

## How to Write a Press Release

1. Your release should go on your organization's letterhead, preferably with your logo or seal and contact information pre-printed. In the top left-hand corner, under your organization's information or logo, put "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE". It should be in all capital letters. You can also bold it if you'd like.
2. A couple spaces below or justified to the right of "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" indicate a contact name and phone number that reporters may call for additional information. This contact person should be your organization's public information officer or spokesperson. It is a good idea to have your subject matter expert on the topic available when the release goes out in case you get media calls.
3. Below "FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" (or the contact information) put the date.
4. A couple of spaces below the date is your headline. Your headline should be bold, in a larger font, and centered. It should be a brief summary (no more than two lines) of what your press release is about. It needs to be informative and grab the attention of the reporter or editor. Keep in mind that the media receives many press releases each day. It should be clear, to the point, and encourage the reader to read the rest of the release. You can include a subheading to provide more information and entice the reader to go on. Here are examples of good headlines:

**"Bethel Opens Mass Dispensing Site for Vaccine Distribution"**

**"Waterbury Health Department Holding Health Fair on Cardiac Health  
Free Blood Pressure Screenings and Educational Sessions Will Be Provided"**

5. A couple of spaces below, include the town or city where the release is coming from followed by a dash. This is called the dateline. You can bold the city if you choose. (Example: **New Britain -** )
6. After the dateline is where your release begins. The first paragraph of your release should be brief and include all of the important information: Who, What, Where, When, and Why. Everything the reader needs to know should be in this paragraph.
7. The rest of the release should include any necessary details. You should provide enough information for the reader to be interested, but you should not overwhelm them.
8. Your last paragraph should be similar to your first paragraph and include a call to action (example: "for more information call..." or "visit our website at www..."). You should drive the reader to a resource where they can get more information on the topic for their article.
9. A couple of spaces below your final paragraph, centered on the page, put "###". This signifies the end of your release.

## Tips On Writing A Press Release

- At the end of the release (after your last paragraph and before the ###), include a couple of sentences about your organization. This can include what your organization's mission is or what your organization is tasked with. At the end of the description, point the reader to your organization's website. This is free advertisement for your agency.
- Try to keep your sentences short with an occasional longer sentence to break the monotony.
- Keep the press release brief (try to keep it to one page) and to the point. Point readers to a phone number or website that they can go to for additional information.
- Clearly present the facts and leave out any editorializing.
- Stay away from acronyms and jargon.
- If it's a local event or topic, indicate the name of the town or city in the headline. This will increase the likelihood that a local newspaper will pick up the story.
- When first responding to an emergency or crisis, you should use statements of empathy. A good way to do this is to include it in a quote from an elected official or your health director. (Example: "Our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims and their families," stated First Selectman Jones. "As a community we can make it through this difficult time.")
- Make sure your release is clear, simple, and to the point.
- Proofread your release several times. Have somebody else look at it as well. A pair of "fresh" eyes may catch mistakes that you missed. A typo or mistake can discredit your release.
- Make sure that your release gets all of the clearances and approvals as outlined by your organization's communications plan. For example, all press releases sent out by the Department of Public Health must be approved by the Director of the Office of Communications, a subject matter expert and the Department of Public Health Commissioner as prescribed in the agency's communications plan.

You can view samples of press releases on the Department of Public Health website at [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph) and clicking on "News Room" on the left-hand menu.

For tips on working with the media, please visit the "CDC Influenza Awareness Campaign: Media Relations Toolkit" at [www.cdc.gov/flu/nivw/pdf/toolkit.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/nivw/pdf/toolkit.pdf).

### Reference:

theMatrix (2006). *Media relations 101: How to write a good press release*. Retrieved April 4, 2008 from [http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/27390/media\\_relations\\_101\\_how\\_to\\_write\\_a.html?cat=3](http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/27390/media_relations_101_how_to_write_a.html?cat=3).