



Press Releases

Press releases are one to two page announcement of “hard news” - an action, decision, report, or other major newsworthy event. A good release will catch the reader’s attention and tempt them to write a story.

When to use them:

Put out a press release when you have a major newsworthy event. This might mean the final release of a plan, a major decision or action, or a *very* significant meeting or activity. Don’t bother using news releases for routine activities, insignificant activities, or shamelessly self-promoting propaganda.

How to use them:

A news release, on its own, will almost never attract any news coverage. Most news operations receive stacks of releases every day. As a general rule, they get ignored. You should always follow up a release with a personal call to the reporter who will be covering it to make sure they have seen the release and understand the newsworthiness of it. Be prepared to answer questions and provide more information.

Format:

Using the right format will make it easier for reporters to use your release and predispose them to take your organization seriously.

- Start with a good, short headline. When in doubt, say “*Who did What.*”
- Always include complete, reliable contact information: name, phone(s) and email.
- The body of a press release should always contain the five Ws: Who, What, Where, When, and Why. Place the most important information in the first paragraph, and build down to less important details and background.
- Brevity is key! Use short paragraphs and omit needless words.
- Include a few good quotes. Putting some quotes in the release will save you the trouble of coming up with something to say when a reporter calls you.
- Close every release with a brief statement of your organization’s identity and mission.
- Write your release so that small media outlets can reprint it in its entirety
- Number pages and close the release with #### or -30- so the reader knows they have reached the end.
- Use a clear font and plenty of white space.
- Offer a picture or map if you have one.