



Media Interview Tips

DO'S

- Before the interview, think about the two or three key messages you want to communicate – and remember to use them as you answer questions. Focus on your key messages, and have them in writing.
- Be persuasive, but concise.
- Identify your “news hook” and say why the story is newsworthy.
- Maintain credibility.
- Turn negative language into positive language. If a question contains negative language or words you don't like, do not repeat the reporter's negative words. Instead, state the answer in a positive way – one that explains what's true, rather than reiterating what is false.
- Concentrate on the audience and the message, not the medium and the messenger. Remember who your audience is – it's not the reporter.
- Stand up during telephone interviews. Comfort breeds wordiness.
- Have someone with you. They can remind you of points you may have forgotten and they can end the interview.
- Do ask if the reporter is planning on talking to others. This will give you a much better idea of how the story will be represented.
- Be aware of deadlines—respond to interview or information requests promptly.
- Be available after sending a news release or contacting a reporter.
- Offer to serve as a source for resource-related news stories.
- Assume you're always “on the record.”
- Make sure to ask when they plan on running the story.
- Be a resource for a reporter, even if it doesn't always result in a story.

DON'TS

- Don't lie, don't fabricate and don't speculate. It's better to say, “I don't know.”
- Don't be intimidated by silence. When you have given your answer, stop!
- Don't speak “off the record.”
- Don't say “no comment.” Everything you say to a reporter can be quoted; be prepared with as much information as is available.
- Don't give personal opinions.
- Don't ever lose your temper. The “best” material you can provide a reporter is an image of you losing your temper. Regardless of the situation, think of reporters as helpful tools with which to get your message across.
- Don't demand to know why a release wasn't run.
- Don't offer to buy drinks or meals and don't send gifts.
- Don't send blanket mailings or emails.
- Don't ask to review a story before it's printed.