

Research Ethics

Professional Research Standards | General company policy

Atlantic Research and Field Services (ARFS) conducts research with respect for the people who contribute to it. This policy guides the Owner and Director, employees, contractors and field associates when planning, collecting and reporting information.

Make participation informed and voluntary

For interviews, surveys and consultations, explain who is conducting the research, its purpose, what participation involves, how information will be used, and any foreseeable risks. Obtain appropriate consent before participation and separate permission for recording. People may decline, skip questions or stop without pressure or penalty. Explain any limits on withdrawing information once it has been anonymized or included in completed analysis.

Protect confidentiality

Explain whether responses are anonymous or confidential and any limits on confidentiality. Collect only information needed for the agreed purpose, restrict access and follow the Privacy and Data Protection policy. Use grouped or deidentified findings where appropriate and consider whether details could identify someone in a small community. Publish identifying quotations or personal details only with appropriate permission or other lawful authority.

Engage respectfully and avoid unnecessary harm

Use clear, considerate language and respect different experiences, backgrounds and abilities. Consider practical accommodation and any additional safeguards needed for children or people whose circumstances may affect freely given consent. Avoid unnecessary sensitive questions, coercion or misleading promises. Pause an activity if it causes distress or presents an unexpected risk, and discuss a suitable response.

Use appropriate methods and report honestly

Choose methods suited to the research question and explain important limitations. Approach the work impartially, record information accurately and do not invent, alter or selectively present findings to support a preferred outcome. Disclose conflicts of interest and distinguish evidence from interpretation. Before observational, mystery shopping or other activities involving limited disclosure, document the justification, permissions and safeguards and obtain any required client or independent ethics approval. Obtain required ethics review before any project begins; this policy does not replace it.

Take responsibility and respond to concerns

Brief everyone involved on project consent, confidentiality and ethical requirements. Report concerns promptly to Charles Batstone, Owner and Director, at charles@atlanticresearch.ca or 902-249-0002. ARFS reviews concerns fairly, protects good faith reporting from retaliation and takes corrective action where needed. This policy is reviewed annually and when requirements change.