

# **Sri Lanka Press Council Code of Ethics for Journalists**

*Rules made by Sri Lanka Press Council setting out the Code of Ethics for Journalists under Section 30(i) (a) of the Sri Lanka Press Council Law, No.5 of 1973, and approved by Parliament under Section 30 (3) of the said Law.*

1. These rules may be cited as the Press Council (Code of Ethics for Journalists) Rules, 1981. Every journalist shall —
  - a. use all reasonable means within his power to ascertain prior to publication the veracity of the contents of any article written by him for publication;
  - b. refrain from reporting or causing to be printed or published any matter which he knows or has reason to believe to be false or inaccurate;
  - c. refrain from distorting the truth by any act of commission or willful omission;
  - d. take all possible steps to correct within the shortest possible space of time any inaccuracy or incorrect information in any report or article for the writing or publication of which he is responsible; and
  - e. refrain from publishing or causing to be published any matter which may offend public taste or morality or tend to lower the standards of public taste or morality.
3. Every journalist shall use all reasonable means at his command in any report or article he writes or causes to be printed or published to draw a clear distinction between any statement of fact on the one hand and any expression of opinion or criticism on the other.
4. Every journalist shall observe secrecy regarding any source of information unless the person who gave him such information authorizes the disclosure of his identity.
5. Every journalist shall respect the reputation of an individual and refrain from reporting or causing to be printed or published any information or comment regarding an individual's private life unless the publication of said matter is in the public interest as distinguished from public curiosity.
6. (1) In reporting or causing to be printed or published accounts of crimes or criminal cases, a journalist shall not —
  - a. name victims of sex crimes;
  - b. name any young person accused of a criminal offense who to his knowledge is below the age of eighteen and to his knowledge is a person who has no previous convictions; or
  - c. name any person as being a relative of a person accused or convicted of a crime for the sole purpose of informing the reader of the relationship between the person so named and

the person charged, unless the public interest would be served by the publication of the said matter.

6. (2) In reporting or causing to be printed or published accounts of matrimonial causes or actions, a journalist shall refrain from reporting or publishing any offensive details

7. A journalist shall not commit plagiarism.

8. A journalist shall not present any matter in a manner designed to promote sadism, violence or salacity.

9. A journalist shall not report or cause to be printed or published any matter that is obscene unless the public interest is served by the publication thereof.

10. A journalist shall not report or cause to be printed or published any matter for the purpose of promoting communal or religious discord or violence.

11. Every journalist shall safeguard the dignity of his profession. He shall not accept any bribe in money, kind or service for any matter connected with or incidental to his profession.