

# mission investigate

svt

2018

# Guidelines for Mission: Investigate

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Our task is to uncover wrong-doings and abuse of power. We provide the general public with tools that enable them to understand various social issues in our democratic society. Having the viewers' trust is a prerequisite for this task. This trust, in turn, requires that we approach our task with care, fairness and courage.

Our work is already subject to a number of regulations that form the foundation of our show:

**The Freedom of Expression Act (YGL)**  
**The Radio and Television Act (RTL)**  
**SVT's Broadcast Charter (ST)**  
**SVT's Internal Guidelines**  
**The Press, Radio and Television Codes of Conduct**

SVT is bound by the Broadcast Charter to scrutinize authorities, organizations and companies who have the power to influence decisions that impact the general public. This obligation would imply that a show may adopt a critical viewpoint without necessarily contravening the demand for impartiality.

## **That is our assignment – to scrutinize.**

We uncover irregularities and wrong-doings that can lead to serious consequences for individuals, companies and organizations. We probe deeply into complex social issues, which require that we do more than just reproduce what two conflicting parties may tell us. We are also experiencing ever tougher opposition. Decision makers undergo media training and PR consultants are brought in to counter the scrutiny.

Therefore, we need more detailed guidelines than those contained in the existing set of regulations. These guidelines are meant to support the members of our show staff in their work. However, no set of printed guidelines can cover all the issues that can come up when working on a story. In some situations, where

the contents of a story are of major interest to the public, it may be appropriate to skirt the guidelines. In such a situation, staff members working on the story should consult their superiors.

## **Being independent**

Credibility demands that we are free of any allegiances. Our independence may be challenged, even if we perceive ourselves as being free of any other interests.

Therefore, our staff may not accept commissions from an outside party without first consulting their superiors. Superiors should be informed of any affiliations that might have a bearing on credibility. This can include charity work, ownership of stock, personal relationships or other circumstances that could affect the professional credibility of a staff member. Freelancers may not use the Mission: Investigate name in commercial endeavors.

If we choose to broadcast material produced by an external party, such as an interest group or organization, the episode shall clearly describe the circumstances and reasons behind our decision to broadcast said material.

## **Protecting sensitive information**

Protecting our sources and confidential materials are prerequisites for our investigative work. Within Mission: Investigate, we handle incendiary material with sensitive contents. Upon being hired, staff members are informed that secrecy and protection of sources is crucial. This safeguards the anonymity of our sources and helps bring about an open and generous climate between the members of our editorial staff.

If there's the slightest doubt about the status of a piece of information with regard to secrecy, each staff member shall consult his editor before it is disseminated in any way.



## Social media usage

We use social to develop audience dialogue, promote shows and reach potential sources.

Everything you write on social media should be considered public information. As a staff member of Mission: Investigate, you should assume that you are seen as part of the show, even when expressing yourself privately. You need to be able to publically stand behind what you publish. So be careful about hastily-expressed opinions on sensitive subjects. Think twice before expressing a negative opinion about anyone. This also applies if you are sharing someone else's opinions

If you express yourself on a controversial societal issue in such a way that the credibility of the company, the show or you can reasonably be put into question, you may lose the ability to work on that issue.

Be careful about publishing images from our offices. The same goes for information provided at office meetings. Information on upcoming pieces can only be published after consulting with an editor. Any such sharing must go through our customary fact checking.

Neither may you spread information that may compromise a source. For instance, if you share your geographical position, it may give clues as to who you are meeting.

Also remember that you do not have the same free speech protections when publishing on social media and that you may be held legally liable for slander, for instance.

## RESEARCH

### Test the hypothesis

Doing our job should be guided by a genuine will to find out what is really going on in the areas that we investigate. During the research process, it is just as important to find information that contradicts our hypothesis as supports it. Put into practice, this means that we, at the initial meeting where the decision is made on whether to do the piece, do what we can to find alternate

explanations and to identify weak links within the story concept.. At this meeting, there will be a designated "devil's advocate", a reporter or editor whose job it is to promote an opposing hypothesis.

