

Title 45. Publication and Broadcasting

Chapter 1 Official Notices

Part 1 General Publication Requirements

45-1-101 Legal notice publication requirements.

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Average advertisement rate" means:

- (i) in determining a rate for publication on the public legal notice website or in a newspaper that primarily distributes publications in a county of the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth class, a newspaper's gross advertising revenue for the preceding calendar quarter divided by the gross column-inch space used in the newspaper for advertising for the previous calendar quarter; or
- (ii) in determining a rate for publication in a newspaper that primarily distributes publications in a county of the first or second class, a newspaper's average rate for all qualifying advertising segments for the preceding calendar quarter for an advertisement:

(A) published in the same section of the newspaper as the legal notice; and

(B) of the same column-inch space as the legal notice.

(b) "Column-inch space" means a unit of space that is one standard column wide by one inch high.

(c) "Gross advertising revenue" means the total revenue obtained by a newspaper from all of its qualifying advertising segments.

(d)

(i) "Legal notice" means:

(A) a communication required to be made public by a state statute or state agency rule; or

(B) a notice required for judicial proceedings or by judicial decision.

(ii) "Legal notice" does not include:

(A) a public notice published by a public body in accordance with the provisions of Sections 52-4-202 and 63A-16-601; or

(B) a notice of delinquency in the payment of property taxes described in Section 59-2-1332.5.

(e) "Public legal notice website" means the website described in Subsection (2)(b) for the purpose of publishing a legal notice online.

(f)

(i) "Qualifying advertising segment" means, except as provided in Subsection (1)(f)(ii), a category of print advertising sold by a newspaper, including classified advertising, line advertising, and display advertising.

(ii) "Qualifying advertising segment" does not include legal notice advertising.

(g) "Special district" means the same as that term is defined in Section 17B-1-102.

(h) "Special service district" means the same as that term is defined in Section 17D-1-102.

(2) Except as provided in Subsections (8) and (9), notwithstanding any other legal notice provision established by law, a person required by law to publish legal notice shall publish the notice:

(a)

(i) as required by the statute establishing the legal notice requirement; or

- (ii) by serving legal notice, by certified mail or in person, directly on all parties for whom the statute establishing the legal notice requirement requires legal notice, if:
 - (A) the direct service of legal notice does not replace publication in a newspaper that primarily distributes publications in a county of the third, fourth, fifth, or sixth class;
 - (B) the statute clearly identifies the parties;
 - (C) the person can prove that the person has identified all parties for whom notice is required; and
 - (D) the person keeps a record of the service for at least two years; and
- (b) on a public legal notice website established by the combined efforts of Utah's newspapers that collectively distribute newspapers to the majority of newspaper subscribers in the state.
- (3) The public legal notice website shall:
 - (a) be available for viewing and searching by the general public, free of charge; and
 - (b) accept legal notice posting from any newspaper in the state.
- (4) A person that publishes legal notice as required under Subsection (2) is not relieved from complying with an otherwise applicable requirement under Title 52, Chapter 4, Open and Public Meetings Act.
- (5) If legal notice is required by law and one option for complying with the requirement is publication in a newspaper, or if a special district or a special service district publishes legal notice in a newspaper, the newspaper:
 - (a) may not charge more for publication than the newspaper's average advertisement rate; and
 - (b) shall publish the legal notice on the public legal notice website at no additional cost.
- (6) If legal notice is not required by law, if legal notice is required by law and the person providing legal notice, in accordance with the requirements of law, chooses not to publish the legal notice in a newspaper, or if a special district or a special service district with an annual operating budget of less than \$250,000 chooses to publish a legal notice on the public notice website without publishing the complete notice in the newspaper, a newspaper:
 - (a) may not charge more than an amount equal to 15% of the newspaper's average advertisement rate for publishing five column lines in the newspaper to publish legal notice on the public legal notice website;
 - (b) may not require that the legal notice be published in the newspaper; and
 - (c) at the request of the person publishing on the legal notice website, shall publish in the newspaper up to five column lines, at no additional charge, that briefly describe the legal notice and provide the web address where the full public legal notice can be found.
- (7) If a newspaper offers to publish the type of legal notice described in Subsection (5), it may not refuse to publish the type of legal notice described in Subsection (6).
- (8) Notwithstanding the requirements of a statute that requires the publication of legal notice, if legal notice is required by law to be published by a special district or a special service district with an annual operating budget of \$250,000 or more, the special district or special service district shall satisfy its legal notice publishing requirements by:
 - (a) mailing a written notice, postage prepaid:
 - (i) to each voter in the special district or special service district; and
 - (ii) that contains the information required by the statute that requires the publication of legal notice; or
 - (b) publishing the legal notice in a newspaper and on the legal public notice website as described in Subsection (5).
- (9) Notwithstanding the requirements of a statute that requires the publication of legal notice, if legal notice is required by law to be published by a special district or a special service district

with an annual operating budget of less than \$250,000, the special district or special service district shall satisfy its legal notice publishing requirements by:

- (a) mailing a written notice, postage prepaid:
 - (i) to each voter in the special district or special service district; and
 - (ii) that contains the information required by the statute that requires the publication of legal notice; or
- (b) publishing the legal notice in a newspaper and on the public legal notice website as described in Subsection (5); or
- (c) publishing the legal notice on the public legal notice website as described in Subsection (6).

