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WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE MEDIA DO's AND DON'Ts

ALWAYS REMEMBER: Interviews are opportunities to build the image of your organization. Two cardinal rules to follow are:

1. Only say what you want reported
2. There is no such thing as *off the record*

When journalists hear phrases such as “no comment,” they suspect that something may be hidden which needs to be exposed. Always supply information. If you need time, don’t be afraid to say that you will call them later in the day with either the information they require or the name of someone who may be able to supply it.

DO...

- ...ask for details on the subject before hand
- ...be aware of the reporter's audience
- ...support your messages with facts
- ...keep your eyes on the host/interviewer and maintain eye contact
- ...be concise and brief in your responses
- ...take more than one outfit (preferably different colours) to the studio
- ...wear mid-tones or pastels instead of black and white
- ...speak in a conversational manner
- ...put statistics in easy-to-understand terms (eg., “one out of three” versus 33%)
- ...use personal experience to illustrate your point

DON'T...

- ...repeat a negative phrase or question in your response
- ...lead up to your point – make it immediately
- ...answer a question you don't fully understand. Ask for clarification.
- ...let interviewers interrupt you
- ...look at the camera (unless otherwise instructed)
- ...overuse statistics
- ...swivel in your chair, grip furniture or play with an object