

# Amendments to the 2007 KBP Broadcast Code of the Philippines

Introduction by Rosa Maria T. Feliciano

## Introduction

The documents presented here are amendments to Article 6 (*Crime and Crisis Situations*), Article 3 (*Coverage Involving Children*), Article 11 (*Children's Program and Welfare*) and Article 17 (*Quiz Shows, Contests, Public Participation Programs, and Promotions*) of the Broadcast Code of the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP or Philippine Association of Broadcasters).

The general membership of the KBP formally approved the Broadcast Code of the Philippines during its top-level management conference on November 2007. It has since then become the 'bible' of the industry that guided broadcast practitioners in the practice of their profession. The Code was also considered an expression of KBP's commitment to strengthen its self-regulatory function.

Through the years, several incidents have necessitated the amendments of several articles in the Code. Notable are changes in the articles presented below.

The first set of amendments on Article 6 was a result of the unfortunate Rizal Park hostage taking on August 23, 2010, which involved a suspended police officer and several Chinese tourists, eight of whom were killed. The hostage taker himself was gunned down by police authorities. The event

brought to fore the role of the broadcast media and questioned their function in handling and covering crises like hostage taking. Thus, the KBP took it upon itself to initiate more comprehensive guidelines in the coverage of crime and crisis situations by broadcast journalists. After a series of consultations among its members (that included broadcast journalists and news and public affairs executives), KBP, led by its Board of Trustees and the KBP Standards Authority Board members, made vital amendments to the Code.

The changes made on Articles 3, 11, and 17 were initiated by KBP as a result of the Janjan macho dance controversy in Willie Revillame's daily program, *Willing Willie*, aired on TV5 on March 12, 2011. What started as a viral video showing a crying six-year-old boy gyrating to adult sexy music and perceived to have been made fun of by program host Revillame and the studio audience created massive protests among the viewing public and brought the incident to national attention. This became the headline news for several weeks. The passionate and intense reaction from the public forced TV5 management to "suspend" Revillame and reformat the program. The amendments on the coverage of children also came from the practitioners themselves, media owners and stakeholders, especially children advocates. Again, KBP felt the need to outline more definitive guidelines on how to handle the coverage of children by the broadcast media.

A KBP general membership meeting on October 20, 2010 approved the amendments on Article 6 of the KBP Broadcast Code. On the other hand, the general membership approved the amendments on Articles 3, 11, and 17 on June 15, 2011. These amendments have been circularized among KBP members throughout the country and have been in effect since then until the present.

**APPROVED AMENDMENTS TO  
ARTICLE 6, CRIME AND CRISIS SITUATIONS  
KBP BROADCAST CODE  
2010**

**Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP)**

(Revised and approved provisions in *italics*)

*Article 6. Crime and Crisis Situations*

- Sec. 1. The coverage of crimes in progress or crisis situations, such as hostage-taking or kidnapping, shall consider the safety and security of human lives above the right of the public to information. If it is necessary in avoiding injury or loss of life, the station should consider delaying its airing.*
- Sec. 2. The coverage of crime and crisis situations shall not provide vital information, or offer comfort or support to the perpetrator. Due to the danger posed to human life in such situations, it shall be assumed that the perpetrator has access to the broadcast of the station.*
- Sec. 3. While the incident is going on, the station shall desist from showing or reporting the strategies, plans, and tactics employed by the authorities to resolve the situation—including the positioning of forces, deployment of machine and equipment, or any other information that might jeopardize their operations or put lives in danger.*
- Sec. 4. The station or any of its personnel shall not communicate by any means, whether on-air or off-air, with the perpetrator or victim without coordinating with the officer in charge of the situation. If the perpetrator or the victim initiates communication with the station or the coverage crew, the officer-in-charge shall be immediately notified.*
- Sec. 5. Anchors, reporters, or other station personnel shall not act as negotiators or interfere in any way in negotiations conducted by the authorities. If asked to assist in the negotiations, they shall first notify station management and carefully weigh how their participation will affect their journalistic balance before getting involved.*

- Sec. 6. *The station and its personnel are expected to comply with restrictions imposed by the authorities in the scene of the incident, such as space assignments for media; police perimeter lines; the use of television lights; the deployment of coverage vans, helicopters, and other vehicles; and the operation of transmitting and communication equipment.*
- Sec. 7. *The legal injunction to preserve evidence in a crime scene should always be kept in mind. When the incident is resolved, the coverage crew shall follow the lead of the authorities in the preservation of evidence, taking care not to move, alter, or destroy anything that might be used as evidence.*
- Sec. 8. *The station should always be aware of the following provision in their legislative franchise: "The President of the Philippines, in times of rebellion, public peril, calamity, emergency, disaster, or disturbance of peace and order may temporarily take over and operate the stations of the grantee, temporarily suspend the operation of any station in the interest of public safety, security, and public welfare, or to authorize the temporary use and operation thereof by any department of the government upon due compensation to the grantee for the use of the said stations during the period when they shall be so operated."*
- Sec. 9. *When interviewing family members and relatives, friends, or associates of the perpetrator, care shall be taken to avoid provoking the perpetrator, interfering with the negotiations, or hindering the peaceful resolution of the situation.*
- Sec. 10. *The tone and demeanor of the coverage should not aggravate the situation. Anchors and reporters must always keep in mind that lives are in danger and could be placed at greater risk by the way they report.*
- Sec. 11. *A coverage should avoid inflicting undue shock or [and] pain to families and loved ones of victims of crimes, crisis situations, or of disasters, accidents, and other tragedies. (S)*
- Sec. 12. *Unless there is justification for doing so, the identity of victims of crimes or crisis situations in progress or the names of fatalities shall not be announced until their next of kin have been notified, the situation resolved or their names have been released by the authorities. (S)*

