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# Embargo Policy

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## Overview

This document outlines the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's (AHA/ASA) embargo policy for:

- Studies published in AHA/ASA's peer reviewed journals;
- AHA/ASA scientific statements, guidelines, science advisories and presidential advisories;
- Abstracts and late-breaking science abstracts/studies at AHA/ASA scientific meetings.

The embargo policy applies to the following audiences:

- News media;
- Study authors and writing group members;
- Medical institutions, health organizations and universities;
- Companies, corporate sponsors of studies and their public relations representatives.

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## Description of American Heart Association/American Stroke Association Embargo Policies:

- **AHA/ASA journal studies, statements, guidelines, scientific and presidential advisories:** The embargo lifts at the time/date that the article is published either online or in print (whichever comes first).
- **Non-late-breaking abstracts/studies presented at AHA/ASA scientific meetings:** If the abstract is being promoted by the AHA, the embargo lifts at the specific time set by the American Heart Association Communications Department or when the abstract is presented to the scientific audience, whichever comes first.
- **Late-breaking science abstract/studies presented at AHA/ASA meetings:** The embargo for each late-breaking study lifts at the presentation time of the **first** late-breaker in the science session in which the study is being presented to the scientific audience.

Penalties for breaking an embargo will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Circumstances of the embargo violation will be evaluated before a determination is made regarding appropriate penalties.

For questions regarding AHA/ASA's embargo policy, contact the AHA Communications Dept. at 214-706-1173 or [ahacommunications@heart.org](mailto:ahacommunications@heart.org).

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## Who May Receive Embargoed Materials:

- News media reporters, writers, producers and editors with staff credentials from newspapers, magazines, online news services, wire services, radio or television networks, individual stations and blogs that appear on a media outlet's website that produce daily or weekly health/medical/science news.
- Journalists with bylined news reports published on news wire services and news media who produce materials for bi-monthly, monthly, or quarterly publications or programs will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Freelance writers with approved credentials (must provide three bylined articles/clip links published by accredited media outlets within the past 6 months) and/or a verifiable assignment letter from an accredited media outlet. Letters of assignment must include contact information for the assigning editor at the media outlet.
- Bloggers who provide daily or weekly coverage of health news but are not affiliated with a major news outlet will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Writers/editors or contributors for websites not considered mainstream media but report regularly on breaking health news will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- All other applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

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## Acceptable media credentials for journalists/freelancers:

- National Association for Science Writers (NASW) membership card.
- International Science Writers Association (ISWA) membership card.
- Association of Health Care Journalists (AHCJ) membership card, plus an assignment letter from an accredited news organization.
- Assignment letter on official letterhead from an editor of a recognized publication or a producer of a recognized broadcast program certifying that reporter/freelancer is covering news for the respective organization.
- Government-issued press credentials and a letter of assignment from an accredited news organization.
- Official media-outlet-issued credentials/ID.
- **Business cards will not be accepted as credentials.**

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## Who may NOT receive Embargoed Materials:

- Industry representatives and financial/industry analysts.
- Writers/editors or contributors for patient publications created and distributed by industry, such as pharmaceutical companies or device manufacturers.
- Staff from public relations firms, advertising agencies or production companies.
- Representatives of corporate, academic or hospital public relations/advertising/marketing/communications/media departments.
- Editors, writers of newsletters created and distributed by universities and hospitals for the public/patient/student.
- Hospitals/universities or other online sites reporting only their own news/press materials.
- In-house and/or industry newsletters/magazines/websites supported by industry or publications supported by a retail chain store, such as a drug store.
- Publishers (who are not reporters) of peer-reviewed medical journals and other media outlets that cover health news.
- Bloggers who do not report daily or weekly on breaking health news.
- Wire or other online services offering syndicated or mass distribution of AHA/ASA embargoed media materials to journalists and non-journalists.
- Staff or representative for medical education companies.

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## Embargo Rules for News Media:

- By accepting AHA/ASA embargoed materials through email, fax, regular mail, from the AHA's online password-protected embargoed online newsroom site or via media registration for scientific meetings, reporters agree to follow the AHA/ASA embargo policies.
- AHA/ASA embargoed information is provided to facilitate the development of news content. Materials may not be published prior to the embargo time and can only be distributed to experts for media interviews. Journalists sharing information with expert sources bear the responsibility of ensuring those sources abide by all AHA policies.
- Failure to abide by AHA/ASA embargo policies may result in suspension of access to: AHA/ASA embargoed materials, media credentials at AHA/ASA scientific meetings and pre-embargo interviews with AHA/ASA volunteer experts. The media outlet that employs a reporter who has broken an embargo also may be penalized.
- Once a media outlet/reporter has been suspended, it is the responsibility of the reporter and/or media outlet to reapply to receive embargoed media

materials after the suspension period ends.

