

On Air Station Policy

This policy outlines Black Country Radio's on air broadcast and links into the Ofcom Broadcast rules. This policy seeks to underpin Black Country Radio's Mission Statement:

"To develop Black Country Radio to its full potential as a vibrant Community Radio station, whose management and programming is based on community access and participation, and which reflects the special interests and needs of the Black Country community that the station is licensed to serve."

Our on air policy underpins the following, to ensure that all on air volunteers are protected:

- Black Country Radio provides a local, community-focused service that fulfils or exceeds its licence obligations
- Black Country Radio is consistent in its approach across all its programming so that it is in keeping with listeners' expectations in order to maximise our audience and ensure its commercial viability
- Black Country Radio complies with all Ofcom rules as defined by the Broadcasting Code
- Black Country Radio complies with all broadcast and associated legislation
- Black Country Radio complies with its licences in respect of music, news provision etc.
- Black Country Radio operates within the remit of its insurance policies

Any deviance from the station's policies that underpin our broadcast output may require you to provide editorial justification to the Head of Programming.

Shows

Programme Show Briefs

Each programme that broadcasts on the station is governed by a Show Brief, which outlines what the programme is, lists its regular features and authorises the personnel who may contribute to that particular programme. This is agreed mutually between the programme's presenter and the Head of Programming.

The purpose of the show brief is to ensure that programmes are delivered consistently to the listener and do not, over time, evolve to serve a purpose outside of what was originally intended.

It also provides useful guidance for presenters who may cover shows if the regular presenter is absent, to ensure that the show is delivered in a way that will be in-keeping with the expectations of the regular presenter's listeners.

Any significant deviation from the show brief must be cleared by the Head of Programming prior to broadcast.

Programme Name or Title

Each programme on the station has a name, as defined in the Show Brief. This should be the only name by which the programme is referred to on-air, on the station's website and on social media. If you wish to change the title of your show, prior permission must be sought from the Head of Programming. The name/title of programmes designated with a 'General' programme type on the Show Brief are fixed and cannot be changed.

Studio Responsibilities

Before Your Show

You should ensure that you are on station premises no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of your show and make the preceding presenter aware you have arrived. If you are running late, you must phone the studio to let the presenter know.

During the news at the end of their show, you should enter the studio and ensure that they have passed on any messages to you (e.g. messages from management, or ongoing technical issues encountered – these must also be reported to the Technical Department). You may take responsibility for the studio and relieve the preceding presenter as soon as the IRN news bulletin is being broadcast.

After Your Show

You are responsible for the studio's operation until two minutes after your show has finished, or until the next presenter has sat down behind the mixer and taken control. You must wait until the next presenter comes into the studio to handover the studio to them, passing on any urgent messages or useful information.

If the next presenter does not enter the studio, or if the next show is voicetracked, you must remain in the studio until the end of the IRN news bulletin and exit the news as normal (i.e. pressing the 'GO' button at the end of the IRN, pulling the IRN fader down). Then ensure ALL FOUR MYRIAD FADERS ARE UP and ALL OTHER FADERS ARE DOWN before leaving the studio. **Make sure the mixer is set correctly and you can hear audio playing on Myriad before you leave!** Never just leave and assume that the next presenter will come into the studio to take over.

On Air Content

Station Name

The station name should be referred to on-air as "Black Country Radio" only.

Any other variant, such as "102.5 Black Country Radio", "102.5FM Black Country Radio", "Black Country FM" etc. must not be used. Additionally, please never call the station "BCR". The term "BCR" should only ever be used when mentioning something on-air where we make use of these initials, such as the text number (which requires listeners to start their message with "BCR", or our Facebook or Twitter handle, "WeAreBCR").

Each time you talk on-air, you must mention the station name at least once – the most obvious time to do this is when you back-announce a song, for example: “*That’s Wannabe from the Spice Girls on Black Country Radio*”.

Strapline

The station has a strapline: “It’s All About You” (the ‘you’ refers to our audience). It is not essential that you say the strapline on-air (our jingles do it for us) but if you do, ensure you get it right.

Station Contacts

Regularly say the phone / text numbers and contact opportunities and our website address that listeners can use to contact the station.

There are many ways in which to get in touch with us – phone, text, email (via the website), Twitter, Facebook – but don’t just go through them all like a shopping list in one go. The best way of asking people to get in touch is via our website, which should be heavily promoted during all shows – www.blackcountryradio.co.uk.

Make sure you check any communications into the station from listeners during your show, and where appropriate give them a mention.

Station contact information is available in the main Handbook, on our website: blackcountryradio.co.uk/contact-us and is on the pinned post on the closed Facebook group.

Studio Emails

The studio emails come into Outlook on the Internet PC in the studio. Make sure you regularly check the studio e-mails – you may get urgent messages through from the management which require your immediate attention, plus the same inbox receives listeners’ e-mails and all text messages. Please note that the studio email address is not for public disclosure. Instead, you should encourage people contact the station via the station’s website.

