

COMMUNITY ACCESS TELEVISION



EMPOWERING COMMUNITY VOICES AND VISIONS



Spectrum

Community Access Television  
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# Member's Handbook

**Selections from  
Rules of Operation  
Community Access Television**

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**To our members:**

This booklet is an alphabetical listing of the most pertinent rules that apply to most producers and their crews. It is not intended to replace the Rules of Operation that you were given at orientation.

Please keep this resource handy and refer to it often. It will answer many of your questions.

We welcome you to Community Access Television and will do everything that we can to help you bring your unique message to the Erie community on Spectrum Channel 1021.

*Community Access Television*  
*Empowering Community Voices and Visions*



**Talent**

Those people who appear in front of the camera as actors, announcers, or other talent do not have to be members of Community Access Television. However, if they wish to be involved in any technical aspect of the production, including editing and all other functions, they must be trained Access Users.

**Truck**

See “Mobile production van”

**Use of facilities and equipment**

(See also “Equipment reservations” and “Facilities reservations”)

If any facilities or equipment belonging to Community Access Television are used to produce a program, the program **must** appear on the public access channel. Facilities and equipment may not be employed for private use.

**Van**

See “Mobile production van”

**Video formats**

See “Tape formats”

**Underwriters**

See “Sponsors”

**Access User**

An Access User is a member of Community Access Television who has attended orientation and entry-level workshops or who has attended orientation and has demonstrated proficiency. In order to make use of CATV facilities and equipment, a member must have current dues paid.

**Advertising**

See “Commercial vs. noncommercial”

**Age**

Any member who is younger than eighteen years of age must attend orientation accompanied by a parent, guardian, teacher or principal. The adult must sign the membership application and all request forms. Youths under sixteen must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, teacher, or principal at all times. Youths between sixteen and eighteen may be accompanied by another adult member who agrees to accept responsibility.

**Attendance**

Members are expected to attend all classes for which they sign up. If we are notified in advance that you will not be able to attend, the registration fee may be applied to a later class. If we are not notified, the class fee is not refunded.

**Availability**

All scheduling of programs, facilities, and equipment is done on a first-come, first-served, non-discriminatory basis. Therefore, planning ahead is very important.

**Bulletin Board**

Citizens and nonprofit organizations, whether or not they are members of Community Access Television, may submit public service announcements and announcements for nonprofit community events. The number permitted to any one organization may be limited by the executive director. Announcements should be submitted two weeks in advance and run for one to two weeks.

**Censorship**

Programs are not censored or previewed for content. See “Obscene or indecent material.”

**Commercial vs. non-commercial**

Commercial advertising is strictly prohibited. This means any material designed to promote the sale of commercial products or services.

Nonprofit organizations may include “noncommercial solicitation,” which is solicitation designed to generate revenue or goods to be used in the nonprofit mission of the organization.

### **Controversial programming**

See “Obscene or indecent material.” There is also a separate controversial programming policy that is available upon request from the executive director.

### **Copyright and legal responsibility**

The producer is solely responsible for copyright liability and for obtaining copyright permission and indicates acceptance of that responsibility every time he/she signs the cablecast request form. The producer is also responsible for any content that may be considered slanderous or libelous or that invades the privacy of another individual or organization or that is deemed indecent or obscene by a court of law.

### **Countdown**

Each DVD presented for cablecast must contain ten seconds of black, a slate, and a countdown immediately preceding the program and begin within the first thirty seconds of the DVD.

### **Crews and crew members**

Everyone serving on a crew that uses CATV facilities or equipment must be trained and current Access Users. The producer is responsible for scheduling an adequate crew for his or her productions. A list of trained Access Users is made available to any current, trained Access User.

### **Damage**

Access Users will not be held responsible when production equipment breaks down due to age or natural causes. However, equipment replacement or repair necessitated by negligence or abuse will be the financial responsibility of the person who caused the problem. If that person cannot be identified, the Access User who requested use of the equipment or facility will be held responsible.

