

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS: What is our purpose in the Coast Guard Auxiliary?

Our purpose is Service. Our product is Service. In order to do this, we must publicize Auxiliary activities so that the public understands and appreciates our support of the Coast Guard and of our commitments to Recreational Boating Safety.

The best way to promote and brand ourselves as the best voluntary service in the world is through media inter-action. Following are some tips for engaging with media.

### TOP TEN TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COAST GUARD AUXILIARY MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

1. If you weren't involved in an event or responsible, **DON'T TALK ABOUT IT. PERIOD.** This pertains to SARs and other highly visible news items involving either the Coast Guard or the Auxiliary. Do not say, "No Comment." Refer media to those responsible.
2. If you want to write or talk about an event, be a **SAPP**. In other words, check your information: **Security – Accuracy- Policy- Propriety** If you are in doubt about any part of SAPP, check with the Chain of Leadership.
3. Written material (articles, both internal and external) and media releases need to follow an **ABC** test. **Accuracy – Brevity- Clarity** Don't be long winded...no one will read it.
4. Have several "sets of eyes" read your material, checking for errors (spelling, grammar, punctuation) and clarity. If they get confused, so will the public.
5. Be Pro-Active. Don't wait for events to come to you. Plan for events ahead of time and seek media coverage. National Safe Boating Week is an example. Think ahead.
6. You can't get external media (TV , radio and newspaper) interested in your events if their people don't know you. Seek them out. Get to know them. The press needs us and we need them.
7. If your event has good "visual" qualities and public appeal, write a media release aimed at local TV and newspapers. Remember your **ABCs**. Include the five **W's** (Who, What, When, Where and Why). Send the release and several days later, do a follow-up phone call, but Don't be a Pest.
8. If TV media requests an interview at an event, make sure the person speaking for the Auxiliary or the Coast Guard is the "right" person to do the talking. Keep the answers short and to the point. And, make sure the Uniform is proper.
9. **When Outside:** No Cover or sunglasses are worn for a TV interview. This is Coast Guard Public Affairs Policy. No sunglasses are to be worn for a still photograph. Watch for heavy facial shadows in a TV interview or still photograph. Mitigate when possible by moving the subject into a shaded area.
10. Give the media a "press package". This should include some background information, list of people involved (names and office spelled correctly), **ABCs** and should include the **5 W's**. TV media in particular loves a "press package". They are pressed for time and this package will save them some time. It might also help prevent mistakes in reporting. Next time you have an event, they will seek you out.

**Semper Paratus PA Team**