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Flood After Fire Toolkit

December 2017

Image credit: DM Molina Terrén

User Guide



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WHAT: In the following slides you will find templates, tips, and materials to share in your community or region when there is a high risk for flooding after wildfires.

WHO: Stakeholders are encouraged to use the materials directly to raise awareness about the risk of flooding after wildfires, and to share the materials with other local community organizations and relevant groups to raise awareness among their networks.

WHERE: All materials can be customized for your community or region. Yellow highlighted areas indicate language that is meant to be modified.

WHY: All materials have a clear “call to action” to help residents understand their risk and encourage property owners and renters to prepare for flooding after wildfires. One of the best ways to prepare is to purchase or renew flood insurance.

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HOW: This toolkit includes a range of materials—from quick, easy actions to more advanced communications strategies. All of the templates, tools, and suggestions can be used with limited communications experience.

Before using this toolkit, determine the scope and strategy of your flood after fire campaign. Consider:

- Who in my community is most at risk of flooding after a wildfire?
- How do residents get their information? What sources, organizations, or individuals do they trust?
- What social media channels do I have access to?
- Do I have any connections with local media?
- Are there relevant organizations that could help spread the word?

In this toolkit you'll find:



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1. Key Messages
2. Communications Materials and Tips
 - Social and Digital Media
 - Print Materials
 - Press Outreach
3. Appendix

Key Messages

Key Messages



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The key messages are used throughout the toolkit materials. In your efforts to raise awareness about the risk of flooding after wildfires, include the key messages in all communications.

- **WARNING:** Flooding after a wildfire is a one-two punch. Following a wildfire, the terrain is dramatically altered. The ground can no longer absorb water, so even light rain can lead to devastating flash flooding and mudflows.
- **RISK:** Even if your home wasn't directly impacted by a wildfire, you are at increased risk for flooding. After a wildfire, all surrounding and impacted areas are at risk for flooding for up to several years.
- **PROTECT:** Protect the life you've built. You've made it through one disaster, now the best way to protect your property from flooding after fire is to purchase flood insurance.
- **MISCONCEPTION:** Most homeowners insurance does not cover flooding. Just an inch of water in an average-sized home can cause more than \$25,000 in damage.

A blue-tinted photograph showing a road blocked by a large rock slide. In the foreground, a large, dark rock formation has fallen onto the road. In the background, a road is blocked by a large pile of rocks and debris. A yellow excavator is visible in the distance, working on the road. The surrounding area is a dense forest of tall, thin trees.

Communications Materials & Tips



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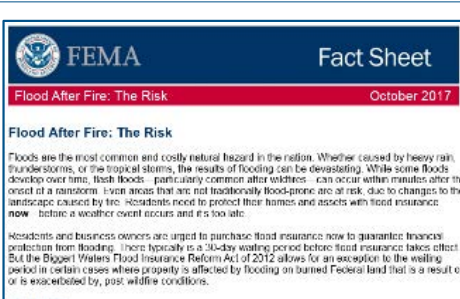
Communications Materials*



SOCIAL & DIGITAL MEDIA

Recommended use:

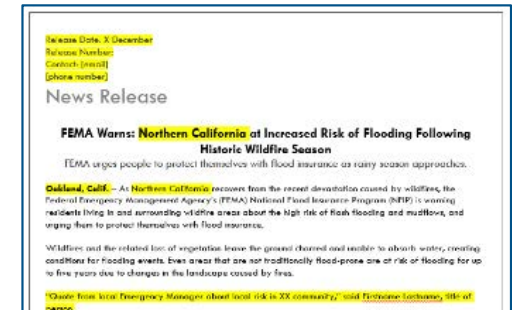
- Post on your social media channels
- Share with local organizations, news media, and influencers for them to share on their social media channels



PRINT MATERIALS

Recommended use:

- Print copies to have on-hand at events and in your office
- Distribute to local organizations
- Include in press release pitch email
- Add to your website



PRESS OUTREACH

Recommended use:

- Identify prominent community news media including local print, radio, or TV outlets
- Add information tailored to your specific community or region
- Share with reporters you've worked with during wildfire season

*full versions of the communications materials can be found in the provided zip folder



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Social and Digital Materials

The average American spends more than four hours a day online. To reach people quickly and easily, post on Facebook and Twitter regularly, up to several times per day. Schedule your posts during moments of high online traffic, often during morning commutes or after dinner. You should feel comfortable sharing the same post repeatedly over a period of several days or weeks. Twitter estimates that less than 5% of your audience will view any single tweet, so repetition ensures higher reach.

