

CO-09-183



Forest Service

Washington Office

1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

File Code: 1650

Date: AUG 25 2009

Route To:

Subject: National Media Contacts

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, Deputy Chiefs and WO Directors

I have received disturbing information concerning contacts by some employees with national media, without coordination as codified in our directives. In FSM 1650.3, all employees are to coordinate contacts with representatives of the national news media or motion picture producers with the Washington Office. The intent of this memo is to reaffirm our process for engaging with the national media.

Working with the media is a key way to express our messages in a consistent and clear manner and a key way for the Forest Service to share its work with the American public. National media is extremely important, thus we must exercise an extra level of care. Without coordination, we miss critical opportunities to determine if there is additional information that would be valuable to telling our story.

You are to notify the National Press Office (202-205-1134) whenever you receive media inquiries that fall into the following categories: 1) Employees contacted by a member of the national media on **any** subject; or 2) Employees contacted by a local or regional reporter seeking information about a national issue, including policy and budget issues.

The trigger word is national—be it a national news outlet or a national issue. Working with the media is a key way to express our messages in a consistent and clear manner. The national media is extremely important, thus we must exercise an extra level of care to ensure that accurate information is provided.

It is critical for us to ensure consistent and coordinated messaging as we engage with national media and discuss issues of national significance. It is my expectation that all line officers will emphasize required conduct when employees are in contact with national media or discussing national issues. Line officers are expected to ensure contact is made with the National Press Office **prior** to talking with national media on issues of national significance.

Please make sure this standing direction is passed on to all employees and ensure compliance.

THOMAS L. TIDWELL  
Chief

