

## The NPR Accuracy Checklist

*Mistakes happen, but lately we've been making too many. See for yourself on our corrections page: <http://www.npr.org/corrections>*

*The checklist that follows is a reminder of things we know we should do. It's meant to be particularly useful to correspondents and producers, who collect the information we put on the air and online and are expected to do all they can to make sure that what we report is accurate.*

*Think of the list as a tool. Print a copy and use it. We know we will make mistakes. But we need to do what we can to reduce them.*

NPR REPORTERS, CORRESPONDENTS, PRODUCERS and MULTIMEDIA JOURNALISTS who collect and write the information we broadcast or post online will double-check:

- SUPERLATIVES. If anything is the “first,” “last,” “best,” “worst,” “only,” “oldest,” “youngest” etc., that claim must be verified. If it can't be, the claim should be deleted or qualified and attributed.
- PERSONAL NAMES. Verify them, spell them correctly (for radio and the Web) and confirm pronunciations.
- AGES. Get a person's date of birth and do the math.
- TITLES. President, CEO, professor, etc. They must be accurate.
- NAMES of BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS and INSTITUTIONS.
- DAYS and DATES. Are you sure this happened then?
- HISTORICAL “FACTS.” Are you sure it happened that way?
- LOCATIONS. Is that where this happened? Is that where this person is from?
- NUMBERS and CALCULATIONS. Do the math yourself. Should it be millions, billions or trillions? Is the decimal in the correct place? Is it percent or percentage point (they're not the same)?
- QUOTES. They must be attributed to the right person.
- WEB ADDRESSES and PHONE NUMBERS. They have to be tested.
- GRAMMAR and SPELLING. Note: What goes in a radio script may end up on the Web.

When an NPR journalist says something is ready for editing, that journalist IS CONFIRMING that all such double-checking has been done. If a detail hasn't been nailed down, the journalist will tell the editor. When news is breaking and we're “live,” NPR makes clear what is known and what is not known.

### NPR EDITORS

- Will verify: That the double-checking has been done.
- But will still check: The accuracy of the reporting.

### WHEN MISTAKES ARE MADE

- We own them. THIS IS IMPORTANT: If you discover a mistake, email [corrections@npr.org](mailto:corrections@npr.org) and notify an editor or producer. [Senior managers need to be told about “serious” mistakes.](#)
- We correct them.

## A DOZEN THINGS TO DOUBLE CHECK

- SUPERLATIVES
- NAMES
- AGES
- TITLES
- INSTITUTIONS
- DAYS and DATES
- HISTORICAL “FACTS”
- LOCATIONS
- NUMBERS and CALCULATIONS
- QUOTES
- WEB ADDRESSES/PHONE NUMBERS
- GRAMMAR and SPELLING