You can also update your website's homepage or e-newsletters to include an "alert" about the heightened risk of flooding after wildfire.

We've created the website fema.gov/flood-after-fire and its Spanish counterpart fema.gov/es/flood-after-fire to direct people to a single page that can serve as a "one stop shop" for anyone looking for more information.



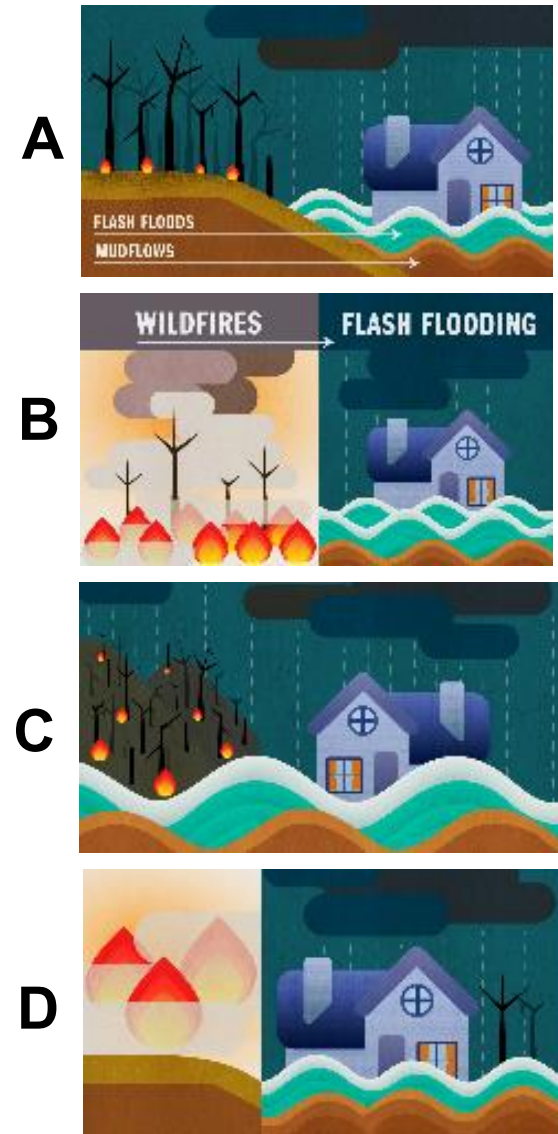
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Social and Digital Media

Facebook

- A. Know your risk: If your home was recently affected by a wildfire, you are at risk of flash flooding and mudflows. Find out what you can do: fema.gov/flood-after-fire
- B. [County or Community Name]: Flood risk is significantly higher up to several years after a large-scale wildfire event. Here's what you can do to protect the life you've built: fema.gov/flood-after-fire
#FloodSmart
- C. FACT: If you live in an area recently affected by wildfires, you are at risk of flooding, the most costly natural disaster. Most homeowners insurance does not cover floods from natural disasters. Make sure your home is protected: fema.gov/flood-after-fire
- D. [County or Community Name]: If you're living in an area that has experienced a wildfire you are at high risk of flash flooding and mudflows. Do you have flood insurance? Be prepared: fema.gov/flood-after-fire





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Social and Digital Media

Facebook

 **FEMA**
Sponsored

Like Page

Know your risk: If your home was recently affected by a wildfire, you are at risk of flash flooding and mudflows. Find out what you can do:
fema.gov/flood-after-fire



FLASH FLOODS
MUDFLOWS

Flood After Fire
Know the risks of wildfires.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Learn More