Internal Station Policies

Station policy must never be mentioned on-air – the rules and regulations presenters have to adhere to are internal matters and strictly not for broadcast. In particular, presenters must never criticise station policy, management decisions, etc. on-air. If you have a comment to make about something the station is doing, always take it up with the management – never the listener.

Criticising the station on-air is considered a serious breach of the organisation’s Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action (via the **Problem Solving Procedure**).

Political Coverage

A presenter must never show direct support for a political party on-air. You can talk about and challenge the views and record of politicians and agree with a party's views, but the station must be impartial and any arguments must be balanced. Never encourage people to vote for a particular political party, or encourage them to vote at all. Their choice whether to vote, or who to vote for, is a decision for them – not for Black Country Radio to recommend.

Broadcasting Opinions

You can broadcast your opinions on-air (within reason – views that could cause considerable offence, for example, are not acceptable) but you must provide a balanced view and offer an alternative opinion.

If you voice an opinion on a matter of controversy, you must be heard to directly invite listeners to challenge your point of view – in fact, it is sensible to have alternative viewpoints to hand to balance against what you are saying. Be careful and be responsible!

If the problem is causing major delays or is likely to continue for some time, mention it more than once for the next half an hour or so. Presenters at all times of day are expected to check on travel news (via the Inrix Radio website) in case anything out of the ordinary is happening.

We Are Not DJs

We are presenters and broadcasters – we are not “DJs”, though selected late-night specialist shows, such as dance shows, may refer to themselves as DJs.

Family Friendly

We are family-friendly. Don't spoil the fun for kids by saying Santa doesn't exist. **There must be no swearing at any time**, day or night – and all presenters of specialist music shows (who supply their own music) are responsible for ensuring that song lyrics are free of swear words.

Excessive sexual innuendo must also be avoided, as should 'toilet humour'. If someone swears, you **MUST** be seen to correct the person and apologise to the listener. Brushing it under the carpet and pretending it hasn't happened is actually the worst thing you can do. There is no “9 o'clock watershed” in radio like there is in television. The equivalent in radio is that we must be “mindful of when children are likely to be listening”. That means presenters who are on during the school run should be especially careful, as must all presenters during the school holidays. If any part of your show is considered risqué, clear it first and make sure you know when the school holidays are.

Travel News

Travel News bulletins must be no shorter than 30 seconds and no longer than 60 seconds (unless circumstances are absolutely exceptional, such as during heavy snowfall or if there are many accidents). The station will have a standard 'out-cue' which will be listed in the

studio which must be read at the end of every bulletin. If the travel news is after a song, do not go straight into the travel news jingle - do a link before the travel news, then fire the travel bed. You do not need to do a link if the travel follows the news, weather or an ad break.

Breaking Travel News

If you receive breaking travel news, read it out. Scheduled travel is at breakfast and drivetime, but any news you receive should be broadcast in your next link, regardless of the time of day.

The Advert Break

Advert breaks are made up of three components: (i) the Ad Bumper (a station ident, though this may sometimes be replaced with a station promo); (ii) the Adverts (these may sometimes be followed by a station promo); (iii) a Station Jingle. All three must be broadcast without fail. Between the start of the Ad Bumper and the end of the Station Jingle, there must be no interruptions of any kind, including the presenter speaking on-air.

If your show's content is such that you need to interrupt the advert breaks (such as sports shows), you must (a) get permission from the Head of Programmes first; and (b) ensure that an Ad Bumper plays prior to each advert break, and (b) a Station Jingle/Ident plays immediately after the final advert (or promo if scheduled).

For more information on On Air adverts see our **Advertising and Income Policy**.

Before the Adverts

Do not mention the adverts. Before going to an advert break, always avoid mentioning "the break", "the adverts", "the commercials" and do not make a comment along the lines of "we're off to pay the bills", "a few words from our sponsors" etc. – the fact an advert break is about to be broadcast should never be mentioned by the presenter.

Listeners hate advert breaks but they are a necessity to keep us in business – and we need the listeners to hear them. So, instead of telling them they're about to hear some adverts, tell them what they can hear *after* the adverts to keep them listening. For example: "don't go anywhere – we've got music from Robbie Williams and ABBA on the way – plus I'll be giving you our top tips on what to do with the kids during the summer holidays". Always promote the artist only – never promote the song title itself. Never play a song straight into adverts/commercial messages – you must always talk before an advert break.

Advert Breaks

Ad-breaks are at 15, 30 and 45 minutes past the hour (for shows with three ad breaks) or at 20 and 40 (for shows with two ad breaks) depending on which show you are doing. Five minutes either side of this time is fine, but no more. In any event, shows which have three advert breaks must ensure that there is a minimum gap of 10 minutes between advert

breaks. Shows which have two advert breaks must ensure there is a minimum gap of 15 minutes between advert breaks.

