

A Publication of the  
**National Wildfire  
Coordinating Group**

Sponsored by  
United States  
Department of Agriculture

United States  
Department of the Interior

National Association of  
State Foresters

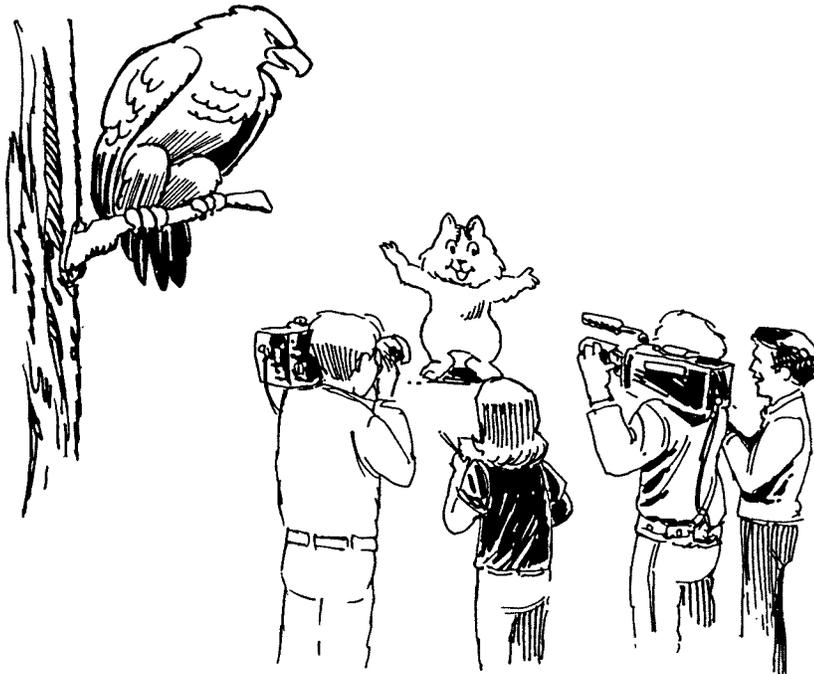


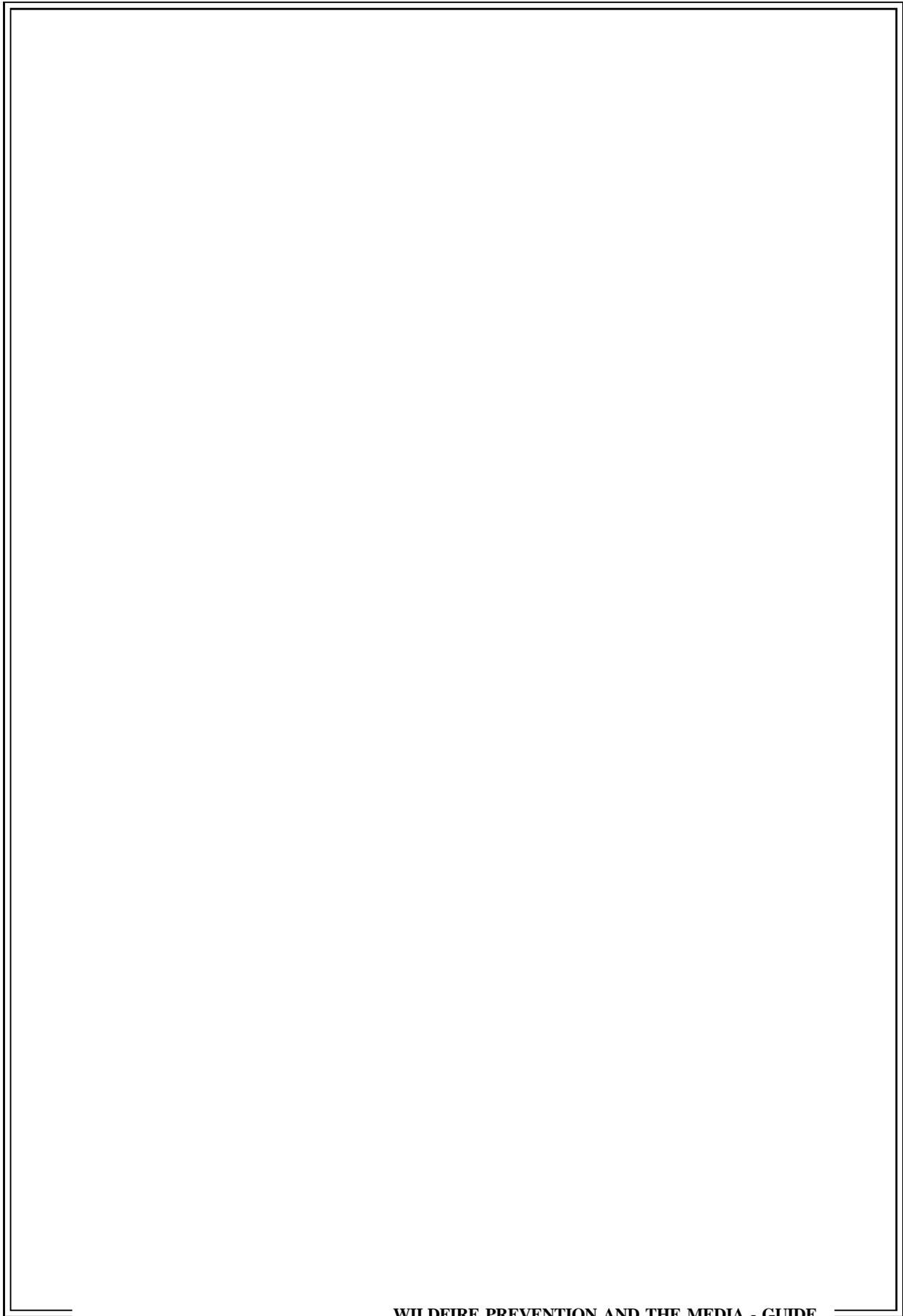
# Wildfire Prevention and the Media

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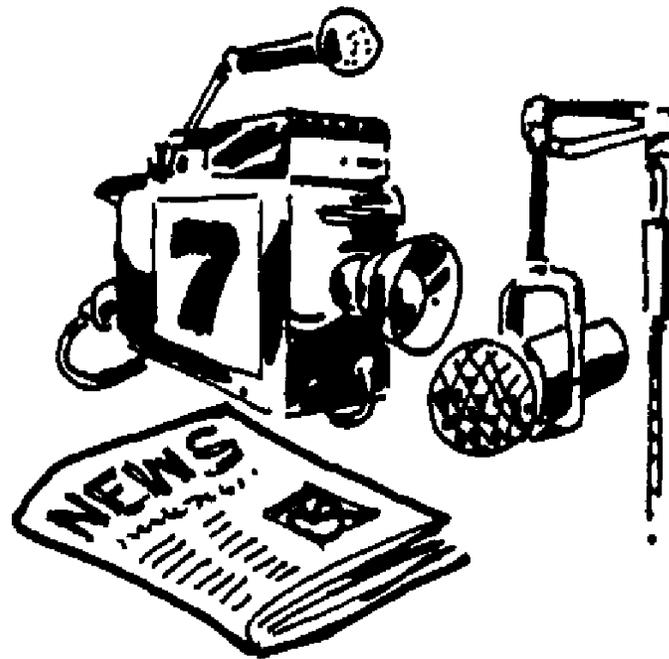
**January 1998**

**NFES 1877**





# WILDFIRE PREVENTION AND THE MEDIA



# NOTES

## **PREFACE**

This wildfire prevention guide has been developed by an interagency development group with guidance from the National Interagency Fire Center, Fire and Aviation Training Support Group under the authority of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

# NOTES

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This **Media Guide** is one in a series of Wildfire Prevention Guidebooks. The information in this guide addresses the role of the media in a fire prevention program, and provides guidance for working with the media to more effectively achieve program goals.