Amended by Chapter 16, 2023 General Session

Part 2 Newspaper Publication Requirements

45-1-201 Newspapers "of general circulation" -- Requirements.

For the purpose of publishing notice required by Utah law, a "newspaper of general circulation" means a newspaper that:

- (1) has a bona fide subscription list of not less than 200 subscribers in this state;
- (2) has been published for 18 months or longer; and
- (3)
 - (a) has been eligible for mailing under a United States Postal Service periodicals permit for at least 12 months; or
 - (b)
 - (i) publishes at least 12 issues in each year; and
 - (ii) is composed of, as a percentage of each issue's total content not including inserts and special sections, at least 25% content that:
 - (A) the newspaper receives no compensation to publish; and
 - (B) is of local or general interest.

Amended by Chapter 174, 2017 General Session

Part 3 Supplemental Publication by Broadcast

45-1-305 Supplementary publication by broadcast -- Definitions.

As used in this act:

- (1) The word "broadcast" means the transmission of information by means of radio or television facilities.
- (2) The word "notice" means any notice that is required by law to be published.
- (3) The word "station" means any radio or television station licensed for commercial operation by the Federal Communications Commission.

Renumbered and Amended by Chapter 5, 2009 Special Session 1

Renumbered and Amended by Chapter 5, 2009 Special Session 1

45-1-306 Notice given in broadcast -- Restrictions.

- (1) Any state or other public officer who is required by law to publish any notice may supplement publication of the notice by causing the time, place and nature of the notice to be broadcast at such times and intervals as determined suitable when in his judgment, the public interest is or will be served.
- (2) The material broadcast shall include only the time, place, and nature of the notice.
- (3) In the broadcast of any notice or material authorized under this act, no reference by name or the use of the voice or likeness of any person who is a candidate for elective public office at the time of the broadcast shall be allowed.
- (4) Notices by political subdivisions of this state shall be made only by stations whose basic broadcast coverage encompasses the county or counties in which the notice is required to be given.

Renumbered and Amended by Chapter 5, 2009 Special Session 1
Renumbered and Amended by Chapter 5, 2009 Special Session 1

45-1-307 Copy of notice broadcast retained by station.

Each station which broadcasts any notice or material under this act shall retain a copy or transcript of the text or material broadcast for a period of six months after the broadcast. The copy shall be available for public review at reasonable times and places.

Renumbered and Amended by Chapter 5, 2009 Special Session 1
Renumbered and Amended by Chapter 5, 2009 Special Session 1

45-1-308 Proof of broadcast.

Proof of publication or broadcast of the notice or other material under this act shall be by affidavit of a duly authorized representative or agent of the broadcasting station.

Renumbered and Amended by Chapter 5, 2009 Special Session 1
Renumbered and Amended by Chapter 5, 2009 Special Session 1

45-1-309 Rates of broadcasters.

Rates charged by broadcasters will be no greater than the lowest net rate charged for a like number of announcements by any other advertiser.

Renumbered and Amended by Chapter 5, 2009 Special Session 1
Renumbered and Amended by Chapter 5, 2009 Special Session 1

**Chapter 2
Libel**

45-2-1 Retraction by newspapers -- Limit of recovery.

If it shall appear on the trial of any action brought for the publication of any alleged libel in any newspaper published in this state that the alleged libel was published in good faith, that the

publication thereof was due to mistake or misapprehension of the facts, and that a full and fair retraction of any statement therein alleged to be erroneous was published in the same type and in the same position on the same page as was the article complained of as libelous, in the next regular issue of such newspaper, or in case of a daily paper within three days, after service upon the publisher of such newspaper, at the principal office of its publication by the party aggrieved, of a written notice specifying the statement alleged to be erroneous, or, in case such notice is not served in the issue or within the time above specified after the filing of the complaint and service of the summons in said action, then the plaintiff shall recover only actual damages; provided, that if such libel was published in a Sunday edition, the publication of the retraction must have been in a Sunday edition within two weeks after the times above specified; provided further, that this section shall not apply in the case of any libel against any candidate for a public office at any election or primary, or any avowed candidate for nomination to any office before any political convention, unless the retraction of the charge was made editorially in a conspicuous manner at least five days before the holding of such election, primary or political convention in case such libelous article was published in a daily paper, or if published in a weekly paper, at least three days before the holding thereof, which editorial retraction shall be in lieu of any other retraction herein provided for.