After the Advert Break

Always play a song after the advert break (unless you have breaking or scheduled travel news, a huge news story, are doing a speech-only show or sports show) or have other reasonable justification to deviate from this rule.

Don't Discuss Adverts

You must never talk about adverts, or discuss the content of adverts, on-air, regardless of whether your comments about them are positive or negative.

Live Reads

You may be asked to undertake a "live read" during your show. This is a supplied script. This may be on behalf of the station (e.g. promotion of an event or initiative the station is involved in) or as part of a sold advertising package. If requested to do so, presenters **must** include these as part of any show.

In addition you may be requested to undertake an interview as part of an overall advertising or sponsorship package. This interview should be generic in nature and should not be pure advertising, although you can mention the person and the business they are working for. You must not discuss prices, offers, or present the interview in such a way that is directly encouraging the listener to go to the advertiser to buy their products or service. Presenters must be extremely careful as to the content of the interview – information given by the interviewee must be editorially justifiable and in the public interest – the interview must not come across as a 'free advert' or 'sales pitch' for that organisation.

Neither you nor your guest may make any of the following statements, unless they can be confirmed or verified through credible third-party sources:

- Market leadership claims
- Comparisons with competitors
- Superlative claims (e.g. 'we think we're brilliant')
- Claims and offers involving significant limitations and exclusions
- Claims that may be of particular interest to children

So, as a general rule, any claims that cannot be independently verified must be avoided (such as a guest saying how they are 'the best in their field' unless they actually have something to prove it, such as a credible award or official industry figures).

Presenters must not give 'recommendations', either on-air or online, for people to use certain businesses or products (e.g. "I went to the xxx pub the other day – it was fantastic so get yourself down there, it's lovely!") – this is a serious breach of Ofcom's rules.

Presenters may state that they have tried a certain company's products or services but should not elaborate on their personal feelings about that product or service, or give any kind of encouragement or recommendation that listeners should or shouldn't use it.

Radio Terminology

Avoid radio jargon. Terms such as "fader", "sweeper", "stab", "playout system", "Myriad", "IRN" etc. do not mean anything to the listener and will only cause them confusion. It is important that you understand what a lot of jargon means – but never share that jargon with our audience.

Sweepers

Sweepers are a type of station jingle which are spoken by the station voiceover. These usually appear in between two songs which play back-to-back. The point of the sweeper is to break-up the two songs so they do not 'crash' into each other. If a sweeper is scheduled to play, do not talk in between the two songs – this defeats the purpose of why the sweeper is there. If you need to talk in between the two songs, red-dot the song on Myriad and remove the sweeper. Do not swap sweepers with sung jingles and vice versa – they are distinct and serve different purposes.

Music Beds

Some presenters may wish to use music beds. Beds are pieces of music, usually instrumentals, which are designed for the presenter to talk over. If you intend to play a music bed after a song, always talk between the end of a song and the start of the music bed. Additionally, always ensure that the bed has ended, or that you have faded it out completely, before the next song starts. In other words, when you are doing a link on-air, both the first and last thing that is heard by the listener must be the presenter's voice.

Competitions

Competitions are a key component to attracting our listeners. Regular competitions are run, which can be on air, via our website and social media and invariably cover a mixture of both.

If you have an idea or have been approached to give away a competition prize – **you must contact the Head of Marketing & Communications and Head of Online before it is run.**

For competitions to be run, there should be a minimum of 7 days notice prior to competition commencing.

There is very strict legislation about the way in which competitions must be administered and the penalties for ignoring them can be very severe and include fines or sanctions. Never broadcast a competition without getting it cleared first. The station also may have its own commercial considerations to take into account when reviewing competition requests.

Cross-Promotion of Shows

All presenters are expected to know the Programming Schedule well and be up to speed with the range of shows the station has on-air during the course of the week. It is vitally important that presenters promote other shows. For the latest you can check our the schedule on our website - blackcountryradio.co.uk

So, if you play a Northern Soul song during the day, promote the Northern Soul Show. If you play a classic rock song, promote Retro Rock, etc. Specialist shows should focus on promoting other specialist shows which may be of interest to their audience.

If you are interviewing or doing a special feature on your show which would benefit from promotion across shows please post on the Closed Facebook Forum, or email the Head of Marketing to advise on any promotion. Please see the section on **Interviews**.

Talking During Songs

With the exception of talking over an intro, or talking over the end of a song that fades, never talk during songs. You may find it funny, but you will alienate and annoy a listener who is trying to hear their favourite song. Nothing is so important that it can't wait a minute or two until the song finishes, unless there has been a major Royal Family death or a terrorist attack etc.