This guide was developed by a group of Fire Prevention and Public Affairs experts who contributed their time, energy and knowledge to the task of providing this information for fire prevention personnel.

# NOTES

## 1.2 THE MEDIA



## **1.21 WHY WORK WITH THE NEWS MEDIA?**

During fire season, stories about major wildfires that besiege the nation's forests and rangelands, as well as surrounding communities, appear almost daily in newspapers and on radio and television broadcasts. But how many of these stories take the time to present information about wildfire prevention?

Although the term "News Media" often inspires fear and loathing, the fact is they provide the most effective means for you to increase awareness of and commitment to wildfire prevention in your community. Working with the news media enables you to communicate wildfire prevention messages to more people than through direct contact. But working with the media can be intimidating even for those who interact with reporters on a regular basis. This guide is intended to make it easy to work with the media to achieve fire prevention goals.

Communicating wildfire prevention messages to the public, through the news media, requires an aggressive, proactive approach. You cannot wait for the media to come to you for information—you must go to them.

Advice and technical support in working with the media is available from agency Public Affairs Specialists or Public Information Officers. Most of these specialists work with the news media on a regular basis and have established invaluable contacts. If you plan to work with the media, contact your agency Office of Public Affairs or Public Information Office ahead of time to ensure that efforts are coordinated.

## 1.22 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

**First and foremost**, start with the right mindset. Think of the media as an ally, not an adversary. Try to build a strong, positive partnership with the media. You have information the public will be interested in — how to prevent wildfires that can destroy their public lands, natural resources, and possibly even their homes — while the media has unequalled access to the public. On the flip side, sometime in the future the media may need accurate, useful information on wildfire-related issues and can turn to you as a primary source.

**Second**, treat all news media equally and honestly! Reporters will always try to outshine the competition by digging for details and finding a new spin on a story. Provide equal access — release the same information at the same time to everyone. Being labeled as a source that “plays favorites” can destroy your credibility. The only exception to this is when a reporter calls on their own initiative and wants to do a story on fire prevention.

**Third**, remember that reporters are extremely pressed for time. Based on this premise, approach them in an intelligent, concise manner and chances are they will respond positively.

## 1.23 TARGETING YOUR AUDIENCE

Wildfire prevention messages must be focused to be effective. Our country consists of people of many different cultures, of many different ages, and of many different interests. You need to speak to each of them differently, in language they can understand.

Selecting target audiences isn't as difficult as it might sound. Simply determine WHO you want to reach with your wildfire prevention message—and don't try to reach everybody. WHO you want to reach will then determine the method you use to reach them. The message you send to each target audience will be different.

### **Target audiences for fire prevention messages might include:**

- Preschoolers
- Off-Road Vehicle users
- Outdoor recreationists
- Hunters
- Children playing with matches
- Wildland/urban interface homeowners

### **Messages targeted for these groups might include:**

- Prevent wildfire
- Use approved spark arresters
- Don't burn toilet paper, bury it
- Put campfires dead out
- Don't play with matches
- Protect your home from wildfire

## 1.24 MESSAGES: WHO, WHAT, WHEN

Analyze your community and the wildfire prevention problems that need to be addressed. If arson isn't a problem in your area, don't waste time talking about it. Instead, focus your efforts on problems that do exist near you.

Next, determine the groups of people that can help alleviate the problems—they are your target audience. Then decide what they need to know to help prevent wildfires — that's your message.

Find out what newspapers your target audiences read, what radio stations they listen to, and what television stations they watch—those are the media outlets you need to work with.

Next, determine the most appropriate time to deliver your messages. Be creative! Wildfire prevention messages can be linked to a wide variety of events and activities year-round, not just during Fire Prevention Week or on the 4th of July. The following timeline provides some suggestions that you can tailor to your community to meet your wildfire prevention needs.

### January

- *Take Wildfire Prevention Education Program to Grade Schools* - Contact local schools and let them know you are available to present lessons on wildfire prevention. Invite the media to cover one of your presentations.
- *Present Wildfire Prevention Program to Employees at an All Employee Meeting* - Encourage your co-workers to work in wildfire prevention messages, where possible, when they are talking to the news media about their program areas. For instance, an outdoor recreation planner can emphasize the need for people to make sure their campfires are dead out while talking to the news media about camping opportunities on public lands.

### February

- *Snow Pack and Potential for Fire Season* - Whether your area is having more or less snow than usual, issue a news release or hold a press conference to alert the media to the effect that current conditions could have on fire season. Emphasize prevention efforts.

### **March**

- *Special Prevention Activities* - Schedule Smokey Bear to appear with the local high school basketball team, university team, minor league, or major league team in your area. Invite local sportscasters and sportswriters to cover the event.

### **April**

- *Benefits of Prescribed Fire* - Many Units conduct hazard reduction burns in the spring. Invite the media to watch the burns take place and explain how they reduce the risk of large, unwanted wildfires.
- *Wildland/Urban Interface Protection* - Conduct a “Show Me” tour for the media of homes in the wildland/urban interface that are well protected — and not so well protected. Emphasize the steps that homeowners should take to protect their property.
- *Firewise Landscaping* - Issue a news release that provides information about the types of plants homeowners can use in their yards to help protect their homes.

### **May**

- *Memorial Day Weekend* - The first holiday weekend of the summer season offers a prime opportunity to issue a news release that reminds outdoor recreationists to prevent wildfires when camping, backpacking or mountain biking.
- *Fire Briefing* - Conduct a media briefing, in conjunction with the fire management staff, to preview the upcoming fire season for reporters. Highlight your wildfire prevention efforts and encourage reporters to incorporate fire prevention messages when they cover wildfires.
- *Newsletters* - Nearly every group, club and organization has a newsletter and they are frequently looking for material. Offer to write some wildfire prevention tips or an article for their publication.

### **June**

- *Pre-School/Day Care Presentations* - Offer to conduct wildfire prevention programs for local preschools and day care centers. Invite the media to cover your presentations.

- *Fireside Chats* - Fireside chats at campgrounds and parks enable the agency to reach outdoor recreationists directly. Issue a news release to notify the public about these events.
- *Public Service Announcements (PSAs)* - Develop and distribute radio PSAs to remind outdoor recreationists to be careful with fire.
- *Talk Shows* - Offer local television and radio talk shows an opportunity to do a show about wildfire prevention. Also offer to appear on “morning drive” radio shows with deejays to discuss prevention.

### **July**

- *4th of July* - This holiday offers a wonderful opportunity to remind celebrators of the fire dangers associated with fireworks and fireworks restrictions on public lands. Issue a joint news release, or hold a joint press conference, with other local wildfire fighting agencies.

### **August**

- *Smokey and the American Cowboy Program* - Arrange for Smokey to appear at local rodeos (he isn't limited to Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association events). Invite local sportscasters and sportswriters to cover the event.
- *Fairs* - County and State fairs offer terrific opportunities to convey fire prevention messages. Make wildfire prevention part of an agency booth and/or arrange for Smokey to appear. Ask the fair manager to include a wildfire prevention message in maps and schedules of events. Invite the media to include your booth in their fair coverage.
- *Incident Information* - Incorporate wildfire prevention messages when you provide information to the media about wildfires burning in your area. Urge Fire Information Officers to do the same.

