

## **WKCC PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT POLICY**

All public service announcements (PSAs) must be submitted in writing or e-mail to WKCC. There are two ways to do this:

E-mail: [wkcc@kcc.edu](mailto:wkcc@kcc.edu) or Fax: 815-802-8101. Please note that e-mail is preferred.

PSA's will not be accepted over the phone or in person.

All PSAs aired on 91.1 WKCC must meet federal and local rules and regulations. PSAs that do not meet these guidelines and standards will not be aired on WKCC.

Federal rules and regulations are strict in nature and violations carry heavy fines. The FCC has recently tightened the rules further and has been issuing fines in the tens of thousands of dollars to stations that are not compliant.

Local policies regarding PSA content and language are designed to promote consistency of sound. Consistency of sound is a critical component of WKCC's overall on air presentation. It is important to remember that we are a non-commercial broadcast outlet and we must always take steps to maintain a non-commercial sound. WKCC's consistency of sound rules are as important to our operation as FCC guidelines. These local guidelines are strict; and while they carry no fines, compliance is required.

If your organization requires a set schedule for a PSA you may purchase a Paid PSA at a cost of \$15 per spot aired. This will guarantee an on-air schedule, limited only by the current underwriting credit announcement schedule. Paid PSAs may not be pre-recorded and are "live read" by announcers at the time contracted for. All other PSAs are aired at "announcer's discretion" which means announcers select PSAs based on the program and other on-air material occurring at the time. More information on Paid PSAs may be obtained from the WKCC General Manager.

PSA submissions must be made at least 2 weeks before the event is scheduled to take place. They may be submitted by mail, Fax, or email.

Please note: WKCC does not air PSAs for silent auctions, yard sales, religiously sponsored activities, political activities, membership-only events, car washes, or lost animals.

### **FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION AND LOCAL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

The FCC has installed stricter rules and regulations for non-commercial radio language and content than for our commercial counterparts. This has been true since the inception of public broadcasting.

#### **Who is eligible for PSAs on WKCC**

Only bona fide non-profits are allowed to air PSAs on WKCC. Additionally, even if a non-profit is eligible for PSA service from WKCC, it cannot be a solicitation for funds, a solicitation for volunteers to solicit funds, or for promoting a "members only" event. WKCC does not mention event sponsors within the body of any PSA. At no time will a PSA be accepted from any for-profit organization.

The FCC strictly forbids announcers on public stations from endorsements of any kind.

### **Pricing information**

You cannot mention prices or refer to discounts or sales of any kind. You may tell listeners where tickets are available for an event. Words such as "free," "sale," "discount," and other references to prices and values are absolutely not allowed. If an event is free you may say it's open to the public.

### **Value neutral descriptions**

You cannot qualify a product, service or event as something that may be more or better in some way than another event, service or product. The FCC disallows public broadcast outlets from comparative language in describing products, services, or events. Commercial broadcasters can say that something is the best, or number one, or one of kind, but we cannot. We can't even use language that will suggest that.

When describing something in value neutral terms you will be describing the actual event, product or service exactly as it is without embellishing language. Here's an example of what is allowable:

"The Such and Such organization will present their annual spring concert this Saturday at 6 PM, and will feature the music of Grammy winning artist, So and So. Lawn chairs, coolers and blankets will keep you comfortable under the night sky. Information at 555-1234."

Here's an example of the same one that is not allowable:

"The Such and Such organization, one of the leading organizations of it's kind, will present their fantastic annual spring concert this Saturday at 6 PM, featuring the country's favorite artist, Grammy winning So and So. Lawn chairs, coolers and blankets will keep you comfortable under the night sky. Information at 555-1234."

The underlined portions of this example are, without question, not compliant with rules regarding value neutral descriptions.

