

Interview Techniques

FIRST – understand the context of the interview

- What is the reporter’s name, publication, audience
- What is the context of the story (What does the reporter want you to discuss)
- What is the deadline (You do not need to speak immediately. You can schedule a time for the interview within the deadline)
- Take the time to prepare for the interview
- Remember, it is your time being given to the reporter. You can end the interview if you feel it is going on too long
- You cannot review or edit the news story

THEN - for the interview

- Use simple language
- Do NOT use jargon
- Be succinct – (*practice short answers for TV*)
- Help guide the conversation
- Lead with your main points
- Follow up with background if time allows
- Briefly answer questions – then stop
- Stay on point
- Stick to the facts; don’t speculate
- Stay with what you know, even if it disappoints the reporter
- Always tell the truth
- Be calm, professional and actively listen
- Correct inaccuracies, never repeat them
- Recast inaccurate questions or information “the real issue is,” “the first concern is,” “It is important to point out”
- Be aware of body language
- Ask questions to determine if the reporter understands what you said
- Summarize key points
- Offer to clarify further if needed and if time allows
- **Enjoy the interview**
- Lastly, News and Media Relations is available to help – to promote your expertise, offer tips, field media calls, etc.