### **Deadlines**

Cablecast request: Must be made 7 days in advance

Equipment request: Seven days for field gear, but less time acceptable if staff has time to fulfill request. No last-minute, end-of-day requests granted

Facility request: Seven days for evenings, all other upon request if available. Requests for all off-hours use must be fourteen days in advance and

sponsible.

- No food or drink is permitted anyplace where there is production or editing equipment.
- Smoking and/or the use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs are strictly prohibited. Such use will result in immediate ejection from the premises and possible loss of access production/cablecast rights.
- All programs produced using CATV equipment ***must*** appear on the public access channel.
- Producers are responsible for all content of their programs.

### **Reservations**

See “Equipment reservations, checkout and return,” “Facilities reservations,” “Mobile production van”

### **Scheduling**

Scheduling of programming, equipment, and facilities is done in a computer database by staff only.

### **Sponsorship of imported programs**

See “Imported programs”

### **Sponsors or underwriters**

Mention of financial support by commercial sponsors is prohibited except for the following: At the beginning and/or end of the program, any or all of the following--the name, address, telephone number, website, depiction of the sponsor’s place of business, logo of the sponsor--may be displayed by a visual and/or audio announcement. The sponsorship agreement must be signed, and payment must be made prior to the cable-casting of the program on Channel 1021.

### **Standards**

All programs must meet minimum audio and video technical standards, which are defined as follows:

- Minimum video quality is defined as video luminance levels within the range of 90-100 I.R.E. and black levels of 7.5 I.R.E. Poor video quality is defined as any levels which drastically vary from the above standard.
- Minimum audio quality is defined as properly modulated audio levels without audible distortion. A continuous audio control track must be present on all recorded programs submitted for cable-casting.

"Obscene or indecent material" means any material in a program or any video or audio presentation that would be deemed indecent or obscene by local community standards and which is not protected speech according to the Constitution of the United States of America. Material that is deemed offensive but is protected speech will be cablecast during "safe harbor" hours as defined by the FCC of 10:00 p.m. through 6:00 a.m. Producers may voluntarily indicate on the cablecast request form that some material in their program may be offensive to children and some adults and may be aired during safe harbor hours. If producers do not voluntarily offer that the program may be offensive, and if offensive material comes to the attention of the executive director, the ED may move the program to safe harbor hours after notifying the producer. A text disclaimer is available on DVD and must be at the beginning and end of the program.

### **Orientation**

Attendance at a regularly scheduled orientation session is a prerequisite for attending classes or having access to CATV equipment or facilities.

### **Programs submitted for cablecast**

Programs presented for cablecast must currently be on DVD and contain ten seconds of black , a slate, and a countdown immediately preceding the program. There should be no extraneous video or audio material on the DVD. Only one program per DVD is permitted. All DVD's must be picked up within 30 days of notification or the DVD will be recycled. CATV is not responsible for loss of or damage to submitted DVD's.

### **Proficiency**

All Access Users must either complete training at the appropriate level or demonstrate proficiency before being granted access to facilities and equipment.

### **Responsibilities, general**

- The Access User requesting use of the access production facilities is responsible for the conduct, actions and behavior of the crew, as well as that of any talent, guests or observers, while involved in the production.
- Access Users are responsible for leaving all facilities and equipment in the same condition as they found them.
- Equipment replacement or repair necessitated by negligence or abuse will be the financial responsibility of the person who caused the problem. If that person cannot be identified, the Access User requesting production time and cable-casting rights will be held re-

subject to staff availability.

Truck request: Fourteen days, no exceptions. Subject to staff availability.

### **Disciplinary measures**

The executive director may reject access programming for cablecast or refuse to schedule programming or production time, in the event it can readily be determined that an Access User:

- falsified any forms or tampered with the scheduling of access programs;
- used any equipment or facilities without the permission of the executive director or appropriate staff;
- abused or neglected facilities or equipment, including attempted repairs;
- attempted illegal connections to Time Warner's system, attempted any rewiring of the studio connections, attached unauthorized accessories, etc.;
- continually appeared late for scheduled production training or for scheduled production time; or
- continually failed to abide by any rules or regulations contained herein.

