



## Operating Rules for users of Traverse Area Community Media

### General Information

#### **What is Traverse Area Community Media?**

Traverse Area Community Media (TACM) is a division of LIAA, a Section 501(c)3 nonprofit community service organization. TACM offers a range of services and facilities to individuals and nonprofit organizations throughout northwest lower Michigan. TACM is under contract with four municipalities to operate the region's public access television station (*CommunityTV Channel 189*), and provide public access television services to citizens and nonprofit organizations throughout our region. TACM operates *CommunityTV* as a Public Forum, promoting and celebrating local achievement, community education, civic engagement, local culture, and art appreciation, and individual expression.

#### **How does TACM operate?**

TACM operations, facilities and cable channel programming are governed by policies developed with the help of community volunteers who serve on the TACM *Citizen's Advisory Committee*. The day-to-day and ongoing activities of TACM are carried out by a professional staff under the direction of LIAA's Executive Director. TACM operates under *Policies and Procedures* developed by the TACM staff with the assistance of the *Citizen's Advisory Committee* and approved by LIAA's Executive Director and Board of Directors. The *Policies and Procedures* guide TACM staff decisions to ensure that equipment and resources are available to the widest number of people in a fair and equitable manner.

#### **Who can use TACM?**

The resources of TACM are available to any current and qualified Media Center Member (as defined by the **Policies and Procedures**).

### Producer Responsibilities

#### **Commercial Gain:**

**You may not use TACM equipment or facilities for profit or personal gain.** The equipment and facilities are available for the express purpose of producing programming for TACM. At its discretion, TACM may require producers to provide a copy of video content generated using TACM equipment, regardless of the quality or content of that video. The exception to this is if you are contracted by TACM itself to provide video production or editing services.

#### **First Use:**

All media produced using TACM equipment, facilities, or staff support must air on CommunityTV before airing on other platforms (Facebook, YouTube, etc.). In the *Traverse Area Community Media Policies* document, this is referred to as "first use". "First Use" means the initial broadcast use.

#### **Back-up(s):**

**Producers are responsible for their own file back-ups.** All hard drives fail over time, and producers are encouraged to maintain redundant copies of files to prevent data loss. The TACM does not maintain redundant copies of any media.

**Consumables:**

Producers are responsible for supplying their own DVD discs, backup batteries, and other consumable materials often used in the video production process. TACM will maintain a small supply of these consumables on site for purchase by Producers, as desired.

**Address Correction:**

Periodically, TACM must get in touch with producers in case of questions about programs or updates on procedure issues or other matters. TACM must have correct address and phone information for producers. In order to use TACM services, TACM Members must inform TACM of any address or phone number changes.

**Conduct:**

TACM producers are responsible for their own conduct, as well as the conduct of any guests that come into the studio in connection with their production.

The Producer is responsible for any damage caused to the TACM studio and/or equipment by the Producer or his/her agents, employees, guests, or invitees, and shall pay for the repair or replacement of any damages caused to the TACM studio or equipment. This liability is independent of any liability of the group or organization that the certified producer may be representing.

TACM reserves the right to refuse the use of Public Access facilities and equipment to any person appearing under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or otherwise not under full control of their faculties.

**Paperwork:**

Member Producers must have a **Producer Update Form** on file with TACM before using any equipment or airtime. A producer submitting a program for playback on the channel must also submit an **Airtime Request Form** for each program.

**Misrepresentation During Production:**

TACM producers are responsible for any misrepresentation arising from their production activity. Misrepresentation by any individual or group as being in the employ of TACM will be considered a major violation of the policies.

**Program Content****Program Content:**

Producers are responsible for the total program content of programs they submit for playback on TACM. This includes obtaining all approvals, licenses, clearances, etc. for programs.

**Responsibility for Program Content:**

Producers are responsible for any misrepresentation, loss, liability, or damage arising from their programs. TACM, Charter Communications, their directors, officers, and staff shall be held harmless against any claims arising from a producer's program.

**Programs May Not:**

1. Contain any advertising material, including any material designed to promote the sale of commercial products or services, or material which identifies any product, service or trademark or brand name in a manner which is not reasonably related to the non-commercial use of such a product, service, trademark, or brand name of the product. Programs may not use the name of a business as the name of the program.

