



World Meteorological Organization
Working together in weather, climate and water

Communication skills

How to Improve Coordination and Relationship with the Media

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The Goal

- To improve relationship of NMHS with the media (Radio, TV, Print):
 - Media gets to understand the:
 - Communication needs of NMHSs;
 - Capabilities and limitations of NMHS;
 - Basic meteorological terminologies.
 - NMHS gets to understand the:
 - Constraints of the media;
 - Effective ways to communicate to media.





Benefits

- Benefits to NMHSs:
 - Products of NMHS reported more accurately to the public;
 - Potential to use media more effectively for public education;
 - NMHS credibility increases;
 - More likely to attract political / financial support from government





Benefits

- Benefits to Media:
 - Media seen to be scientifically aware;
 - Popularity of the media increases.





Benefits

- Benefits to the Public:
 - More effective application of forecasts and warnings for safety of life and property;
 - Contribution to social and economic benefits;
 - Enlightenment.



Briefing the media on expected health impacts after a Climate Outlook Forum – Nairobi, Kenya



Improving Media Relations

- NMHS may form a Media Committee to:
 - Develop formal liaisons with the media outlets;
 - Address pre- and post-season media briefings routinely;
 - Outline strategies for dissemination of weather prediction events;
 - Involve media at the planning and strategizing level of media activities;
 - Develop a clear communication channel;



Media Committee



Formalizing Media Relations

- NMHS may also designate an information officer to:
 - Aid the flow of information from weather officer rather than restrict it – this encourages positive commentary;
 - Pro-active in dealing with media:
Always available to make or respond to calls;
 - Arranges for the most appropriate professionals to address issues during media events;



Information Officer



Training: Media to NMHS staff

- Basic facts about the media world.
For example, journalists:
 - Work on very tight deadlines;
 - Need unimpeded access to sources of information;
 - Are unfamiliar with technical jargon;





Training: Media to NMHS staff

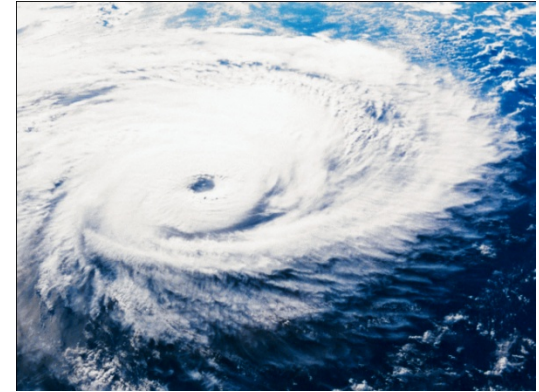
- Skills to enable NMHS to effectively communicate with the media. E.g.:
 - Writing press releases and information notes;
 - Holding press briefs and press conferences;
 - How to handle press interviews;





Training: NMHS to Media

- Basic weather and climate terminologies and definitions;
- Explanation of such notions as ‘probability’ forecasts, forecast uncertainty, forecast confidence e.t.c;
- Relating intensity of weather intensities to their likely impacts;
- Appreciation for limitations of the science of meteorology;





Example of Media/Met Network

- The NECJOGHA
 - Training workshops for journalists and meteorologists;
 - Increase in reportage frequency;
 - Public education;





General Do's

- Get to know your national media and be familiar with their deadlines and needs.
 - Be available to journalists, even when you are busy.
 - Get back to them quickly, if you are out when they call.
 - Be helpful with their requests. Adding your suggestions will be appreciated.
 - Be friendly.
 - Treat journalists with respect.
 - Use laymen's language whenever possible and explain the jargon when you must use it.
 - Be prepared and thoroughly understand your material.
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General Don'ts

- Don't ignore media requests but respond to every call;
 - Don't lose your temper. Understand the pressure that media work under;
 - Don't lie or be evasive. If you do not know the answer to a question, find out and get back to the reporter;
 - Don't say "no comment". It is a negative response and risks being misinterpreted. If you are unable to comment, explain;
 - Don't say anything off the record. It means it cannot be used, so why say it?
 - Don't use acronyms or technical jargon without explanation;
 - Don't flood reporters, with too much material.
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For further reading

Guidelines on the Improvement of NMSs-
Media Relations and Ensuring the Use of
Official Consistent Information.

(PWS-3; WMO/TD No. 1088)

Available at www.wmo.int/pws



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- Thank you

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