### **September**

- *Hunting Season* - Issue a news release, or hold a press conference, in conjunction with a local hunters association or sportsmen's society. Offer safety tips to hunters about to head for the high country and remind them to be careful with fire.
- *Smokey and Sports* - Arrange for Smokey to appear at high school, college, and pro-football games in your area. Invite local sportscasters and sportswriters to cover the event.

### **October**

- *Fire Prevention Week* - Join forces with other wildland and structural firefighting agencies to sponsor special activities and events. Invite the media to cover them.

### **November**

- *End of Year Fire Report* - Compile data from the fire season in conjunction with the fire management staff and release it to the media. Include information about the negative effects on public lands from human-caused wildfires that could have been prevented.

### **December**

- *Civic Groups* - Talk to local clubs and organizations that are always looking for guest speakers about the agency's wildfire prevention program. Offer to write an article on prevention for the organization's newsletter.

These are some of the ways to keep the media involved in wildfire prevention throughout the year. Use your imagination to expand these ideas and create your own avenues to deliver a wildfire prevention message through the media.

You may also want to spend some time educating other natural resource specialists in your agency about how to incorporate wildfire prevention messages when they are working with the news media.

For instance, if someone on the range or wildlife staff is being interviewed about the effects of drought on forage, they can say that dry conditions mean the fire danger is also high and people need to be careful.

Wildfire prevention messages can be creatively incorporated into almost any natural resource management activity if the staff understands how to do it.

## **1.25 UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA**

The ability to deal effectively with any subject is directly related to how much you know about it. The more you understand, the more you are comfortable dealing with any aspect of that subject.

A person who anticipates being a part of any media presentation should learn as much as possible about the media in general as well as each specific sector of the media.

We're all exposed to the media so frequently that we are quite familiar with their end products — broadcast programs, newspapers, periodicals, and trade journals. Many of us therefore assume that we also know a great deal about the workings of the media and their personnel. That assumption isn't always correct.

Different types of news media have different needs. Along with identifying your audience and targeting your message, it is important to understand the different media's needs — and cater to them — in order to effectively convey your fire prevention message to the public.

### **WIRE SERVICES**

Wire services, such as Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI), supply information to virtually every broadcast and print news operation in the country. They generally feature news of regional or national interest — fire prevention stories often meet that requirement.

Wire services have continuous deadlines and need the most up-to-date information.

AP and UPI have offices in major cities in each state. For example, in Idaho AP is located in Boise while in California the wire services have offices in San Francisco, Sacramento, Fresno and Los Angeles. Depending on your geographical area, you may be served by an out-of-state office. Northern Idaho, for instance, is served primarily by the Associated Press office in Spokane, Washington. Find out where the wire services are in your state or which office serves your area.

Wire services have editors in charge of each office who supervise staffs of news writers. These news writers gather information by telephone using newspapers, news releases, and tips from subscribers. They have few field reporters.

In addition to news stories, wire services print calendars of events called “Daybooks” for subscribers. If you are having a press conference or special event, get it listed here.

In some major cities, there are regional wire services such as City News Service in Los Angeles. If you are close to a major metropolitan area, check it out.

## **PRINT**

The print media, primarily daily and weekly newspapers, need highly detailed information and like to have several sources to interview. They appreciate local story ideas that relate to current national news, especially human interest stories. Fire prevention can often fill this need. The print media need photo opportunities and can also use maps and graphics.

The City Editor usually decides what stories reporters and photographers will cover. The Features Editor also can provide ongoing coverage of your wildfire prevention program.

Deadlines vary depending on the type of publication. Morning newspaper deadlines are usually in the late afternoon or early evening the day before publication. Afternoon newspapers usually have an early morning, same-day deadline. Weekly newspapers have one designated deadline day per week. Magazine deadlines can be as much as six to eight months prior to publication.

## **TELEVISION**

Television is a powerful medium for your wildfire prevention message. The most important thing to remember about television reporters and photographers is that they want to be where the action is.

Television news needs two key elements — strong visuals and “soundbites.” Interesting and exciting visuals such as flames at a prescribed fire, Smokey Bear with children, and fireworks being demonstrated in dry grass with an engine standing by will enhance a story on fire prevention. “Soundbites” are the answers people give on camera to questions asked by reporters. They are the broadcast equivalent of quotes. Soundbites should be short — no more than 30 seconds. Agency employees should appear on camera in uniform when possible.

Television reporters usually have several stories to do in one day, and a mid-afternoon deadline, so they need to be in and out quickly.

In most cases, you will work with a reporter and photographer team but sometimes you will deal with a “one-man band” photographer who also serves as the reporter or who will have someone call you later for the information behind the pictures. Assignment Editors usually determine what stories reporters will cover.

Most television stations produce a local public affairs program once a week to meet Federal Communication Commission requirements. These programs, which range in length from 30 minutes to one hour, can provide a great opportunity to talk to the public in depth about your fire prevention program.

If you want a copy of your television story, try to find out when it will be broadcast and tape it yourself since most stations charge a fee for a copy of news stories. Another source of television exposure may be the local cable company. Most cable operators run community billboards on unused channels, and some even have a community access channel for local programs.

## **RADIO**

Radio is an often-forgotten medium, but sometimes it can provide the most effective means to reach your target audiences.

Radio news is immediate and ready to deliver your message NOW. Most radio stations broadcast local news at least once an hour. In a breaking news situation, radio can deliver the story as it develops.

Radio needs current, concise information with short soundbites. Small radio stations often have a one person news staff who will appreciate your help in delivering an interesting feature story. Larger stations have reporters, producers, news directors, program directors and public affairs directors.

Most radio stations also produce a local public affairs program once a week to meet Federal Communication Commission public service requirements. These programs, which usually last from 30 minutes to one hour, can provide a great opportunity to talk to the public in depth about your wildfire prevention program.

## **ON-LINE NEWS SERVICES**

With the growth in popularity of the Internet, many traditional media outlets now offer news on-line, in addition to their regular publications or broadcasts. In addition, a number of new companies are offering news on-line only. The needs of on-line news services are a combination of the needs of print and broadcast media outlets. On-line news service stories may be very brief summaries or they may be highly detailed, lengthy pieces. On-line news service stories may be accompanied by photographs, videotape, graphics, audio, or all four. With only rare exceptions, you will be asked to provide information to on-line services over the telephone. If they want visuals to accompany the story, they will usually ask you to provide them, probably via e-mail. On-line news services update their stories very frequently—they may have deadlines as often as every half hour for a breaking story.

## 1.26 GETTING STARTED

Now that you've identified wildfire prevention problems in your community, determined target audiences and developed appropriate messages, and you understand the different media's needs, it's time to start contacting your local news organizations.

The first thing to do is compile a list of the news media in your local area. Check the telephone book or yellow pages to see if there are any wire services such as Associated Press or United Press International, daily or weekly newspapers, radio stations, television stations, or magazines in your area. Directories that list news media by city, state, and region can also be purchased or found in local libraries.

The most commonly used directories include *Bacon's Publicity Checker*, *Ayer's Directory of Publications, Editor and Publisher's Yearbook*, *Broadcasting Yearbook*, and the *All In One Directory* (Gebbie Press). Since even the most current issue of a telephone book or media directory may already be dated by the time it is published, always verify all information by phone.

Once your list of local news media is complete, you are ready to start using the tools and conducting activities outlined in the next section of this guidebook.

## 1.27 YOUR ROLE

The media control the content and length, and the times and frequencies of publications and broadcasts.

Your role may be to give one short comment for the evening news about wildfire prevention. Or, you may be the sole guest on a one-hour radio call-in program. Or, you may be chosen for a personality profile in the supplement of your Sunday newspaper. In every case, a media representative will be present to ask questions, screen phones, limit time, write the final copy, and generally control the flow of interactions to reach the intended goal of the final product.