20 562 Comments 311 Shares

Like Comment Share



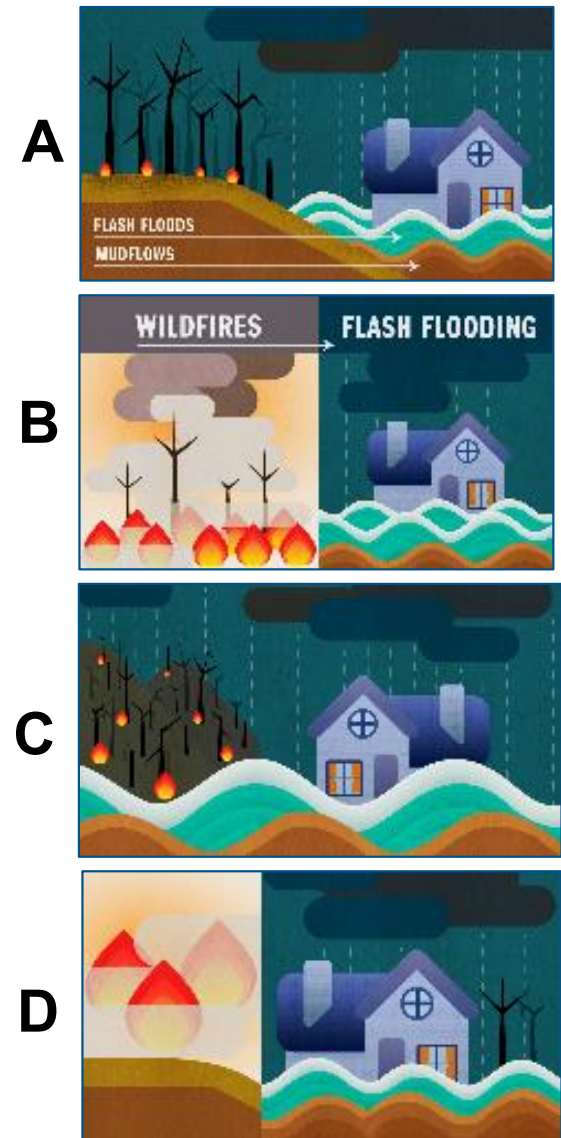
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Social and Digital Media

Twitter

- A. Know your risk: If your home was recently affected by a wildfire, you are at risk of #flashflooding and mudflows. Find out what you can do: fema.gov/flood-after-fire [#CaliforniaFires](#) [#SonomaStrong](#)
- B. [\[County or Community Name\]](#): Flood risk is significantly higher up to several years after a large-scale wildfire event. Protect the life you've built: fema.gov/flood-after-fire [#CaliforniaFires](#) [#SonomaStrong](#)
- C. FACT: If you live in an area recently affected by wildfires, you are at risk of flooding. Most homeowners insurance does not cover flooding. Make sure your home is protected: fema.gov/flood-after-fire [#CaliforniaFires](#) [#SonomaStrong](#)
- D. [\[County or Community Name\]](#): If you're living in an area that has experienced a wildfire you are at high risk of #flashflooding and mudflows. Do you have flood insurance? Be prepared: fema.gov/flood-after-fire [#CaliforniaFires](#) [#SonomaStrong](#)





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Social and Digital Media

Twitter





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Social and Digital Media

Website and Newsletter Advisory

In a prominent location on your website, display the following web copy. You can modify the copy to run as an “alert” banner along the top of your website or in an email newsletter.

HEADER: *FEMA Advisory: Flooding After Fire*

BODY: *FEMA has issued a warning to all [Insert Region or County] residents alerting of the increased risk of flash flooding and mudflows following this historic wildfire season. We urge residents to protect themselves by planning evacuation routes, collecting supplies, and purchasing flood insurance today. To learn more, visit fema.gov/flood-after-fire.*



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Social and Digital Media

Website and Newsletter Advisory



EXAMPLE:



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Print Materials

Another way to raise awareness is to share printed and digital materials with other organizations within your community.

