

Sound Bites 101...Working with the Media Handling Questions

1. Prepare: Know your key messages/sound bites you want to get across!
2. Restate the question to make sure you understand it properly.
3. Thank the speaker for the question, using their name.
4. Start and finish your answer by looking at the person who asked the question.
5. Bridging Comments:
 - What is important here is....
 - That is an interesting point you make...let's examine the facts...
 - I appreciate that question, however; the real focus should be...
 - That is an interesting description of the problem; however I would describe it differently...
 - Thank you...The point I want to make is...
6. Suggestions:
 - Use simple, non-technical language; avoid "library-ese."
 - Avoid no comment responses.
 - Avoid the use of "but."
 - Do not repeat negative or inflammatory words.
 - Avoid throat clearing, verbal pauses (ah, um, etc.).
 - Know their name – use their name in the answer.
 - Stay in your "playground." If someone asks five questions, answer only those you want to answer.
 - Stay focused on what you want to convey. If someone interrupts you, stop, and then continue where you were. Do not let them disrupt your message.
 - Don't end by asking, "Does that answer your question?"