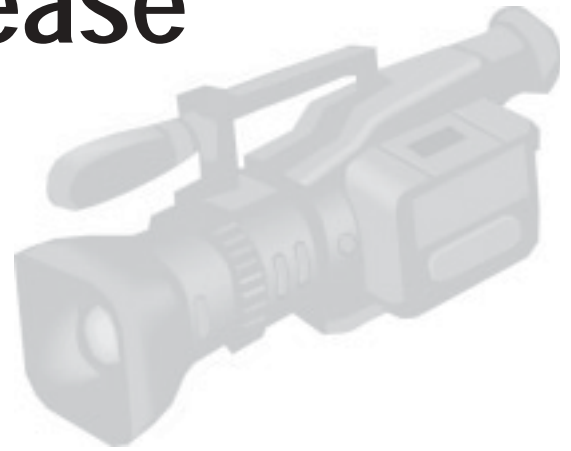




How to Write a Press Release



What do you get from a press release?

Papers receive hundreds of press releases. A well-written release generates a reporter's interest in your story or often is printed as in a weekly paper. Press releases are often sent alone, by e-mail, fax or regular mail. They can also be part of a full press kit.

Essential Tips

- Make sure the information is newsworthy and timely. If your news isn't substantive, don't send the release.
- Start with a brief description of the news, then distinguish who announced it, and not the other way around.
- Define your audience. Ask yourself, "How are people going to relate to this and will they be able to connect?"
- Make sure the first 10 words of your release are effective, as they are the most important.
- Deal with the facts.
- Cover the 5 Ws (who, what, when, where and why, and the how).
- Write in the third person.
- Avoid excessive use of adjectives and fancy language.
- Use your quotes to emphasize key messages or put your points into perspective. Make them relevant to the story and avoid the padded quotes that don't say anything important.
- Provide as much contact information as possible: Individual to Contact, address, phone, fax, email, Web site address.
- Shorter is better. Try to stick to one page, never more than two pages.
- Make it as easy as possible for media representatives to do their jobs.

Formatting Suggestions

- Use 8 ½ x 11 paper.
- Use a minimum of one-inch margins on each side of the page.
- Use a bold typeface for the headlines to draw attention.
- Capitalize the first letter of all words in the headline (with the exception of: "a", "an", "the", or prepositions such as: "of", "to", or "from"). The combination of upper and lower case makes it easier to read.
- Complete the paragraph on one page instead of carrying it over onto the next page.
- Use only one side of each sheet of paper.
- Use the word "more" between two dashes and center it at the bottom of the page to let reporters know that another page follows.
- Use three numbers symbols immediately following the last paragraph to indicate the end of the press release:

- more -

#

continued

Content Basics

Every press release should contain these six basic elements:

- **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** These words should appear in the upper left-hand margin, just under your letterhead. Capitalize every letter.
- **Contact Information:** Skip a line or two after release statement and list the name, title, telephone and fax numbers of your city, and your spokesperson (the person with the most information). It is important to give your home number since reporters often work on deadlines and may not be available until after hours.
- **Headline:** Skip two lines after your Contact information and use a boldface type.
- **Dateline:** This should be the city your press release is issued from and the date you are mailing your release.
- **Lead Paragraph:** The first paragraph needs to grasp the reader's attention and should contain the relevant information to your message such as the five W's (who, what, when, where, why).
- **Text:** The main body of your press release where you develop your message. Use enough facts and quotes to back up your lead paragraph.

PR Template

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact:
Contact Person
City
Telephone Number
Fax Number
Email Address
Web site address

Headline

City, State, Date — Opening Paragraph (should contain: who, what, when, where, why):

Remainder of body text - Should include any relevant information to your issue. Include why this matters to the community. Also include quotes from key community leaders, electeds, city staff members or issue experts.

If there is more than 1 page use:

-more-

(The top of the next page):

Abbreviated headline (page 2)

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