



Press Release Guidelines

A press release is a statement prepared for distribution to the media. The purpose of a press release is to give journalists information that is useful, accurate, and interesting. They are a way to share important information about critical, newsworthy topics such as:

- The impact of the bidding program on patients.
- The impact of the bidding program on specific providers.
- Sharing the position of a state organization on a specific topic.

State associations and individual providers can use press releases to raise public awareness of specific problems surrounding the Medicare bidding program. Press releases are an effective and inexpensive way to reach a broad public audience. And using a distribution service is easy and inexpensive, often only \$100-\$200 for each release.

Accuracy

Be sure your facts are correct. Credibility is lost with bad information.

Structure

Use a standard press release format:

- Print it on company letterhead. If this is not possible, adding the company logo is essential.
- The company's name, website, address, and phone number should be printed clearly at the top of the page.
- PRESS RELEASE should be below the company information in all capital letters, centered, and bolded.
- The contact person's name and contact information (email and phone number) should be included underneath PRESS RELEASE.
- If the release is for IMMEDIATE RELEASE, print those words in all capital letters, and bolded at the left margin directly above the title.

Title

Write the title for impact. Attention-grabbing, short, and snappy titles get your release read. It should be centered and bolded. Make it one font size larger than the following text, so that it really stands out.

Content

The body of the press release is where you share your useful, accurate, and interesting information.

- The body begins with the city where the press release originates and the date. This text should be bolded.
- The text, beginning with the date and city of origin, should be typed in a clear, basic font (Times New Roman, Arial, etc.) and double-spaced.
- Put the main point of your release in the first paragraph, even the first sentence if possible, and then expand the story in following paragraphs with facts.
- The facts include **the five “w”s of good writing: who, what, where, when and why.** The first paragraph of the press release should discuss in brief detail what the press release is about. The second paragraph explains: who cares; why the reader should also care; where can the reader find it; when it will happen.
- Next comes a quote to give the release a personal touch. This lets the media know that they have a reliable source to talk to if they’re interested in following up, and it provides that human interest angle that can draw both media and readers’ interest.
- The last paragraph should summarize your news.
- If your press release exceeds one page, include “more” at the bottom of the first page and “Page 2” in the upper right-hand corner of the second page. Journalists look for the following to define the end of the press release: ###. (three # symbols, centered directly underneath the last line of the release)
- Finish up with information on your company, a paragraph known as the “boilerplate,” which describes what your company does and includes your website address.

Distribution

- If you want your news release to become news, an effective distribution plan is a must.
- If the release topic is local, share the release with your local media.
- If the topic is broader in scope or you want broad distribution, using a press release service such as PRNewswire, PRWeb, PRLog, or 24-7PressRelease can get your release out to a broader audience.
- Put together a file of appropriate contact people at newspapers, radio stations, TV stations and other organizations that would be a good fit.
- Share your release with AAHomecare and HME industry trade publications to gain more exposure.
- Websites and blogs also give your news the chance to really go viral. Email your news release to specialty bloggers who cover your subject, post a video link on YouTube, and use free news release distribution sites online, too. Cover your bases.

The next time you are tasked with writing a press release for your company, have no fear, the basic rules are clear: useful, accurate, and interesting information portrayed within the set journalistic guidelines.