

# ON-THE-RECORD

The California Dig Safe Board's Media Training



# Objectives:

To better understand how the media ticks and what a reporter is looking for when he/she calls.

To learn how to interact with the media, and the different ways the Board can respond to a media inquiry.

To know what to do if a reporter contacts you directly.



“JOURNALISM IS WHAT WE  
NEED TO MAKE  
DEMOCRACY WORK.”

– Walter Cronkite, Journalist

# Main Media Sources



# Newspapers

## What the reporter is looking for:

- Confirmation on a tip they received regarding the Board
- Background information about the Board or a specific issue involving the industry
- A comment on a current issue involving the Board or the industry
- Facts, figures, or graphics detailing specific details on a current issue involving the Board or the industry

## What you can expect from the reporter:

- A phone call asking for information, an interview, or a statement
- Will want to interview you over the phone 99% of the time
- Will most likely be a beat reporter who covers a specific topic for the newspaper, i.e. energy or the Capitol
- Wants information that is detailed but easy for the audience to understand

# Television

## What the reporter is looking for:

- Confirmation on a tip they received about the Board
- Background information about the Board or a specific issue involving the industry
- A comment on a current issue involving the Board or the industry
- Perspective on a current issue involving the Board or the industry

## What you can expect from the reporter:

- A phone call asking for information, an interview, or a statement
- Will want to record an interview with you on camera 99% of the time
- Most likely received a press release, and is unfamiliar with the complexities of the industry
- Wants information that is easily digestible for the audience

# Radio

## What the reporter is looking for:

- Confirmation on a tip they received about the Board
- Background information about the Board or a specific issue involving the industry
- A comment on a current issue involving the Board or the industry
- Perspective on a current issue involving the Board or the industry

## What you can expect from the reporter:

- A phone call asking for information, an interview, or a statement
- Will either ask for a pre-recorded interview, or a live talkback interview
- Wants perspective on the issues, and information that is easily digestible for the audience