Talking Over the Start of Songs

Many songs begin with an instrumental. This will be shown by the duration next to the word "In" on the playlist on Myriad, and will also appear as a countdown on the relevant Myriad player when the song starts. Presenters may talk over this intro, but it is vitally important that you have finished talking by the time the intro ends (the intro ends at the point at which the vocals begin). Do not talk over vocals at the start of the song – this is called "crashing the vocal", which is considered bad practice and is frowned upon generally within the radio industry. Always let the Head of Production or the Head of Music know if a countdown is incorrect.

Talking Over the End of Songs

Don't talk over the end of songs that naturally come to a conclusion (this is known as an "ending" song as is displayed as "End" in the playlist on Myriad). If a song "ends", let it end, then talk. Nothing is so important that it can't wait a few seconds to let the song end. Talk over the end (final 10 sec. max) of songs that fade or the final chord of songs with a 'Sustain' ending.

Song Notes

Myriad will display notes about songs. This may include pronunciation guides for artists, or the year in which the song was released. Read through the information in advance of speaking and do not endlessly read out this information. By all means, make something of the information for selected songs, but vary how you phrase it to avoid repetition.

Avoid Repeating What The Jingles Are Saying

At the start of the Weather bed, the station's voiceover will say "Black Country Radio Weather". Therefore, you do not need to start your weather bulletin by saying "well, let's have a look at the weather for today", or "The weather tonight: it's going to be cloudy..." – the jingle has already announced that this is the weather. You don't need to repeat the fact that this is the weather bulletin. Keep it slick – just come straight in with the start of the Weather script: "Dry today with sunny spells..."

Likewise, when the station's voiceover says "Black Country Radio Travel", come straight in with the first item of travel news. Do not say "well, let's get the latest traffic and travel, then" or "here's your travel news, then..." though prefacing the travel bed with "right, let's get you home" during drivetime or "let's see what's happening on the roads" is acceptable prior to firing the travel bed.

Additionally, when ending the hour and talking up to the News In jingle, some presenters try to mimic BBC Radio 2, whose presenters usually say "Online, on digital radio and on 88 to 91FM, this is BBC Radio 2". Radio 2 presenters do this because their news jingle has no voiceover, and this is part of the station's format. Black Country Radio's News In jingle says all the equivalent information for you: "On FM, on DAB, online, on your mobile – we are Black Country Radio". Therefore, you should avoid saying something along similar lines immediately before playing the News In jingle.

News Bulletins

Every hour, Black Country Radio will broadcast a two-minute bulletin from IRN (Independent Radio News). The IRN service is branded as Sky News Radio ("SNR").

Presenters should never refer to it as "IRN", "Independent Radio News", "SNR", "Sky News Radio" or make any reference to the fact that it is a "satellite feed from London". Simply refer to it as "the news" or "Black Country Radio news" or, if you are broadcasting during hours where we are running local news, refer to the name of the local news reader, e.g. "Mike and the team are here with the latest news shortly".

When we run local news, the IRN bulletin will be broadcast first, followed immediately by the local news, which is usually pre-recorded and played off Myriad. The national and local news bulletins should be considered one single bulletin and may not, under any circumstances, be interrupted. So, never talk or play anything in between the national and local news, other than the News Stab which plays immediately before the local news.

Occasionally, we may run a single advert (known as a 'News Link Advert'), which will be broadcast after the bulletin. This will usually be between the Weather and the first jingle of the hour (in hours where we are running local news), or immediately after the IRN bulletin (in

hours where we are only running national news). Again, the presenter must not talk before the News Link Advert has played.

All presenters are required to take the news bulletin at the top of the hour. If you have exceptional editorial reasons for not being able to broadcast it (such as because of a live event that is taking place, then permission must be sought from the Head of Programmes). Sports shows that are covering live commentaries of matches (e.g. football, rugby, speedway etc.) are permitted to drop news bulletins during the match coverage, but should broadcast all bulletins that do not clash with the match where possible.

Mistakes sometimes happen and you may run late for the news. If you do, do NOT simply join the IRN bulletin half-way through. If there is local news after the IRN bulletin, drop the 'News Stab' (which is immediately before the local news) and run straight from the News In jingle into the local news and then carry on as normal. If there is no local news, simply remove the News In jingle, skip over the news altogether and continue the show as normal.

Talk Before The News

It is station policy that all presenters must talk immediately before the News In jingle at the end of each hour – the News In jingle should be fired at 59:49. Occasionally, the station may sell a 'top of the hour sponsorship', which will usually result in a sponsorship message being broadcast immediately before the News In jingle. In this case, presenters will be advised of a new time to talk up to, and should talk immediately prior to the Top Of Hour Sponsorship, which must be immediately followed by the News In jingle.

In addition to the main news bulletins at the top of the hour, some shows have a summary of news-in-brief (known as the 'News Headlines') at the bottom of the hour (i.e. on the half-hour).

Presenters must also talk immediately before the News Headlines jingle before the bulletin. Do not announce the newsreader's name, as the newsreader will begin by stating their name. Half-Past Local News Headlines should be aired no earlier than :29 minutes past the hour and no later than :33 minutes past the hour.

