

Broadcasting & Studio Use Guidelines and Policies



Having a show on WOOL is a privilege with responsibilities. We're the largest publicly held radio station in Vermont and New Hampshire, possibly in the whole Northeast. We're a noncommercial community station but we operate on a full-power, commercial scale. We're fun and approachable but we're not a little radio club, or a playground where anything goes.

WOOL-FM broadcasts under a federal license that can be revoked. Short of revocation, the Federal Communications Commission can issue large fines. There are also station policies; violating them can result in the loss of your broadcasting privilege. In your Program Host Contract with WOOL, you agree that you are responsible for any fines and penalties issued due to your actions or negligence.

GENERAL

Presence & Absence

Part of the responsibility that accompanies the privilege of having a show is doing your program each week. If you can't do your show some week for any reason, it's your responsibility to let the Board know right away and to try to get another trained host in good standing to substitute. You must report the upcoming absence as soon as you know about it, and must give a reasonable and timely effort to secure a substitute. The easiest way to both report your upcoming absence and look for a substitute is to post to the WOOLhosts email list. Substitutes can choose their own content, or simply be there while automation runs.

Permission for a hiatus or other long interruption of your show is required from the Programming Coordinator or the Board, or you'll forfeit your place on the schedule. If you miss three shows in a row without permission from the Programming Coordinator or the Board (even if you secure substitutes) you'll forfeit your place on the schedule.

By federal law, broadcasting stations are required to maintain posted business hours. All hosts are considered staff when on the premises, and WOOL's posted business hours coincide with the live programming schedule. This is why it's important to try to find a substitute. The sign-in sheet is a record of our staffing compliance; be sure to sign in and out every time.

Illegal Substances/Alcohol/Tobacco

The use of alcohol and/or illegal substances is prohibited on station property; smoking is prohibited within the building. Notwithstanding the previous sentence, alcohol may be present at special events if sanctioned by the Board. Any member found to be broadcasting while under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal substances or smoking within the building will be subject to disciplinary action.

Facility Care and Respect for Fellow Hosts

Have respect and be responsible. Any trash or recycling you generate goes home with you. Put things back where they belong. Reset any equipment you've used. If something is broken or missing, report it to the WOOLhosts email list and write it up in the Host Comments book. If you turned anything on, turn it back off. If you've opened windows, close them. Straighten things up, even if you didn't mess them up. Vacuum the floor if needed. Etc.

FCC Agent Visits

The Communications Act gives the FCC the authority to immediately inspect any broadcasting station at any time of any day. Failure to allow inspection can result in the loss of our broadcast license and maximum fines. A late-night or weekend show isn't a guarantee that FCC field inspectors won't visit. Answer any questions truthfully and non-evasively; if you don't know the answer to a question, the correct response is "I don't know." However, it's essential that you know how to perform a test of the Emergency Alert System, and that you know where the Public File is. If you can't, and if you don't, fines will be issued by the FCC; these fines will be your responsibility per your Host Contract.

Public Visits and the Public File

Broadcasters are licensed to use the public airwaves in the public interest, and their physical facilities must also be reasonably available for the public to visit. Unless there's a legitimate safety concern, you must allow members of the public — on business or simply curious — into the studio. Within reason, you may limit their activities and the duration of their visit.

We're required to maintain a Public File that contains a variety of forms and information. Any person may request to see this Public File. Denying access to the Public File is a violation of Federal law. You must know where the Public File is located, and must allow access to it. Additionally, if an FCC field agent comes to inspect, you'll be asked for the Public File; and you'll be responsible for the resulting fine if you don't provide this access, per your Host Contract with the station.

BROADCAST CONTENT

On-Air Conduct

All members of WOOL broadcasting on-air are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Please refer to the FCC booklet *The Public And Broadcasting*, and also familiarize yourself with all policies of WOOL and Great Falls Community Broadcasting Company.

