

BWI Ethics Principles

Boating Writers International regards editorial integrity as a cornerstone of its mission. The following ethical principles should guide editors, writers and web content managers in making choices that will not only enhance editorial excellence for our various media, but heighten credibility in the eyes of our readers.

1. EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE. We believe editorial independence is the best way to achieve honesty and excellence in our work. To that end:

1.1 A publication's editor should have control over all editorial content, photos and front cover artwork.

1.2 BWI expressly condemns the practice of trading advertising for editorial content. We believe that this practice not only undermines a publication's credibility among its readers, but ultimately diminishes its value in the marketplace.

1.3 Insofar as possible, editorial and advertising functions should be kept separate to avoid the risk of editorial decisions being influenced by advertising revenues.

1.4 Editors should not submit any editorial piece to advertisers for prior approval or screening. This does not preclude checking facts or verifying quotes for accuracy.

1.5 Advertorial and sponsored pages must be clearly labeled as such on each page of the advertising section. Display advertising must be clearly differentiated from editorial to avoid confusion.

2. ACCURACY, FAIRNESS AND TRUTH. Editors and writers should always strive to be fair and truthful. To that end:

2.1 Writers and editors must never deliberately mislead readers, either by making dishonest or distorted statements or by omitting pertinent facts about a product or subject they are covering. However, editors may inform manufacturers of specific criticisms of boats or products prior to publication, and give that manufacturer a fair chance to respond before the article appears in print.

2.2 Any factual errors should be acknowledged immediately, and corrections should be featured as prominently as possible.

2.3 Information provided by any manufacturer must be identified as such.

This includes performance test data that has not been independently verified by the editor or writer.

2.4 Plagiarism is considered theft of another's work. Writers and editors should always attribute materials taken from other sources.

3. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST. Writers and editors should avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived, whenever possible. To that end:

3.1 Any potential conflict of interest, which might affect editorial content, must be disclosed prior to publication. Writers must notify editors, and the editor, in turn, must disclose this information to the readers.

3.2 Editors and writers should not accept substantial gifts, services or merchandise from organizations or individuals that may be affected by editorial content.

3.3 Editors and writers should not solicit products for personal use.

3.4 The acceptance of a product for editorial review does not carry an obligation to give that product favorable coverage. Any products provided by suppliers should be returned after the test is complete.

3.5 Any product loaned "on consignment" or for a "long-term test," should be identified as such in the article.

3.6 Publications should pay the travel expenses of their writers and editors. If this is not possible, such support should be disclosed. It should also be made clear to manufacturers that subsidized or free travel does not equal favorable coverage.

4. SUPPORTING AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS. We consider supporting and associate members to be an integral part of BWI, and therefore expect them to follow these guidelines. To that end:

4.1 Supporting and associate members should never provide any misleading information or untruthful facts about their clients and products.

4.2 Supporting and associate members should not request, or expect, editorial coverage in exchange for advertising dollars, product loans or subsidized travel.

4.3 Supporting and associate members should do their utmost to ensure that commitments for boat and product tests are met.