



Rules to live by when dealing with the news media



- Never, ever lie.
 - Never go off the record - Nothing is off the record.
 - Never say “No comment.”

If a reporter calls

- Don't hang up.
- Ask the reporter for their name and organization.
- If you have one, use your news release as a script to answer questions.
- Don't be afraid of silence. If you're done answering a question, stop and wait for the next one. Don't talk for the sake of filling silence.
- If you feel unprepared, buy yourself some time.
- Ask for their deadline and honor it.
- If you must delay, get a name and phone number and promise someone will call back.

If you get ambushed

- Resist your 'fight or flight' instinct.
- Don't run away, shut the door or hide your face.
- If you are unprepared, or need more information, be honest and say so. Then get the information you need and make sure to follow up.
- If the reporter persists, try to answer the questions if you can.
- Stop and think how you're going to respond.
- Don't be flip. A flip answer will get used.

If you agree to an interview

- If you have time to prepare, consider possible questions and answers.
- Decide the points you want to make and stress them throughout the interview.
- Prepare generic explanations.
- Don't be fooled by a “soft sell” - stay alert during the interview.
- Avoid jargon. Don't assume people know what you are talking about.
- If you're unsure, don't be afraid to excuse yourself if you need time to think.
- Dress comfortably, speak professionally, and be pleasant.



Print vs. broadcast media: What do they want?

- Print (and most bloggers): Details, long interviews, basic information.
- Television: Visual, talking heads, a juicy quote.
- Radio: Brief interviews, a sound bite to fill in a story.