

Dealing With the News Media (The Basics)

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Ultimate Goal (PR Perspective)



Effectively handling the media

Get the reader, listener, viewer to say to themselves:

“I’m sorry this event happened, but I’m glad these people are dealing with it because they know what they are doing!”



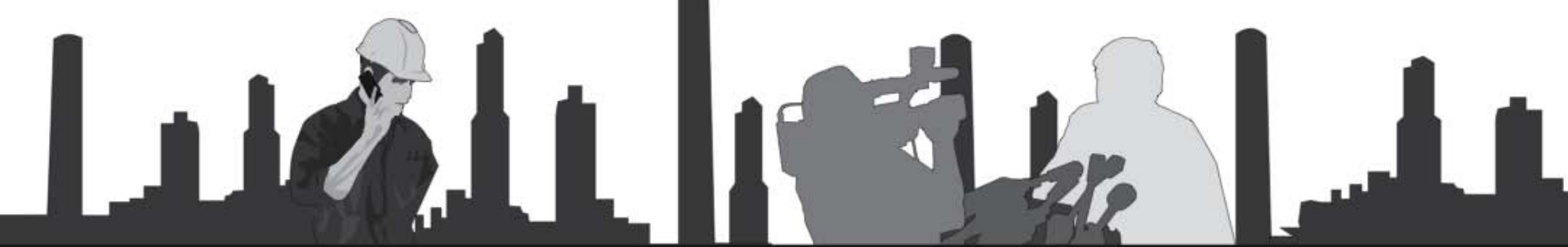
Crisis Media Relations: Don'ts

- **Don't** speculate
- **Don't** estimate damages
- **Don't** assign or accept blame
- **Don't** allow reporters or sightseers to wander around unescorted
- **Don't** discuss confidential information within earshot of people you **Don't** know
- **Don't** bluff or lie
- **Don't** be afraid to say you don't know something
- **Don't** say “no comment” or “off the record”
- **Don't** show emotion



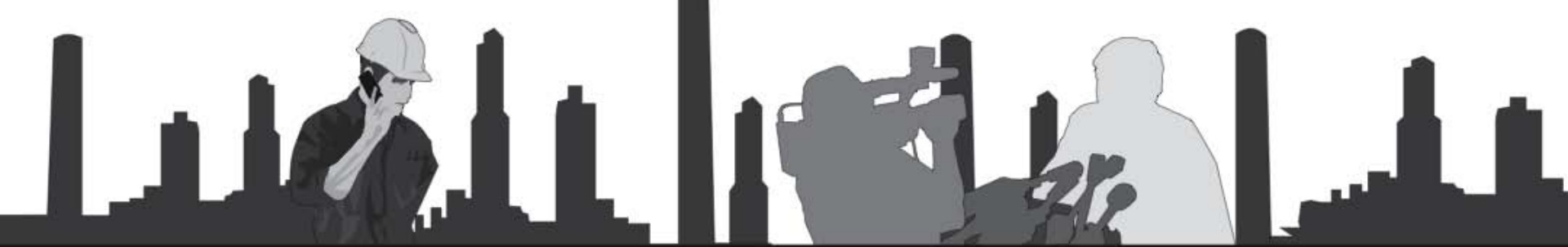
Crisis Media Relations: To Do

- **Do** be prepared--anticipate the type of information the public will need
- **Do** be calm & truthful
- **Do** identify yourself & provide your card
- **Do** speak only for your organization
- **Do** set up a safe, secure briefing area
- **Do** give a clear statement of facts, with a focus on what is being done about the issue
- **Do** practice the art of “bridging”
- **Do** speak in non-technical, no jargon, understandable language



