



10 TIPS FOR JOURNALISTS COVERING COVID-19

#1 UNDERSTAND THE MOOD ON THE GROUND, THEN TRANSLATE IT INTO YOUR WORK

Visual reporting on the crisis is valuable, but it needs to be carried out responsibly. Reporters should ensure their images accurately portray what's going on. Otherwise, it might give an inaccurate picture and spread fear. Before you even start photographing — or writing — take in your surroundings, speak to people and understand the mood on the ground. Then, translate that into your reporting, and avoid any content that might contradict what people are actually experiencing



#2 FOCUS ON REPORTING, NOT ANALYSIS

Opinion and analysis have their role. It's too early to know the long-term effects of the virus. Therefore, avoid projecting any political, economical ramifications in your reporting unless backed by a credible source.

#3 WATCH YOUR HEADLINES

Don't mislead readers with your headlines. Most people get their news from headlines alone. Although you might want it to be catchy, don't sacrifice facts for clicks — ever, but especially in the midst of a crisis.



#4 REMEMBER: NOT ALL FIGURES ARE ACCURATE

Numbers, data and figures are a critical part of reporting. However, remember that figures from an epidemic, or a disease, fluctuate as it progress. Don't neglect the data you have, but make sure your audience understands the limitations and uncertainty behind the numbers. Try to make audience understand that the numbers will change and direct them to relevant platforms to check daily updates.

#5 TALK TO AS MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE

The crisis affects people across countries, cities and social strata. For instance, the experience of those affected in China will not be the same as those in Malaysia or Thailand. It won't be the same in Italy either. Even within a country, or city, there exists a great deal of difference. Reporters have a responsibility to do their best to capture the different realities people are living within.



#6 AVOID RACIST TROPES

According to Asian American Journalists Association: add context to photos, avoid images of race/ethnic specific locations/names unless they are directly related to the story and don't use any geographic references in the name of the virus.

#7 CONSIDER THE WAY YOU INTERVIEW EXPERTS

You might be a phenomenal reporter, but if you don't find the right sources your work will suffer. Take care to research the experts you need, and their views. Find experts who can distance themselves from their own bias. Not only does this help you understand their worldview, it also strengthens your story.



#8 DON'T NEGLECT STORIES THAT AREN'T EXCITING

A worldwide story like COVID-19 lends itself to hard-hitting reporting, in-depth investigations and more. However, not every story you're going to write will be worthy of a praise. Focus your efforts on answering your audience's questions. Use social media trends and data to better understand what type of information people are looking for, and then produce quality content they can turn to in order to find answers.

#9 SET YOUR LIMITS

Editors will likely approach you for more stories. It's important to say no sometimes — for your sake, and for the sake of your work. Slowing down to evaluate which stories you want to tell will ensure that you don't get caught up in the rush. Instead, you can focus on telling a few stories well.



#10 WHEN THINGS WIND DOWN, STICK WITH THE STORY

Eventually things will wind down, but that doesn't mean your job is over. Evaluate the way politicians and health officials handled the crisis, identify lessons learned, determine whether survivors still live with the stigma of infection and explore what it means to return to "normal".