



News release guidelines

The following are recommended guidelines that will make things easier for you and the people handling your news.

- Always write a press release on your organisation's stationery. If you are sending multiple copies, print the release on white paper first, then photocopy onto the actual stationery.
- At the top of the page, put your organisation's name, address and contact person of persons, with phone number(s).
- Leave enough space in the margins so that the editor has room to edit or to insert instructions.
- Releases should be typed, double space, on one side only.
- If the release runs more than one page, write "more" at the bottom of each page. Put a short heading at the top of all pages except the first.
- Do not break a paragraph or a sentence at the end of a page. Each page might be given to a different typesetter.
- Begin the release with a date or "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE."
- End the release with "end" (centered).

News releases for newspapers should be sent at least one week in advance. Weekly or monthly magazines should receive your release several weeks in advance, since publication schedules vary.

Photographs

Newspapers often send their own photographer to news events for a feature story. However, editors will choose a news release with a picture over one without. Here are some rules to follow when taking photographs:

- Use black-and-white film. Colour pictures are rarely used.
- All pictures should have captions identifying the place, date and event. Write the caption on the lower half of a sheet of paper and tape the photo above the caption. Do not forget to put contact information on this sheet as well.
- Make it look interesting, but not staged.

Writing tips

- Traditional news always contains the WWWWWH of a story: Who, What, Where, When, Why and How.
- All news should be written in as journalistic a style as possible so it can be printed as it is. See if you can find a professional writer to help you or at least review what you have written. Have your writer approach the press release as if he were interviewing your group.
- Headlines should strive to capture the reader's imagination. Make use of puns and colons.
- Grammar and format: Use simple sentences and avoid flowery language. State your information straightforwardly by sticking to the facts and avoiding personal opinions. In references to the time of day, use a.m. and p.m. except for midnight or noon. The first time you use a person's name, never abbreviate; spell out their first and last names. Use the names of both city and state or province when referring to a location. When you mention a day, be sure to write the date and year. And never use insider jargon.

- Use quotes.
- BE CREATIVE!

As a final suggestion when dealing with the media, establish a good relationship with news people. Your relationship with editors and reporters can make all the difference. Build a recognition factor so when they see your group's name or letterhead they know to give it attention. This takes work on your part. Always do your job efficiently, reliably and credibly so as to make the reporter's or editor's job easier. Remember, it never hurts to always invite reporters to your programs, social gatherings, and fund-raising events! Send complimentary tickets in advance and make arrangements for their guests. The week before your event contact the editor to ensure that they received all information.