Though many styles of radio broadcasting — including many that are inflammatory and otherwise provocative — are successful, WOOL expects a general tone of courtesy among our hosts. This courtesy should be extended to both our members and to our listening audience.

Personal Gain

You can't accept money or gifts in exchange for airing any programming, and you can't use WOOL's broadcast for any direct or indirect personal gain. Promotion for personal gain happens when you air content or make statements that promote any product, service, event, or other thing that you stand to benefit from, or otherwise have a personal stake in — a business, band, event, goods or services, etc.

Noncommercial

We're a noncommercial station. It's OK to express your opinions about things within the limits of the law and WOOL policies, but you can't promote for-profit ventures (retail, restaurants, service providers, etc). Be judicious and use common sense. If you're involved in a remote broadcast from a commercial venue, you can mention the place where the broadcast is originating but you can't promote the venue or its products or services.

The exception (but don't go overboard) is in the case of registered nonprofits, and public events that educate and entertain such as:

- Arts and entertainment events
- Public-sponsored events and meetings
- Workshops and seminars
- Lessons and classes

Obscenity/Indecency

Broadcasting obscene or indecent material is prohibited by federal statute. The maximum penalty is a \$325,000 fine and the revocation of our broadcasting license. A condensed and succinct guide to FCC restrictions is contained in the booklet *The Public And Broadcasting*. You must familiarize yourself with these laws and regulations to obtain and maintain certification to broadcast on WOOL. There are no exceptions. All Program Hosts are required to sign an agreement that they will abide by FCC regulations and WOOL policies.

On-Air Telephone Conversations

On-air telephone conversations are permitted as long as they don't include any inappropriate or illegal material. Before recording or broadcasting any telephone conversation, you must clearly notify the other party and receive their permission to record and/or broadcast the conversation. WOOL has a broadcast delay with a "Dump" button; the delay must be engaged and fully ramped prior to any call being put on air. Training is available on how to use the broadcast delay. All inappropriate language is your full and sole responsibility, and any policy breaches may result in disciplinary action.

Live Announcement Language

You're encouraged to be well-informed about your choice of words as they relate to live announcements — if you have any questions, consult the publication *The Public And Broadcasting*, and if questions remain, post to the WOOLhosts email list. If an immediate decision is required and you have any doubts, don't use the language. Err on the side of caution.

Free Speech Policy

Great Falls Community Broadcasting Company and WOOL support the provisions of the First Amendment protecting free speech, as such speech is limited by federal, state, and local law and further governed by the FCC license under which we operate. A knowledge of these laws and codes is the responsibility of each host. We will enforce Article X of our bylaws, which states: It shall be the policy of this corporation not to discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, creed, or national origin.

In addition to these provisions, we require reasonable courtesy to all members of our community in the creation of programming to be broadcast on WOOL. We support and encourage all flavors of diversity, but won't tolerate demeaning, belittling, dehumanizing, objectifying, hateful, or similar speech about any race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, creed, national origin, disability, class, or other characteristics. Discussing difficult truths, having needful dialogs, and expressing unpopular opinions are encouraged; but disrespect goes against the spirit of our mission to support and uplift our community, not tear it down. If in doubt about something, don't say it.

IDs and PSAs

Each hour of programming airing on WOOL shall include the following:

- The FCC requires a LEGAL STATION ID as close to the top of each hour as possible. Our official ID is these words in this order: "WOOL-FM, 91.5, Bellows Falls."
- Additionally, CASUAL STATION IDs at least three times each hour. Casual IDs are conversational reminders such as "you're listening to Black Sheep Radio," or "this is W-O-O-L."
- A minimum of two public service announcements (PSAs). More is better. PSAs can be read anytime during the hour, together or separately. PSAs are an important part of fulfilling our community service mission, and is valuable content for listeners; don't say things along the lines of "I have to read these rotten PSAs."