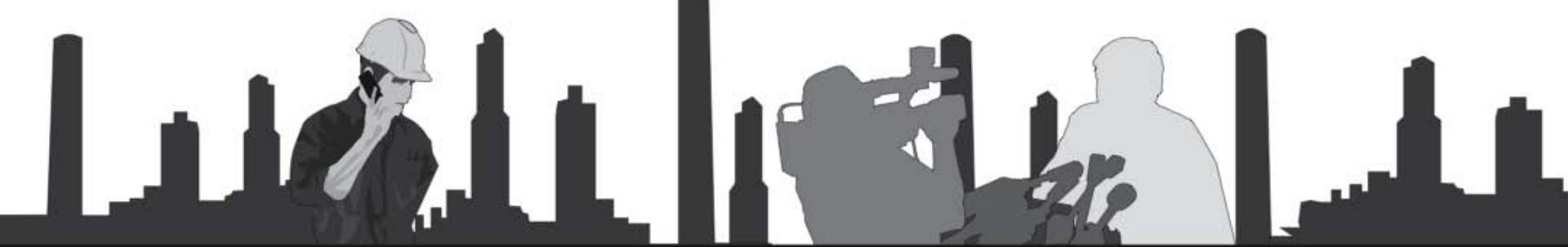
What The Public Needs to Know

- Who are you and why are you here?
- What has happened?
- Is anyone hurt?
- What is your greatest concern now?
- Is there any danger to people or the environment?
- Have any materials been spilled or released?
- What steps are you taking to control the situation?
- Are there evacuations or disruption of traffic or other services?
- Are there any other sources of information?



Common “Bridging” Techniques

- “What I really want to talk about is.....”
- “What’s most important is.....”
- “That’s really not my area of expertise... What I’m here to talk about today is.....”
- “Another point to remember is...”
- “Let’s take a closer look at.....”
- “Before we leave the subject, let me add...”
- “While _____ is certainly important, let’s not forget about _____”



Things You Can Always Say

- “We’re responding to the incident.”
- “Our personnel are well-trained.”
- “Safety is our top priority.”
- “We’re committed to working closely with all of those impacted by the incident, including other response agencies.”
- “We’re committed to being a source of accurate information.”



Tips for One-on-One Interviews

- You can use notes, but don't be a "prisoner" to them
- Eye contact should be made with the reporter
- Don't slouch, stand comfortably with feet shoulder-width apart
- Watch your body language, including "nodding" when listening to questions
- Remember, you're not just there to answer questions; instead you are there to provide key information that demonstrates your organization is on top of the issue!!



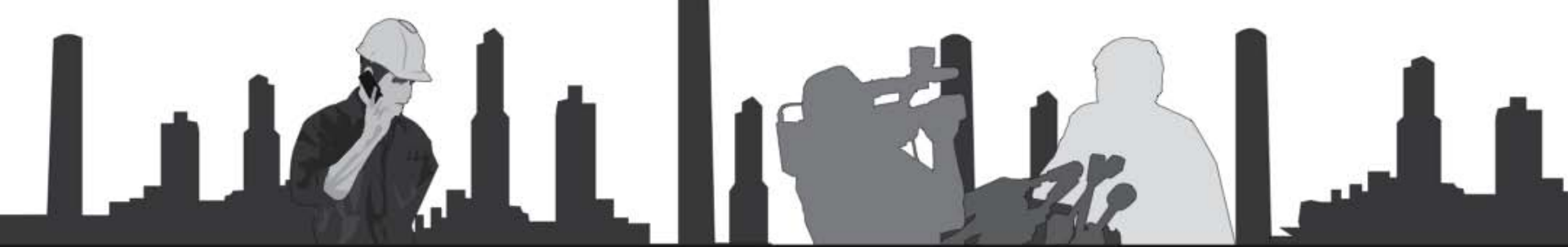
Group Interviews/Press Conferences

- You can use notes/written statements, but don't be a "prisoner" to them
- Be comfortable; don't grab the podium in a "death grip" or lean in towards microphones
- When making statements, use the "eye sweep" technique to speak to all areas of the room
- When asked a question look directly at the questioner when responding
- Control your space & surroundings – be aware of what is behind you when speaking to TV reporters



In ALL Media Relations' Situations

- Bring your **control** into the setting & take your **control** out of the setting
- End interviews & press conferences on **YOUR** timetable not those of the reporters
 - Don't wait to be excused – make your break !!
- Stay focused on the points you wish to make rather than reporters' questions
- Provide a contact name and means of contact (phone, e-mail, etc.)



Writing Effective Statements

- Quickly summarize “high-level” facts (“who”?, “what”?, “where”?, “when”?...stay away from “why”?)
- Next transition into key steps your organization is taking to respond
- Use “action-oriented” phrases – “responding to”; “activated”; “mobilized”; “cooperating with”; “communicating to”; “focused on”; “investigating”
- As an outline, use “What the Public Needs to Know”
an in formulating statement ask: What is it that I want people to know about how we’re responding?