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## AHA/ASA policies for video, photography and recording devices at scientific meetings:

- Only registered media - such as camera crews, producers and reporters - who have received their camera credentials upon registration are allowed to conduct interviews or shoot photos/videos at AHA/ASA scientific meetings.

### Registered media may record video/take photographs in the following areas:

- The AHA News Media Center, including news briefings, conferences and broadcast interview rooms.
- Concourse areas, hallways and in select "main event" sessions.
- Registered media may record video of the daily Late-Breaking Science presentations from a lock-down position on a riser available for news media in the presentation hall.
- Only non-flash photography of speakers and their materials during oral or poster presentations is allowed by registered media.

### Registered media may NOT record video/take photographs in the following areas:

- **Science and Technology Exhibit Hall:**
  - Science and Technology Exhibit Hall:
  - In order to shoot flash photography or record video of a specific booth in the Science and Technology Exhibit Hall, advance permission must be given by booth manager and the AHA exhibits manager who will provide an escort for the media crew.
  - Media who want to record general b-roll or photos of the HeartQuarters booth may do so with advance permission from News Media Center staff and an escort. Limited dates/times will be noted on news media website.
  - Recording video interviews is prohibited in the Science and Technology Exhibit Hall and must be conducted outside of the Hall.
- **Meeting/Presentation Rooms:**
  - No video recording is allowed in meeting rooms or poster sessions. Only still (no flash) photographs may be taken of a specific poster with the author's permission.
  - Still (no flash) photographs or audio recordings for commercial use taken in meeting rooms require advance consent by the AHA and the speaker/presenter.

Any questions about recording video/photography in any of the restricted areas should be addressed with the AHA/ASA Scientific Meeting registration staff.

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## Embargo policies for researchers and scientists of studies to be published in AHA/ASA journals or presented at AHA/ASA scientific meetings:

**Note:** The rules below apply to all studies published in AHA/ASA peer reviewed journals and all abstracts/studies presented at AHA/ASA meetings, whether or not the AHA/ASA is promoting them to the news media.

- Abstracts or manuscripts accepted for presentation at an AHA/ASA scientific meeting or to be published in an AHA/ASA journal may not be presented at other meetings or published in other journals prior to the embargo time set by the AHA/ASA.
- All authors, researchers and institutions associated with a manuscript being published in an AHA/ASA journal or an abstract being presented at an AHA/ASA meeting must comply with the embargo policies of the AHA/ASA.
- Study/abstract authors may not distribute any embargoed written information (slides, manuscript, etc.) to the news media prior to the embargo date and time. Reporters may contact the AHA/ASA communications department to get copies of manuscripts and/or abstracts.
- Study and abstract authors are allowed to conduct embargoed media interviews as long as the embargo date and time are emphasized to the news media.
- Researchers who are presenting their study in an AHA/ASA embargoed media briefing or news conference may bring one co-author of the study as a guest to the AHA/ASA media event. Corporate sponsor representatives are not allowed in any AHA/ASA media events at AHA/ASA scientific meetings.
- Researchers/healthcare providers who are members of an AHA/ASA Scientific Statement/Guidelines Writing Committee are not allowed to share any information, including the fact that there is a document in progress, about the content of the statement/guideline with the news media, colleagues or institution prior to the AHA's Communications department issuing an embargoed news release.
- If the news media breaks an embargo as a result of a researcher conducting an embargoed interview or as the result of their public relations department/agency/institution providing them with written or visual information, the researcher risks having his study pulled in an AHA journal or presented at an AHA/ASA scientific meeting. Embargo breaks in these cases will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Failure to honor embargoes may also jeopardize future acceptance of studies and/or exhibition at AHA/ASA scientific meetings or acceptance of

manuscripts for publication in AHA/ASA journals.

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## Embargo Policies for Medical Institutions / Universities / Health Organizations:

- **Studies published in AHA/ASA journals and *non-late-breaking* abstracts presented at AHA/ASA scientific meetings:** Universities, medical institutions and health organizations that are involved in a study may distribute their own embargoed news release 2 business days prior to the embargo and authors of studies and representatives from the institution may conduct embargoed media interviews during the embargo period. However, no one other than AHA/ASA is allowed to issue embargoed media materials pertaining to scientific statements, guidelines or late-breaking science prior to embargo. (See Description of Embargo Policies for specific information on time of embargoes.)
- Researchers may conduct pre-embargo interviews with reporters based on news materials provided by the AHA/ASA or the institution.
- Universities and medical institutions must alert the AHA/ASA Communications dept. if they plan on issuing a news release on studies being presented at AHA/ASA scientific meetings by providing the name of the study, the first and last authors' names that are listed on the study and the journal where it is being published or meeting where it is being presented. The requested information should be sent to AHA/ASA Communications Dept. at [ahacommunications@heart.org](mailto:ahacommunications@heart.org) or call 214-706-1173.
- AHA/ASA does not approve or review news material content developed by universities/medical institutions but does need to be aware in case they receive media queries.
- AHA/ASA requests that the universities/medical institutions include the name of the AHA journal where the study is being published or the name of the AHA/ASA's scientific meeting where the study is being presented in their news release.
- Universities, medical institutions and health organizations who need to confirm embargo dates and times should contact AHA/ASA Communications department at 214-706-1173 or [ahacommunications@heart.org](mailto:ahacommunications@heart.org).
- Universities, medical institutions and health organizations must obtain specific study information from the researcher. AHA/ASA will only provide the embargo date and time and will not provide anyone with study information unless the researcher contacts the AHA/ASA asking them to provide the information.
- Only the presenter/lead author of the study and one co-author of the study may attend an AHA/ASA embargoed media briefing or news conference at a scientific meeting. The co-author's name must be listed on the abstract.
- Universities, medical institutions and health organizations that have information being presented at an AHA/ASA scientific meeting may **not** conduct any planned embargoed promotional media activities, such as media briefings/news conferences, satellite media tours, corporate receptions, or investigator meetings before the embargo lifts.
- If media break an embargo as a result of issuing information or conducting an interview, the AHA/ASA may enforce sanctions against the reporter/media outlet, the researcher/scientist and university/institution/company as appropriate.
- Researchers/healthcare providers who are members of an AHA/ASA Scientific Statement/Guidelines Writing Committee are not allowed to share any information, including the fact that there is a document in progress, about the content of the statement/guideline with the news media, colleagues or institution prior to the AHA's Communications department issuing an embargoed news release.
- AHA/ASA statements and guidelines represent AHA/ASA positions. Therefore, institutions and universities may not issue embargoed news releases to promote their faculty member's participation as a member of the writing group until the embargo has lifted.

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## Embargo Policies Specific to Companies / Corporate Sponsors of Studies and their Public Relations Representatives:


- Pharmaceutical companies, device manufacturers or companies that are corporate sponsors of a study and/or their representatives **may not issue** embargoed news releases, statements or proactively promoting their spokespeople prior to embargo.
- Pharmaceutical companies, device manufacturers or companies that are corporate sponsors of a study and their representatives **are not allowed** conduct any type of event where media are in attendance prior to embargo.
- Pharmaceutical companies, device manufacturers or companies that are corporate sponsors of a study and their representatives **are allowed** to make representatives available to answer only incoming inquiries from the media during the embargo period.
- If a company feels that for legal reasons it is obligated to release information about a study prior to the embargo, the company must notify AHA/ASA in advance in writing regarding the legal rationale as to why the information must be disclosed, and advise specifically who would receive the information, how/when the information would be disclosed and exactly what information would be released. AHA/ASA then will determine whether the study shall remain on the program of an AHA/ASA meeting or be published in an AHA/ASA scientific journal. One specific consideration will be whether the company plans to release qualitative information (i.e., the primary endpoint was/was not met) rather than quantitative data (specific study results). Please send this information to: [programparticipant@heart.org](mailto:programparticipant@heart.org)
- Representatives from public relations agencies or companies involved in a study are NOT allowed in embargoed media briefings or news conferences at AHA/ASA scientific meetings. The only exception is when a representative of a company is an author listed on an abstract of a study being presented in an AHA/ASA embargoed media briefing or news conference.
- Media interview rooms are for the use of media only, and PR representatives from pharmaceutical and device companies are allowed in the room only

if specifically invited by a media representative. PR representatives are not allowed to use the media rooms for their activities and will have to conduct their activities elsewhere.

- Industry and exhibitor events for the news media **may not be held** during AHA/ASA's scientific meeting operating hours. Permission for officially-sanctioned satellite events must be obtained from AHA scientific meetings staff. Media should not be invited and are not permitted to attend investigator meetings. Violating this policy is considered an embargo break and penalties apply.
- Company representatives may not pass out literature, statements or news releases in or around the adjacent hallways and areas of the News Conference/Media Briefing Room and the Media's Working Newsroom.
- AHA does not share its media list with anyone. Companies are responsible for distributing their media materials to the news media at time of embargo and are **not** allowed to put their media materials in the AHA/ASA media area at AHA/ASA scientific meetings.
- Companies that have questions about issuing news releases should contact the AHA Communications dept. at 214-706-1173 or [ahacommunications@heart.org](mailto:ahacommunications@heart.org).

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**Hours**  
Monday - Friday: 7AM - 9PM CST  
Saturday: 9AM - 5PM CST  
Closed on Sundays

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