2. Contain direct solicitation or appeal for funds or other things of value for any and all purposes (except in the case of **TACM**).
3. Contain obscene, pornographic, indecent, libelous, or slanderous material, nor material attacking or defaming any individual.
4. Cablecast a lottery, or any advertisement of or information concerning a lottery.
5. Contain any content which would subject the producer to prosecution under any applicable local, state, or federal law for the production or presentation of obscene material, libel, slander, invasion of privacy, or copyright or trademark infringement. Neither **TACM** nor **LIAA** will attempt to make any determination as to the constitutional legality of any content submitted for cablecast.

### **Viewer Discretion Warning**

Producers are expected to alert **TACM** staff to programming that may be inappropriate for younger viewers, or offensive for adult viewers. Excessively violent material, offensive language, or sexually provocative content should have a warning disclaimer at the beginning. Producers should request that playback of their program be restricted to the hours between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. to preserve a "safe haven" for viewing by all audience members.

### **Local Sponsor Notice**

Programs submitted for cablecast, whether made with **TACM** equipment or not, will contain a tag at the end stating the name of the local producer, and the city or township of the producer's residence or place of business.

### **Bicycled Tape Introduction & Closing**

Each bicycled tape submitted for playback on **TACM** will contain a unique opening intro and a unique closing by the presenting producer (the producer who signs the airtime request form).

### **Program Scheduling and Cablecasting**

#### **Scheduling for Playback**

Producers request playback times for their programs by submitting a properly filled out *Airtime Request Form*, including the selection of one of the eight general content categories. Producers are invited to suggest up to four specific playback times within the appropriate category time blocks. **TACM** will use Producer suggestions as a guide in scheduling playback times. However, **TACM** will use its discretion in scheduling programs.

Playback times may be scheduled no less than two weeks and no more than two months in advance, *except in the case of programs considered time sensitive*, and only with **TACM's** approval.

Except in the case of "live" programs and other programs deemed timely (at **TACM's** discretion), completed programs must be presented at the time that the airtime request is made.

#### **Priorities for Programming**

When scheduling *individual programs* and *series programs*, **TACM** will give priority to programs produced within the viewing area. Bicycled programs and filler programs will be scheduled after all local programs have been scheduled. Once an *individual program* or a *series program* has been scheduled, **TACM** will try to preserve their scheduled times.

#### **Technical Quality**

Every program submitted for cablecasting on **TACM** must meet minimum technical standards.

#### **TACM Tag**

Every program submitted for cablecasting on **TACM** must be tagged with a proper end tag. This end tag must contain the Producer/submitters' name (may be abbreviated) and voting jurisdiction (township). (Ex: Joan Smith, Elmwood Township).

### **Time Slots**

Playback is normally scheduled for 5 minute, 10 minute, 30 minute or 60 minute time slots. Longer or shorter time slots may be available at the TACM's discretion. A program does not have to fill the time slot exactly.

### **Labeling**

Video tapes, DVDs, or electronic files submitted for playback must be clearly labeled with the Title of the program, Name and Phone Number of Producer, exact program length, and in-cue time.

### **Number of Submissions**

TACM is interested in broad public participation. Producers may submit up to five programs per week, and no more than one month in advance of the first planned airing.

### **Series Programming**

Producers should plan ahead to establish a *Series Program*. All *Series Programs* must exhibit a common theme, format and length. Scheduling requests for a *Series Program* should be made at least 4 weeks in advance of its first planned airing. At least 3 programs must be completed before the series is scheduled.

*Series Programs* shall be scheduled in *3 month blocks*. Every effort will be made to keep at least one showing of each *Series Program* in the same time slot throughout the 3 month scheduled block. Depending on the overall demand for airtime, *Series Programs* may be renewed by their producer(s) in 3-month intervals. However, there is no guarantee of renewal or retention of the time slot due to the potential for increasing demand for airtime. TACM may use a lottery or other non-discriminatory method of assigning series time slots if necessary.

### **Preemption**

TACM reserves the right to pre-empt any scheduled program in order to better serve the public interest. One example of what might better serve the public interest is the transmission of disaster or emergency information or instructions. Pre-empting a scheduled program for another first-run taped program does not better serve the public interest. Pre-empting a scheduled program for a "live" program that covers a one-time special event may be cause for preemption, but not automatically.

## **Training and Certification**

### **Required Training**

Any person who wishes to submit programming for playback on *UpNorth TV* must complete the Orientation Program. Producers who wish to use TACM equipment must be certified on TACM equipment they wish to use. Producer Orientation is offered on the TACM website ([here](#)).