From your standpoint as the interviewee, an interview of any length with a capable interviewer should be a comfortable and invigorating experience. You'll be talking about one of your favorite topics, about which you are knowledgeable (the topic may even be you!). You will have many opportunities to make the positive points for which you've prepared.

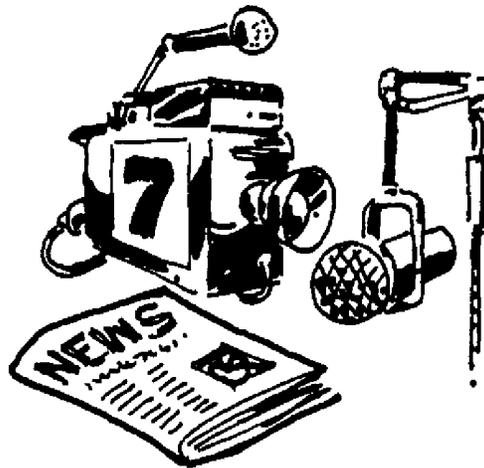
There may be rare occasions when the interviewer, for any number of reasons, will be a hindrance to you in reaching your interview goals. Many times, however, the interviewer, whatever his or her view of the subject, will be of considerable help. The interviewer will keep you focused and will insist upon substantive answers to his or her questions.

- Welcome the interview challenge.
- Master your role as the interviewee.
- Be just as good in your role as the interviewer is in his or her role.

## 1.3 MEDIA INTERVIEWS

It is very important to understand just what print, radio, and television interviews can and cannot do.

Most times, of course, you are not able to choose the type of interview in which you will participate. You are normally asked by a station or publication representative. To be most effective, you should initiate contact yourself, thereby selecting the medium and format best suited to your strengths and your message. The ultimate goal is to be equally effective in all sectors of the media.



## 1.31 CHARACTERISTICS OF MEDIA INTERVIEWS

The general characteristics of media interviews are listed below.

### **A television interview**

- gets across more of your personality, but less of your message.
- is actually you saying what you choose to say.
- if taped, may result in part of what you say being edited out.
- usually allows less time for you to speak than print (radio is often shorter than TV interview), sometimes only a matter of seconds.

### **A radio interview**

- gets across more of your message, but less of your personality.
- is actually you saying what you choose to say.
- if taped, may result in part of what you say being edited out.

### **A print interview**

- *may* get your message across in some detail, and *may* accurately reveal aspects of your personality as well.
- usually allows more time for you to speak than television or radio.
- results in someone writing their impressions of you and of what you may have said.
- sometimes fails to capture the attitude and nuances of your delivery. Things you say (particularly if they are humorous or said “tongue-in-cheek”) may not read the same in print. Readers can't see your smile.

## 1.31.1 TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

A media interview can be one question and a brief answer — or a conversation over many hours that covers a wide variety of topics.

A broadcast news interview normally reaches a larger audience than an interview on any other type of program, but exposure time is usually very brief. Exposure time on a talk show, for example, would be considerably longer than on a news program, but fewer people would normally be watching.

A situation may arise where you would be required to give a number of interviews on basically the same issue. Such interviews could be back-to-back during a period of a few hours, or extended over a period of months. To add variety or to ease the boredom of being repetitious, there is the temptation to change your answers or restate your message. You *must* resist the tendency to do this. Take each interview as the first — it is for the interviewer — and keep your same phraseology and attitude.

Most television, radio, and print interviews can be divided into two broad categories. An interview either is basically a *personality profile* or is concerned primarily with *subject matter*. Of course, some interviews will mix the two to some extent. You should be well aware of the type you will be involved in long before the interview begins. Indicators are the style of the interviewer or writer, and the program format or nature of the publication. If you're in doubt, ask in plenty of time so that you can properly prepare.

### **Print interviews**

Some characteristics of print interviews:

- Normally conducted in person, one-on-one, sometimes with more than one meeting.
- On occasion, more frequently than in the past, may be conducted by telephone either entirely or in combination with in-person contacts.
- There may be an exchange of written or printed material involving opinions and/or facts and statistics.
- Locations vary greatly (if you get to select, pick a place where you are comfortable!).

## **Radio and television interviews**

On radio and television, whether you are interviewed as the sole guest or with other guests, you will usually be interviewed by one person. Two or more interviewers may, however, be present in a press conference, a scheduled topical news special, or a co-hosted talk show.

Television and radio interviews can be:

- *Live*
- *Live-on-tape*: The program is taped, but played back in its entirety at a later broadcast time.
- *Taped and edited*: Very little or almost all of what was said could be deleted.
- *Taped, edited, and broadcast out of sequence*: What material remains after editing is broadcast in the order selected by the program producer.

The radio and TV interviews that you will most commonly encounter are the following or some combination of the following:

- In studio with interviewer(s).
- On location with interviewer(s) — any area, indoors or outdoors, other than the studio.
- Remote straight-to-camera or straight-to-microphone — you are not physically present with interviewer(s).
- Face-to-face, one-on-one with interviewer.
- Panel — face-to-face, with interviewer(s), with at least one other guest present.
- Pro-con — face-to-face with one person having an opposing view, with a moderator present.
- By telephone.

- With audience questions — audience either physically present or by telephone.
- Abrupt encounter with interviewer(s) — as you leave work or the courthouse, at a disaster site, etc.
- Program where you are paid as a guest, speaker or expert presenter — usually for a profit-oriented industrial video program; you are not normally paid when appearing as “yourself” on commercial radio or television.

The most challenging of all media interviews is a live television interview. If done well, it is by far the most effective of all interviews a business person, or person with a cause, can give. Every element for impact is present:

- You can be seen
- and heard
- saying what you choose to say
- in context
- without the risk of anything being deleted.

## **1.32 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN THE MEDIA REQUESTS AN INTERVIEW WITH YOU**

What date is the interview scheduled?

Where?

What time?

How long will the interview take?

What is the proposed content?

Who will be the interviewer(s)?

Any other people involved as guests or subjects? Who?

What is the format of the program or article?

Any idea of the line of questioning at this time?

*If radio or television:* Will the interview be live, taped, edited? Audience present? Questions from them? Call-ins?

*If television:* Can props be used (charts, pictures, products, etc.)?

What should I bring with me?

## **1.32.1 BEFORE THE INTERVIEW**

What you do to prepare before the interview will probably, more than any other factor, determine how well you come off. If you're only answering questions during an interview, you're not doing enough. Get a couple of short, clear messages in mind and refer to them often during the course of the interview. For instance, if you are doing an interview about debris burning, your messages might be:

- Before you burn, make sure you obtain all required permits.
- Never burn on dry, windy days as these conditions cause fires to spread rapidly.
- Burn leaves and trash in a metal barrel, covered with a wire screen, as much as possible.

If you only remember one thing from this guide, let it be this: Always, as in 100% of the time, develop your key messages and let them guide your interview. Answer the media's questions, but follow your agenda!

## **1.32.2 ANTICIPATING QUESTIONS**

Now that you have set your goals for the interview, it's time to focus on the goals of the interviewer(s).

You cannot, of course, anticipate the off-the-wall questions. But you should never be surprised by any reasonable question asked you in a scheduled interview for which you've had time to prepare. After you have done several media interviews, you should not be surprised by any question asked of you, even in an unscheduled interview.

The best training in reaching such a mindset is disciplining yourself to write down the most challenging and logical questions you're likely to be asked given all the facts and circumstances associated with the subject matter of the program and your participation, then develop a good answer and be prepared to deliver it if the question comes up. Be especially prepared to answer questions about any negative or controversial aspects of your fire prevention program.

