

THE CONVENTION NEWS CO. ETHICS, LEGAL & GOOD PRACTICE POLICY

Introduction

The Convention News Co. has a long and proud tradition of providing reliable and independent coverage of the aviation business. The first and overriding duty of the editorial team is to its readers. We owe it to them to do everything possible, legal and ethical, to provide accurate, timely, comprehensive, fair and balanced reporting.

In doing our important job, we work on a daily basis with people and companies from throughout the industries we cover. In many cases we rely heavily on them as sources of information. Companies and individuals have a right to expect that quality publications will research stories thoroughly and publish only factual information. At the same time, our necessarily close working relationship with the industry must not impair our impartiality and pursuit of the truth. Many of the companies we write about are also advertising customers. Members of the editorial team should treat these companies no differently from any other company we deal with. We should treat everyone respectfully and fairly.

The following requirements and guidelines are intended to help our employees and agents meet these high standards as consistently as possible. They apply to all of the group's publications, including the monthly edition of **Aviation International News** ("AIN"), all air show and convention editions (including **AINtv**), **Business Jet Traveler** ("BJT") and online news services. In addition to the following requirements and guidelines, **The Convention News Co.**, its employees and agents shall comply with all applicable legal and ethical standards of the United States and of each jurisdiction in which business is conducted.

These requirements and guidelines will remain in effect until they are superseded. Any employee or agent who has any information leading him or her to believe that this policy is being, or may be violated, is required to present such information to the editor-in chief.

Accurate, Fair and Balanced Reporting

- To the best of our abilities, all articles will be accurate, fair and balanced. The aim is to provide all relevant facts, explain the basis or source for these facts and give all parties concerned an opportunity to explain their version of events or opinions.
- To that end, all reporters, whether on staff or engaged as independent contractors, and editors shall disclose whether they or their spouse or partner within the last twelve months of publication has held any direct or indirect share interest or other financial interest in, including, but not limited to, receiving dividends, commissions or wages, or employment with, or position as a board member, official or consultant with, any entity that is the subject of a particular article or any competitor of **The Convention News Co.**

- Thus, reporters should be sure that they have checked facts as thoroughly as possible before submitting copy. Editors should question any facts about which they are unsure and use secondary sources where necessary or appropriate. It is better to remove questionable “facts,” miss a deadline or even not publish a story rather than to publish an article containing facts that we cannot verify. Special care should be taken when the misreporting of facts could have serious consequences for the individuals or companies concerned (e.g., saying that a company is close to bankruptcy).
- In many situations, such as reporting the characteristics of an aircraft, the only viable source of information will be the company concerned. When it is not practical to independently verify facts, we should always make clear the source of the information.
- In seeking information, our employees and agents will be honest about the purpose of their inquiries.
- As a general rule, we should not rely on facts as reported in other publications unless we have independently verified them. Sometimes, it is legitimate to repeat points made in another publication, but we should always make clear the source of such facts or points and the date they were published.
- It is never acceptable for writers to plagiarize the work of reporters on other publications.
- Whenever possible, we should provide follow-up reports on a subject or situation to inform our readers how a story has unfolded. Subsequent developments can often show the initial facts in a new light.
- Unless presented as a clearly identified editorial, commentary or opinion item, articles should not be a platform for the opinions of reporters. Care must be taken to avoid using words or a tone that could be taken to add a subjective slant to the facts (for example, using “he claimed” when “he said” is sufficient). Though humor may sometimes be appropriate in articles, writers should steer away from snide comments, cheap shots and humor directed toward individuals.
- When individuals or representatives of companies are either unwilling or unable to comment on or respond to a situation, the resulting article should make it clear that they were given the opportunity to do so. When seeking a comment, the reporter should give a clear deadline for responding.
- When an individual or company does give a comment or response, the comment or response should be included as fully and prominently in the article as possible. If other parties make allegations against or criticisms of the individual or company, the individual’s or company’s responses to these allegations should be printed as closely as possible to each point made. For example, if one party gives a long shopping list of complaints against another party, it is not satisfactory to simply include a general denial at the end of the story. The reporter should seek to include a precise response to each point right after it is made, or at the first practical opportunity in the story.
- When including a criticism or allegation in a story, the source of the criticism or allegation must be clear. In addition, the story must also disclose any possible vested interest that the source may have.

- Headlines and captions should not distort or misrepresent the main point of the article. To assist headline and caption writers with this responsibility, writers should ensure that the main point of the article is clearly summarized at the top of the story and that the information needed for the caption is clear and accurate.
- We will not change or manipulate digital photos in a way that gives a significantly false impression of what the picture is showing or compromises the integrity of the photo, but we may make minor, cosmetic changes to improve the quality of reproduction. When such changes are made by the production department, they should consult with the editor and writer to be sure that there is not some significant reason for not making the change.