*Sec. 13. Images that are gruesome, revolting, shocking, obscene, scandalous, or extremely disturbing or offensive, shall not be shown or described in graphic detail. When such images suddenly occur during a coverage, the station shall cut them off the air.*

*Sec. 14. Persons who are taken into custody by authorities as victims or for allegedly committing private crimes (such as indecency or lasciviousness), shall not be identified, directly or indirectly -- unless a formal complaint has already been filed against them. They shall not be subjected to undue shame and humiliation, such as showing them in indecent or vulgar acts and poses. (S)*

*Sec. 15. Stations are encouraged to adopt standard operating procedures (SOP's) consistent with this Code to govern the conduct of their news personnel during the coverage of crime and crisis situations. (A).*

**Attachment to KBP Memo Circular 011-047  
Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP)  
2011**

(Revised and approved provision in *italics*)

*Article 3. COVERAGE INVOLVING CHILDREN*

*Sec. 1. The child's dignity must be respected at all times. The child should not be demeaned or his/her innocence be exploited. (G)\*\* (taken from the DOJ guidelines )*

*Sec. 2. The personal circumstance of the child that will tend to sensationalize his/her life must be avoided. (G) (taken from the DOJ guidelines )*

*Sec. 3. There should be a conscious effort to avoid sensationalizing, stereotyping, prejudging or exploiting children with disabilities or children belonging to minority or indigenous groups. (G) (taken from the DOJ guidelines and the Convention on the Rights of Children )*

*Sec. 4. The right to privacy of children must always be respected. Since undue publicity or wrong labeling can cause harm to them, children who are*

victims of abuse or in conflict with the law shall not be identified, directly or indirectly. Any information that might cause them to be identified shall not be aired. (G)

- Sec. 5. Surprise and unplanned (“ambush”) interviews of children are prohibited. (S)
- Sec. 6. Child victims, child suspects, children accused of a crime, children arrested or detained on suspicion of wrong-doing, and children that are undergoing trial shall be protected from further suffering emotional distress or trauma; they shall be interviewed only upon the consent of their parent or legal guardian, unless the parent or guardian is the accused. The interview shall be conducted only with the authority and supervision of qualified lawyers, psychologists, or social workers responsible for their welfare. (S)
- Sec. 7. Children should not be required, coerced or bribed to recall and narrate traumatic experiences, demonstrate horrific acts, or describe them in graphic details. (S)
- Sec. 8. Programs and materials involving children must comply with all pertinent laws, rules and regulations.(G)

*Article 11. CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS AND WELFARE*

- Sec.1. The airing of programs that would help children to develop to their full physical, mental, and social potential *as well as attain psychological, emotional and spiritual maturity* shall be encouraged.
- Sec. 2. At least fifteen percent (15%) of a TV station’s daily airtime should be devoted to programs suitable for viewing by children.( S )
- Sec.3. Children’s programs shall contribute to the sound and balanced development of children.
- Sec.4. Children’s programs shall not foster violence as a desirable way or a means of resolving conflicts and problems. ( S )

- Sec.5. Children's programs shall not depict inappropriate sexual subjects or violent actions. ( S )
- Sec.6. Children's programs should promote values that would help children to become responsible citizens. Such values include respect for authority and law and order, good manners, love of *God and* country, a sense of duty, and the proper concept of courage.(A)
- Sec.7. Children's programs should complement what children learn from school.
- Sec.8. Children's programs should encourage children in the art of correct speech and pronunciation. Speech and expressions which may hinder the language development of children shall be avoided. Slang and incorrect pronunciation shall be discouraged.( A )
- Sec.9. Children's programs shall not encourage children to purchase a product specifically for the purpose of keeping the program on the air. ( S )
- Sec.10. Advertisements of products or services or movie trailers which are not suitable for children or which might cause them physical, mental, psychological or moral harm shall not be aired in or adjacent to children's programs.(G)
- Sec.11. Children should not be made to perform acts, use language, or put on attire that are vulgar, obscene, indecent or inappropriate for children. (G)*
- Sec. 12. Children should not be made to engage in hazardous activities or behavior. (G)*
- Sec. 13. The possibility that children might be among the audience should always be considered. Materials that might be physically, mentally, psychologically, or morally harmful to children should not be aired during times when they are likely to be watching or listening. ( S )
- Sec. 14. No material that might be physically, mentally, psychologically, or morally harmful to children shall be aired immediately before, during or immediately after a children's program. (G)

Sec.15. Trailers of movies classified as “R” (Restricted) by the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) shall be aired only between nine o’clock in the evening (9:00 p.m.) and five o’clock in the morning (5:00 a.m.). ( S )

*Article 17. QUIZ SHOWS, CONTESTS, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS AND PROMOTIONS*

Sec.1. Contests and promotions shall be conducted with fairness and shall comply with all pertinent government laws, rules and regulations and the provisions of this Code. Contests and promotions shall not unduly exploit the audience or participants.(S)

Sec. 2. All contest details including rules, eligibility requirements, opening and termination dates shall be completely and clearly announced at least three (3) days before the contest. The winners’ names shall be announced and the prizes awarded as soon as possible after the contest. (S)

Sec. 3. Public or audience participation programs shall not ridicule, diminish or demean the dignity of an individual participating in such programs. (G)

Sec. 4. Performers in programs shall always observe decency and proper decorum. (S)

*Sec. 5. Programs in general should avoid sensationalizing, stereotyping, prejudging or exploiting children with disabilities or children belonging to minority or indigenous groups. (G)*

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