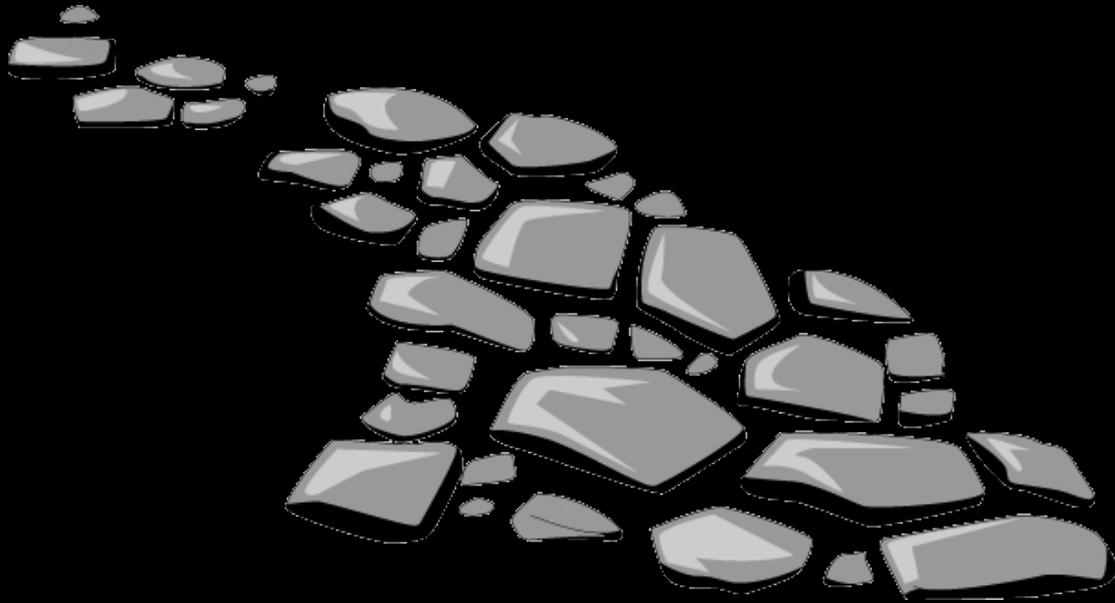




Dealing with the Media During an Emergency

Thanks to Chuck Wolfe and Melanie Miller, Media
Consultants, for provision of information useful in this
presentation, as well as Mike Callan



Media is pathway for information of
public demand

Media is how citizens and other key
audiences learn about
emergencies



- Community residents
- Elected officials
- Emergency Management
- Government agencies
- Hospital officials
- Industrial neighbors
- Police/fire/EMS responders
- Public and private schools
- Traditional media (radio, TV, newspaper)
- Social Media



- Supplies information and directions to affected public
- Disseminates information on preparedness measures for future similar emergencies
- Stimulates volunteerism and donations
 - Discloses needs for improvement in governmental response
- Can withhold potentially counterproductive information

- Perpetuate myths: people always panic, rampant looting, all donations are welcomed
- Cause stress
- Get in the way
- Encourage political interference
- Look for someone to blame

