Continuity.**—Broadcasters should be alert to prevent the transmission of subversive information through the use of commercial continuity in program or announcement broadcasts. In this connection, the continuity editor should regard his responsibility as equal to that of the news editor.

(g) **Foreign Language Programs.**—Broadcasters have recognized that the loyalty of their personnel is of supreme importance in voluntary censorship; they recognize the dangers inherent in those foreign language broadcasts which are not under the control at all times of responsible station executives. Station managements, therefore, are requested to require all persons who broadcast in a foreign language to submit to the management in advance of broadcast complete scripts or transcriptions of such material, with an English translation. It is further requested that such material be checked "on the air" against the approved script, and that no deviations therefrom be permitted. These scripts or transcriptions with their translations should be kept on file at the station.

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Broadcasters should ask themselves, "Is this information of value to the enemy?" If the answer is "Yes," they should not use it. If doubtful, they should measure the material against the Code.

From time to time the Office of Censorship may find it necessary to issue further communications either to interpret certain existing requests, amend or delete them, or otherwise to cover special emergency conditions. Such communications will be addressed to managers of radio stations and networks and should receive preferential attention.

If information concerning any phase of the war effort should be made available anywhere, which seems to come from doubtful authority, or to be in conflict with the general aims of these requests; or if special restrictions requested locally or otherwise by various authorities seem unreasonable or out of harmony with this summary, it is recommended that the question be submitted at once to the Office of Censorship, Washington. Telephone: Executive 3800.

THE OFFICE OF CENSORSHIP,  
BYRON PRICE. *Director.*

JUNE 15, 1942.