No Change Since 1953

45-2-1.5 Actual damages -- Broadcast in good faith -- Retraction -- Time -- Candidate for public office.

- (1) If it shall appear on the trial of any action brought for any alleged libel or slander on any radio or television broadcast originating in this state that the alleged libel or slander was broadcast in good faith, the broadcast thereof was due to mistake or misapprehension of the facts, and that a full and fair retraction of any statement therein alleged to be erroneous was broadcast on the same station and approximately the same time of day as was the alleged libel or slander, within three days after learning of the mistake or within three days after service upon the person broadcasting that libel or slander, by the party aggrieved, of a written notice specifying the statement alleged to be erroneous or, in case such notice is not served, in the manner and within the time above specified after the filing of the complaint and service of the summons in said action, then the plaintiff shall recover only actual damages.
- (2) This section shall not apply in the case of any libel or slander against any candidate for a public office at any general or primary election, or any avowed candidate for nomination to any office before any political convention, unless the retraction of the charge was made in the same manner as provided for other retractions under this section within 24 hours of the time the person broadcasting that libel or slander became aware of the mistake, but in no case later than three days before the holding of such general or primary election or political convention. A written text of the retraction shall be made available to the candidate immediately after it has been broadcast. This retraction shall be in lieu of any other retraction herein provided for.

Enacted by Chapter 134, 1975 General Session

45-2-2 Libel and slander defined.

As used in this chapter:

- (1) "Libel" means a malicious defamation, expressed either by printing or by signs or pictures or the like, tending to blacken the memory of one who is dead, or to impeach the honesty, integrity, virtue or reputation, or publish the natural defects of one who is alive, and thereby to expose him to public hatred, contempt or ridicule.

(2) "Slander" means any libel communicated by spoken words.

Amended by Chapter 134, 1975 General Session

45-2-3 Privileged publication or broadcast defined.

A privileged publication or broadcast which shall not be considered as libelous or slanderous per se, is one made:

- (1) In the proper discharge of an official duty.
- (2) In any publication or broadcast of or any statement made in any legislative or judicial proceeding, or in any other official proceeding authorized by law.
- (3) In a communication, without malice, to a person interested therein, by one who is also interested, or by one who stands in such relation to the person interested as to afford a reasonable ground for supposing the motive for the communication innocent, or who is requested by the person interested to give the information.
- (4) By a fair and true report, without malice, of a judicial, legislative, or other public official proceeding, or of anything said in the course thereof, or of a charge or complaint made by any person to a public official, upon which a warrant shall have been issued or an arrest made.
- (5) By a fair and true report, without malice, of the proceedings of a public meeting, if such meeting was lawfully convened for a lawful purpose and open to the public, or the publication or broadcast of the matter complained of was for the public benefit.

Amended by Chapter 134, 1975 General Session

45-2-4 Malice not inferred from publication.

In the cases provided for in Subsections 45-2-3(3), (4) and (5), malice is not inferred from the communication or publication.

Amended by Chapter 20, 1995 General Session

45-2-5 Radio or television broadcasting station or network of stations.

No person, firm, or corporation owning or operating a radio or television broadcasting station or network of stations shall be liable under the laws of libel, slander or defamation on account of having made its broadcasting facilities or network available to any person, whether a candidate for public office or any other person, or on account of having originated or broadcast a program for discussion of controversial or any other subjects, in the absence of proof of actual malice on the part of such owner or operator. In no event, however, shall any such owner or operator be held liable for any damages for any defamatory statement uttered over the facilities of such station or network by or on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Amended by Chapter 73, 1953 Special Session C

45-2-6 Right of station to require submission of matter intended to be broadcast.

Any person, firm, or corporation owning or operating a radio or television broadcasting station shall have the right, but shall not be compelled, to require the submission and permanent filing, in such station, of a copy of the complete address, script, or other form of expression, intended to be broadcast over such station before the time of the intended broadcast thereof.

Amended by Chapter 73, 1953 Special Session C

45-2-7 Limitations and restrictions -- Immune from liability -- Due care.

Except as provided in Section 45-2-1.5, nothing in this act contained shall be construed to relieve any person broadcasting over a radio or television station from liability under the law of libel, slander, or defamation. Nor shall anything else in this act be construed to relieve any person, firm, or corporation owning or operating a radio or television broadcasting station or network from liability under the law of libel, slander, or defamation on account of any broadcast prepared or made by any such person, firm, or corporation or by any officer or employee thereof in the course of his employment. In no event, however, shall any such person, firm, or corporation be liable for any damages for any defamatory statement or act published or uttered in or as a part of a visual or sound broadcast unless it shall be alleged and proved by the complaining party that such person, firm, or corporation has failed to exercise due care to prevent the publication or utterance of such statement or act in such broadcast. Bona fide compliance with any federal law or the regulation of any federal regulatory agency shall be deemed to constitute such due care as hereinabove mentioned.