In the continued work, the team making the piece needs to make sure that all relevant voices are heard, and to remain critical even of the facts that support the hypothesis. Mitigating circumstances should be presented if they are contextually relevant.

When work on a piece has reached the midpoint, another check is made in the form of a "midpoint meeting", at latest before editing begins, to ascertain that the team is on the right track.

### Rules for photography

In the field, we are to show good judgment and make sure we are familiar with the legal restrictions relating to our work.

There are few legal restrictions on photography. The most important to be aware of are the following:

Photography is forbidden in a court of law.

It is forbidden to secretly photograph someone in a private environment (such as in their apartment, a changing room, a bathroom or similar). Exceptions are when such photography can be considered warranted, which is often the case when it comes to investigative journalism.

According to the 2015 ruling in the Swedish Supreme Court, there is no liability for photographing a protected person if said photography is intended for publication in a constitutionally protected medium such as SVT. This is because the Freedom of Expression Act takes precedence over the Protection Act. Therefore, we should assert our right to photograph such protected persons, and if necessary inform guards, etc., of the Swedish Supreme Court ruling. However, the Court did not give journalists the right to violate refusal-of-access rulings about approaching a protected person.

Do not hesitate to contact SVT's corporate counsel if you are uncertain.



It is important to remember that copyright rules may apply with regard to photographing works protected by copyright such as paintings, photographs and installations.

We are not always required to state that we are photographing. If asked directly if we are photographing, we must answer honestly.

We are allowed to record images in the locations/ premises we are allowed access to. But there are two rules here:

Anyone entering or remaining in another person's domicile is violating the law of privacy of the home. Hotel rooms, tents and yards also count as domiciles. In practice, this means we are permitted to ring doorbells, but may not otherwise enter and walk around their property without authorization.

When it comes to other premises owned or rented by someone, for example a shop, office, factory, farm, school, restaurant or apartment buildings, the rule is that you must have a legitimate reason to enter or remain on the premises. Otherwise, you are trespassing.

In both cases, we must respect any request to vacate the premises.

### **Being on screen**

Our staff is on screen when this is warranted. Usually, this is just a lone reporter, but sometimes other staff members will be on screen, for example when there is a scene. In such cases, it should be explained to the viewer who the staff member is.

The staff members' on screen behavior shall be such that the concentration of the viewer is not affected by irrelevant details. For instance, this requires a mode of dress that is not too conspicuous or in any other way obscures the content. Visible logos on clothing are not permitted.

Images of staff members carrying tripods or luggage should be avoided, unless the situation absolutely requires it.

### **Information to participants**

According to the "rules of the game" and SVT policy, we are to meet reasonable requests from interviewees to be informed in advance of

how and where their statements will be used. People who make statements in our pieces shall, as much as is possible, be informed of their participation in the show. This also applies to recorded telephone conversations.

### **Show special care and consideration**

Television broadcasts have a considerable impact on audiences, not least Mission: Investigate's shows. Therefore, we should show special consideration for inexperienced interviewees, such as minors.

### **Using anonymous sources**

A promise of anonymity may be a precondition for someone to provide us with information about possible irregularities or wrong doings. Such information should be examined more thoroughly, since the source is not required to public stand behind said information.

If we allow an anonymous source to express criticism or accusations in the show, we should explain our reasons for doing so and why we feel the source is credible. Any information emanating from an anonymous source shall, as far as possible, be supported by other documentation.

### **Protect the source**

A promise of anonymity is legally binding. Professional secrecy applies even in those cases where circumstances give us cause to conclude that a source wishes to remain anonymous. Any staff member who reveals an anonymous source can be charged and risks jail time of up to 12 months.

We protect our sources in every way available to us. Notes and tapes containing information that might lead to the identity of a source being revealed is kept under lock and key. Digital materials with the same status must be encrypted.

