



## Do's and Don'ts of Working With the Media

### Do These Things:

- ✓ Instead of “no comment,” tell them why you can’t comment and when you can give the answer.
- ✓ Provide access to a spokesperson – someone who has knowledge of the information requested. This must be provided as soon as possible after the request.
- ✓ Always respect a reporter’s deadline.
- ✓ Answer questions directly and as briefly as possible. For broadcast, this should be about 10 seconds. For newspapers, talk slowly and deliberately, stopping if necessary. The reporter is taking notes.
- ✓ Get to know the reporters covering your beat BEFORE a crisis occurs. These relationships can bring about more favorable coverage.
- ✓ Divulge new information as soon as possible – even if the news is bad. Follow-up the bad news with information on what you are doing to correct the situation as soon as possible.
- ✓ Be positive – structure your response in as favorable a light as possible, but don’t overdo it.

### Don't Ever Do These Things:

- Say “no comment.” Most people view this as a statement of guilt.
- Lie or mislead a reporter. They are like elephants and will never forget.
- Say something “off-the-record.” If you don’t want to see it on the front page of the paper, then don’t say it.
- Assume that the reporter is an expert on your subject.
- Tell a reporter everything you know. Choose three main points and stick to them.
- Avoid returning media calls. If the media really want a story, they will get it with or without you. Return the call, and you will at least get your side included in the story.
- Fake it. If you don’t know, say so. Tell the reporter that you will find out and get back to them . . . then do it!
- Argue with reporters. They have the last word. You may have won the battle, but you will lose the war.
- Avoid “exclusives.” Reporters are very competitive, and they will remember the time that you gave their story to a competitor.