Never Allow Dead Air

Dead air is, simply, when nothing is playing out on-air. Always ensure something is going out on-air. If Myriad crashes, either talk or play the emergency back-up from the internet PC in the studio. Never allow dead air. Remain calm – do not panic, do not freeze – think carefully about what you doing. Calmly get the emergency backup on-air as quickly as possible and either restart Myriad, or restart the PC.

Don't Talk About Technical Problems

Do not give a running commentary on technical problems. The listener does not want a long discussion on the faulty spring on the mic stand, or that the studio chair needs oiling. In live

radio, technical issues occur, mistakes happen and things can go wrong. If it is clearly noticeable to the audience, apologise to them, blame it on the 'gremlins' and, if necessary, make a quick light-hearted joke about it. After that, move on – do not dwell on it – and don't mention it again after that.

If The Next Presenter Is Late

If the next presenter doesn't turn up, don't tell the listener on-air. Simply carry on normally without further comment (and do Weather and/or Travel if required) and let the music play.

Whether you should continue to present the show depends on how late the presenter is. If they are running ten minutes late, leave the music running without talking again on-air and let them take over as and when they arrive. The presenter who has arrived late should not make reference to it on-air.

If, however, the presenter is running so late that you will be into the first advert break by the time they get there, then you will need to continue presenting the show.

Don't make a big deal of it to the listener – that's unprofessional – but, at the same time, you can't ignore it either. Just say the next presenter is running a few minutes late, or is stuck in traffic, or forgot his packed lunch, and carry on.

Covering Shows Outside Your Comfort Zone

Occasionally, due to sickness, you could find yourself covering a specialist music show playing a genre of music that you know nothing about. Remain calm, use your initiative and let the music do most of the talking. Google and Wikipedia can be invaluable sources of information and can make you sound like an expert.

But telling the listener that you haven't got a clue what you're talking about, or that all you're doing is reading off the internet because you don't actually know anything is unprofessional. This discredits you, the show and the station. Be professional and do your best.

Do Not Criticise The Music

Never criticise the music or artists on-air. It is fine to say "I didn't like that song when it first came out but it's really grown on me" – but never outright say that you dislike a particular song or artist. Presenters should regard every song they play as a great song. If you don't like it, you don't have to lie and say it was brilliant. Just announce what it was and move on. Negative comments about the music make you and the station look unprofessional - and risk breaking the connection you've made with any listeners that like the song in question.

Always Back-Announce Songs

There are few things more frustrating for a listener than hearing a great song, not knowing what it was, and then the presenter doesn't tell you. Always tell people the song title and the

artist after the song has played. If playing two songs back to back, back-announce both after the second song.

Do Not Be Ignorant On-Air

Never show ignorance of something the listener would reasonably expect you to know, for example, the name of the presenter who is on-air after you, or which show is on later that day. If you don't even know the name of the person who is taking over from you, this will only cause the listener to doubt your credibility. Don't discredit yourself or the station.

Do Not Drop Scheduled Features

Features such as weather, travel news, the local events guide, half-past headlines and sport are compulsory features of the shows in which they are scheduled. Presenters must not drop or move these features.

Some of these features may be sponsored. If they fail to play at the correct times, you risk placing the station in breach of contract with the sponsor. If you need to drop features, then this must be cleared beforehand by the Head of Programming. Your Show Brief will indicate which scheduled features are included within the show.

Mentioning Other Stations

The names of other radio stations should never be mentioned on-air. The only exception to this is if it is justified by the context, for example, you are interviewing a broadcaster about their media career, or you are interviewing someone about the radio industry generally, or it is part of an obituary.

Talking About Fellow Members On-Air

It is a common occurrence that presenters will mention other presenters on-air. However, unless the listener is a regular and listens to the station a lot, many of the names will be unfamiliar. Always address to the audience who it is you are talking about. Instead of talking about your fellow presenter 'John Smith' as if everyone should know who he is, put it into context – "I was talking to John Smith the other day – by the way, you can hear him this Friday morning at 10 here on Black Country Radio..."

If another presenter contacts you whilst on air about a general comment - if you wish to mention them - mention them as 'Name from Area' - e.g. 'Jo from Halesowen' - if there is no context or association to their show, or shows they are covering.

Members should also be very careful when making comments about other presenters and their shows on-air. Any sort of criticism of another presenter's show is unacceptable and considered a serious breach of the organisation's Code of Conduct. Beware if you make jokes about other presenters – they may not find it as funny as you do. Doing shout outs for presenters makes us look insular, gives the impression we have no listeners and makes it look like we're only there to entertain ourselves.

Respect The Presenter On-Air

Do not enter the on-air studio unless you have been invited. The studio always belongs to the presenter currently on-air. The presenter has a job to do – you distracting them does not help them serve our audience or our advertisers and, therefore, nor does not help the station. If the presenter asks you to leave the studio or be quiet, please do not be offended.