## 1.33 THE VALUE OF PRACTICE

At this point in your preparation process, you have gathered all the facts you can about the program and media outlet representative involved and determined the goals for the interview. You have come up with all the reasonable questions you think could be asked and developed complete answers to those questions (often there's no time to write them).

Sometimes the questions you anticipate are quite compatible with your goals. Most times, there is a degree of incompatibility. The last step in your preparation process, if you have time, is to practice with someone who substitutes for the actual media interviewer. Your goal is to get your points across. The “interviewer's” goal is to pursue answers to the questions you expect to be asked.

The value of practicing for an upcoming interview cannot be overstated. Even media veterans need to practice. *There is a great difference between going over answers in your head and actually having to verbalize your responses.* And practice is the only way to determine if your goals are planted firmly enough to remember them while conversing about other matters.

A further important benefit of practice is training yourself to become more aware of the passage of time. You will do much better in a television interview if you're able to gauge accurately how much remains of the time you were allotted. Practice builds a level of confidence that will allow you to relax and show more of your personality to the viewers. Preparation is not complete without practice!

### **1.33.1 PRACTICE TIPS**

1. Choose a person who is serious about helping you, one who will do his or her best in playing the interviewer's role. Your agency Public Affairs Office or Public Information Office can usually provide assistance here.
2. Supply the interviewer with your list of anticipated questions. Have the interviewer mix up the list and rephrase the questions in his or her own style.
3. Instruct the interviewer to hammer at getting those questions answered. The interviewer should, however, feel free to digress and ask whatever related questions come to mind.
4. Fully answer each of the interviewer's questions, but try to redirect the interview back to your agenda of prioritized points.
5. Set a firm time limit that closely approximates what you expect to be given on the program.
6. Practice with as many interviewers as possible.
7. If you can, videotape or audiotape each interview so that you can critique your answers. Pay particular attention to how you made your main points regardless of the questioning.
8. If you make a mistake, start over.
9. Work to shorten your answers. (In a broadcast interview that you know will be edited, a short comment that clearly makes a point is apt to be used. Such comments and answers have come to be known as “sound bites.”)

## 1.34 THE INTERVIEW

If you thoroughly know your subject and if you have confidence because you have prepared and practiced for the most difficult interviewers and questions, a media interview can actually be an enjoyable and satisfying experience. It is important to remember that you have some rights too. You have the right:

- To know that you are being interviewed.
- To know who is interviewing you and what organization they represent.
- To know the format of the interview—live, taped, about how long, and when it will be printed or aired.
- To be physically comfortable.
- To accept or reject the interview opportunity (although we suggest you never turn it down.)
- To not be threatened, insulted, or bullied.
- To protect your privacy and that of your co-workers.
- To express yourself and make your points with the interviewer.
- To have a third party present, such as a resource specialist or public affairs officer.
- To counter false or questionable information.
- To not address subjects that are outside your area of expertise.

### INTERVIEW TIPS

1. Speak in personal terms. You want to come across as a real, live human being. Don't say, "The Agency's position is..." instead say, "We think ..." or "Our position on the matter is..."
2. If you don't want something on the airwaves or in print, the rule is simple: don't say it! Even if the microphones are off and the reporter's notebook is closed.

3. Get your most important facts and messages in at the beginning of the interview.
4. Think in terms of 5 to 15 second answers, regardless of the news medium. Generally, the tougher the question, the shorter your answer should be.
5. If you don't know the answer, say so, with a promise to get it. Then follow through.
6. If you brick an answer, get flustered, or say something inaccurate, ask a reporter to repeat the questions or step away from the camera if it's a TV news interview. Reporters almost certainly will agree to give you a second chance. They're also interested in getting the best story and information out to the public.
7. Don't exaggerate.
8. Leave being cute or funny to the late night talk show hosts. They're better at it and get paid more than you do for being funny.
9. Watch out for jargon and acronyms. About the only safe acronym to use is USA.
10. Avoid speaking for other agencies and offices. Do not speak for your supervisor or anyone else higher on the food chain than yourself, unless you are willing to bet your job that's what he or she would want you to say. Don't repeat negative or emotionally charged language.
11. Do not debate elected officials. You'll never win. You could lose big.
12. Avoid calling other people names, talking down to them, or trying to discredit them.
13. Keep it simple. If you're asked what time it is, don't tell the reporter how to build a clock. Difficult or complex questions need to be answered simply. Time is not on your side.
14. Expect to be a little nervous. Everyone is before an interview, no matter how much experience they have.

15. Speak a little slower. The tendency for most folks is to rush. When we rush, we make more mistakes.
16. It's okay to sweat, but never lose your cool. Angry people always come across bad, even if they have good reason to be upset.
17. Never say “no comment.” It raises all sorts of red flags with journalists and the public thinks we're covering up something.
18. Always look at the reporter, not the camera.
19. You are speaking for your agency; your opinion doesn't matter and should be kept to yourself.
20. Be honest. Don't defend the indefensible.
21. Stay away from labeling people or groups. Phrases such as “tree hugger,” or even “cowboys,” can be offensive and should be avoided.
22. Not only do you have control over what you say, you also have control over what you don't say, which is sometimes more valuable than the information you provide.
23. Reporters generally have an idea of what you are going to say and what they want you to say. If necessary, they'll rephrase or repeat questions to elicit the answer they want to quote you on. Don't worry and don't get stressed if you keep giving the same answer to almost the same question.
24. Be likeable. Your acceptance, and consequently, the acceptance of your message, depends more than we'd like to think on whether you're likeable. If the viewer or reader thinks, “She seems like an okay person,” or “This guy is someone I'd like to know,” your message is going to be received well.

## **1.35 PRODUCTION AND STAFF PERSONNEL**

Do your best in a sincere way to be pleasant to all the media personnel with whom you come in contact. Production and staff people can be of great assistance to you on the day of the media event. They have the answers to a lot of the questions you might ask, and they will be helpful if treated in a pleasant, professional, non-demanding manner.

Be prepared to deal with a wide variety of ages and levels of experience. And keep in mind that these people have some input as to whether or not you will be interviewed again.

## **1.36 SPEAKING OFF THE RECORD**

No matter what his or her level of competency, you can be sure that every media interviewer will be trying to get you to talk very candidly. No two media personalities are the same; but each has a well-practiced, sometimes quite subtle, technique for warmly gaining your cooperation or intimidating you by confrontation.

Certainly many media people with whom you will come in contact are wonderful human beings with a deep sense of honesty and fairness. Some are not! The important point is that, from a short meeting (and sometimes even from a long association), you cannot always tell the difference.

Some interviewers will act as though they truly are your friends. Keep in mind that you are not being interviewed to build friendships. Your goal in every interview is to advance the image and positive aspects of your agency, idea, or cause.

Never be so taken in by a member of the media (whether an on-air personality, producer, staff member, writer, or administrator) that you will reveal any bit of information you would not proudly announce on the network evening news. Make it a hard and fast rule that absolutely nothing you say is off the record. Anything you say may be used later in some way, so don't be drawn in by people who say or imply that they will honor your definition of what's on and what's off the record. Answer reasonable questions fully and honestly, but keep to yourself what should be kept private.

## 1.37 TIME MANAGEMENT

You might imagine that time will pass slowly during a media interview. You will find that quite the contrary is true. No matter what the length, time will pass very quickly. You must develop a sense of elapsed time and learn to manage it to your advantage.

In a print interview, time may seem of less concern since there is no audience of viewers or listeners and you don't have the pressures of broadcast time constraints. Don't be fooled; print interviews have their time limitations too. You had better know how much time the person interviewing you has allotted for the two of you to talk.

