



MEDIA INTERVIEW TIPS

Handling Interviews

- The goal is to advance your message
- Understand and acknowledge that the story is news
- Don't underestimate a reporter
- Stay focused on key messages

Preparation is the Key

- Know the media outlet
- Know the reporter's style and stories
- Know yourself
- Know your messages

Manage the Process

- An interview is NOT a friendly conversation
- An interview is a business meeting between individuals with different agendas
- Get the facts before responding to questions
- Always call a reporter back
- Ask what information the reporter is looking for
- Don't respond immediately if unsure

Eight Questions the Media Always Asks

- What happened?
- Who is in charge?
- Has this been contained?
- Are victims being helped?
- What should we do?
- Why did this happen?
- Did you have forewarning?

Interview Tips:

- Get accurate spellings of reporter and outlet
- Seize the moment
- Remember name of your organization
- Prepare for likely and tough questions
- Never say "No Comment"
- Not sure of a fact – admit it
- Never speculate
- Be concise
- Don't be evasive
- Be concrete
- Back up generalizations with specifics
- Avoid in-house language or jargon
- Make sure interviewer correctly rephrases your answers
- Don't fill silences
- Don't answer for other people
- Don't volunteer information
- Don't provide positive or negative reviews of questions to reporters
- Don't answer the hypothetical "What if" question
- Everything in "ON THE RECORD"
- Don't be caught off guard
- Literally stay on your toes

Source: NC State University, Raleigh, Crisis Preparedness Training, March 2010.
<http://plantsforhumanhealth.ncsu.edu/extension/marketready/pdfspt/NC%20MarketReady%20Crisis%20Communications%20Training%20Guide.pdf>

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