

# Talking to the Media in an Emergency

Tips for Effectively Dealing with the Media  
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# Overview

- ▶ Emergency Situations
- ▶ The New Reality of Media Relations
- ▶ Target Audience
- ▶ Preparing your Message
- ▶ Delivering your Message
- ▶ Common Mistakes
- ▶ Follow-up

# Emergency Situations



# The New Reality of Media Relations



- ▶ You need the media!
- ▶ Time Moves Fast
- ▶ Social Media moves even faster

# Target Audience



- ▶ Who Should Speak
- ▶ What is your Audience
- ▶ What is the Venue
  - Print
  - Telephone
  - Television
  - Remote Television
  - Radio
  - Internet Media

# Preparing your Message



- ▶ Never take the cold call
- ▶ Ask Questions
- ▶ What does your dam look like? Fact Sheets
- ▶ Define your message – Talking Points
  - Be Accurate
  - Be Honest
  - Be First

# Sample Talking Points

- ▶ Message: Dams are Necessary
  - Dams are important for drinking water, irrigation, recreation, and flood control.
  - Dams are an important part of Montana's Economy

# Sample Talking Points

- ▶ Message: Dam Safety
  - The Dam performed as designed.
  - Our main focus at this time is to maintain the integrity of the dam.
  - I am not familiar with those facts, so I can't comment on the matter.



# Sample Talking Points

- ▶ **Message: Dam Response**
  - Over the next days and weeks we will perform a full investigation into the failure of the dam, but at this time we are concerned about providing assistance to our downstream neighbors.
  - We are working with local officials on notifications and efforts to mitigate the damages.
  - I am going to refer you to the local response officials on downstream efforts.

# Delivering your Message



- ▶ Tips for Print Media
  - Be Prepared
  - Relax
  - Know your facts
  - Be honest
  - Off the Record

# Delivering your Message



- ▶ Tips for Phone Interview
  - Don't use speaker phone
  - Don't use a cellular phone
  - Stand Up
  - Convincing Phone Voice

# Delivering your Message



- ▶ Tips for Television Interview
  - Talk in Sound Bites
  - Use memorable words
  - Look your best
  - Concentrate on interviewer, not camera
  - Watch your body language
  - Stand up Interview, one foot in front of the other

# Delivering your Message

- ▶ Remote Television Interview
  - Check volume and get tips from crew, know how you are framed
  - Listen for the Question
  - Sit up Straight – Don't let your shoulder blades touch the back of the chair
  - Look Directly into the Camera
  - Look for the all-clear

# Delivering your Message



## ▶ Tips for Radio Media

- Talk Show vs. News
- If you are uncomfortable with volume in hearing , say so
- Remember the Interviewer's Name
- Resist Speaking Louder
- Use descriptive language

# Common Mistakes

- ▶ Keep answers short
- ▶ Get “your” message across
- ▶ Use your experience
- ▶ Use Plain Language
- ▶ Stay in you lane
- ▶ Question Facts
- ▶ Use body language
- ▶ Ramble
- ▶ Discuss Hypothetical Situations
- ▶ Argue
- ▶ Lose your temper
- ▶ Lie or bluff

Do's

Don'ts

# Common Mistakes

- ▶ The Tough Question
- ▶ Body Language
- ▶ Not Enough Time to Respond
- ▶ Technical Language
- ▶ Taking a Passive Role
- ▶ Over Talking
- ▶ Pause, Go To Answer
- ▶ Be the best version of yourself, know how the camera frames you.
- ▶ Its part of the job
- ▶ Keep it simple
- ▶ Your time, your location, your interview
- ▶ Dark humor?, nervous?, over explaining?, get your message down

The Problem

The Solution



# Follow-up



- ▶ Monitoring the Media
  
- ▶ Analyzing Public Information
  - The Right Information
  - Accurate Information
  - Timely Information
  - Did target audience respond appropriately
  
- ▶ Correcting Mis-Quotes

# Additional FEMA Training

- ▶ IS 29: Public Information Officer Awareness
- ▶ IS 702.a National Incident Management System Public Information
- ▶ G -290 Basic PIO Course
  - December 1-2 - Columbus
  - December 3-4 - Wolf Point