

# WRITING A VALID PRESS RELEASE

An editor sneers when a supposed *Press Release* crosses his or her desk, knowing full well that the writer's attempt was to place an unpaid ad. When is a press release valid? When it offers something of value to the reader, other than just a coupon for 10% off. Attempts to advertise within a press release is a big NO-NO.

The key word here is **NEW**. What's NEW that the subscription base might find of interest? A NEW location, a NEW officer, a NEW position, a NEW degree, a NEW event, a NEW book just published. **If it isn't NEW, it isn't NEWS.**

Once you have gotten past that hurdle, be sure to include the elements that compose a valid press release and submit no later than 2 weeks prior to the event::

- Name of the business, club, etc.
- Date of event
- Time of event
- Type of announcement (game, meeting, grand opening, advancement, graduation, new location)
- Name & phone number of contact person
- Contact for more information
- Evening phone number of contact

Now that you're clear about what comprises a press release, let's talk about the format. All press releases must be on 8 1/2" by 11" white paper. Use a 1" margin all the around. In the upper left corner type your Club or Business Name, space down for your address, space

down for the contact name and day phone number, and space down for the contact name and night phone number. Space down a few lines and to the far right type in the release date.

Space down a few more lines and type in your suggested title in ALL CAPS AND UNDERLINED LIKE THIS. The body of the release should begin one-third of the way down the page and double spaced.

If you are submitting photos, be sure to identify the people in the photo from left to right AS YOU LOOK AT THE PHOTO. These names can be typed on a label and attached to the back of the picture, or at the end of your press release. If the release is more than one page, write –more– or ### at the bottom of the first page.

Please realize that your press release may not appear word-for-word even though it may be well composed. All copy submitted is edited to conform to AP style and to fit into the space available.

For a sample press release and a copy of this article, visit our website at [www.on-trackenterprises.com](http://www.on-trackenterprises.com).

Shirley Adema & Caroline McKeon