Unnamed Sources/Quotations/Comments On and Off the Record

- As a general rule, our articles should not use unnamed sources (e.g. “sources close to ?? say” or “industry officials say”). However, there may sometimes be circumstances in which a credible source does not want to be or cannot be named. If such sources are used in a story, we should give as much information as possible about the background of the sources and any vested interest they may have (e.g. “an ABC Company executive told **AIN** that his company’s rival XYZ Corp. is still receiving unfair research funds from the government”). Reporters and editors must carefully consider whether the use of an unnamed source is genuinely in the public interest and/or whether it is merely being used by the speaker to make a self-serving comment or criticism. Sometimes, a legitimate unnamed source can provide valuable information that might not otherwise be in the public domain. However, unnamed sources should not be allowed to simply make subjective, cheap shots about another person or company. Especially where the source is being critical of a third party, they must provide strong supporting evidence for such comments.
- If an unnamed source is to be used, the writer should explain to his or her editor who the source is, why it is legitimate or necessary not to name the person and any connections or vested interests that this person may have. We should always question a source’s motive in making the comments and question his or her reasons for seeking to remain anonymous. The editor shall be the judge as to whether to accept the unnamed source in the story. In some instances, the writer may not want to actually name the source to an editor. The editor must be the judge of whether this is acceptable. If the editor does not feel that an unnamed source is acceptable, then this person’s comments or views cannot be included in the article. If an unnamed source is to be used, the reporter should corroborate information provided by the unnamed source, if at all possible, with information provided from a named source. If the editor does not deem it appropriate to use an unnamed source, the reporter should request that the unnamed source agree to be quoted on a named basis.
- Whenever possible, full and direct quotations should be used in articles. However, it is important to keep the following points in mind. Sometimes people speaking to **AIN** reporters do not understand that they are going to be quoted verbatim and they may speak in a somewhat disjointed and ungrammatical way. Similarly,

many interview subjects do not have English as a first language and their comments may appear disjointed or ungrammatical for this reason. It is therefore legitimate to include words in parenthesis within quotes if they help to make the quote easier to understand and do not distort what the person is saying. If a reporter is quite clear what a person is trying to say, and it is not particularly controversial, it is legitimate to paraphrase what they are saying, *i.e.*, summarize the point in your own words rather than as a direct quote. In fact, sometimes it is actually better to paraphrase the points a source is making rather than using excessively long direct quotes that don't really enhance the article. For longer question-and-answer format interviews (such as Center Stage in **BJT**) it is acceptable to do some minor rephrasing and tightening up of grammar to make the comments more readable. **The key point is that re-editing should never change the point of what the interview subject is saying. When a comment is about a controversial or legally-sensitive subject, editors should do no more than remove "ums" and "ahs".**

- **The Convention News Co.** and its employees and agents will respect all requests from a source to make a particular comment or piece information **off-the-record**, so long as the source makes such a request *before* he or she discloses the information. In such circumstances, we will only treat as the statement as background information that cannot be directly used in an article. If source asks to make comments or tell a reporter something on a **not-for-attribution** basis, this is essentially an unnamed source situation and should be handled as outlined above. Generally, employees and agents should not offer to accept the comments of an unnamed, off-the-record or on a not-for-attribution basis. Rather, they should wait until the sources makes such a request.
- Sometimes, for the sake of accuracy, it may be appropriate and desirable to record telephone conversations. Generally speaking it is not legally required that the person making the recording informs the other person that their conversation is being recorded. However, a few U.S. states (including Maryland) have a so-called "two-party" requirement, namely that people at both ends of the line know that the call is being taped. In other states, the party recording the conversation only need to tell the other person that the conversation is being recorded if asked. All employees and agents should abide by the rules on recording telephone conversations that apply in the state from which they are making the call. Employees and agents may obtain additional information on this issue from the following websites: www.callcorder.com/phone-recording-law-america.html and www.rcfp.org/taping/fcc.html.
- Unattributed or anonymous letters or emails to the editor will never be published in **AIN**. All letters and emails will be vetted by a staff member by contacting the letter writer. Requests by letter and email writers that their identities not be published are subject to the same scrutiny as unnamed sources.

Remaining Independent

- Articles in **AIN** should never give the impression that we have a preference for or a partiality towards a company, individual or product. One exception to this rule

is a pilot report in which the sole purpose of the article is to comment on a particular aircraft. Another exception is a clearly identified editorial comment column.

