

Sample Tips for Speaking to the Media in an Incident

1. Be prepared. Understand all the facts, especially technical ones.
2. Be honest. Be brief. **Stick to the facts.**
3. Don't become defensive. Don't lose your temper or argue. Remain calm.
4. Do not make statements about responsibility until all the facts are known.
5. Pause and collect your thoughts before you respond to reporters' questions.
6. The interview is not over until the reporter leaves. Always be careful about what you say in the presence of a reporter before or after an interview--the microphone may still be on.
7. Don't respond to negative questions by repeating words that inflame the situation.
-*"Yes, it is a real tragedy...."*
8. Be alert to statements that begin:
-*"Isn't it true that ?"*
-*"Aren't you really saying...?"*
-*"How do you respond to...?"*
-*"Are you aware that...?"*
9. Avoid "what-if" questions. You can't predict the future.
 1. Do not say "No comment". Instead, try "I will have to check into the matter. What is your deadline and I will get back to you".
 2. **There is no such thing as "off the record"**. While many reporters will honor this, you cannot assume that all reporters will.
 3. If more than one spokesperson addresses the media, make sure that all are using the most current facts.