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA)

The FCC doesn't care about what we broadcast as long as it's within the limits of the Federal laws they enforce. However, our broadcast is also streamed over the internet, and there are laws about that. According to The Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998, in any three hour period:

- you can only play three songs from one album or CD, and only two of those can be played in a row;
- you can only play four songs by the same featured artist or from the same box set, and no more than three

- of those can be played in a row.
- Additionally, you can't publish playlists in advance.

These rules only apply to the web stream — but since the web stream is the same as the terrestrial broadcast, it affects what you can do during your show.

PROCEDURE

Headphone Use

VERY IMPORTANT! To ensure the quality of our broadcasts, headphones must be used every time you speak on the air. The station is not obliged to supply headphones.

Logging

Everyone must sign in and out on the Sign-In Log every time they come to the studio — hosts and guests alike, no exceptions. The Sign-In Log is a record of our compliance with the legally obligated staffing requirement. NOTE: All visitors are subject to all WOOL policies, and are the responsibility of the host who allows them access to the studio; the host accepts responsibility for any problems that may occur. ALSO NOTE: Regular cohosts and permanent guests must be certified host-members in good standing with all fees paid. No exceptions.

The Station Log is the property of the FCC; it's a legal document that must be completed in blue or black ink every time you go on the air. Falsification is a Federal offense; falsification includes not filling out the form, or not filling it out completely. All discrepancies and errors must be corrected, dated, and signed by the originator. Print your full name legibly; fill in the start and end of your broadcast in military time; and check the appropriate box indicating whether or not our transmitter is on the air. Use a new log sheet every day.

A completed Program Log must be filed for every program that plays music. All songs must be logged. These logs are a required part of our music licensing; they also provide a record that can be referred to in case of listener questions, comments, or complaints; and can be used as additional proof of staff-hours fulfillment. (Notations of PSAs read can be handy, but isn't required. All PSAs read should be individually signed and dated in any case.)

An Issues Log should be filled out for any issues programming of any length. All broadcast stations are required to include programming that meaningfully addresses significant issues of concern and importance to its community. PSAs don't fulfill this requirement. Issues segments can include programming of any length, as long as it addresses substantively and seriously any significant issue facing the community. You're requested to do at least one of these segments each month (more is better), fill out an Issues Log sheet for each segment, and leave the completed form on the administrator's desk.

The EAS Log should be filled out any time you trigger the Emergency Alert System.

EAS Tests

It's the responsibility of every host to know how to manually trigger the Emergency Alert System, and to accurately log any test performed. Training relating to EAS can be arranged, just ask. If an FCC field agent stops by for an inspection, they'll ask you to perform a test of the EAS system. Failure to be able to do so carries a base fine of \$8,000 from the FCC, for which you are responsible per your Host Contract.

EQUIPMENT

Broken/Defective Equipment

Any and all broken or defective equipment must be reported as soon as possible to the WOOLhosts email list

and noted in the Host Comments book at the station, along with the reporter's name and date. Failure to report malfunctions leads to problems for other hosts and could lead to further damage. Please always report malfunctions without fear that you'll be held responsible. Accidents happen. Equipment breaks. But without a prompt report of equipment malfunction or facility problems, quick repairs can't happen.

Equipment Care

Handle the equipment with care, and use common sense. Don't tamper with settings. Treat all buttons, dials and switches, and microphones with respect; be careful while handling station-owned CDs and records. It's your responsibility to report all equipment failures and malfunctions accurately and quickly.

Theft & Vandalism

Station-owned equipment, including CDs, should never leave the building without written approval from the Board. Borrowing any station materials or property will be considered theft. Theft is grounds for termination of your broadcast privilege. Never assume that something is "up for grabs."

Vandalism, unauthorized use, or intentional misuse of any property of WOOL will result in immediate disciplinary action, including but not limited to the immediate revocation of broadcasting privileges. Vandalism includes unreported accidental damage of equipment.

Computers

WOOL computers are for station activities only. Don't change the settings; don't install anything. No porn.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS MATERIAL.

Host Signature & Date

Parent/Guardian Signature & Date