For instance, a neighborhood safety organization may have a meeting coming up. You can email the following resources for them to print and hand out at the meeting. Or, you could deliver printed copies to a local business to hand out to customers. Many reporters also find factsheets and infographics helpful as they develop stories for the local news.



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Print Materials

Fact Sheet



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Fact Sheet

Flood After Fire: The Risk

October 2017

Flood After Fire: The Risk

Floods are the most common and costly natural hazard in the nation. Whether caused by heavy rain, thunderstorms, or the tropical storms, the results of flooding can be devastating. While some floods develop over time, flash floods—particularly common after wildfires—can occur within minutes after the onset of a rainstorm. Even areas that are not traditionally flood-prone are at risk, due to changes to the landscape caused by fire. Residents need to protect their homes and assets with flood insurance **now**—before a weather event occurs and it's too late.

Residents and business owners are urged to purchase flood insurance now to guarantee financial protection from flooding. There typically is a 30-day waiting period before flood insurance takes effect. But the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 allows for an exception to the waiting period in certain cases where property is affected by flooding on burned Federal land that is a result of, or is exacerbated by, post-wildfire conditions.

WILDFIRES

Large-scale wildfires dramatically alter the terrain and ground conditions. Normally, vegetation absorbs rainfall, reducing runoff. However, wildfires leave the ground charred, barren, and unable to absorb water, creating conditions ripe for flash flooding and mudflow. Flood risk remains significantly higher until vegetation is restored—up to 5 years after a wildfire. Flooding after fire is often more severe, as debris and ash left from the fire can form mudflows. As rainwater moves across charred and denuded