Staff members need to be aware of the risks of using telephony and electronic communications in their contacts with sources. During any such contact, encryption tools should be used.

### **Documenting the work**

Taking notes and recordings of telephone conversations is documenting the work. It is



important to be able to, after the fact, account for how and when the information was obtained. If anyone asks us if we are recording, we give an honest answer.

### **Identifying ourselves**

We generally introduce ourselves as working for Mission: Investigate or SVT.

However, the investigative nature of our research may justify not revealing your identity as a journalist. This might happen, for example, when phoning a company to speak to a possible source.

### **Working with hidden cameras**

We use hidden cameras when it is the only possible way for us to uncover serious wrong doings or irregularities. SVT's hidden camera policy is extremely restrictive.

According to SVT Guidelines, this is required to warrant the use of a hidden camera:

The disclosure is clearly of major public interest. The disclosure can only be achieved with this method.

Those involved in the disclosure are given the opportunity to explain or defend themselves in the same show.

The hidden camera recording is supplemented with material from open sources.

Take into account the risk that a hidden camera recording may affect events or actions in a way that can later be seen as inappropriate.

The material recorded with a hidden camera is assessed with regard to the general interest in such a way as to minimize the impact on those being investigated. In as much as possible, they should be offered to see those hidden camera recordings which are to be used for transmission. The decision to use a hidden camera must be authorized by the project manager.

### **Publishing secret telephone recordings**

Telephone conversations recorded without the knowledge of the person called may be published in order to prove an irregularity or wrongdoing. For example, this approach may be used when the responsible party refuses to be interviewed on camera. Instead, we may choose to let the person concerned state his or

her case via recorded telephone conversation, even if said person has not been informed that the conversation was recorded. Publishing such a secret recording can only be warranted when other alternatives have failed and the matter is of major public interest.

The person shall, as quickly as possible, be informed of the recording prior to future broadcast. The informed shall be given the opportunity to know what portions of the conversation are to be published.

### **Demanding accountability**

This is a cornerstone of our journalistic work. It comprises ensuring that an individual, authority, organization or company who is responsible for a wrongdoing or irregularity is identified and held to account for this.

The impartiality required by the Broadcast Charter calls for, among other things, a clearly identified party who has been the focus of criticism being given the opportunity to defend themselves.

When several points of serious criticism are leveled, the party shall be offered the chance to respond to each one. When warranted, the party shall also be informed of the basis of the research leading to the accusations. We allow the criticized party to access relevant parts of the final script before transmission.

In such cases, the protection of sources and interviewees should be kept in mind.

Only when the responsible party has been allowed to give their comments do we know if the collected material can be transmitted. Therefore, we should strive to get the explanations of the responsible party as early as possible. The strategy for demanding responsibility is to be discussed both at start and midpoint meetings.

We should be generous and publish the responsible party's best argument. If there are any other relevant mitigating circumstances, they should also be included in the piece.

Sometimes, the problem may arise, that the responsible party refuses to respond to the criticism. If we then opt for unconventional methods – for example continuing to shoot when the person being confronted asks us to stop – we



explain our actions to the viewers. The decision on using such methods lies with the legally responsible publisher.

If the responsible party does not want to make a statement, we run through his argument ourselves, on the basis of the information we have at our disposal. A party's refusal to make a statement cannot prevent the episode from being broadcast.

It is important, as far as possible, to document the efforts to offer the person responsible the chance to comment by making a reference recording and a note of the date and time.

Prior to transmission, the parties being investigated shall be informed of any phrasings in the script that may be seen as criticism. At that point, they should be given a deadline for final rebuttal.

Feel free to contact the responsible party after transmission to gain their reaction to the episode.

### **Question everyone**

Our basic approach is from the standpoint of the person affected by the state of affairs we are investigating. However, this person's credibility won't be enhanced by obsequious and uncritical questioning.

Adopting a critical stance toward both sides boosts the credibility of the story.