- As a general rule, it is **AIN** policy that we do NOT allow individuals or companies to see and comment on articles prior to publication. If a company or individual asks or demands to see an article, the writer should explain this policy to them and refer them to the editor if necessary. There may be some exceptional circumstances where it may be legitimate for all or part of an article to be reviewed prior to publication. This should only be done with the agreement of the assigning editor. Examples of situations in which it might be legitimate to review an article externally would include when the subject is extremely sensitive from a legal perspective or if it contains very complex technical information. In these situations it might be legitimate to allow someone to review a particular passage or section of the article. However, the person or company concerned must be informed that the invitation to review does NOT convey to them an absolute right to change the copy. Whenever possible, fact-checking should be done without recourse to allowing copy to be reviewed.
- Working with industry executives year after year it is not surprising that individual reporters may be on friendly terms with some and not-so-friendly-terms with others. Neither set of circumstances should influence the balance and impartiality of our reporting.
- Moreover, employees and agents must disclose any conflict of interest with the subject of any article they are writing or editing or otherwise, pursuant to the terms set forth in the **Accurate, Fair and Balanced Reporting** section above.
- Because accepting company hospitality or assistance with travel plans may compromise the independence of **AIN's** coverage, employees and agents should only accept such hospitality or assistance with travel plans if it is part of a group media visit or is an event in which other publications and reporters are participating. However, circumstances may exist, such as where such hospitality or assistance is the only practical way to participate in a company briefing or participation in **BJT's** Getaways series, which render this policy not viable or practicable. In such situations, before accepting company hospitality or assistance with travel plans, employees and agents must notify and obtain approval from their supervising editor(s) and the editor-in-chief.
- **AIN** staff writers and editors should not solicit or accept any paid work from individuals or companies in the aviation industry.
- **AIN** staff writers and editors should not solicit or accept any paid work from other aviation magazines.
- **AIN** staff writers and editors should not directly own stock in companies they write about. However, **AIN** staff writers and editors may hold stock in these companies in company-sponsored 401K plans and other mutual funds.

Accountability

- When a company or individual complains about an article published in **AIN**, the complaint will be quickly reviewed by the writer concerned and an editor (usually

the assigning editor). If a mistake has been made, a correction will be published at the next available opportunity. Sometimes a clarification may be required rather than a factual correction. In some instances, it may not be appropriate to publish a correction or clarification in **AIN**. For instance, if the article concerned appears in one of **AIN**'s show or convention editions, the subject matter may be completely irrelevant to our monthly editions. In this case, we will provide a written apology to the parties concerned and offer to set the record straight at the next suitable opportunity.

- If a company or individual submits correspondence to **AIN** that contradicts an article, or a portion of an article, published in **AIN**, we will make every effort to include this submission on the Letters page. In this case, the writer of the original article will be offered the chance to submit a counter-response, which is not disproportionate in length or in scope to the letter itself.

Libel

- Although, generally speaking, U.S. libel law should be our main concern, because **The Convention News Co.** publications are published in multiple countries, employees and agents need to be somewhat mindful of the standards for libel in the countries in which we publish.
- In general terms, libel in the U.S. is defined as follows: a **false** statement of **fact** (stated or implied) **published** (printed or broadcast) **about a living person** who is **identifiable** which tends to **injure that person's (or company's) reputation** and which is published with the **required level of fault** (generally negligence, actual malice or gross irresponsibility). [In comparison UK law favors the litigant, who need not prove that the libel was intentional or malicious. In other countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, we may not be able to rely on the defense of freedom of expression because none has been established.]
- Libel lawsuits can generally be avoided if writers follow the above guidelines on accuracy, fairness and balance. Writers must also avoid including needlessly derogatory or personal language in the main body of the text, or in headlines and captions.
- Editors also need to be mindful of the potential for a libel to be committed in a published letter from a reader. Any potentially damaging claim by the letter writer about or against another party needs to be backed up with facts in the same way that it would need to be in the context of an article. In some legal jurisdictions, a publisher can be sued for printing a libellous claim made by a third party.
- If an employee or agent receives a telephone call threatening legal action over an alleged libel, he or she should follow the provisions set forth in the **Legal Inquiries** section below. Employees or agents must NOT discuss the matter with the caller.

Legal Inquiries

- If an attorney calls an individual **AIN** employee for any reason related to company business DO NOT engage them in any conversation. Request their name

and contact information and inform the caller that someone from the company will get back to them.

- Employees should then refer the inquiry to Managing Director Wilson Leach in the Connecticut office. If Wilson is traveling, the matter should be brought to the attention of Jane Webb, director of human resources. If she is not available, give the basic details only to Wilson's secretary, Patty Hayes, who will locate Wilson. It is also advisable to notify your immediate editorial supervisor.
- It is vital that legal inquiries are dealt with by a single voice within the company. This is important so that AIN does not become inadvertently embroiled in legal proceedings as a result of casual conversations with attorneys.