Interviews

We encourage presenters to contact a range of people for interviews as part of their shows. This can be in person in the station, phone call or ISDN ((via the station's ipDTL system) call to the studio or pre-recorded.

Presenters should post any guests on the closed Black Country Radio Facebook Group well in advances of their show, so any promotions of On Air interview can be managed online, and assessed for potential PR or income opportunities.

Presenters should be mindful of 'undue prominence' as outlined in the Ofcom Broadcasting code above, where a single guest may appear on more than one show within a short period of time, discussing the same subject matter. This could also imply that the station may give undue bias or promotion towards a person or organisation, which could also imply endorsement of the person or organisation by the station. Where duplicate interviews of this nature are discovered, a member of the management team may ask for an interview to be re-arranged until a later date or cancelled.

Please be mindful when requesting interviews, and liaise with other volunteers who may seek to be approaching the same contact. Multiple contacts to the same organisation, PR or management may not place the station in a professional light. Volunteers should take time to liaise with other presenters if this is likely to be the case.

If You Are Putting Callers On-Air

You must **never** answer the phone to callers by putting them straight on-air. Callers must only go on-air with their permission. If you are intending to put a caller on-air, then make sure they are aware that they are going on-air, and ensure you have some basic details about them, notably their first name and where they are calling from, e.g. "Brian in Pensnett". Asking a caller what their name is on-air sounds unprofessional, unless it is justified by the context.

Show Clocks

Try and run your show to a show clock based on the music provided in Myriad. Ask if you need help planning your show clock.

Changing the Playlist

Please see our **Music Policy** for guidance or contact the Head of Music for advice. Your Show Brief provides guidance on the individual Music Policy for your show.

Songs Played Back To Back

No more than two songs may be played back-to-back without the presenter speaking, unless it is part of a pre-approved musical feature within a programme.

Do Not Add Extra Songs

Normally, 12 songs per hour are scheduled on general daytime shows. This should, on average, allow for enough speech for the station to fulfil its required level of speech content each hour, as defined by the station's licence. If you find you do not have enough songs, there is likely to be too little speech content in your show.

Cart Ranges

Presenters may be allocated up to two cart ranges.

Personal Cart Ranges

All presenters (and some producers/production assistants, depending on the specifics of their role) will be allocated a range of Personal Carts. Your personal cart range can be used for anything that you may use as part of your show, for example, music beds, sound effects and your own imaging.

Please note that anything stored in your Personal Cart Range is expected to be in-keeping with the station's sound and the Head of Programming or Head of Production have the right to deny the use of specific pieces of audio and some may require prior clearance (notably imaging).

Music which is to be introduced to the listener as a song in your show must not be stored in your personal cart ranges.

Music Cart Ranges

Presenters of specialist music shows will be allocated a range specific to their show, which will be outlined in your Show Brief.

Your music cart range must only be used for music that you would expect to find scheduled in your programme as a 'song'. Anything else, such as sound effects, music beds, etc. must not be stored in your Music Cart Range. Your Personal Cart Range should be used to store these.

The upkeep of the cart range is your responsibility as the presenter of that show.

You must ensure that all music carts are properly titled (both Song Title and Artist field on Myriad) without spelling and grammatical errors and that any filename extensions (e.g. ".wav" or ".mp3" etc.) are removed. This is very important as the information, exactly as entered into Myriad, will be published automatically on the station's website and other external feeds. Spelling errors, filename extensions (and information that is entered all in upper case, or all in lower case) makes the station look unprofessional.

Any audio which does not comply with the above may be deleted by management without warning.

Technical Issues

If you have any technical issues please contact a member of the Technical Team. The best way to do this is to post your issue on the closed Facebook Group and if you know the member of the Technical Team to contact, tag them in the post. If you don't know, another member of the station can take in the appropriate people, or may be able to offer advice on solving the issue.

Microphone & Headphones Technique

Microphones are great – but they are virtually useless if you don't use them properly. The studio mics are designed to be close to your mouth. If you are too far away, your voice will sound distant and echoey, as if you're talking quietly into a tin can – this is called 'talking off-mic'.

If you have guests, always make absolutely sure they are by a microphone and are wearing headphones. Before they go on-air, give them clear direction to talk into the mic and keep their mouths near to the microphone when they talk on-air, get them sat next to their microphone and make sure they are comfortable, then check their levels using the PFL on their mic.

Many guests will not be used to talking on-air and some maybe nervous, therefore they may easily forget to stay near to the mic. Getting them to wear headphones may help remind them if they move too far from the mic.

If guests do stray off-mic, though, give them hand-signals to come closer to the mic or, if you have to, direct them while you are live on-air, for example: "just come a bit closer to the mic so we can hear you, John". Whatever you do, never, ever leave a guest talking away while off-mic – it is one of the best ways to lose your entire audience in a matter of seconds.

