

Begin with a statement of the basic facts

The first comment is often the most remembered. Of you don't establish the basic facts at the outset, the reporter's probing questions may put you on the defensive. (The basic facts would cover where you were, why and what you did.)

Don't be intimidated by silence

If you have answered the question, you are not obliged to fill air space: Actually, taped interviews are quite comfortable for this reason. You can take your time to respond, as blank space is edited. You may also ask the reporter if you can answer the question again, if you did not feel that you were too articulate. Of course, there is no guarantee that your second response will be used but there is no harm done in trying.

Offer photos or illustrations whenever possible

First ensure that the Federation/NS has given approval for public distribution of any photos or illustrations. Pictures usually say more than words and, even when they don't, they often arouse interest.

Using the royal "we"

Ensure that you get the name of the Red Cross/Red Crescent in the interview a few times. The term "we" can be grating to an audience if it is overused. (Try variations such as: "During my three month assignment as relief administrator, I...")

Wear a badge!!

Be prepared

Do your homework. Collect any necessary facts and figures. Prepare your set of point-form notes. Consult with your RC/RC media relations contact.

Be concise

There is a greater chance your words will be used. Identify key messages. In general, your audience will only remember **three** points. Choose the most important three.

Speak for the record

If you have information that you don't want reported, don't tell it.

Keep your cool

Courtesy and cooperation help establish your credibility. Be alert. Reporters are trained to ask questions in a probing manner. This does not mean that they are trying to "get" you. Don't get defensive.

Ask questions of your own

Ask questions of your own to ensure you know what the reporter is trying to accomplish, how much detail is wanted and how your material is going to be used. Often a couple of questions from you can help you give the reporter what is wanted; this is a courtesy they generally appreciate.

Take the initiative to make your point

Don't merely answer questions obediently. Seize the initiative to provide your audience with additional information you want them to have.



AUSTRIAN RED CROSS

TIPS FOR INTERVIEWS

Remember, the reporter is not out to "get" you. The reporter wants to do an interesting and informative interview. The more prepared you are, the better the interview (and the better both you and the reporter look).

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Be truthful

Tell the truth but don't thoughtlessly spill out sensitive information. There is no such thing as "off the record".

Don't volunteer opinions

Let the reporter get on with the job. Just give the facts. Don't make judgements or speak on behalf of others. We speak only for ourselves.

If you don't know, say so – and find out

It is no sin to be less than 100% informed. If you don't know something, say so. If it is a fact you can obtain, offer to do so but make sure you get it to the reporter on time. A missed deadline is a missed opportunity.

Of course, if you are doing a live broadcast, you will have to be content with admitting that you don't have the information.

Don't repeat objectionable words

If you don't like a word the reporter uses in a question, then don't repeat it, even to correct or deny. A question may not be quoted in the eventual story but the answer will.

Don't do all the talking

The temptation may be to go on and on because you know a lot about the subject. Don't. Be disciplined.

Think about the audience and use terms that will be understood. (For example, not many audiences will understand the terms ICRC or Federation but they will know what is meant if the term International Red Cross or Red Crescent is used).

Pertinent stories, anecdotes, cases or examples will illustrate, clarify, amplify and reinforce your points. (These stories also provide excellent material for inclusion in presentations.)