



# NATCA



# MEDIA GUIDE

Tips for preparing for and being interviewed by members of the press

## BEFORE the interview

- Research your topic thoroughly. Know the reporter, the publication/program and the audience.
- Make a list of questions the reporter might ask and outline your answers ahead of time.
- Craft your key messages for the interview. The more concise, the better.

## DURING the interview

- Take control of the interview. Answer questions, but always steer the conversation back to your key messages.
- Know that there is no such thing as “off the record.”
- Don’t be fixated by the questions. Bridge back to your facts and key messages by using phrases such as:

*“That’s a great question, but the bottom line here is that ... (deliver key message)”*

*“What’s really the main issue is that ... (deliver key message)”*

## DURING the interview

- Avoid saying “no comment,” using ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answers, jargon and acronyms. Short answers are better than long, complex answers.
- Do not speculate or lie. If you don’t know the answer to a question, say “I’m not sure” – reporters appreciate honesty above all. If appropriate, assure the reporter you will find out and provide the needed facts in a timely manner.
- Speak clearly and in complete sentences.
- Use examples and specifics to illustrate your messages.
- Listen carefully to each question before responding. It’s fine to pause and allow a moment of silence before answering.
- Don’t let false charges, facts or figures offered by a reporter stand uncorrected.
- Never repeat a reporter’s negative statement. Frame a positive response that bridges back to your key message.
- Bring a business card to give the reporter in case he or she has follow-up questions or needs clarification.

## TELEVISION interview

- Dress simply and professionally.
- Avoid wearing intricate or busy patterns.
- Avoid large, shiny or noisy jewelry; do not wear hats or anything with an insignia on it other than NATCA or NATCA related insignia.
- Make a conscious effort to sit still if you are seated in a swivel chair.
- Look at the reporter/interviewer – not the camera – unless you are instructed otherwise.

## TELEPHONE interview

- Give the interview your full attention; take the call in a quiet, secluded room or area.
- Avoid chewing gum, eating, smoking and/or drinking during the interview.
- Have your main messages and answers in front of you. Use the notes as a reference, not a script.

# CONTACT

If you are contacted by the media, immediately alert the NATCA National Office Public Affairs Liaisons:  
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