### **Student Internships**

Unpaid *Internships* are offered to students and members of the community in the interest of education. *Interns* will receive school credit when applicable. On occasion, paid *Internships* may be offered to qualified *Interns*.

### **Procedure for Sign-up**

TACM offers many trainings and workshops throughout the year. There is no refund for missed sessions or dropping out of the sessions. People interested in attending any TACM orientation session or workshop can find sign-up forms online at [www.upnorthmedia.org/participate](http://www.upnorthmedia.org/participate).

### **Producer Training**

The TACM offers a basic *Producer Orientation* training to introduce trainees to the concepts and rules of public access television. Producers must complete the *orientation* before they are permitted to submit content for cablecasting. This

training is available [online at any time](#), or in person on a case-by-case basis. Call 231-929-4188 or e-mail TACM@liaa to schedule a Producer Orientation.

The *Video Camera Basics Training* will give producers an introduction to the equipment and some understanding of the fundamental concepts and techniques of video production. Producers must take this training to check out camera equipment.

The *Video Editing Basics Training* will give producers an introduction to the equipment and some understanding of the fundamental concepts and techniques of video production. Producers must take this training to check out camera equipment.

### **Advanced and Topical Training(s)**

From time to time, special workshops may be offered to enhance the producer's knowledge and skill of some aspect of video production or post-production. These courses will be offered at reasonable cost on a first-come first-served basis to all certified producers.

## **Equipment Usage**

### **Equipment Use for TACM Programming Only**

It is not the intent of TACM to compete with any commercial production or duplication business, or any other commercial business. Therefore, TACM equipment, studio facilities, airtime and other resources are to be used only for the purpose of producing programming for TACM.

### **Purpose of Equipment Usage Procedures**

The equipment usage procedures are designed to encourage the heaviest possible usage consistent with the fair and equitable accessibility to equipment by all Producers and consistent with proper care of the equipment. Remember that TACM equipment and facilities can be used only to produce programs for TACM, and all TACM equipment and facilities can be used only to move programming toward playback on TACM. Some procedures are designed to encourage local use and discussion of local issues.

### **General Procedures for Checkout**

Equipment may be checked out on a walk-in basis only during limited hours published by TACM and only if the equipment is available. TACM would prefer that Producers reserve needed equipment over the phone or by e-mail at least two days *in advance*, but not more than two months in advance. Procedures for checking out equipment are:

1. Request assistance from a TACM staff person.
2. Present your equipment request, either written or verbal, to a TACM staff person. Reservations are not official, nor recorded, until a TACM staff person enters it into the computer. You may request a printout or an email of your reservation for confirmation.
3. Be sure to keep your appointments. Your reservation means that equipment is not available for other producers—if you are not going to use your equipment, be sure to call us as soon as you know so that we may make the equipment available to others.

### **Procedures for Field Equipment Check out and Check in**

Plan to spend about 20 minutes checking equipment out and another 20 minutes checking equipment in. TACM staff people will check out all equipment by entering its number into the computer, and check in the equipment in the same way. This is to ensure accuracy. Producers may request a printout of the transactions for confirmation.

All video equipment approved for off-site use is available to qualified Producers on a first-come first-served basis and may be reserved in advance. The check-out time period for cameras, lighting, and sound equipment is in 24 hour increments. The checkout time period may consist of a maximum of three consecutive 24 hour periods. After the maximum checkout period, the equipment must be returned to **TACM**. There will be no handoffs of equipment.

#### **Editing Bays and Equipment**

Off-line editing equipment shall be available on a first-come first-served basis and may be reserved in advance. Editing sessions are available in up to 4 hour increments, or at the discretion of **TACM** staff to encourage the most efficient possible usage. Editing time may be given to walk-ins if the producer is more than 15 minutes late for a reserved session.

#### **Equipment Knowledge**

All **TACM** producers must be trained and certified on the equipment they are using. All **TACM** producers take full responsibility for any loss or damage to the equipment they have checked out or are using.

#### **Studio Usage**

A Producer who reserves the studio for a production, whether live or to tape, is responsible for finding certified crew people to work in the various crew positions. **TACM** staff members may be available for a fee.

#### **Changes to Procedures**

**TACM** reserves the right to make changes to Procedures at any time. Please notify staff if you encounter any lack of clarity in this document.