

Situation Specific Ethical Guidelines

1. Practice honest and trustworthy behaviors in all dealings within the organization, the media, and the public. As Table 3 demonstrates, a balance between right to privacy and the First Amendment can be obtained through consent and newsworthiness.

2. Remain courageous if promoting your client, yet honest and truthful, despite any conflicts of interest. Tardiness and disregard for basic privacy rights by journalists is not justified. However, this power struggle can be avoided with a few applications of the Golden Rule on all sides of the issue.

3. Practice two-way, respectful communications with not only those within one's own organization, the client's organization, but also the public and any other stakeholders that show interest. Being proactive on your part can help to get more information about the issues at hand as well as the messages inherent in your organizations's mandate. And on that same line of thinking, journalists are likely to get a better story if they honor their obligation to offer you and your organization general courtesies as well. And, don't hesitate to make this clear to them.

4. Above all else, be fair to all stakeholders. Your obligations are always to your organization. Journalist are always going to be obligated to their own interests, so remain true to your side of this balance of power.

Figure 2: Situation Specific Ethical Guidelines