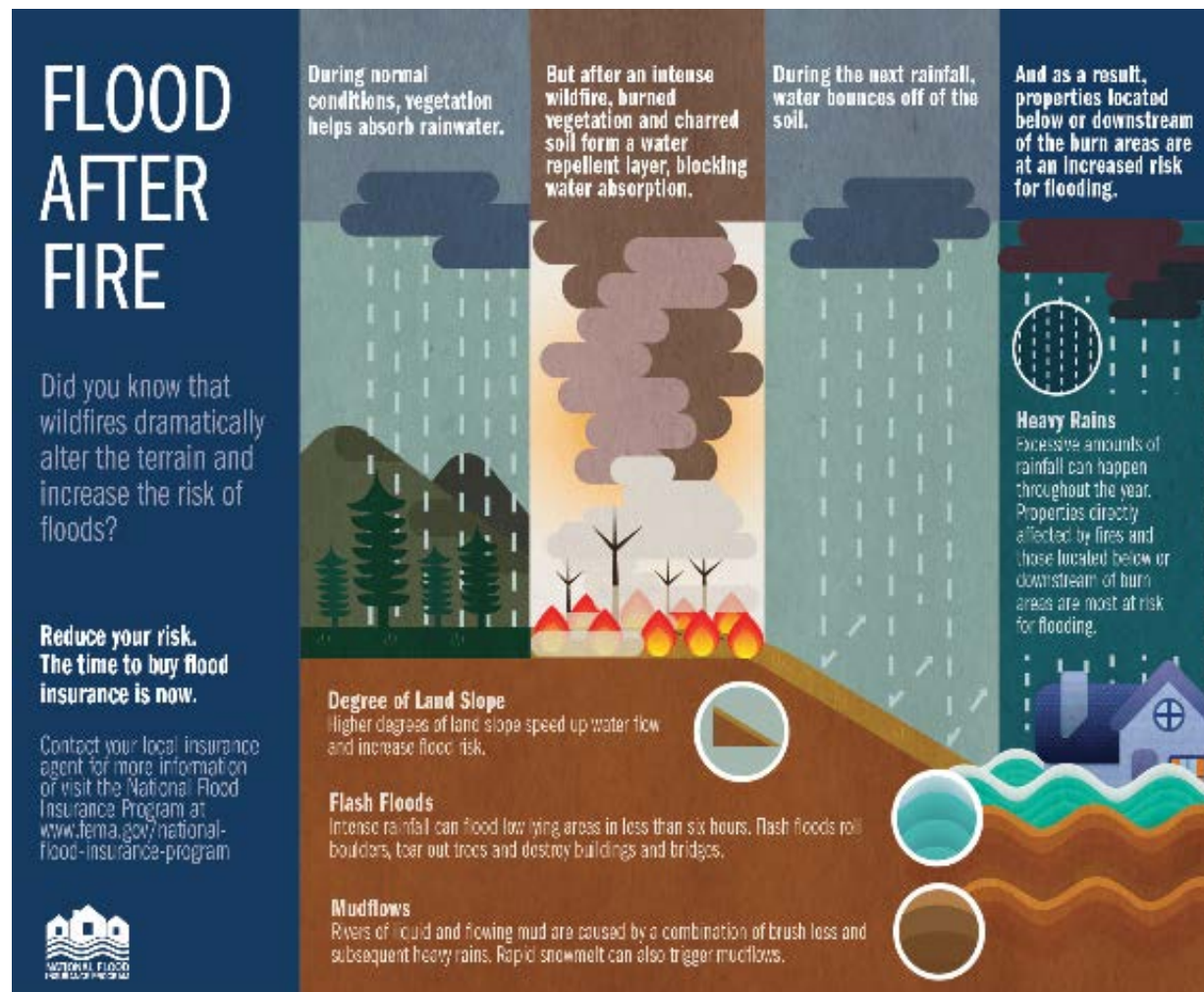


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Print Materials

Infographic





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Press Outreach

To increase visibility of the risk for flooding after wildfire, consider reaching out to your local media to help spread the word. Local newspapers, blogs, TV, and radio stations are often looking for important community stories, and can help you reach audiences outside of your usual communications channels.

Once you've identified local media outlets, you'll want to customize the provided press release and email template to contact reporters, asking them to report on flooding after wildfire risk.

Even if reporters are not able to write about this topic, reaching out is an opportunity to build and strengthen relationships with the media, which can help you “earn” coverage in the future.



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Press Outreach

Choosing a Local Media Outlet

Print Media: Your local print media may include a main daily paper, local weekly paper, and smaller neighborhood publications. Many of these outlets also post stories on their website and on social media. Look for reporters who have covered previous wildfires, natural disasters, PSAs, or breaking news. Offer reporters interviews with Emergency Managers, property owners who've purchased flood insurance, or photos of local flooding after fire to help them build their story.

Radio: In addition to reaching out to radio news reporters to invite them to cover the risk of flood after fire, you may consider reaching out to music stations or popular morning shows. For instance, a local R&B or pop station may be willing to run a PSA or interview a community official between songs without having a formal paid partnership.

Television: Contact local news stations by finding their news desk contact information on their website (usually on the contact page under "news tips"). TV producers are most concerned with visuals, so you can help by introducing them to community members and Emergency Managers to interview, offering to share any video footage or photos, along with the infographic and social media graphic provided in this toolkit.

Constituency Media: Media outlets that are targeted to local communities are an effective way to reach demographic groups, such as Spanish-speakers or readers with a specific interest like neighborhood news and safety. These outlets can be print, online, radio, or TV. Although they usually have very small staffs and it may take longer to connect with them, they are often looking for relevant local stories.



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Press Outreach

Press Release Template

Release Date: X December

Release Number:

Contact: [email]

[phone number]

News Release

[Insert Organization Name] Warns: [Insert Region] at Increased Risk of Flooding Following Historic Wildfire Season

[Insert Organizations Name] urges residents to protect their home, business, property with flood insurance as rainy season approaches.

[City, State] – As [insert region/city] recovers from the recent devastation caused by wildfires, [insert local organization name] warns residents living in and surrounding wildfire areas about the high risk of flash flooding and mudflows, and urging them to protect their home, business, or property with flood insurance.

Wildfires result in a loss of vegetation and leave the ground charred and unable to absorb water. This creates conditions for flooding. Even areas that are not traditionally flood-prone are at risk of flooding for up to several years after a wildfire.

["Include a quote from a local staff or community member about the risk of flood after fire," said [insert name], the [Insert title] of [insert community organization].]