Always ensure you and your guests are wearing headphones that are at a sufficient volume so you can clearly hear the sound quality of what is being broadcast. Listen carefully – if the sound you are hearing lacks clarity, react to it. Adjust their levels if necessary via the gain (trim) and/or adjust the bass/treble settings to find an optimum level.

And never forget to turn your microphone on! Obvious as it sounds, people do sometimes forget! A common cause is people not realising because they aren't wearing headphones or they have them too quiet. And, just as importantly, remember to turn the mic off when you've finished talking, too!

Be In Control

Always make sure you are in control of callers and guests at all times when they are speaking on-air. Remember that it is your show, not theirs – and you are responsible for its content (see guidance on swearing in the **Family Friendly** section). Listen to what they're

saying and react if they do anything they shouldn't – never brush it under the carpet and pretend it hasn't happened.

Make Sure The TV Is On

Our news provider is Sky – as such, the first presenter of the day should turn the TV on to Sky News and leave it on at all times. All presenters should continuously monitor Sky News for big, breaking news stories. The sports team may, if they wish, change the TV over to sports coverage (such as Final Score etc.) – please always change it back afterwards.

Backtiming

Always try to back-time the final song so it finishes a few seconds before you need to fire the News In jingle. This should give you a few seconds to back-announce the song before the news. Generally speaking, you should never cut songs short – though, if you do, make sure at least two-thirds of the song has been played. Presenters should never start a song and cut it off after 30-60 seconds in order to get to the news on time.

Home-Made Jingles/Station Imaging

You must not make your own home-made jingles or imaging for your show.

Any piece of pre-recorded or pre-produced audio which says any one or more of

- (i) the presenter's name
- (ii) the show's name
- (iii) the station's name

must be cleared first by the Head of Programmes and the Head of Production prior to broadcast, unless it has been provided to the Head of Production by the station's designated imaging company.

Please do not spend any money on having your own jingles made without checking first. The station prefers to keep consistent imaging on-air at all times, therefore prefers to use imaging which feature the station's jingles or the official station voiceover's voice.

If you would like to request imaging for your show, please speak to the Head of Production or the Head of Programmes.

For the avoidance of doubt, the same rule also applies if you are intending to 'remix' any of the station's existing imaging with any of your own sound effects or other imaging.

The imaging cleared for use can be found in each programme's Show Brief.]

Weather Bulletins

Black Country Radio broadcasts weather bulletins in live programmes from 07:00 seven days a week. Normally final weather bulletin of the day is broadcast:

- After the news at 18:30, Monday to Friday
- After the news at 13:00 on Saturdays, during the football season; 15:00 during the summer
- After the news at 15:00 on Sundays

On weekdays, the local news reader will read the weather. At weekends, the presenter should source their weather script, which should come from the Met Office West Midlands webpage but must be edited ruthlessly and put into your own words. Your weather bulletin should never **exceed 30 words**, which should take around **10 seconds to read on-air**. Always give both Celsius and Fahrenheit (a simple Google search can provide a conversion).

If you are taking over from another presenter, always check and update their weather script! It's pointless telling the listener to expect "a dry start to the morning" at 13:00!

Read The Information Myriad Is Giving You

Myriad doesn't lie. Read the information Myriad gives you – it will do most things for you but make sure you have always got it set up correctly to ensure it is going to do what you want it to do.

If you press the 'GO' button expecting the News In jingle but get a song playing instead, you didn't check to ensure that you had dropped the song before the news.

Never take anything for granted – always make sure you give due care and attention to the information that is on the screen in front of you, especially red and green-dotted items in the playlist.

If you have any issues with Myriad or any software or hardware please contact a member of the Technical Team.

Show Prep

All presenters are expected to do a reasonable amount of show prep. Shows should be planned carefully using the hour clocks provided on Myriad – never just turn up without doing any preparation or knowing what's going on in the world, or what's happening at Black Country Radio. Are we involved in any events? Is there anything of significance that the station is about to do? Make sure that you know the schedule and know who is on after you.

Overrunning Shows

Do not change your show's length. If you haven't fitted your show in to your allotted time, this does not give you the right to overrun into someone else's show unless you have the Head of Programmes' prior permission.

Your Show Brief will tell you whether your programme has the right to overrun into the next programme, though the vast majority of programmes may not.

Typical examples include a sports programme overrunning because a football match went to extra time, which is a rare occurrence. For your convenience, your Show Brief will also inform you if the show preceding yours has the right to overrun.

If your show has the right to overrun, any reasonably foreseeable situation in which the programme may need to overrun must still obtain clearance for this not less than 48 hours

prior to broadcast from the Head of Programming, who will inform the presenter of the next programme.

Think Carefully When Broadcasting...