Certainly, the time may be extended, but don't count on it. Proceed as you would with a radio or TV interview and budget your time so that it will not run out before you've attained your goals. Obviously, you can keep track of the time by checking your watch or a clock.

During a radio interview surprises can occur. If the program is thirty minutes or an hour in length, don't expect to get all that time. Always ask how much time you should subtract for commercials and other time-consuming items such as weather reports and public service announcements. You should also ask whether the host has a routine to close the show and how long the routine is.

Try to find out just how many minutes you actually have. Be conscious of how much time you've used and how much still remains. Work toward your prioritized goals accordingly.

Television programs, television and radio news interviews, and abrupt television and radio confrontations are the real challenges. During scheduled television programs, time cues are normally given only to the host. Seldom does a guest receive any time cues. Clocks are usually nowhere to be seen and looking at your watch gives a negative impression.

During a short news interview, whether live or taped, the news reporter may cut a guest off in mid-sentence if a previous comment has met the reporter's needs. Similarly, the abrupt confrontational interview may end at any point at the discretion of the reporter holding the microphone.

Some broadcast interviewers, especially on longer scheduled programs, will give you an indication that time is winding down. Most won't. The ones who do will sometimes let you summarize by asking, "Is there anything we haven't covered?" or "In closing, anything you'd like to add?" or "What are the main points you'd like our viewers/listeners to take from this interview?" This is an opportunity to present one of the messages you developed before the interview.

## **1.38 AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

The first thing you should do after any interview is to thank the people involved. Most of the time, it's very easy to be motivated to do this. Many of the people will have been helpful and pleasant, and you'll want to thank them.

There will, however, be times that you will not feel like thanking anyone. You may be in a bad mood about your own performance or disappointed in the interviewer or staff or crew. Nevertheless, thank everyone who is conveniently near and available. Even seek out those who have been particularly helpful—for example, the TV director who is in the booth, or the person in the office who helped you get situated when you first arrived.

There is more than one way to say thank you. To those people who have been especially cordial and helpful, you'll be more enthusiastic and sincere. There is, however, a professional manner of thanking even those people you haven't dealt with or those who have made your appearance less successful or pleasant than you would have liked. Never allow yourself to drop below this level of professionalism. You will be remembered for it, sometimes by the least likely person who could help you later.

## 1.4 MEDIA TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES



## 1.41 THE NEWS RELEASE

The news release is the tool most commonly used to generate news media interest in policies, programs, and activities. You can use news releases to deliver fire prevention messages directly or to announce press conferences, media days, show-me tours, or special events.

The purpose of a news release is to spark an editor's or reporter's interest - not to tell the whole story. News releases should be well-written, informative, interesting, and brief. The content should be timely and newsworthy.

News releases are easy to write if you use the 5 "W's" (and the "H") to organize and present your thoughts:

1. **Who** is involved, said/did something, to whom did something happen?
2. **What** was said/done, or will happen?
3. **When** did/will the story/event take place?
4. **Where** did/will it take place?
5. **Why** did/will it happen?
6. **How** did/will it happen?

The order in which these facts appear depends on their importance in the story—the most critical go first. Avoid bureaucratic or technical jargon. Use small words rather than big ones.

Appearance-wise, your news release should be formatted according to the following guidelines (also see sample releases in Appendix A):

- Print it on 8 1/2" x 11" paper with 1" margins. The name and address of the appropriate offices should be printed at the top of the page.
- Type and double space the release.
- Put the name and phone number of the best person to contact for more information in the upper right hand corner.

- On the top left side of the first page, type “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.”
- Develop a headline that captures the gist of the release. Keep it as short as possible and incorporate powerful words.
- Start your release with a dateline, the city from which the story originates, e.g., “Boise, Idaho - -” followed immediately by the first paragraph.
- Include quotes from the appropriate manager or appropriate staff member. Make sure that person approves the quotes before you distribute the release.
- Try to keep the release to one page. If you need to go more than one page, type “- more - ” at the bottom of the page. Type “###” and center it below the last line to indicate the end of the release.

Sometimes, particularly if you are in a remote area, you can increase the amount of coverage your news release receives by accompanying it with photographs for newspapers, videotape for television stations, and audiotape for radio stations. Photographs should be high contrast black and white glossies. For assistance in shooting videotape and recording audiotape for news releases, contact your Public Affairs Office.

### **Distribution**

You can mail, fax, e-mail, or hand-deliver news releases to the media depending on physical proximity and time sensitivity of the information. Generally, you should mail news releases so that the media receive it approximately one week in advance of the activity or event you are trying to promote. (*See Appendix A for sample news releases*)

## 1.42 NEWS CONFERENCES

News conferences provide another important means to convey your fire prevention message to the public through the media. However, you should use news conferences sparingly and limit them to important “hard news” subjects.

For instance, you could sponsor a news conference in cooperation with other wildfire fighting agencies in the late spring to discuss the upcoming fire season and provide tips on how the public can help protect their homes. Or you could hold a news conference at the end of fire season to announce results.

You can hold news conferences in a conference room at your office or anywhere else that is easily accessible to the media. Be sure the room has plenty of power outlets, space for television cameras, and seats for reporters.

You can also hold news conferences outside if the weather is good and the location is visually appealing. Bear in mind that news conferences do not provide the most captivating images for television and newspaper photographers. Try to visualize the information you are trying to convey with charts, maps, or other visual aids. You may also want to consider providing videotape or photographs to reporters that illustrate the information.

The best time to hold a news conference is between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. That will ensure that most reporters meet their deadlines. Avoid weekends, Mondays and Fridays as many media outlets are short-staffed on those days. Midweek days will usually provide better exposure for your message.

Write a media advisory to announce the date, time, location, and subject of the news conference (see sample advisory attached). However, do not disclose details about the subject you are going to discuss because the media will use that information to write the story and skip the news conference. If a reporter calls and wants to talk about the topic before the news conference, politely refuse. If the story appears in one media outlet before the news conference, the rest of the media will not attend.

Mail or fax the advisory to the media so that they receive it at least one week ahead of time. Follow up with a phone call the day before the news conference to remind the media of the event. (*See sample, page 39*)

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

Contact: Michael Littleton  
(555) 555-5555

### **BLM TO OUTLINE STEPS HOMEOWNERS CAN TAKE TO PROTECT THEIR HOMES FROM WILDFIRES**

With only one month left before the start of “fire season” in the southwest, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is urging homeowners to take steps now to reduce the risk that their homes will burn if a wildfire occurs in their area.

The BLM will hold a news conference to discuss specific things homeowners should do on Wednesday, March 15 at 10:00 a.m. The news conference will be held at the BLM Tucson Field Office, located at 12661 E. Broadway in Tucson. Videotapes and photographs will be provided. For more information, call Michael Littleton at (555) 555-5555.

###

## **1.43 PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Public Service Announcements are similar to advertisements, except you don't pay for them! Most radio stations and television stations are required to run a certain number of PSAs to meet Federal Communications Commission licensing requirements.

While PSAs can provide an economical and effective way to deliver your fire prevention message to the community, there is a lot of competition for a limited amount of time. There are no guarantees about when or how often your PSAs will run, so don't rely too much on this communication method.

You will need to provide PSAs to radio stations and television stations in a complete "ready to run" format. Unlike print, radio and television are linear — in other words, your audience cannot go back to check a point or fact. Keep your message simple.

Most radio and television stations have Public Affairs or Public Service Announcement directors. Contact them in advance to find out what types of PSA opportunities their station offers and what formats they prefer. If you can "sell" them on the need for fire prevention in your community, they may be able to help you produce a PSA.

