Dealing with Media and Using Plain Language

PIO is here for YOU

- You're the expert
- It's better for the PIO to call you once and field 20 media outlets, than for you to have to stop work 20 times
- We are here so that media and public has someone to talk to
- You are not under any obligation to talk to the media.
- You may be the best person to talk to a citizen

The media found you… now what?

- Stay calm
- Give a basic reply if necessary
- Direct to Public Information Office
  - Ask: What information?
    What is your deadline?
    How can we contact you?
- Carry PIO business cards
- After hours point of contact,
  Steve Olson, PIO Manager
- Our goal is to reply within 24 hours.

Tips if you get cornered and have to reply NOW:

- Keep it basic
- No opinions *(IE: What do you think? What is the FDOT's take? How do you want to see this turn out?)*
- No promises
- No dogma
- Things change

If you are pressured for an answer:

RESPONSE:

“We need to look into your question/concern a little further, because we want you to have the best and most accurate information possible, as soon as possible. How do we get the information to you?”

Use Plain Language

- Write to the average reader not to experts, management, etc.
  - Writing should be at a 8th to 5th grade reading level
- Keep it short- Less can be more
  - Using short sentences, paragraphs and sections helps your reader get through your material. Readers get lost in long dense text. Chunking your material also inserts white space, opening your document visually and making it more appealing.
- Eliminate excess words
- Use familiar words
- Using acronyms- These can be used ,but should be identified the first time used.
  - Example: State Road (S.R.) 50, then all other times can be S.R. 50

Plain Language Examples

Before	After
Egress	Exit
Ingress	Entrance
Vertical slope	Hill
Aggregate	Rocks
Bascule span	Moveable bridge

When in doubt? Call us.

- Steve Olson

Office-386-943-5479

Cell-386-479-1252

- Jessica Ottaviano

Office-386-943-5473

Cell-386-479-6369

- Jen Horton

Office-386-943-5497

Cell-386-956-8817