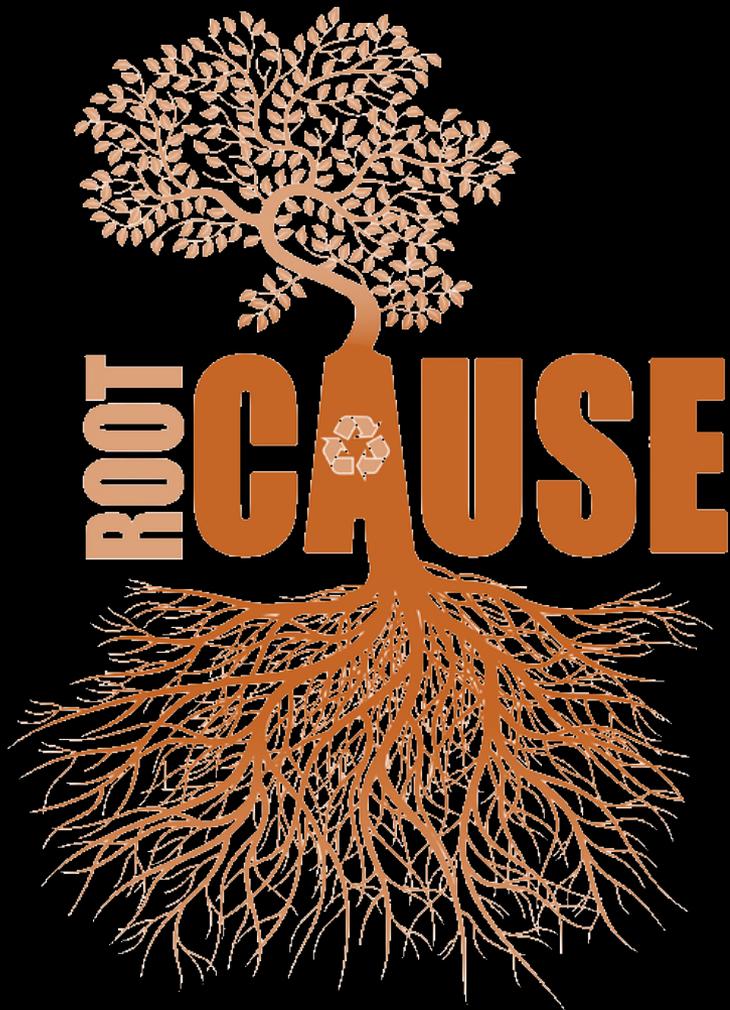




- Preparing For Emergencies Is Usually Not Big Story
- Politics Is More Newsworthy than Emergency Management
- Reporters Cover Viewpoints, Not Truths
- Emergency Is Usually Simplified To Dichotomy
- Reporters Try To Personalize Emergency
- Claims Of Risk Are Usually More Newsworthy Than Safety
- Reporters Do Their Job With Limited Expertise And Time

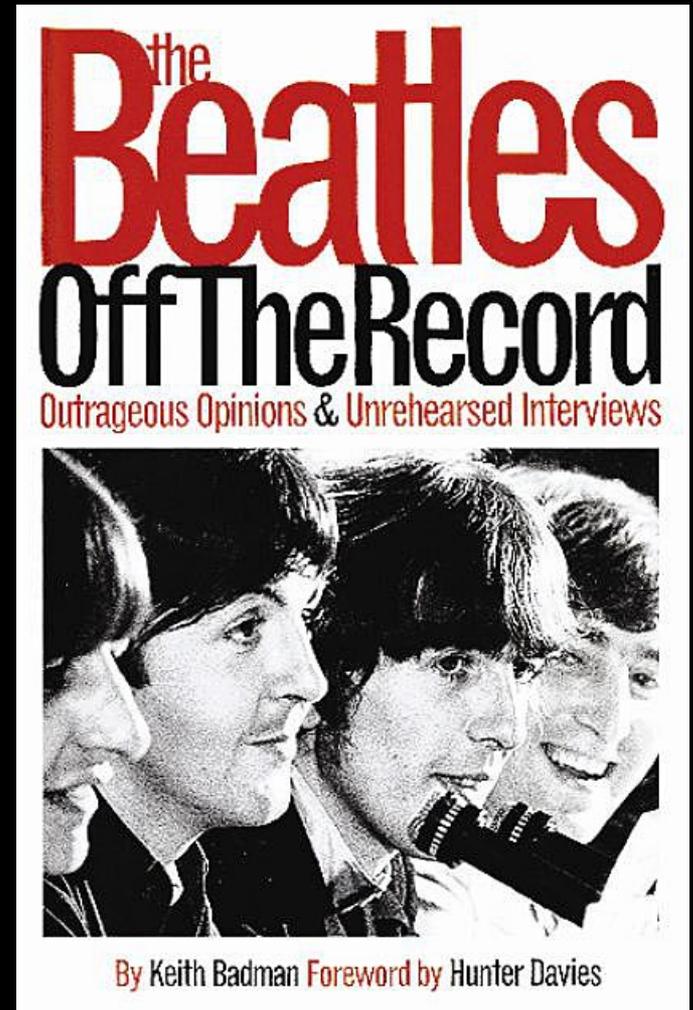


- Not knowing what to say, or saying too much to reporter;
- Being misquoted; out of context;
- Being embarrassed, or look bad on tv;
- Media will sensationalize event;
- Fear of negative press, or bad news;
- Lack of control of self and story;
- Too many media;
- Don't understand media technology, or media needs/wants;
- Possible security breaches;
- Takes time away from crisis



- What happened, when & where
 - Cause is under investigation
 - Chemical name and hazard
 - Agency/company response
 - Status of the incident
- Impact on employees and public
 - Public protective actions
 - For more information

- Take initiative—provide information as soon as it is available
- Provide frequent updates (even if there is nothing new to report)
- Be prepared for wide array of questions
- Do not make “off-record” comments (maybe)
- Be honest and straightforward
- Do not guess at answer
- Seek to relate to audience



- **Ability:** Do you have the information?
- **Competency** Are you qualified?
- **Authority:** Do you have authority from your organization to release information?
- **Security:** Is the information classified or protected?
- **Accuracy:** Is the information accurate?
- **Propriety:** Is the information appropriate to the situation?
- **Policy:** Is it permitted to release?