Using a critical approach, even against those affected, minimizes the risk of a one-sided perspective and provides greater nuance. The same applies when we interview experts and other people whose analyses or opinions confirm the thesis of the episode.

## **EDITING AND PUBLISHING**

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### **Drawing conclusions**

Our task of revealing wrongdoing requires that each story contains a conclusion regarding the nature and origin of the wrongdoing, the party responsible for it, and who can rectify it.

An investigative story without a conclusion runs the risk of ending up as a bland list of facts. It is our duty to tell the viewers what the information

we have presented signifies and the reasoning behind our conclusion.

### **Verify the story**

Our show must meet the demands for factual correctness and impartiality. The editorial staff must carefully review the story before transmission in accordance with separate manuals. During this process, facts need to be verifiable with documents.

The verification process should ask the following questions:

#### **Factuality**

Is all the factual information correct?

Are all the claims well-founded?

Is any essential information missing?

#### **Impartiality**

Are we presenting a balanced picture?

Do we take a stand on any issue?

Have those who have been criticized all had a chance to state their case?

Have those who have been criticized all had a chance to respond to all serious criticism?

#### **Publishing names**

Our task is to scrutinize those in a position of power. An individual's position in society is an important factor when assessing the publication of names or information enabling a person to be identified. The Broadcast Charter stipulates the existence of a clear-cut public interest in order to bypass the principle of consideration of personal integrity.

Legislation allows the publication of defamatory material if it can be justified and if it is true, or if it is based on reasonable grounds.

The rules are complicated with each case having to be judged on its own merits.

#### **Shielding identification**

This approach should be discussed at an early stage. This is in order to, among other things, enable this option to be taken into account when the recording takes place.

Shielding identification must be carried out with extreme care. Looks and voice are not



the only characteristics by which a person can be identified. A person's hair, clothes, jewelry, tattoos and body language are other factors. Care should also be taken so that the location of the recording doesn't provide a clue to the identification of the person in question.

In particularly sensitive cases, the secret source should also be given the opportunity to approve the visual and auditory identification shielding. In such cases, the possibility of using actors should also be discussed.

All secret materials coming out of editing must have shielded identification.

### **Transparency**

We are to be transparent about how we work. Among other things, this means that we publish the basic materials for our pieces on our website. Anybody who participates in the show is informed of the editorial guidelines for interviews and accountability.

The reasoning behind decisions about controversial transmissions is explained on our website.

### **Admitting mistakes**

We admit when we have made mistakes in our shows. A factual error is to be corrected as soon as possible – in other words, rectified. If someone hasn't had the chance to respond to criticism in the show, they should be given opportunity to do so as soon as possible. Mistakes made in the editorial process are to be investigated. The legally responsible publisher ascertains that this is done. Analyses and suggested actions are presented to the editorial board. Lessons learned are presented at a Monday meeting.



# *For participants*

## **GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS**

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When you are interviewed by Mission: Investigate, it is important that you get the best possible conditions to answer our questions. That is why we have a few guidelines to help you to tell us about your experiences or speak as an expert in a field.

- You should be allowed to know about the interview questions in advance.
- If you are dissatisfied with your answer during the interview, you are welcome to do another take and rephrase it.
- Because we are a television show, the interview will be recorded on camera. We would like to be on location with plenty of time for preparations.
- Once the interview has been edited, you will be provided with a print-out of what we intend to transmit. If you want to see your own participation in the program before transmission, we will do our best to accommodate that wish.
- If you have any opinions on how the interview was edited, we will take them into account.

## **GUIDELINES FOR CRITICIZED PARTIES**

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It is essential to our shows that the investigated party is given the opportunity to respond to the statements made in the piece. To clarify the conditions of interviews with criticized parties, Mission: Investigate follows a few guidelines.

