

WORKING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

WHY IS A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESS IMPORTANT?

- Credibility and a good image have significant deterrent value.
- The news media are our key link to the public we serve.
- The public has a right-to-know.

**KNOW YOUR
ORGANIZATION'S
COMMUNICATIONS
POLICY.**

WHAT IS THE AGENCY'S COMMUNICATIONS POLICY?

- We work in a fishbowl.
- Be open and honest.
- Imagine your words on a billboard.

ALL REPORTERS ARE NOT ALIKE . . .

- Newspapers.
- Television.
- Radio.
- Trade press.

. . . but they all have deadlines and editors!

WHAT IS NEWS?

News is what editors think will interest their readers or viewers.

WHAT SHOULD YOU NOT TALK ABOUT?

- Criminal cases.
- Confidential business information.
- Enforcement-sensitive material.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF A REPORTER CALLS?

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- If you're in the office, refer the call to the Office of Public Affairs.
- If you're in the field, talk to the reporter about your area of expertise.

RULES FOR INTERVIEWS

When you are interviewed, you represent the entire Agency, so please keep these rules in mind . . .

1. Remember . . .

what you say will be
in print or on the air.

2. Be prepared.

**3. Know your
message . . .
and use it.**

4. Be honest and open. If you don't know the answer, say so.

5. Be understandable.

6. Stop talking.

**7. Make a
"no comment"
sound like
something more.**

COMMON PROBLEMS

- Misquotes.
- Out-of-context.
- Trick questions.

AVOIDING MISQUOTES

- Repeat your basic points.
- Nicely ask the reporter to summarize what you've said.
- Ask the reporter to read back your quotes.

OUT-OF-CONTEXT

Remember . . .

your answer appears without
the question.

TRICK QUESTIONS*

1. The "set-up."
2. The "either . . . or" situation.
3. Irrelevancy.
4. The empty chair situation.
5. The broadside attack.
6. The hypothetical situation.
7. Inconsistency.
8. No comment.

* Source: ICF Inc.

ANSWERING TRICK QUESTIONS

- Stay with your points.
- Don't repeat the charge.
- Don't respond to the "empty chair."
- Don't try to invent a solution to the hypothetical problem.