

TV tips

When the call comes

Ask questions

- **Why do they want you?** Find out what the story is and what your part in it is, ie are you being asked for comment? Is the story about your new research? Will other people be interviewed as well? Who are they? When will the story go to air?
- **Where do they want you?** Are they coming to you? Or are you going into the studio? Either way, be prepared. They will assess where it's best to do the interview if it is on-location but have some ideas – you may know a good spot that they won't be aware of. This means somewhere without loud machinery and with a background that has some meaning for the story, or just looks nice.

Play for time

- If you feel unprepared, ask when the deadline is and if you can have a short time to consider the topic/collect your thoughts and ring them back.

Prepare yourself and your message for television

- TV stories are generally short news or current affairs packages and the journalists want grabs from you of between three (yes!) and 10-12 seconds...so practice saying what you have to say in various concise and simple ways.
- Choose an outfit that will look good on camera. Avoid too much black, white, stripes, patterns, or anything too outrageous – the TV audience will look at that tie and not listen to what you've got to say. Solid colours are best.

Once you're in front of the camera

- Don't fidget, look calmly at the reporter and answer the questions as briefly as you can
- You will come across better if you have already thought up some simple phrases that sum up what you want to talk about
- Keep in mind that the media wants colourful lively quotes, and your expert opinion delivered confidently but without condescending jargon.
- Be yourself, smile or frown; let your face be lively, depending on the context.
- Stay focused and relaxed and enjoy the opportunity you are getting to share your expertise with such a huge and diverse audience

Other things you may be wondering about

What do you do if you're asked a question or you can't or don't want to answer? Be honest

What do you do if you're not sure about any of the protocols of TV? Ask

How do you behave towards the journalist and other crew members? Treat them as fellow professionals

What do you do if you don't like the way you have worded your answer? It is fine to stop and start over again in edited interviews. If it's live just carry on!