- The criticized party shall be provided the opportunity to be informed before the interview about the criticism presented in the show.
- The criticized party should be allowed to know about the interview questions in advance.
- The interview will be filmed and not conducted over telephone or email.
- We often use several cameras and would like at least an hour prior to the interview in order to prepare the location for a good result. The recording should preferably be in a spacious location where interruptions from other activities can be avoided.
- We are happy to allow the criticized party to film or record sound of the interview.
- Mission: Investigate is a pre-recorded show and never offers live transmission. We reserve the right to edit the material and make a journalistic judgment of its content.
- Once the interview has been edited, the interviewee will be provided with a print-out of what we intend to transmit.
- Mission: Investigate wants to assure that the criticized party is allowed to present their best argument. If the criticized party has any opinions on how the interview was edited, we will take them into account.





# About Mission Investigate's Work Methods

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## **The editorial staff will always publish the investigative party's best argument**

Among other things, the demand for impartiality means that the person being investigated has to be allowed to respond to the criticism. The Telecommunications Review Board want to assure that this rule is followed. Mission: Investigate's pieces are often reported to this review board. Due to the editorial quality assurance system, it is very rare for these reports to lead to an adverse decision.

We work according to a "line by line" system which is at the base of our editorial process. This means that, before transmission, we check all the facts, line by line. We also identify all accusations against an individual or organization to ensure that the investigated entity has been allowed to respond to the criticism.

After every interview we also provide a transcript of the quotes we intend to publish. This gives the investigated party the opportunity to express their opinion on each quote.

It is not unusual for the interviewee to want to have film or audio recording of the interview – which we encourage.

## **The editorial staff provides ample opportunity for preparation**

Our aim is to always contact the investigated party as early as possible. This often happens weeks before transmission, giving them plenty of time to prepare. There can be exceptions, for instance if advance notice might lead to the investigated party trying to escape responsibility.

## **We surprise people for a response only in rare cases**

Our investigations have often been months in the making and it is paramount that we get answers to the questions that have arisen during that investigation. Mission: Investigate prefers to do interviews in a controlled

manner, where the interviewee can be well-prepared. But if the investigated party dodges our questions, there may be undeniable public interest in confronting that person for a comment. Doing this requires a decision by the legally responsible editor.

## **Hidden cameras are never used for entertainment purposes**

Hidden camera is a method that is rarely used. It only happens when we have reached the conclusion that the wrongdoing or irregularity cannot be documented in any other way. Hidden cameras are never used to enhance the entertainment value of the piece.

The decision to use hidden cameras is taken by Mission: Investigate's legally responsible editor.

## **The editorial staff strives to be fair and always maintain a critical view of the collected material**

From the very inception of a piece, Mission: Investigate works on finding what can be used in defense of the investigated party, or against the hypothesis that the editorial staff has proposed. For instance, can there be mitigating circumstances or alternate explanations? When we make the decision to start an investigation, we always appoint a "Devil's advocate" whose job it is to identify any weaknesses and promote positives for the investigated party. This form of critical thinking is at the heart of the entire editorial process at Mission: Investigate.



# START MEETING

Date:  
Participants:  
"Devil's advocate":

Title:  
Background:  
Previously published:

Hypotheses:  
Minimum level:  
Maximum level:  
Evidence requirement:  
The weak link:  
Mitigating circumstance:

Method:  
Accountability:

Ethical problems:

Security:

Dramatic composition:

Host segments:

Time plan:  
Research:  
Recording:  
Editing:  
Midpoint meeting:  
Line by line:  
Transmission:



# MIDPOINT MEETING

Date:

Participants:

"Devil's advocate":

The big picture (Anything missing?):

Hypothesis (Is it confirmed?):

The evidence (Does it hold up to LBL?):

Experts (Is it representative?)

Statistics (Correct and fair?)