### **RADIO PSAs**

Radio PSAs should be the same length as commercials: 10-, 20-, 30- or 60-seconds (30-seconds is the standard). A 30-second spot is approximately 75 words (150 words for 60 seconds, 50 words for 20 seconds, and 25 words for 10 seconds). Ideally, adapt your message to fit each of these lengths to give the radio station flexibility to fill available time slots.

You can provide radio PSAs in two formats - as a produced audiotape or as a printed message for an announcer to read. Contact your agency Public Affairs Office or Public Information Office to determine if they have the capability to help you produce an audio tape. If you do submit a produced audio tape, send a written transcript of the PSA to help station staff who will preview it. If not, follow these guidelines to provide printed PSAs:

- Use an 8 1/2" x 11" piece of paper. Write "PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT" at the top of the page with the length of the PSA, in seconds, directly below.
- Include a subtitle that details the subject of the PSA.
- Provide a contact name and telephone number.
- Specify a "kill date," which is the last date the PSA should air.
- Type and double-space the PSA using all capital letters.
- Include phonetic pronunciations in parentheses for names or terms that may be difficult to pronounce.

*(See sample Public Service Announcement, Appendix B)*

## **TELEVISION PSAs**

Television PSAs can range from silent, on-screen community calendar announcements to color slides with voice-overs, to pre-produced videotapes. Television PSAs should also be produced in a variety of 15-, 30-, and 60-second lengths.

Television stations can develop on-screen calendar announcements for your special events if you give them a fact sheet that provides basic information (who, what, when, where, why, and how). You can also send camera-ready artwork of a logo and slogan for their use.

Color slides are another option that can make the television station's job easier. A single slide may contain basic information and a graphic of a logo and slogan. Send the slide with a 10-second script.

You may also provide a produced videotape PSA. Contact your agency Public Affairs or Public Information Office to see whether they have the capability to help you produce one.

If you do submit a produced videotape, send a written transcript of the PSA to help the station staff who will preview it.

## 1.44 SHOW ME TRIPS

“Show Me” trips provide opportunities for reporters to go to the field to generate firsthand understanding of fire prevention. For instance, you could conduct a trip to show reporters examples of protected, and vulnerable, homes in the wildland/urban interface and demonstrate the steps homeowners can take to protect their property from wildfires. Here are some tips to help you plan successful “Show Me” trips:

1. Determine the audience you need to reach and the message you want to convey. Develop a trip that will achieve your goals.
2. Select the closest possible location - preferably no more than a 30-minute drive from the news media’s office location. The closer the site, the more reporters you will attract. Schedule the trips for early to mid-morning so that reporters can meet afternoon deadlines.
3. Have a variety of fire specialists on hand to provide information and answer questions.
4. Plan activities. Taking a group out just to stand and talk to them about protecting a home from wildfire isn’t nearly as interesting as showing them how a homeowner can clear brush around their property. Make sure there are lots of visual photo opportunities. Newspaper and television reporters need pictures to tell the story.
5. Try to provide more than one story angle. Make a reporter’s effort worthwhile by giving them an opportunity to cover several different stories on the same trip. These could be fire related or they could feature other natural resource management activities. For instance, on your way back from the wildland/urban interface, you could stop at a campground and demonstrate precautions recreationists can take to prevent wildfires.

# NOTES

## 1.5 WILDFIRE PREVENTION PUBLICATIONS AND MATERIALS



## **1.5 WILDFIRE PREVENTION PUBLICATIONS AND MATERIALS**

Producing fire prevention brochures, posters, displays, videotapes, and other materials can be an effective way to deliver fire prevention messages.

The first step is to determine what format is most appropriate. To do that, consider the following questions:

1. What are you trying to accomplish?
2. Who exactly are you trying to reach?
3. Where will you reach your audience?
4. What is your message?
5. What do you want your audience to know, think, feel or do after they see your material?

Your answers to these questions will help you decide the best medium to convey your message to your audience. For instance, if you are trying to convince junior high school students not to use fireworks on public lands, you may want to produce a bookcover with that message. If you are trying to persuade recreational woodcutters to install spark arresters on their chainsaws, you may want to produce a brochure to be handed out with firewood-cutting permits.

After you have decided what type of material you want to produce, contact your agency Public Affairs Office or Public Information Office. They can tell you what approvals are required and help you complete the necessary paperwork. The Public Affairs Office or Public Information Office may also be able to write, edit, illustrate, design, lay out and print your product.

If you want to distribute promotional fire prevention materials, such as pencils, coffee mugs or t-shirts, contact your office's procurement staff. They can advise you about guidelines concerning these types of purchases.

## **1.51 INCORPORATING FIRE PREVENTION MESSAGES INTO EXISTING PUBLICATIONS**

Another way to disseminate fire prevention messages is to incorporate them into existing agency publications. This enables you to send focused messages to specific target audiences. For instance:

- Recreation maps and brochures could include a reminder to make sure campfires are dead out before leaving.
- Fish and wildlife brochures could include a message about the damage that human-caused wildfires do to habitat.
- Forestry brochures could include information about how long it takes for forests to recover from human-caused wildfires.

All it takes to incorporate fire prevention messages into existing agency publications is coordination with other program and Public Affairs and Public Information staffs. Meet with them to convince them of the need to incorporate fire prevention messages into agency publications and find out what brochures and maps are being developed for future publication.

# NOTES

## **1.6 THE INCIDENT INFORMATION OFFICER AND WILDFIRE PREVENTION**

## **1.6 THE INCIDENT INFORMATION OFFICER AND WILDFIRE PREVENTION**

The primary responsibility of an Incident Information Officer assigned to a wildfire is to keep the public updated about suppression efforts. However, having the attention of the public and the news media focused on a wildfire presents a unique opportunity to deliver fire prevention messages as well.

Incident Information Officers are encouraged, in training classes, to deliver fire prevention messages when they are talking to the public and the news media about wildfire suppression. But sometimes, in the heat of the moment, it is easy to lose sight of this opportunity. Feel free to contact any Incident Information Officer assigned to a wildfire in your area and encourage them to incorporate fire prevention messages in the information they provide to the public and the news media.

For example:

- The 5,000-acre Elkin Fire, now burning out of control 10 miles east of Reno, was started by a carelessly discarded cigarette. People who use or visit public lands this time of year should smoke only in cleared areas or vehicles.
- The Sandpiper Fire has slowed significantly along its western flank near Bear Haven. That's because much of the old, dense chaparral in that area was eliminated last spring during a BLM prescribed fire.
- The Warm Lake Fire is currently threatening hundreds of cabins in the area. To help protect their structures from wildfire, homeowners in wildland areas should store firewood away from their houses and clear the brush around their property.

# **APPENDIX A**

## **Sample News Releases**

Print on agency letterhead or news release paper

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Steve Reynolds  
(555) 555-5555

**IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS REMINDS  
PUBLIC TO LEAVE FIREWORKS AT HOME**

BOISE, IDAHO - The Idaho Department of Lands is encouraging area residents to spend the Fourth of July weekend on the public lands, but is reminding them to leave the fireworks at home.

Despite heavy rains in May and June, the total precipitation for the season is still well below normal. Recent high temperatures and low humidity have left trees, brush and grass extremely dry and ready to burn.

Using, and even possessing, fireworks is illegal on all public lands. Violators could face a maximum of six months in prison and/or a \$5,000 fine. In addition, anyone responsible for starting a wildfire may be held responsible for the cost of putting it out.

“The fire danger going into this Fourth of July weekend is very high and the sparks from even a small type of firework could start a major wildfire,” said Steve Reynolds, Fire Prevention Officer with the Idaho Department of Lands. “Rangers patrolling the public lands throughout the holiday weekend will strictly enforce the 'no fireworks' law.”

