

radioCount offers the following ethical and operational standards related to ratings bias and ratings distortion. Adherence to these guidelines is necessary to maintain the basic objectives of valid and reliable audience measurement.

### **Ratings Bias**

How is it defined? Any announcement, statement or activity that could alert or sensitize respondents or potential respondents that an audience measurement study is being conducted within their market area can be construed as ratings bias. The ratings biasing activities are not limited to on-air announcements. They could be in print, on the station website, within the social media, in a television ad, over the phone, via electronic or digital messaging (ie: IM, text, tweet) or in most any other media. The most common form of ratings bias occurs when a radio station informs listeners that an audience measurement study is being or will soon be conducted. It is radioCount' opinion that reminding of the need for participation in the research and/or the need to be honest when participating in the study are additional forms of ratings bias.

### **Ratings Distortion**

These are station activities that radioCount determines may influence survey respondents to report radio listening in excess of their actual radio usage. Ratings Distortion may also include attempting to contact or influence survey respondents by telephone or other means.

At the outset of each interview, radioCount probes for media affiliation. Employees of radio stations and their family members are not eligible to participate. Should any station employee discover a staff member or family member has participated in a radioCount survey, radioCount should be contacted immediately.

### **Ratings Bias & Ratings Distortion Violations**

When radioCount determines a station has engaged in activities with the potential to cause ratings bias and/or ratings distortion, several outcomes may result. Deliberate and/or repeated violations may result in the station's call letters and audience estimates being deleted in all research reports. Consequences in situations radioCount determines to be less severe may include any combination of the following: the violations being noted in the research reports, the station being flagged in all mediums used to analyze the research reports, a separate "official notice of violation" being delivered to all subscribers and the station's audience estimates being listed out of rank order (sometimes referred to as being listed "below the line").

radioCount maintains the option to use any available means to ensure that any and all persons are made aware of any station activity that has the potential to impact the validity, reliability or credibility of any of its audience estimate reports. radioCount, at its sole discretion, shall determine the appropriate action in each incident of violation.

#### **Grievance Procedure**

Grievances of ratings bias or ratings distortion should be set forth in writing and detail specifically the alleged violations. The grievance should include a recording (ie MP3), newspaper clipping, direct mail piece, printed copy of the questioned web page and/or a printed copy of the text, tweet or any other type of digital communication that is the subject of the grievance. The grievance can be delivered in either of two modes: addressed to radioCount Advisory Board, PO Box 838, Port Dover, ON N0A-1N0 or via email to [support@radioCount.ca](mailto:support@radioCount.ca)

#### **Investigation Process**

radioCount will investigate all claims of ratings bias and ratings distortion. Should radioCount determine, solely at its discretion, that a violation may have occurred, radioCount will have acted reasonably if it gives the allegedly offending station written notice of what could have caused bias or distortion, presents evidence to support such claims, and gives the station a reasonable opportunity (usually 24 hours) to correct the situation.

In no event shall radioCount be liable for incidental or consequential damages or be subject to injunctive relief in the event estimates of a station's listening are deleted, noted, flagged or listed out of order due to ratings bias or ratings distortion.

#### **Play It Safe**

If you are uncertain as to whether your planned station activity may constitute ratings bias or ratings distortion, we would encourage you to contact radioCount for a confidential review.

Please visit [radioCount.ca](http://radioCount.ca) for latest news and updates.