



BLM Fire

Key Elements of a Good News Release

Key Elements Of A Good News Release

- **Newsworthiness:** Consider what you have to share and judge its newsworthiness.
- **Audience:** Consider who will be reading your news release and what their specific interest will be on the topic.
- **A good lead:** The lead is the first paragraph and shapes your story. Provide enough information to make them want to read more. If it isn't well written, it may be the only paragraph the media reads before moving on.
- **Good writing:** Smaller publications have less staff to write or rewrite material. If your news release is well written, it may be printed with little to no editing. If it requires great effort to rescue, it most likely will go in the trash.
- **Photos/video:** If you have them, share them! People are more engaged when images or video accompanies a story.

The Bare Bones of a News Release

A well-written news release follows the inverted pyramid model. Following this model allows you to provide a clear structure when writing a news release that journalists can easily and quickly read. The model helps you provide a big picture perspective first, then helps you work your way down to providing some of the smaller, minute details that support your big picture perspective. The inverted pyramid follows this approach:

- **Headline:** Keep it simple and straight forward. Try to use your agency name in the headline, if appropriate.
- **Introductory paragraph:** This should contain the key information you wish to share, answering the five W's (who, what, when, where, and why). Ideally, the five W's will be provided within the first sentence, or two sentences, max.

- **Subsequent paragraph:** The next paragraph should contain additional information that supports the introduction, expanding on the information already provided.
- **Optional quote:** The third paragraph is a good spot to put a quote in from an agency lead. Remember, never back into a quote! Each quote should be its own paragraph. Do not include anything else in the paragraph except for the quote and its attribution. For example:
 - » **Right:** "California is increasingly at risk of wildfire," stated Ichabod Smith, Planet Earth Fire Director. "The tragic loss of lives and property this past year makes the situation clear."
 - » **Wrong:** Planet Earth Fire reports California is one of the most wildfire vulnerable states in the country. "California is increasingly at risk of wildfire," stated Ichabod Smith, Planet Earth Fire Director. "The tragic loss of lives and property this past year makes the situation clear." This year, California experienced three million structure losses due to wildfire.
- **Conclusion:** By the fourth or fifth paragraph, you should be providing information that was omitted earlier or even a summary of what appeared earlier. You can also add in additional contact information here, such as a website.

A few things to remember:

- Your news release should be limited to one page!
- Don't forget to put your contact information at the top of the page, along with the date of release.
- Make sure your spelling and grammar are correct! You are representing your agency, you want to look like you know what you're talking about!