



# Coffee Break Training - Fire Prevention and Public Education

## Working With the Media

No. FM-2011-13 December 1, 2011

**Learning Objective:** The student shall be able to describe effective interview techniques to use when interacting with the news media.

**M**edia interviews are opportunities to communicate life-saving fire safety and prevention information. Tell your community how to stay safe.

Whether you're a seasoned veteran or a rookie at media relations, it's always a good idea to keep these interview pointers in mind:

1. Carry the *Fire Spokesperson's Pocket Media Guide* with you. Quickly scan it before you begin an interview.
2. Determine the one or two safety and prevention tips you want to mention in addition to the facts of the story.
3. Prior to the interview, mention to the reporter that you would like to provide a fire safety and prevention tip or direct people to additional information.
4. Look at the reporter, not into the camera, during television interviews.
5. Avoid answering the reporter's questions with only "yes" or "no." Always speak in full sentences.
6. Remove sunglasses and chewing gum and turn off your phone before conducting the interview.
7. Ask for the reporter's name and contact information, and the name of the media outlet so that you can follow up with more information or suggest a feature story about fire safety and prevention.
8. Provide your name and contact information in case the reporter has questions or needs more information.
9. Emphasize the importance of including a safety and prevention message to the reporter. This may prevent the message from ending up on the cutting room floor.

It may feel strange or even pushy the first few times you take the lead and add safety and prevention messages during an interview. But remember that your community looks to you for safety information. Providing this is one of the most important things you can do as a community leader. With practice, it will become more natural, even second nature, to share life-saving safety and prevention tips during interviews.

For more information and resources to help you work with the media, including the *Fire Spokesperson's Pocket Media Guide*, visit the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) website at [www.usfa.fema.gov/media](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/media)



The *Fire Spokesperson's Pocket Media Guide* includes helpful interview tips to use when interacting with the news media.

For archived downloads, go to:

[www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/coffee-break/](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/coffee-break/)