Main case (Trustworthy?):

Ethics (Can weaknesses be identified?):

Selection (How can it be justified?):

Responsibility (Are we being fair?):

Music and voice over (The right tone?):



# MANUAL "LINE BY LINE"

"Line by line" (LBL) is performed on Monday the week before transmission. The editor collects the team and "devil's advocate" to LBL, and is responsible for making sure all changes are executed. The script and video must be available to the editor on Friday, the week before LBL at the latest. The script must be complete with all statements from participants, and translations. With issues that are more complex, requiring more time for analysis, research material shall be handed over to the editor earlier. For instance, this can be anything used to draw conclusions. In complex cases we can get the assistance of external experts.

The response must be completed when the LBL is performed.

All the available video material should be stripped of identifying information. This could be names and personal identification numbers on documents, license plates, people in the background, street numbers, and letter boxes in stairwells. In cases where the material is to be stripped of identifying information in "grading", the team will provide makeshift blurring.

Before LBL, the producer must ascertain that all documentation is available. Footnotes and links are to be used.

The editor and the "devil's advocate" must read the script and see the piece prior to LBL.

The following applies to articles published online: the producer is responsible for LBL of articles written by the online team. Facts and conclusions from the LBL'd script should be used in as much as possible.

## Step 1

### 1. Main questions

Follow up midpoint meeting discussions about the big picture.

Can anything be identified as weak?

Is the investigated party being treated fairly?

Do we have a basis for the main accusations?

Check the most complex evidence issues.

### 2. Fact checking

Fact checking is done undisturbed with all the relevant documentation available.

Can all the statements of fact be verified?

Be extra careful about statistics. Check the math!

Do all conclusions have a solid underpinning? Could there be call for making the phrasing more or less aggressive?

Facts presented by participants also need to be checked.

If an improper phrasing is found, check the entire document to make sure it is not repeated.

If statements cannot be verified, for instance if they come from anonymous sources, they need to be referred to the legally responsible editor.

### 3. Responses

Have the criticized parties been informed of the exact phrasing in the stated criticism?

Have the criticized parties been allowed to respond to all criticism?

Is the person responding to the criticism the right person to do so?

Have the answers been correctly presented?

Has the party been allowed to present their best arguments (if necessary, check the raw material)?



If the party has not responded to criticism, have we tried to present their argument in some other way?  
Can the reporter document their efforts to get the party to respond?  
Do we point out in the piece that we have attempted to contact them for an answer?

#### 4. Images, graphics and captions

Are the images correct?  
Is the spelling of names, and are the notated dates, times and places correct?  
Are statistics and other information correctly shown in the graphics?  
(If graphics are not finished, refer to ordering script.)

#### 5. Anonymization

Assure that people whose identities are to be obscured are not revealed by voice-over, image or audio. Be extra careful about on-screen documents. Have the video identity shielding and voice distortion for audio been approved by the legally responsible editor?

#### 6. Rights

Have all rights been secured?  
Have creators been credited?

#### 7. The big picture

Final discussion:  
Is the piece impartial? Is anything or anyone missing? Does anything feel out of place? Is the voice-over tonally appropriate or gratuitously indignant and accusatory? Does the music feel tonally appropriate?  
Identify any working method, image choice, phrasing or selection that may be doubtful.  
Could any fact or person that has been excluded affect the whole?  
Are there mitigating circumstances in favor of the accused?  
Be generous!  
Is there anything that does not feel right?  
What criticism might we face after transmission?

## Step 2

#### 8. Translations

The producer is responsible for scrutinizing the translation from SVT's subtitle department.

#### 9. Next-week promo

The show editor is in charge of making sure that the legally responsible editor gets to see the promo to approve it.

#### 10. Final run through

The piece editor makes a list of anything that cannot be performed directly during LBL, and is responsible for it being done later. A copy of the list is sent to the show editor.

#### 11. Final check

The editor reports to the show editor who ascertains that all changes have been made. The program editor is made aware of graphics that need to be checked.



# EVALUATION

Participants:

Planning:

Research:

Recording:

Editing:

Cooperation reporter and photographer:

Cooperation editor:

Cooperation show editor and host:

Cooperation tech, graphics and online:

Results:

Compare to initial meeting:

Impact:

Follow up:

Lessons learned:





