

10 THINGS TO DO WHEN THE MEDIA COMES CALLING

1. Clear your schedule.

Speed is critical when responding to viral misinformation or a media crisis. When journalists call, **do not wait to engage**. Postpone other non-critical commitments.



2. Gather your experts.

When faced with a false or misleading claim gaining steam in the media, bring your staff together to quickly ascertain the facts. **Don't go it alone**—the clock is ticking.

3. Delegate x2.

One staff member should **handle, track, and respond to journalists' inquiries**, while another can **take charge of physical logistics** (media staging locations, greeting journalists, security, website, or other tasks).



4. Focus on the truth; don't repeat the lie.

Draft a statement that clearly states the truth, providing as many **facts and supporting evidence** as possible. Use plain language in an easy-to-read format, such as FAQs, bullet points, or short paragraphs.



5. Craft your release plan.

Decide how you'll **release your statement as soon as possible** (and within hours of the initial inquiry) via news conference, press release, social media, or other platforms. Get input from your logistics staffer on what is feasible and what support is being provided from government allies.

6. Alert the media.

The staffer handling media inquiries should alert those journalists and other local media contacts with details of the release plan. Include the **who, what, where, when, and why**.

7. Take a moment to gather yourself.

If holding a news conference, ask your supporting staff beforehand to **stand behind you** as a symbol that you are not facing the storm alone.

8. Showtime!

When delivering your office's response to the media, speak slowly and calmly. Enunciate and make eye contact with the journalists, not the camera lenses. Voters are looking to you, a **trusted voice**, for an authoritative, professional response.

9. Take questions following your statement.

Walking away without taking questions from journalists can appear defensive and not transparent. **Rely on your expertise**. Instead of "I don't know," use "That's an important question, and we're looking into that right now." Alternatively, refer them to someone who can answer the question in accordance with office policy.



10. Post, post, post.

Immediately post your full statement on all of your office's platforms. For continued content, break the statement up into smaller items. If reputable news outlets share your conference or other video statements, consider posting links to those. If government allies record your statement, publish it to your website.

