



**Proper news release format:**

*For Immediate Release – Month Day, Year [use gray, italicized type]*

**[Insert LOGO here]**

**Headline**

Use one line for the headline. Keep it short and snappy. Headline should include the name of organization/person and what the news release is about. Format the headline in **bold**. Only capitalize letters that would normally be capitalized.

**City** [Location of organization or event in **bold** – if it is a bigger city such as Seattle, include only the city name. If it is not as big, include the state after the name, separated by a comma]—**1<sup>st</sup> body paragraph** contains 1-2 sentences that states exactly what the release is about and includes the most important who, what, where, when, why, how and “so what” of the story.

**2<sup>nd</sup> body paragraph**—More in-depth explanation of the release topic, including key facts, numbers, names, and any who, what, where, when, why, how and “so what” of the story not included in the 1<sup>st</sup> body paragraph

**3<sup>rd</sup> body paragraph**—Begin with quoted information; follow it by who said it, including title.

**4<sup>th</sup> body paragraph**—Include descriptive information about release topic, such as the organization’s mission, its goals, or more specific information about a person or event.

**5<sup>th</sup> body paragraph**—Use a quote or catchy way to summarize.

**6<sup>th</sup> body paragraph**—Wrap up the release and include the website address.

###

[Insert three # symbols to indicate the end of the text portion.]

*Contact:*

*Name*

*Phone*

*Email*

*[In gray italics, insert the contact person who will field calls about the news release. Include the person’s name and title, the phone number and email address.]*

## **Some tips for writing a successful news release:**

**Always adhere to AP style writing.** Many books and resources are available that instruct on AP style. We recommend *The Associated Press Stylebook*: [www.ap.org](http://www.ap.org).

**Be accessible.** Supply contact information. Don't make reporters chase you. If reporters are more likely to reach you on a cell phone, put your cell phone on the news release. Don't crowd your news release with more than one phone number. Always provide an email address below the phone number, along with a website. If reporters want to find out more about you, they will expect to find it there.

**Less is more.** Get to the point quickly and provocatively. Don't include the entire history of an issue. There is rarely a need to draft more than one page. Save additional information for a "one-sheet" backgrounder to offer if they're interested.

**The headline should be one line.** As a general rule, headlines should never exceed one sentence or one line of text. Use verbs and avoid dependent clauses.

**Understand the lead.** The best leads are clever, colorful and succinct without being precious and cute. They are no more than two or three sentences.

**A good quote always follows a good lead.** Quotes are reserved for provocative, exciting language that summarizes the key issue. Every news release lead should be followed by an interesting quote that succinctly tells your story.

**Local contacts matter.** Quotes from local community sources are better than quotes from officials far removed from the area. Quote a local resident or authority when you can. Reporters are more inclined to act on news happening locally. If you are working on a regional issue, provide a local voice for each news release that you send out to different newspapers, where possible.

**Prove your point by supporting the lead and quote.** In two or three paragraphs, provide supporting facts that drive your message home. If you have dry facts, consider bulleting them so they stand out.

**Write in plain language without jargon.** Would your spouse or friend understand the content of your news release? If not, rewrite it using plain language. Avoid insider terms or technical jargon. Remember that reporters are writing for a general audience, not special interest groups.

**Email news releases as text, not attachments.** While a well-formatted news release is appealing, spam filters rarely accept unsolicited attachments. Copy and paste your news release into an email. Avoid glitzy graphics and pictures that take hours to download. Save those for *after* the reporter is interested.

**Have a second party proofread your news release.** Nothing can sink a good news release quicker than an embarrassing typo that makes your organization look amateur. All releases require a second pair of eyes for proofreading and review. Ask a co-worker to read for typos, grammar and then content.