### **Promoting local organization fundraisers**

At no time will WKCC promote an organizations' fundraiser unless it can be promoted strictly as an event. A concert to raise money for a service organization can be promoted as a concert, with a brief statement in the body of the announcement that states who will benefit. An example is

"...Proceeds benefit Such and Such organization."

This is the only statement allowable in a PSA to acknowledge a beneficiary. Words such as "fundraiser" are not allowable. There are some fundraising activities that we simply cannot promote, no matter how worthy the cause because the language cannot be modified. Examples include silent auctions and yard sales.

WKCC does not permit mentions of an organizations event sponsors in PSAs.

## **Calls to Action**

Calls to Action are, perhaps, the most common offense made in PSAs. The FCC disallows calls to action on public broadcasting stations. A Call to Action is a statement or phrase that commands or invites someone to action. The best way to explain this is to give some examples.

Example 1) "Bring lawn chairs and blankets."

The word "bring" is a call to action, you are telling a listener to "bring" something with them. The compliant manner of stating this would be "Lawn chairs and blankets welcomed." You are not telling the listener to do something; you are merely stating that the events organizers will allow people to have these items with them at the event.

Example 2) "Come to tonight's presentation of Such and Such."

In this statement you are telling the listener to take action by coming to the event. The compliant version of this statement would be "The Such and Such organization will present Such and Such tonight." This simply says that the event is tonight and does not instruct a listener to be there.

Example 3) "Don't forget to get your tickets."

"Don't forget" and "get" are both instructions to the listener to take action, in this case, get tickets. To be compliant you would say "Tickets available by pre-order only." You can see that it is the same message, which is to get your tickets ahead of time, but the language falls within the parameters of what the FCC and WKCC does permit.

Example 4) For more information call 555-1234."

The word "call" is clearly an inducement for a listener to take action, in this case to pick up their phone and "call." The same message is communicated by changing the language to "Information at 555-1234."

In the past the phrase "We invite you..." was not allowable. It is still considered a gray area. In our situation, where local representatives are used for voicing their organizations PSA it is allowable, by local policy, as long as it is low key in nature.

## **Additional language/content guideline**

All PSAs must end with "Information at..." This creates a "consistency of sound", an important component of WKCC's overall sound. Do not qualify the word "information" with words like "further" or "more". A web site or email is also acceptable with or without a phone number, but may not include added language, either. Please review the following examples.

Acceptable PSA close: "Information at 555-1234 and/or info.org."

Unacceptable PSA close: "Further information on this event at 555-1234 or you can visit our new website at info.org."

## **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS EXAMPLES**

### **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

Start Date: September 22, 2007

End Date: October 4, 2007

**THE CARIBBEAN BRASS ENSEMBLE WILL PERFORM WORKS INCLUDING BEETHOVEN AND BACH ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER THE 4TH AT EIGHT P.M. AT LARSEN CENTER AT THE ONU CAMPUS. INFORMATION AT (815) 555-1111 OR ON THE WEB AT: WWW.ENSEMBLEWORKS.COM**

Timing: Approximately :15 seconds

---

**Examples of words and phrases WKCC cannot use in PSAs**

The following list includes some of the words and phrases that are either comparative, price related, or calls to action, and that are not allowable on WKCC. They are in no particular order. This list is also not a complete list of all words and phrases that are not acceptable. If there's ever any question about language and content please speak with a WKCC representative before you send the PSA.

- first ("...first annual..." is okay)
- best
- finest
- number one
- discount or discounted
- price
- specially priced
- free (unless it's in the name of an event)
- call us
- come and...
- visit us
- visit our...
- buy
- purchase
- don't miss
- don't forget
- better than
- more interesting
- your money
- get your...
- don't go
- hurry and get...
- fundraiser
- auction
- silent auction
- sale
- close out
- bring
- savings
- dig in

- stay for
- your only...
- flea market
- yard sale
- thrift sale
- white elephant sale
- fee
- low cost
- raffle
- most beautiful (or any other word preceded by "most")
- fantastic

Updated 9/09