



The following tips provide for a larger discussion of the mechanics for delivering impactful messages during media interviews.

- Know the ground rules for your interview. Who will conduct it? What length of time will be necessary? Will this forum be live or recorded? When will it air? Am I participating in a one-on-one interview? Will there be other guests? If so, who are the other experts?
- Always conduct yourself as if the microphone, phone line, etc. is “on” and that the interview has begun. Bear in mind, reporters will routinely think what you have to say is “on the record.”
- Never conduct interviews using a cell phone or a headset. A landline telephone offers the most reliable sound quality.
- Ahead of time, prepare yourself with the answers to three questions you want most to be asked during an interview.
- Please be advised that most interviewers may only be prepared on the subject roughly 20% of the time. Prepare for the 80% of folks who may not be as knowledgeable on the material. Frequently, interviewers rely on suggested interview questions provided to them ahead of time as well as the press release.
- Know when you have answered the question and stop talking. Often that silence gives the interviewer the opportunity to follow up on the subject or switch gears to another direction. If you don’t understand a question, feel free to ask for clarification. Don’t assume you know where they are headed.
- Regardless of the anticipated length of an interview, prepare three key talking points.
- Know what the news (or overriding subject) is on which you have been asked to comment. What delineates your voice on the matter from others? Consider why you were asked to comment and what you particularly have to offer.
- Prepare to deliver urgency to the precise subject. Why is this issue presently being discussed in the media? Share answers that relate to local audiences. Relate all examples and thoughts to the state or community where you are speaking.
- What is the call to action? Where can local stakeholders go to learn more and get involved? What web site should be mentioned? Don’t wait for an interviewer to ask. They won’t.