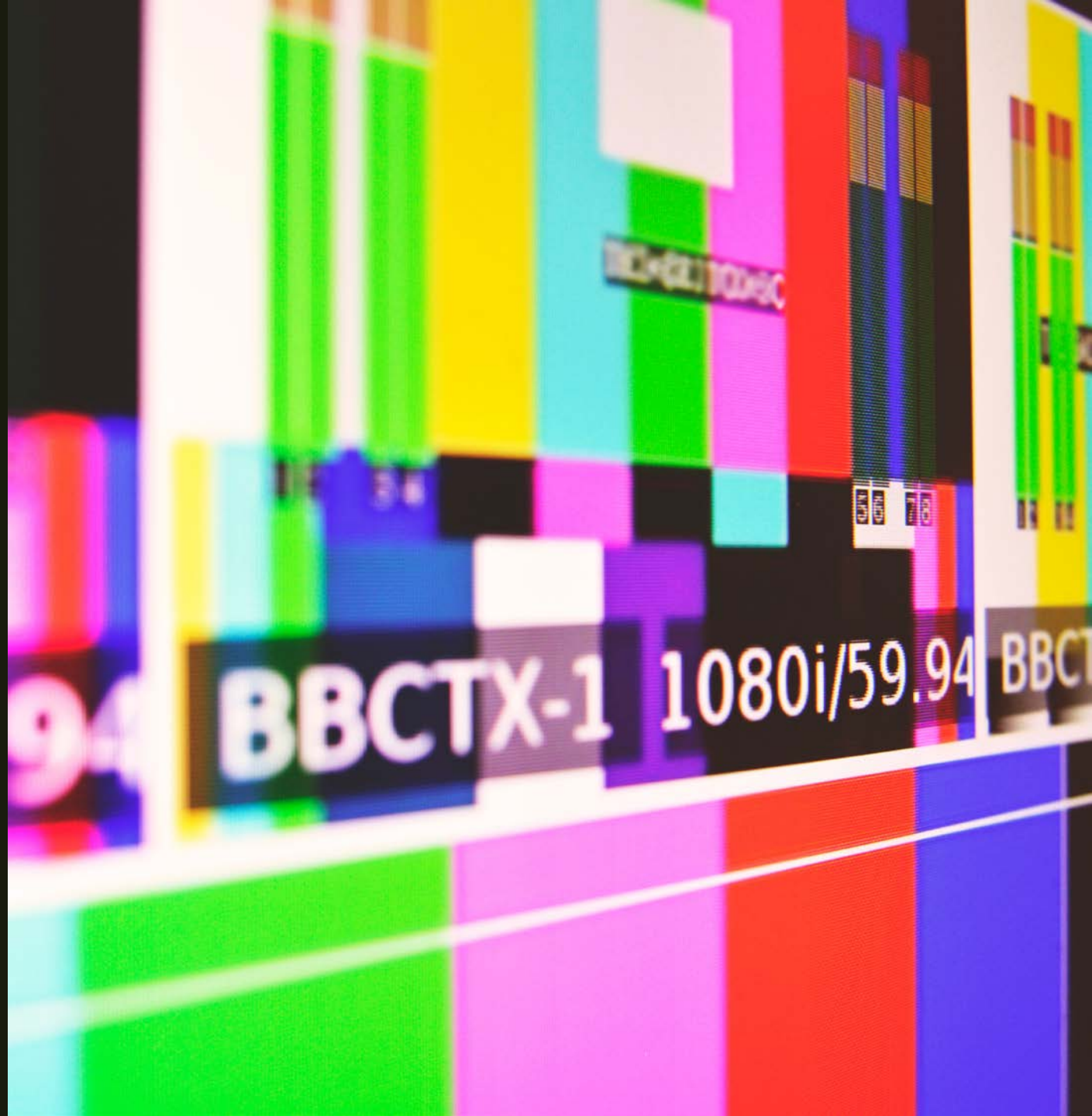


WHAT KIND OF  
STORY IS IT?



# One-Day Story

1. This type of story is used to inform the public of the news of the day.
2. The reporter attempts to interview both sides of the story.
3. These stories don't tend to have any follow up unless new, major developments occur.
4. The reporter's deadline is typically 8-24 hours.
5. This is the most common news story you will encounter.



# Investigative Story or Series

1. This type of story is a deeper look into a complex issue.
2. The series dives into different angles or topics regarding a central issue.
3. The reporter interviews multiple people about the same issue to gain an in-depth understanding of the topic.
4. The reporter's deadline is typically a month or two, depending on the complexity and the sensitive nature of the story.
5. This is seen in documentaries, magazines, newspapers, and TV news programs like "60 Minutes" or local news in bigger markets.





ALWAYS RESPOND  
TO MEDIA REQUESTS

# On-the-Record

Definition: Used in reference to the making of an official or public statement

- **EVERYTHING** you say or do during a conversation with a reporter can be used and attributed to you by name and job title.
- Assume that everything you say is on-the-record unless you specify before the conversation begins.
- Most common form of response to the media.

# Not for Attribution

Definition: Used to quote the information provided to a reporter as long as the source isn't identified

- Comments made to a reporter may be quoted directly in an article or on the air, but the reporter may only refer to source in general terms (i.e. “a government insider”).
- Must tell the reporter before interview begins that information discussed is “Not for Attribution.”
- Generally used by whistleblowers.
- Not legally binding.

# On Background

Definition: Used to reference the information provided to a reporter that cannot be used directly

- Also referred to as “For background only.”
- Comments or information provided to a reporter cannot be used directly or quoted from, but can be paraphrased.
- Must tell the reporter before the interview begins that information discussed is “On Background” or “For Background Only.”
- Generally used by organizations to point a reporter in a specific direction of inquiry.
- Not legally binding.

# Off-the-Record

Definition: Not made as an official or attributable statement.

- Comments made to a reporter cannot be used for publication.
- Reporter can use the information without attributing it, to verify the accuracy with another source.
- Must tell the reporter before the interview begins that information discussed is “Off-the-Record.”
- Not legally binding.

“MORE INFORMATION IS ALWAYS BETTER THAN LESS.  
WHEN PEOPLE KNOW THE REASON THINGS ARE  
HAPPENING, EVEN IF IT’S BAD NEWS, THEY CAN  
ADJUST THEIR EXPECTATIONS AND REACT  
ACCORDINGLY. KEEPING PEOPLE IN THE DARK ONLY  
SERVES TO STIR NEGATIVE EMOTIONS.”

–Simon Sinek, Author





WHAT DO I DO IF A  
REPORTER  
CONTACTS ME?



# Step One: Be Responsive

- Ask what the reporter's deadline is.
- Ask if he/she has any questions he/she wants to provide in advance of the interview.
- Tell the reporter that someone will get back to him/her before the deadline.
- Wait to make any comments or provide any background information.

# Step Two: Contact Staff

- Once you've gotten off the phone with the reporter, contact the Education and Outreach Officer:

Office: 916-568-2988

Cell Phone: 916-926-1786



QUESTIONS?