

Press Release Guidelines

The purpose of a press release is to provide key information to the media, in order to obtain coverage. Although press releases are written around a variety of subjects, the core message should ALWAYS be something 'new', which prior to your release is not public knowledge.

The basics

UPSIDE DOWN TRIANGLE - Most important information at the top, least important at the bottom

KEEP IT SIMPLE - Short, sharp and to the point, with one key message

CHECK EVERYTHING - Messages, dates, spelling, grammar, facts

Don't be disappointed if your release is reworded before publication or broadcast. Journalists normally like to produce material in their own style.

Golden rules

Start Strong. Your headline and first paragraph should tell the story, the rest of your press release should provide the detail.

- Headlines are important - the first thing the editor will see
- Stick to the facts, not flowery adjectives like 'super, fantastic and marvelous'
- Write in the third person not 'we' or 'you'
- Don't use your own emotion or opinion
- Avoid clichés 'like the plague'
- Keep it current
- Keep the overall message simple

Step by step

Title Think of something short and snappy that will grab attention and summarises the story

First paragraph Answer the 5 W's

- Who - is the story about?
- What - is it about?
- When - will it happen?
- Where - will it happen?
- Why - is it happening?
- How - will it take place?

Quote Incorporate a direct quote into your release - a relevant comment from a person directly involved, this is where you express opinions

Additional paragraphs Use these for supporting information that if not used will not matter

-ends- should mark the end of the release and should separate those details included for the news desk only

Contact details Add your name, position and contact details (phone and e-mail) also add photocall details here

Notes to editor Your release should include 'notes to editor'. These will include a brief description of your company and/or group, its aims, objectives and achievements and any other factual info that the editor may require for reference.

Overall: Try to keep to a maximum of two pages, include today's date, add photocall details at the top of the page, double space the text and most importantly...JUSTIFY the need for a press release!