

Understanding the Media

First step in knowing what to do when you get a call from the media is to understand them and what they are looking for.

- They are very competitive and want to be the first to report the story. They work on tight deadlines.
- Return a call from the media as quickly as possible; you can't influence a story once its deadline has passed.
- They are interested in the truth.
- Nothing is off the record.
- They may not be familiar with background information. Use the opportunity to educate them about the problem.
- They ask many general questions.
- They may ask you the same question more than once.

Media Formats

	Advantages	Disadvantages	What they look for	What they <u>don't</u> look for
T.V.	Quick, combines visuals, sound and graphics	Stories are short, very tight deadlines, shows every few hours	Visuals, availability, style, controversy, the people angle, local interest, what it means to the common person	Big statistics, technical mumble jumbo, dry interviews, "man stands at podium" stories, events that have already happened
Radio	Portable, able to disseminate news to the public immediately	Rely on sound only, stories are very short	Availability, style, controversy, smooth interview, local interest, strong sound bites	Visuals, dry, long winded interviews, complex details, big statistics, events that have already happened
Print	Reach a broader audience, use more details in the story, dedicate more time to a story	Not as immediate or visual as T.V. or radio, no sound or moving picture	In-depth angle, controversy, local interest, background information	Stories without a local interest, events that have already happened, stories that T.V. and radio already has