

MISSION-FOCUSED COMMUNICATIONS

Media Tips — Do's and Don'ts

Your voice is essential to demonstrating how DHA successfully accomplishes its mission. Every public engagement is an opportunity to build trust and showcase our agency.

Guiding Principles

➤ Be Message-Driven, Not Question-Driven

- Deliver key messages. Use questions as opportunities to bridge back to your message.

➤ Stay In Your Lane

- Your knowledge is a critical asset. Speak confidently about what you know. Avoid speculation.

➤ Maintain Integrity and Professionalism

- Provide honest, simple, and direct answers. If you don't know, say so, and follow up!

And Remember:

- **You Are ALWAYS on the Record.** Conduct every interaction as if it were publicly reported.
- **Not Every Question Demands a Direct Answer.** Your objective is to advance the mission's narrative, not to be driven by a stakeholder's agenda.
- **Plan Ahead!** Work with your leadership and PAO to leverage engagements as strategic opportunities to highlight the great work being done at DHA.



DHA PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONTACT INFORMATION

Media inquiries: dha.ncr.comm.cal.dha-media@health.mil

Main Line: 703-681-1770





Execution: Best Practices for Engagement

DO	DON'T
Proactively coordinate with your Public Affairs Office for all external engagements.	Go “off script” on topics with political, financial, or policy implications.
Use data and consult with experts to make your case and ensure accuracy.	Get into arguments. Reframe challenging questions as opportunities to focus on solutions.
Take responsibility when and where it is appropriate, even on controversial subjects.	Speculate. It undermines your credibility and the agency's position.
And, also do... • Project a positive image — be confident and relaxed. • Correct misstatements. • Say that you don't know the answer, when you don't. • Pause and think about your answers. • Speak in complete sentences that can be easily quoted. • Put your main points first, then support. • Offer to follow up later with more information, if applicable.	And, also don't... • Speak off the record or on background. • Lie or guess. • Repeat negative or inaccurate statements. • Give your opinion. • Share confidential or sensitive information. • Say, “no comment.” Explain why you cannot answer a question. • Use acronyms and jargon.

Fact + Key Message = The Right Response

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