



Press Releases

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Get your press release out to the media: Print (newspapers), Broadcast (radio, TV), and Electronic (online sites). Consider the timing and don't forget a follow-up.

WHAT is a press release?

It's a written summary or update to make the media aware of your activities.

WHY do you need a press release?

- Announce an event
- Tell why your event is news
- Show your perspective
- Increase visibility
- Remind people of what your group does
- Highlight a report

WHEN should you prepare a press release?

- News of upcoming events
- Report of recent events
- Reports of changes
- Reports of awards and accomplishments
- General announcements

HOW do you prepare a press release?

- Make it read like a news article
- Emphasize importance
- Be provocative
- Make clear headline and lead
- Make it look professional
- Follow technical guidelines

Tips in Preparing A Press Release

1. **Make sure your press release is clear and accurate.** Remember that if media outlets pick up your press release they may copy it directly to create an article or a news item. If there are errors in your press release those will get copied as well.
2. **Write your press release on a word processor first** rather than composing it directly online (for media that require online submission) so you can easily correct writing errors.
3. **Be as brief as possible, but include all important information.** If it's over two pages, be sure to include a keyword that describes the article (for example, "program opening") and page # on top left corner.
4. **Use quotes when possible.** Quotes from prominent community leaders making positive remarks about your efforts show support for your work.
5. **Include pictures if you can.**
6. **Identify media targets.** Find out the publications and persons to whom you can directly send your information.
7. **Identify the person** in your program or organization who will be the contact person on all materials.
8. In addition to the press release, you can **also send other information about your program or organization** such as a fact sheet, a case study, or an executive summary of a report.
9. **Distribute** your press release and/or press packet by mail, E-mail, or fax.
10. Follow-up with a phone call to each press contact.

Technical Guidelines

1. **Used mixed case letters**, not all upper case.
2. **Follow rules of grammar and style.** Grammatical errors will affect your credibility. Write, print, proofread, rewrite, edit, rewrite. Ask someone unfamiliar with your work to proofread the press release.
3. **Do not embed HTML or other markup languages** in the press release as it detracts from readability.
4. **Write more than one paragraph.** If you can only muster a few sentences then chances are you do not have a newsworthy item (shoot for a 300-400 word press release). Make sure you answer all of the questions: who, what, where, when, why, and how.
5. **Carefully select the E-mail address you include in the release.** On the one hand, you want to make it as easy as possible for media contacts to reach you; on the other, your press release may be made widely available and there are programs on the Internet that harvest E-mail addresses for spamming. Including your Web site address is okay.
6. **Provide contact information** that will enable you to promptly respond to any questions.
7. **Avoid hypes such as multiple exclamation points.** Keep it formal.
8. **Follow a standard press release format.** Press Release Newswire provides helpful Press Release Tips & Guidelines at www.prweb.com/pressreleasetips.php

Publications may copy directly from your press release to create an article. Make sure the press release puts your best foot forward.