

**How to  
deal with**

**THE MEDIA**



Presented By

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## **A DOZEN GUIDELINES TO WORKING WITH THE PRESS**

1. Treat members of the press as professionals.
2. Never say, "No comment".
3. Admit your mistake.
4. Use plain English.
5. If you don't know the answer, find it.
6. Give reporters your home and cell numbers.
7. Encourage reporters to cover big issues or events.
8. Pass news along.
9. Give reporters background information.
10. Alert the press when you cancel an event.
11. Tell reporters when they have done a good job.
12. Don't play favorites.
13. Ask your best friend what you do.
14. If a newspaper prints erroneous info, call the editor.

## **IF YOU ARE BEING INTERVIEWED**

1. Be sure what you are saying is true.
2. Anticipate questions.
3. Formulate responses.
4. Remember the reporter's first name.
5. Welcome the recorder.
6. Control the interview.
7. Don't be defensive.
8. Be aware of your nonverbal communication.

## TIPS FOR TV INTERVIEW

Before the interview:

- DO:**
1. Anticipate questions and prepare answers.
  2. Dress as you would for a day at the office.
  3. Consider any microphone...ON.
- DON'T**
1. Assume you can answer all questions extemporaneously, you'll be surprised.
  2. Overdress; you'll call more attention to yourself than your message.

During the Interview:

- DO:**
1. Look at the interviewer while responding.
  2. Use the reporter's first name.
  3. Ignore the people around you.
- DON'T:**
1. Look at the camera while responding.
  2. Fidget, cross legs, fold arms, rub face.

After the Interview:

- DO:**
1. Stay where you are until you are told you are off the air.
  2. Thank the interviewer and crew for making the interview possible.
- DON'T:**
1. Stride off the set immediately – the crew may need some final shots.
  2. Overlook common courtesy.

## **TRIED & TESTED PUBLIC INFORMATION PRINCIPLES**

- When a reporter calls with an unexpected question, promise to get the answer and call back **WITHIN 30 MINUTES. AND DO IT!!!!**
- Public Service Announcements (PSA's) on radio get results.
- The fact that you are present at this professional development meeting is news. Did you tell anybody? Will you when you get back home?
- Ask your best friend to tell you what you do. The gaps in your friend's knowledge will show you where to start with your public information effort.
- If a television reporter points a camera at your face, make your most important point in the first 20 seconds.
- Rarely send news releases that are longer than three **SHORT** paragraphs.
- If a newspaper prints erroneous information about your office, call an editor and point out the error. **DON'T** write a letter to the editor for publication.
- If a news release is not used, call an editor and ask what you can do to make your material more suitable for publication.
- Call or visit the media outlet until your material is used. This polite persistence works.
- Don't hesitate to say, "I don't know." Avoid saying, "No comment".

# Hancock County Commission

## Contact Information:

Administrator's name

Address

Telephone number

E-mail

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: **(date)** *Put the date that you want the information released*

"Title Here" *(Example: Commission announces groundbreaking for new water line.)*

CITY, STATE *(Example: New Cumberland, WV)* – This is the opening paragraph, and it should be really brief but explain all important points. This paragraph should be anywhere from 3 to 5 sentences. It should include the event that's going on, the date, time and important people.

The next paragraph goes into more detail. For example, this section could explain the importance of the event and why it's taking place. This is a good place to mention that the program and its participants depend on grants and other outside funding. In general, remember that most important information should be placed at the beginning of the article – information at the end is less likely to be read.

Another section could talk about the need for your particular program(s). This is where you'll go in detail about how it got started and what services you offer. Once again, you should keep paragraphs at about 3 to 5 sentences in length.

The very last paragraph is called the "boilerplate". It is usually no more than 2 to 3 sentences. *Example: This is just a part of the ongoing infrastructure improvement program the Commission has been working on for the past three years. The County Commission is applying for more grants and hopes to be making more announcements for water and sewage projects throughout the county.*

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(This mark lets the reader know that it is the end of the article.)