Amended by Chapter 134, 1975 General Session

45-2-8 Liability in case of joint operation.

In any case where liability shall exist on account of any broadcast where two or more broadcasting or television stations were connected together simultaneously or by transcription, film, metal tape, or other approved or adapted use for joint operation, in the making of such broadcast, such liability shall be confined and limited solely to the person, firm, or corporation owning or operating the radio or television station which originated such broadcast.

Amended by Chapter 73, 1953 Special Session C

45-2-10 Privileged broadcasts.

A privileged broadcast which shall not be considered as libelous, slanderous, or defamatory per se, is one made:

- (1) In the proper discharge of an official duty.
- (2) In any broadcast of or any statement made in any legislative or judicial proceeding, or in any other official proceeding authorized by law.
- (3) By a fair and true report, without malice of a judicial, legislative or other public official proceeding, or of anything said in the course thereof, or of a charge or complaint made by any person to a public official, upon which a warrant shall have been issued or an arrest made.
- (4) By a fair and true report, without malice, of the proceedings of a public meeting, if such meeting was lawfully convened, for a lawful purpose and open to the public or the broadcast of the matter complained of was for the public benefit.

No Change Since 1953

Chapter 3
Abuse of Personal Identity Act

45-3-1 Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Abuse of Personal Identity Act."

Enacted by Chapter 95, 1981 General Session

45-3-2 Definitions.

As used in this act:

- (1) "Advertisement" means a notice designed to attract public attention or patronage and includes a list of supporters for a particular cause.
- (2) "Cause the publication" means that a person prepares or requests another to prepare an advertisement of the type described in Subsection 45-3-3(1), and that person submits or requests another to submit the advertisement to a publisher, and the advertisement has been published.
- (3)
 - (a) "Consent" means a person's voluntary agreement to the use of that person's name, title, picture, or portrait.
 - (b) "Consent" may not be inferred by the failure of the person to request that the person's name, title, picture, or portrait not be used or that the person's name be removed from a mailing or supporter list.
- (4) "Individual" means a natural person.
- (5) "Person" means any natural person, firm, partnership, association, corporation, joint venture, or any other form of business organization or arrangement, and the agents or representatives of such persons.
- (6) "Personal identity" means an individual's name, title, picture, or portrait.
- (7) "Publish" means that a person provides the instrumentality through which an advertisement is communicated to the public at large or to a significant portion thereof.

Amended by Chapter 146, 1999 General Session

45-3-3 Acts constituting abuse -- Permitting prosecution.

- (1) Except for purposes of the criminal penalty in Section 76-9-407, the personal identity of an individual is abused if:
 - (a) an advertisement is published in which the personal identity of that individual is used in a manner which expresses or implies that the individual approves, endorses, has endorsed, or will endorse the specific subject matter of the advertisement; and
 - (b) consent has not been obtained for such use from the individual, or if the individual is a minor, then consent of one of the minor's parents or consent of the minor's legally appointed guardian.
- (2) Nothing in this part prohibits prosecution of abuse of personal identity under Section 76-9-407.
- (3) The personal identity of an individual is not abused if the individual's personal data or publicly available information:
 - (a) was lawfully obtained;
 - (b) is used to preview, advertise, or promote the sale of a product, service, or subscription, including the sale of a product, service, or subscription of which the individual's personal data or publicly available information is or may be a part; and
 - (c) is not used in a way that expresses or implies that the individual approves, endorses, has endorsed, or will endorse the product, service, or subscription being previewed, advertised, or promoted.

Amended by Chapter 424, 2023 General Session

45-3-4 Cause of action for abuse -- Remedies.

An individual whose personal identity has been abused under Section 45-3-3 of this act may bring an action against a person who caused the publication of the advertisement, and is entitled to injunctive relief, damages alleged and proved, exemplary damages, and reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

Enacted by Chapter 95, 1981 General Session

45-3-5 Action against publisher -- Grounds -- Remedies.

- (1) An individual whose personal identity has been abused under Section 45-3-3 of this act may bring an action against a person who published the advertisement:
 - (a) if the advertisement, on its face is such that a reasonable person would conclude that it is unlikely that an individual would consent to such use; and
 - (b) the publisher did not take reasonable steps to assure that consent was obtained.
- (2) In an action under this section, the plaintiff shall be entitled to injunctive relief, damages alleged and proved, exemplary damages, and reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

Enacted by Chapter 95, 1981 General Session

45-3-6 Other remedies unaffected.

This act does not limit or supersede any causes of action otherwise available to the parties.

Enacted by Chapter 95, 1981 General Session