

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PUBLIC POLLS  
REVISED 2006

We, the member organizations of the National Council on Public Polls, hereby affirm our commitment to standards of disclosure designed to insure that consumers of survey results that enter the public domain have an adequate basis for judging the reliability and validity of the results reported.

It shall not be the purpose of this Code to pass judgment on the merits of methods employed in specific surveys. Rather, it shall be our sole purpose to insure that pertinent information is disclosed concerning methods that were used so that consumers of surveys may assess studies for themselves.

Any survey organization, upon providing evidence to the Council of its compliance with this Code, shall be permitted to state that it "complies with the Principles of Disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls."

**PRINCIPLES OF DISCLOSURE**

**Level 1 Disclosure:** All reports of survey findings issued for public release by a member organization will include the following information:

- Sponsorship of the survey
- Fieldwork provider (if applicable)
- Dates of interviewing
- Sampling method employed (for example, random-digit dialed telephone sample, list-based telephone sample, area probability sample, probability mail sample, other probability sample, opt-in internet panel, non-probability convenience sample, use of any oversampling)
- Population that was sampled (for example, general population; registered voters; likely voters; or any specific population group defined by gender, race, age, occupation or any other characteristic)
- Size of the sample that serves as the primary basis of the survey report
- Size and description of the subsample, if the survey report relies primarily on less than the total sample
- Margin of sampling error (if a probability sample)
- Survey mode (for example, telephone/interviewer, telephone/automated, mail, internet, fax, e-mail)
- Complete wording and ordering of questions mentioned in or upon which the release is based
- Percentage results of all questions reported

Member organizations reporting results will endeavor to have print and broadcast media include the above items in their news stories.

Member organizations conducting privately commissioned surveys should make clear to their clients that the client has the right to maintain the confidentiality of survey findings. However, in the event the results of a privately commissioned poll are made public by the survey organization the above items should be disclosed.

In the event the results of a privately commissioned poll are made public by the client, the survey organization (a) shall make the information outlined above available to the public upon request and (b) shall have the responsibility to release the information above and other pertinent information necessary to put the client's release into the proper context if such a release has misrepresented the survey's findings.

**Level 2 Disclosure:** In response to any specific written request for additional items pertaining to any survey findings a member organization has released publicly, the member organization will additionally release any of the following:

- Estimated coverage of target population
- Respondent selection procedure (for example, within household), if any
- Maximum number of attempts to reach respondent
- Exact wording of introduction (any words preceding the first question)
- Complete wording of questions (per Level I disclosure) in any foreign languages in which the survey was conducted
- Weighted and unweighted size of any subgroup cited in the report
- Minimum number of completed questions to qualify a completed interview
- Whether interviewers were paid or unpaid (if interview survey mode)
- Details of any incentives or compensation provided for respondent participation
- Description of weighting procedures (if any) used to generalize data to the full population
- Sample dispositions adequate to compute contact, cooperation and response rates

**Level 3 Disclosure:** Member organizations are strongly encouraged to:

- Release raw datasets (ASCII, SPSS, CSV format) for any publicly released survey results (with telephone numbers or other identifying personal information removed)
- Post complete wording, ordering and percentage results of all publicly released survey questions to a publicly available web site for a minimum of two weeks
- Publicly note their compliance with these Principles of Disclosure

### **Review Procedure**

It is reasonable to require disclosure of pertinent information regarding methods when questions are raised about survey results or how a survey has been conducted. The purpose of such disclosure will be to insure that adequate information is available, not to evaluate the specific techniques that were employed.

Accordingly, the procedures outlined below will be used when question is raised:

- a. Whether a member organization has complied with the Principles of Disclosure; or,

b. Regarding the methods employed in a publicly released survey for which the complaining party has not been able to obtain the desired information directly.

These procedures are designed to insure due process:

1. The President will make available a copy of the complaint to the organization involved, including the identity of the individual or organization bringing the complaint.
2. The Committee on Disclosure will consider the matter and determine whether fuller disclosure is warranted.
3. Upon a vote of two-thirds of a quorum of the Committee, the matter will be pursued as described below.
  - a. The Committee on Disclosure will determine (by two-thirds vote of a quorum) within one month which aspects of methodology should be disclosed, including, but not limited to, any or all of the first- or second-tier disclosure items listed above.
  - b. Within one week of such vote the Chairman of the Committee will notify the organization of the requested disclosure.
  - c. The organization shall have two weeks to make the requested information available to the Committee on Disclosure without prejudice, or to otherwise respond.
  - d. After the two-week response period has passed, the Chairman will report to the President of the Council the question raised initially, the Committee on Disclosure's request for information, the organization's reply (or lack thereof), and the Committee on Disclosure's recommended action. Such action can include issuance of a public statement or, in cases in which the organization is a Council member, probation or expulsion from the Council.
  - e. The full Council shall review this information and, by majority vote, accept, reject or revise the Committee on Disclosure's recommendation for action. A complete record of the review process shall be kept and made available to the public upon request.

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