

## **Retail Food Defense Media Guidelines**

If an incident (product tampering, bomb threat, flood, etc.) happens, you will want a plan of action for communications. **The first step is to designate one person as the Spokesperson or Public Information Officer (PIO) to handle inquiries.** This avoids confusion and makes keeping records of media contacts easier.

The following are some tips and guidelines for the Spokesperson:

- Keep cool and calm. Your company's good name is too important for emotion-charged and off-the-cuff answers. Do not avoid the news media. A "no comment" policy can lead to negative publicity;
- Give the news media facts only when you have them, not before. Be truthful and don't speculate or be drawn into hypothetical questions. Discuss what you know, not what you think;
- When possible, use positive or neutral terms. Avoid one-liners, clichés and do not express personal opinions;
- Don't let a reporter put words in your mouth and don't react to new information a reporter gives you.
- When having an in-person interview:
  - ✓ Know who will be conducting the interview;
  - ✓ Know the subjects the reporter wants to cover and limit the interview to those subjects;
  - ✓ Know the format and duration of the interview;
  - ✓ Do not embarrass or argue with a reporter;
  - ✓ Do not tell the news organization which reporter you prefer.
- When having a telephone interview:
  - ✓ Know who is on the other end of the line;
  - ✓ Ask if you are being recorded;
  - ✓ Ask when and where the information will be used.
- Make certain that families have been notified before identifying injured persons to the news media;
- Follow up with the media as new information develops. Take the initiative to call them with new information or to correct inaccuracies.