

Interview Etiquette

Press conferences

- Pick your location carefully. Think about convenience, noise, lighting – and background visuals that tell your story.
- Plan your time around their workday.
- Have someone greet the press as they enter. Hand out fact sheets, prepared text, copies of graphics (hard copy and digital, if possible).
- Have a “master of ceremonies.”
- Use 2 or 3 people. Let the boss talk about policy, others talk from their experience.
- Speaking serially from the podium generally works best.
- Keep prepared statements short. Hand out text.
- Tell them when your most important point is coming (if you want to see it on the news.)
- Take questions. Know who will answer which types of questions.
- Allow for one-on-one follow-up interviews. Don’t leave too early.
- Call any major media who didn’t attend.
- Bring refreshments!

Office interviews

- Find out as much as you can before the interview – but don’t ask to preview questions.
- Be hospitable.
- Introduce key people in your office and get media people’s names.
(Don’t forget the cameraperson.)
- Prepare a “cheat sheet” in advance.
- Be aware of the background. Get rid of what you don’t want seen on TV.
- Think about visuals to accompany your interview.
- Have subjectmatter experts nearby to answer questions that you can’t.
- Make sure reporters have a way to get back to you for clarifications.
- Don’t ask to preview the article.

Phone interviews

- Have the person taking the call get as much information as possible: What is the story about? What type of information is he or she looking for? When is his or her deadline?
- If you’re caught off guard, say you’ll call back in 10 minutes.
- Don’t get too casual. Some people recommend standing up while you call.
- Don’t go “off the record.” If may come back to bite you.