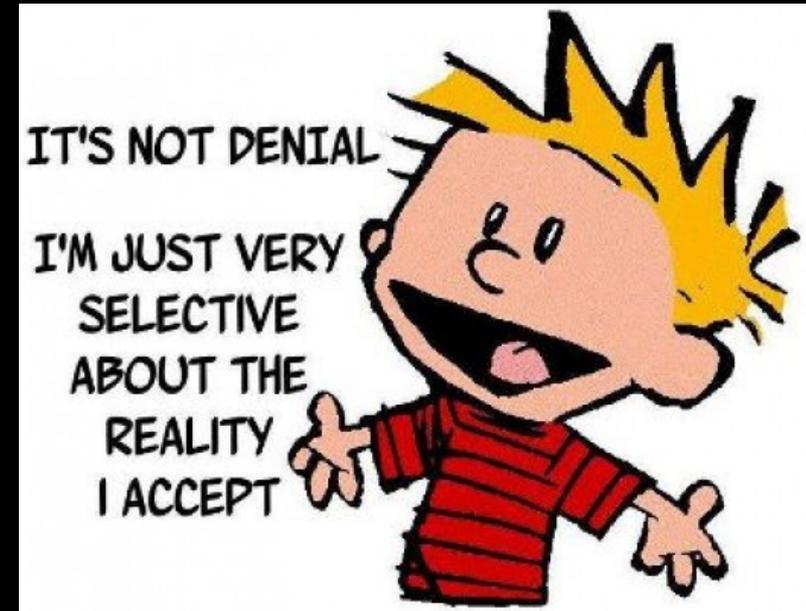


- People are entitled to information that affects their lives
- Story may leak anyway; you are apt to lose trust and credibility
- Less work required to release information early than respond to inquiries, attacks, etc. that might result from delay

You can't control the story if you don't tell your story. As long as this is true, others will define who you are.

Larry Wright

- If You Make a Mistake, Deny It
- Do Not Speak Plain English
- Present Yourself Like Government Bureaucrat
- If One of Your People Hates to Talk to People, Send Him out to Speak to Public.



- Have both a public relations person on the command staff and a public information officer. “There will be a lot of second-guessing, very soon.”
- The Incident needs a social media person
- Appoint a scribe to record phone calls, conversations, timelines, etc. for each member of the command and general staff.
- Disseminate information to all responders.

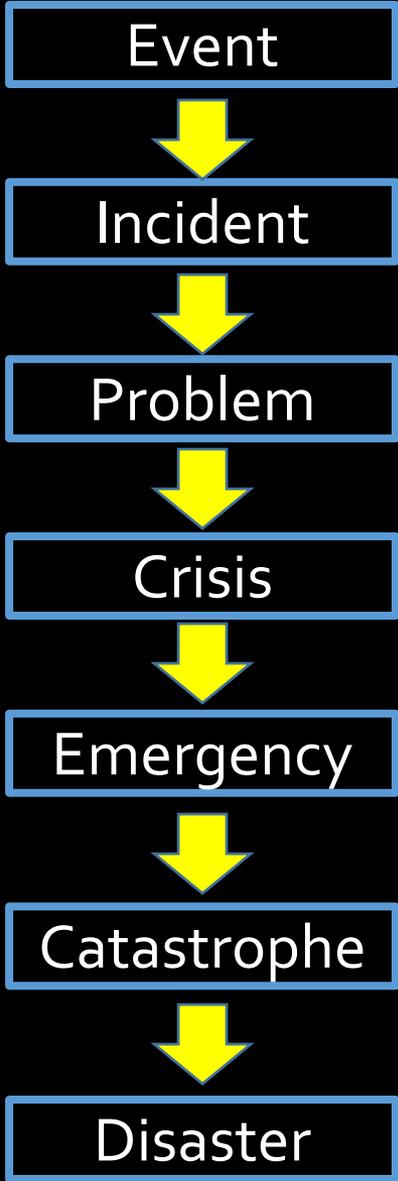


You Need the Media So You Can:

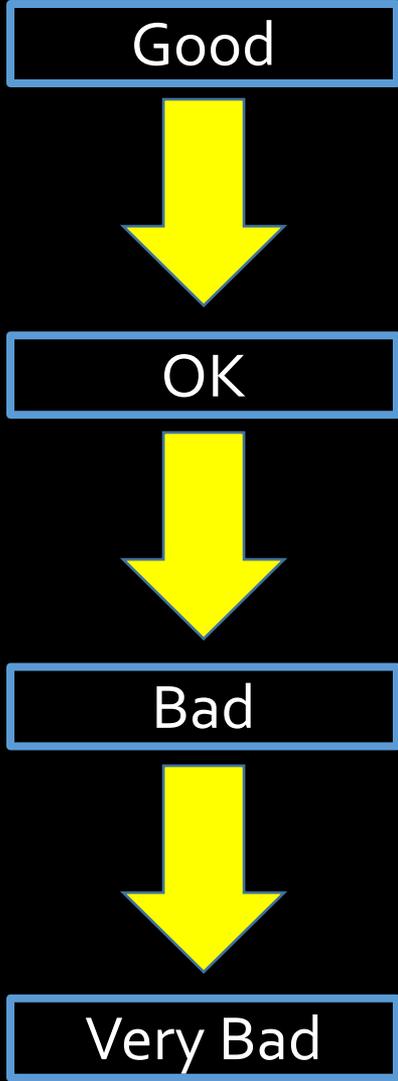
- Reassure public what needs to be done is being done
- Communicate progress being made
- Provide correct and needed information and dispel rumors



IT'S OK BRO



How you deal with the media can result in:



"I don't like to call it a disaster, because there has been no loss of human life; I am amazed at the publicity for the loss of a few birds"

Oil Company President



"If it's inevitable, just relax and enjoy it"

Governor candidate



"I'd like my life back."

Oil Company Executive