
Annex B2: Media Management Guide

Interviewing “Do-s”

1. The conduct of deployed USAR Team members is a primary concern to INSARAG, the assisting and affected countries, and the local officials of the affected country.
2. Ask the reporter’s name. Then use it in your response.
3. Use your full name. Nicknames are not appropriate.
4. Choose the site (if possible). Make sure you are comfortable with the location of the interview. Consider what is in the background.
5. Choose the time (if possible). If you are comfortable waiting another five minutes, ask the reporter if it is OK. However, you should bear in mind that the reporter has a deadline.
6. Be calm. Your demeanour and apparent control of the situation are very important in establishing the tempo of evolving events.
7. Tell the truth.
8. Be cooperative. You have accountability to explain to the public. There is an answer to most questions, and if you don’t know it now, let them know you will work diligently to determine the facts needed.
9. Be professional. Don’t let your personal feelings about the media, or this reporter in general, affect your response.
10. Be patient. Expect dumb questions. Do not get angry to those ill-natured or ill-tempered questions. If the same question is asked again, repeat your answer without irritation.
11. Take your time. If you make a mistake during a taped or non-broadcast interview, indicate that you would like to start over with your response. If appearing live, just start over again.
12. Use wrap-around sentences. This means repeating the question with your answer for a complete “sound bite.”

Interviewing “Don’t-s”

1. Do not discriminate against any type of press or any specific press agency. You should be open to all media such as TV or radio, nationwide or local paper and foreign or national press.
2. Do not reply with “no comment.”
3. Do not give your personal opinion. Stick to the facts.
4. Do not go off the record. Anything you say can and will be used against you.
5. Do not lie. To tell a lie unintentionally is a mistake. To intentionally tell a lie is stupid.
6. Do not bluff. The truth will come out.
7. Do not be defensive. The media and their audience recognise a defensive attitude and tend to believe you are hiding something.
8. Do not be afraid. Fear is debilitating and is not a characteristic you want to portray.
9. Do not be evasive. Be upfront on what you know about the situation and what you plan to do to mitigate the disaster.
10. Do not use jargon. The public is not familiar with much of the language used in this field.
11. Do not confront. This is not the time to tell a reporter how much you dislike the media.
12. Do not try to talk and command a disaster at the same time. You will not do either well.
13. Do not wear sunglasses.
14. Do not smoke.
15. Do not promise results or speculate.
16. Do not respond to rumours.
17. Do not repeat leading questions.
18. Do not run down the efforts of the affected country or any other organisation.

19. Do not compare the response to one disaster with that of another.