



MEDIA 101 **DON'T PANIC:** **HOW TO RESPOND TO A** **JOURNALIST'S ENQUIRY**





SCOUTS[®]
Creating a Better World

© World Scout Bureau Inc.
COMMUNICATIONS
June 2018

World Scout Bureau
Global Support Centre
Kuala Lumpur

Suite 3, Level 17
Menara Sentral Vista
150 Jalan Sultan Abdul Samad
Brickfields
50470 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA

Tel.: + 60 3 2276 9000
Fax: + 60 3 2276 9089

worldbureau@scout.org
scout.org

Reproduction is authorized to
National Scout Organizations and
Associations which are members of
the World Organization of the Scout
Movement. Credit for the source
must be given.

MEDIA 101
DON'T PANIC:
HOW TO RESPOND TO A
JOURNALIST'S ENQUIRY





MEDIA 101

DON'T PANIC: HOW TO RESPOND TO A JOURNALIST'S ENQUIRY

From time to time, journalists may get in touch with you asking for comment. They may call you on the phone or email. Most of the time their questions are likely to be quite straightforward, but occasionally they may be more challenging, asking for clarification of something they've heard or a response to comments/criticism someone else has made.

Rule number one is not to panic. Journalists need to check facts and get both sides of the story.

Many organisations respond by declining to comment. For most reporters that's a sign they have something to hide. If you choose not to comment, the journalist will probably include a sentence saying: "The Scouts of ABC Country declined to comment."



Other organisations simply ignore the request. In this case (depending on how important your organisation is to the story) a journalist will probably get in touch again. And again. And again. They may then give up, in which case the story will probably read: "The Scouts of ABC Country did not respond to XYZ Media's repeated requests for comment." They may even add the number of times they tried to get in touch and whether it was on the phone or through email.

It's better, then (usually), that you respond.

But how?

Firstly, keep calm. Breathe.

Don't panic.



If a journalist is on the phone do not say anything that you don't want to be published. Ask them as much as you can about the story they're doing. Let the journalist speak. Take notes. Be polite.

If you're not comfortable answering questions over the phone (or are not authorised to speak to the media) ask the reporter to email their request.

If the journalist has emailed, read the email carefully. Think about exactly what is being asked.

Very few emails require an immediate response. Acknowledge the email and say you'll get back to them soon.

Consider your response, both what you want to say, and how you intend to say it.



Do not say more than you need to. You should respond only to the questions asked, and try not to invite follow-up questions by mentioning things that the journalist may not have thought about.

NEVER LIE. You will be caught out.

If the journalist has mentioned a deadline respond before it runs out.

And remember... WOSM is here to help. Drop us an email or give us a call if you need assistance or support.



SCOUTS[®]
Creating a Better World

© World Scout Bureau Inc.
COMMUNICATIONS
June 2018

World Scout Bureau
Global Support Centre
Kuala Lumpur

Suite 3, Level 17
Menara Sentral Vista
150 Jalan Sultan Abdul Samad
Brickfields
50470 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA

Tel.: + 60 3 2276 9000
Fax: + 60 3 2276 9089

worldbureau@scout.org
scout.org