Always think carefully about what you are saying. NEVER judge people, companies or disparage them – don't say anything which could damage their reputation. Use your common sense! In court cases, only talk about hard facts that have been spoken about in open court. And REMEMBER THE GOLDEN RULE: **IF IN DOUBT, LEAVE IT OUT.**

Schedule Changes

If you have a designated show which is broadcast at the same time each week, you will be expected to turn up for this show unless you inform the management that you cannot, in line with the procedures for booking time off.

Programme schedules, generally, remain consistent in terms of their running order week to week, however there are a few exceptions to this.

Whilst one-off changes could be made at any time, the programming schedules are sometimes changed on Bank Holiday Mondays (usually to accommodate sports coverage). In addition, one-off programming changes are occasionally made on weeknights and Sunday afternoons. The Programming Team will aim to give you as much notice as they can to warn that a schedule change affecting your show may occur. However, there are occasions where it may not be possible to give final confirmation more than 48 hours in advance.

In addition, there are occasions where the Programming Team may wish to make changes to the schedule to reflect what is happening in the world, be it the death of a major celebrity, a significant local sporting event, the death of a prominent member of the Royal Family, or a terrorist attack, in line with the station's OBIT/Major Event Policy.

This could mean that, on rare occasions, your show maybe rearranged, cancelled or shortened. In the event of a major incident such as a Royal Family death or terrorist attack, this could even result in the cancellation of your show while it is in progress, though this is extraordinarily rare. Wholesale changes are usually made to the programming schedule on Christmas Eve (late evening), Christmas Day (all day/night), Boxing Day (all day/night), New Year's Eve (late evening) and New Year's Day (all day/night).

A list of specific days on which your programme will not generally be broadcast can be found in your Show Brief. The Head of Programming reserves the right to change the programming schedule at any time.

Social Media

Presenters are encouraged to use social media, in particular the station's Facebook and Twitter feeds, to promote their shows. Ask the Head of Online to help you. Please refer to the **Social Media policy** for guidance.

People on Shows

Guests, Co-Presenters & Production Assistants

A **guest** is defined as someone who is an expert in, or plays an active role in, a particular occupation or field. As such, their reason for being on the show should be directly related to this and their purpose is to answer specific questions from the presenter in an interview-type format. Guests are encouraged where appropriate but there must be editorial justification for them being on-air – they should be there to talk about a specific subject.

A **co-presenter** is defined as someone who does not fall into the above category and they simply contribute to the general flow of the show, regardless of the extent of their contribution. Co-presenters are not permitted on shows without prior permission, even if they are members of the station, unless the circumstances are absolutely exceptional (e.g. you need extra help because of a significant breaking news story). If you need guidance on this, further information is available on request.

It is vital you appreciate the difference between a guest and a co-presenter.

A **production assistant** is an individual who is assigned to a specific show (and, occasionally, a specific presenter) – their role may depend on the type of show they are assisting with, but generally may include taking phone calls, greeting guests, collating emails and providing the presenter and guests with refreshments. If you have a production assistant assigned to you or your specific show, you may involve them on-air sparingly – but this involvement should be limited and not constant.

If you wish for a production assistant to play a more active and regular part in your broadcast, please speak to the Head of Programmes first. Some production assistants may also be co-presenters – but this is not always the case. If you have someone who supports your show and acts as a production assistant during your show, they must be a member of the station to undertake this role.

Please note that non-member co-presenters invalidate the station's insurance and they, as non-members, are not protected by any of our insurance against anything they may say on-air, which could leave them personally open to legal action and financial loss. This could lead to them attempting to take legal action against you, as an individual, for negligence or recklessness because you invited them on-air in the first place.

The station is insured against guests' comments – but both Ofcom and insurance companies will make the same distinction between a guest and a co-presenter through the context in which they are contributing to the show (for the purposes of any regulatory investigation, a production assistant who speaks on-air will be treated in the same context as a co-presenter). Make sure you know the difference.

Some programmes have multiple personnel attached to them who serve a range of responsibilities depending on the type of programme. Details of this can be found in each programme's Show Brief.

Bringing Friends & Family

Please do not bring non-station members, friends, family or visitors with you without permission. You should never invite anyone in to 'watch' the show and should not use this as an excuse to unjustifiably put them on-air as a 'guest'. **If you would like to regularly bring someone in with you, either because you feel uncomfortable on your own, or would like to request a co-presenter for your show, please speak to the management.**

Generally, where it is a 'one-off' or it is a necessity due to logistical reasons, we take a sympathetic view to people bringing friends and family with them as long as it does not distract you from the job at hand. Please ask permission first.

Friends, family and visitors must never be put on-air, unless their specific purpose for being there is as a designated guest on your show where there is significant editorial justification.

Any visitors who are not members of the station must never carry out duties on the station's behalf, including emailing people on behalf of the presenter they are visiting.

Guests visiting the station

It is your responsibility to look after any guests that visit the station. Directions are available on the website at: www.blackcountryradio.co.uk/visiting