Floods are the most common and expensive natural disaster in the U.S. Just an inch of water in averaged- size home can cause more than \$25,000 in damage. Most homeowners and renters insurance policies do not cover flood damage. Flood insurance is a separate policy that protects homes and belongings.



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Press Outreach

Contacting Reporters

After customizing the press release, share it with reporters. Your organization may already have a media list with the names and contact information for local reporters, TV producers, or editors. If you don't have a media list, you can easily find contact information online, often under the “contact” or “about” sections of a news organization's website.

The screenshot shows the footer of the Daily Herald website, which has a blue background. It is divided into three main sections: the logo and social media links on the left, 'Sites & Partners' in the middle, and 'Tools & Services' on the right. In the 'Tools & Services' section, the 'Submit a News Tip' link is highlighted with a yellow box. In the bottom left corner, a list of links includes 'Contact the Daily Herald', which is also highlighted with a yellow box.

	Sites & Partners	Tools & Services
Daily Herald f t y p i • Customer Service • Subscribe to the Daily Herald • Contact the Daily Herald	• Cougarblue • Prep Rally • The Ticket • Mom Click • The Pyramid • Utah Adventure • Student News	• Mobile Apps • Activate Your Digital Access • E-Edition Newspaper • Submit a News Tip • Advertise • Subscribe to Email Updates • Business Marketplace • Apply to work at the Daily Herald



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Press Outreach

Reporter Outreach Template

FEMA warning: Flood After Fire - Message (HTML)

File Message Insert Options Format Text Review Tell me what you want to do

Paste Clipboard Basic Text Names Include Tags Add-ins

To... localreporter@california.com

Cc...

Send

Subject FEMA warning: Flood After Fire

Dear [Reporter Name] – I hope this email finds you well.

I'm the [Insert title] for [insert region]. [Insert sentence to personalize: "Thanks so much for your work to raise awareness after the devastating recent wildfires."]

With the rainy season coming up, we want to bring attention to [Insert region] high risk for flooding after fire. Because the wildfires have changed the terrain, all residents who live in and around areas impacted by wildfires are now at a heightened risk for flash flooding and mudflows. We're working to get the word out and make sure all [Insert City] residents are prepared for flooding. Will you help us by writing a story covering this topic?

Attached please find a press release with more information about how the community can take action. I'm also happy to put you in contact with representatives from [other local community organization] who can speak to the flood risk.

Hope to hear from you soon,
[Insert Name & email signature]



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Press Outreach

Interview Tips and Tricks

Be prepared. Do your research on the reporter and their previous coverage. Know in advance what the format of the interview is and what questions to expect.

Be strategic. Determine your objective, and answer every question within that objective. Bridge your response to the questions asked with the answers you've planned in advance.

Be snappy. Only a few sentences from your interview will make it into the story, so everything you say should restate or reinforce your message. Keep responses 15-30 seconds long.

Be human. Reporters aren't your audience; their readers or viewers are. Answer questions as if you're speaking directly to your target audience, and use personal anecdotes or analogies

Be a partner. Be helpful, responsive and respectful of the reporter's deadlines. Help them find other people willing to speak on the record.

Don't patronize. Don't mistake a PR opportunity for advertising. Reporters are there to write news for their readers, not to run a free ad for your issue or organization.

Don't go into the weeds. Know what level of detail to provide a reporter. Don't try to educate the reporter about every single issue; it leads to confusion, distracts from your core messaging and can back you into a corner.

Don't speak in jargon. Adjust your vocabulary to the technical level of the interviewers and their readers or viewers. If you use unfamiliar terms, you'll decrease the chances of an accurate story.



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Appendix

1_Flood After Fire_Toolkit.pdf

2a_Flood After Fire_Social Media Copy.doc

2b_Flood After Fire_Social Media Image.png

3_Flood After Fire_Fact Sheet.doc

4_Flood After Fire_Infographic.pdf

5_Flood After Fire_Press Release Template.doc

6_Flood After Fire_Reporter Email Template.doc