

Seattle Times policy on slurs and objectionable language

The Seattle Times recognizes that racial, ethnic, religious and other slurs are very hurtful to many readers, so we use them in the newspaper only when they are absolutely essential to the reader's understanding.

In the same vein, this is a family newspaper, and we want to encourage parents to read it with their children, not to have to hide it from them. Difficult subjects are unavoidable in news coverage, but profane and vulgar language almost always is avoidable. Therefore, we apply the same standard as we do with slurs: the language must be absolutely necessary to the reader's understanding.

To help us reach that standard, we do not dash out slurs or profanity. If the language is absolutely necessary to a reader's understanding, we will write the word out and take the heat. An alternative that works in some cases is to substitute (expletive) for the word.

If you think you have a case for putting slurs, profanity or other language of questionable taste into the newspaper, you must obtain the approval of an assistant managing editor, the executive news editor, or the managing editor. And don't assume that just because a word is part of a proper name it has automatic entrée into the paper.