TIPS FOR HANDLING THE MEDIA

Have a reason for being there

- Ask yourself what is your reason for being interviewed
- What reasons does the interviewer have for interviewing you?
- Don’t agree to an interview until you know why the interviewer wants to talk to you

Be prepared

- Know what your message is going to be
- Stick with your message!

You cannot win a fight with the media

- Never lose your temper with a reporter
- Always tell the truth
- If you don’t know the answer to a question, say so

Before every interview ask yourself these questions

- Who is my audience and what matters to these people?
- What is my goal in doing this interview?
- What is my message?
- How much time do I have?

Have an agenda

- Plan to use the interview wisely
- Jot down 3-5 points you want to make during the interview
- Make certain you get these points across before the interview is finished

Media traps to avoid

- Personal opinions: Remember that you represent your organization.
- Speculation: Limit your responses to what is known.
- Third-party discussions: Instead of discussing an organization other than your own, bridge back to the items on your agenda to re-establish control.
- Blind source: A blind source is a memo, report or comment from some individual with whom you are unfamiliar. Don’t discuss them!

Interruptions

Do not allow a reporter to interrupt you before you complete your answer. You have the right to finish answering the previous question before addressing another one. Simply continue talking, or ask the reporter to allow you to finish the answer.
Listen – Think – Respond

- Concentrate on each question
- Listen to the entire question
- Think of its implications
- Respond after consideration

Say “No” to “No Comment”

The phrase “no comment” implies that you are evading the issue, hiding something that would be damaging, or that you are guilty of some wrongdoing.

Never say “no comment.” Instead, give sound reasons why you will not or cannot answer a question (e.g., proprietary information, lack of authority, current or pending litigation, etc.).