### **Eligibility**

Only trained and current members may make use of any CATV facility or equipment or serve as crew on another member's program.

### **Equipment reservations, checkout and return**

Equipment may be checked out between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Reservations must be made in advance on the appropriate form. Reservations are made on a first-come, first-served basis. Equipment must be picked up and checked out at or near the time indicated on the reservation form. Members must double-check equipment before it is returned to be sure that all parts and manuals are included. Members are held financially responsible for all equipment reserved in their name.

### **Facilities reservations**

Requests to use the studio, editing booths, or dubbing station must be made on the appropriate form in advance. Reservations are made on a first-come, first-served basis. Failure to appear for a scheduled reservation within fifteen minutes of the scheduled time is considered a cancelled reservation. If the reservation is for any off-hours time such as evenings or weekends, staff is instructed to close the facility and leave if the member has not called or appeared and no other use of the facility is

planned.

### **First-come, first served, non-discriminatory**

All requests are processed on a first-come, first-served, non-discriminatory basis (as to age, race, creed, gender, religion, disability, or general content of the programming) and the executive director or other staff will advise the member in the event a request cannot be granted due to the filing of a prior request.

### **Format**

Programs submitted for cablecast must be on standard Video DVD's or brought in on MP4 digital file format. All DVD's submitted for cablecast must be clearly labeled with the following information:

- **the title of the program,**
- **the name of the producer,**
- **the running time of the program,**
- **the date of production, and**
- **the date the program is scheduled to air, if known.**

DVD's submitted without the above information may be returned to the producer for appropriate labeling without being cablecast. Members provide their own DVD's. DVD's are available for purchase if necessary.

### **Imported programs**

Programs produced elsewhere may be scheduled for cablecast on the public access channel provided they are noncommercial and meet all other rules. They must be sponsored by a current member who must complete a cablecast request form accepting responsibility for all content.

### **Labeling**

All DVD's submitted for cablecast must be clearly labeled with the following information:

- **the title of the program,**
- **the name of the producer,**
- **the running time of the program,**
- **the date of production, and**
- **the date the program is scheduled to air, if known.**

DVD's submitted without the above information may be returned to the producer for appropriate labeling without being cablecast. Members provide their own DVD's.

### **Legal responsibility and copyright**

The producer is solely responsible for copyright liability and for obtaining copyright permission and indicates acceptance of that responsibility every time he/she signs the cablecast request form. The producer is also

responsible for any content that may be considered slanderous or libelous or that invades the privacy of another individual or organization or that is deemed indecent or obscene by a court of law.

### **Limits on equipment checkouts**

No more than two camera kits at a time, per producer or per project. Four days maximum checkout including weekend. May not rebook for at least 24 hours.

### **Limits on number of playback hours**

Producers are limited to no more than four hours of actual program cablecast time in any fourteen-day period.

### **Locally produced**

A program is considered locally produced if produced by an Access User using the equipment or facilities provided by Community Access Television or his/her own equipment and presented for cablecast on CATV Channel 1021. Programs may be live or recorded in the CATV studio or in the local community area of Erie.

### **Lotteries**

Programming may not directly or indirectly present any lottery information. "Lottery" means any device, scheme, plan, promotion, contest or other program and/or presentation which involves directly or indirectly the elements of prize, chance and consideration or any such device, scheme, plan, promotion, contest or program and/or presentation which is, has been, or may be declared a lottery under applicable local, state or federal law.

### **Mobile production van**

Reservations for use of the mobile production van must be made at least two weeks in advance and have specific requirements which are listed on the appropriate form. Reservations are made on a first-come, first-served basis.

### **Non-staff, non-members**

Only those people involved in the production of a program will be allowed in the production area without the express consent of the executive director or staff on duty, and they must remain in the production area at all times. Non-staff persons in the production area are the responsibility of the Access User requesting use of the facility.

### **Obscene or indecent material**

Obscene material and material advocating extreme violence is prohibited.