

San Francisco Chronicle

ANONYMOUS SOURCES POLICY

Attributing facts to anonymous sources must be extremely rare and occur only when all other on-the-record options have been exhausted. The decision to use a confidential source can diminish the credibility of the story and the news organization, and, as appropriate, we should explain to readers why we are relying on anonymous sources. Editors should consult with legal counsel as appropriate.

Anonymity should be granted sparingly and only in cases where 1) the source has a reasonable basis to fear retaliation or other adverse consequences from speaking out; 2) the information the source will convey is significant; and 3) there is no other way to obtain it. Never allow a source to use the cloak of anonymity to disparage others or to express political opinions.