The Idaho Department of Lands is asking people who plan to spend the Fourth of July weekend on the public lands to take additional precautions to prevent wildfires, such as clearing the brush around campfire rings, making sure campfires are "dead out" before leaving them, smoking only in cleared areas, and avoiding parking on dry grass.

For more information on how to prevent wildfires on public lands, contact Steve Reynolds at (555) 555-5555.

###

Print on agency letterhead or news release paper

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Beth Lund  
(555) 555-5555

**WILDFIRE AGENCIES TO  
ANNOUNCE BEGINNING OF FIRE SEASON**

BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA: The U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection will hold a news conference next week to announce the beginning of the 1994 wildfire season.

The agencies will discuss current fire conditions, the outlook for the fire season, and resources available to fight wildfires. They will also present tips to homeowners who live near wildland areas on how to protect their property from blazes and recreationists on how to prevent wildfires while playing on the public lands.

The news conference will be held Tuesday, May 10, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 335 of the Federal Building, 1839 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield. For more information, call Beth Lund at (555) 555-5555.

###

Print on agency letterhead or news release paper

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jennifer Callan  
(555) 555-5555

### **BLM URGE HOMEOWNERS TO PREPARE FOR SEVERE FIRES**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) urge homeowners with property in or near wildland areas to act now to protect themselves from severe wildfires like the Oakland, California fire that destroyed more than 3,000 homes and killed 25 people last October.

The potential for another wildfire of that magnitude exists throughout much of the West. Many states suffered an extremely dry winter with precipitation levels well below normal. Drought conditions in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington are currently classified as “extreme”. In addition, increasing numbers of people have built homes in or near wildland areas that do not have full-time, year-round fire departments to provide protection.

Homeowners in those areas are responsible for reducing fire hazards on their property. “There are a number of things homeowners can do that will go a long way toward protecting their homes from wildfires,” said Cindy James, Director of the BLM. “We strongly encourage homeowners to make their homes more fire safe now, before fire season is in full swing.

To that end, the BLM has launched a public education campaign called “Wildfire Strikes Home,” that outlines the steps homeowners should take to protect their homes. For instance, “Wildfire Strikes Home” recommends that homeowners install fire resistant roofing, store firewood away from the house, and create a fuel break around their property.

For a free “Wildfire Strikes Home” brochure, call the BLM at (555) 555-5555.

###

# **APPENDIX B**

## **Sample PSA**

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT  
(:30)

**FIRE AWARENESS**

**CONTACT:** JOAN SKINNER, FIRE PREVENTION OFFICER,  
COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE (555) 555-5555

**KILL DATE:** SEPTEMBER 5

DO YOU LIKE THE FEEL OF THE WIND IN YOUR FACE  
WHILE RIDING OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ON THE PUBLIC LANDS?  
HOW ABOUT THE SMELL OF SMOKE IN YOUR NOSTRILS AND  
THE SIGHT OF CHARRED TREES AND BRUSH?

SPARKS FROM ORVs AND OTHER EQUIPMENT ARE THE  
NUMBER ONE CAUSE OF WILDFIRES IN THE ROCKY  
MOUNTAINS. YOU CAN HELP PROTECT OUR PRECIOUS  
NATURAL RESOURCES BY ENSURING THAT YOUR ORV IS FITTED  
WITH A SPARK ARRESTER, AVAILABLE AT MOST HARDWARE  
STORES.

THIS MESSAGE IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE COLORADO  
STATE FOREST SERVICE.

###

# **APPENDIX C**

## **Glossary of News Media Terms**

## GLOSSARY OF NEWS MEDIA TERMS

**Appropriate Management Response** - Specific actions taken in response to a wildland fire to implement protection and fire use objectives.

**Assignment Editor** - in television news, the person who decides what stories will be covered and assigns stories to reporters.

**Beat** - a reporter's regular assignment, such as the police beat or fire beat.

**Breaking News** - unplanned, spontaneous news events, such as wildfires, as opposed to scheduled events like City Council meetings.

**Deadline** - the time at which a story must be ready or after which material will no longer be accepted for publication or broadcast.

**Editor** - the person responsible for determining what stories will appear in a newspaper. A Managing Editor is responsible for overall operations while a City Editor determines local coverage and gives reporters assignments. Feature Editors, Photo Editors, and Sports Editors determine the stories that will appear in their sections.

**Feature** - a story providing an in-depth look at news other than hard or breaking news, or a lighter look at the news.

**Fire Management Plan** - A strategic plan that defines a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires and documents the Fire Management Program in the approved land use plan. The plan is supplemented by operational procedures such as preparedness plans, preplanned dispatch plans, prescribed fire plans and prevention plans.

**Five W's and H** - who, what, where, when, why and how---the major questions answered in a news story.

**Follow-up** - a story that adds information to a story previously broadcast or published.

**Hard News** - the serious and immediate news of the day as opposed to feature stories and stories that can wait.

**Handout** - a written statement, a set of statistics, or graphics prepared for distribution to the news media.

**Initial Attack** - An aggressive suppression action consistent with firefighter and public safety and values to be protected.

**News Director** - the manager in charge of a radio or television news department.

**Off-The-Record** - information provided to a reporter that is meant for background and not for publication. It is a good policy to never assume anything is off the record. If you say it, expect to hear it on the air or see it in print.

**Package** - a television story where the reporter's voice is recorded over the videotape.

**Preparedness** - Activities that lead to a safe, efficient, and cost effective fire management program in support of land and resource management objectives through appropriate planning and coordination.

**Prescribed Fire** - Any fire ignited by management actions to meet specific objectives. A written, approved prescribed fire plan must exist, and NEPA requirements must be met, prior to ignition.

**Prescription** - Measurable criteria which guide selection of appropriate management response and actions. Prescription criteria may include safety, economic, public health, environmental, geographic, administrative, social, or legal considerations.

**Producer** - in television news, the person who puts together the newscast and decides where a story will be placed.

**Sidebar** - a story on the same topic that runs the same day and right next to the main story. The sidebar may have a narrower focus or more detail on a single aspect of the main story.

**Soundbite** - the broadcast version of a quote. Usually consists of a very short statement or message.

**Standup** - a reporter telling a small part of the story on camera in the field as a part of a package.

**Talking Head** - a videotape recording of a closeup shot of someone talking.

**Voice-over** - a television story where the news anchor in the studio reads a script over videotape.

**Wildfire** - An unwanted wildland fire.

**Wildland Fire** - Any non-structure fire, other than prescribed fire, that occurs in the wildland.

**Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA)** - A decision-making process that evaluates alternative management strategies against selected safety, environmental, social, economical, political, and resource management objectives as selection criteria.

**Wire Story** - a news story that appears on a wire service.

**Wraparound** - a radio story where the reporter's voice is recorded on audiotape around a soundbite. Similar to a television news "package."

# **APPENDIX D**

## **Sources for Additional Information**

## **SOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Additional information about working with the news media is available in the following publications:

**Arson News Media Guidebook**

- Hartford Insurance Group for the U.S. Fire Administration

**Fireline Handbook**

- National Wildfire Coordinating Group Handbook 3

**Public Service Announcements**

- Central Oregon Fire Prevention Co-op

**Meet The Media, A Guide To Working With The Press**

- The Sierra Front Wildfire Cooperators

**Strategic Communications For Wildfire Management**

-National Wildfire Coordinating Group

**Guide For News Media Covering Wildfires**

-National Wildfire Coordinating Group

**Introduction to Incident Information, S-203 Instructor's Guide**

-National Wildfire Coordinating Group