Guidelines for News or Press Releases

1. Double-space all body text so it can be easily read.

2. Indent all paragraphs.

3. Have at least a 1-inch margin on the left- and right-hand sides of the paper so the release can be easily read and, if necessary, easily edited by the editor.

4. Type on only one side of an 8 1/2 inch x 1l-inch piece of paper.

5. Use factual information as well as strong verbs. Do not use adjectives that exaggerate.

6. Explain how the information will benefit the reader, listener, or viewer.

7. Check the spellings of names of individuals, products, and companies.

8. If initials or acronyms are used, make sure that the words for which these initials or acronyms stand have been spelled out once.

9. Use the active, not the passive, voice.

10. Use a quotation or quotations from the company's president or some other official or expert that relate to the subject discussed, especially if the quotations are opinionated or offer interpretation. A quotation adds color or flavor to a release

11. Explain to the reader, listener, or viewer how they can obtain additional information.

12. Do not use jargon or terms that may not be understood.

13. As mentioned, use short sentences and short paragraphs.

14. Use words that are easily understood.

15. Edit the release. Try to replace a phrase, for instance, with a word.

16. If possible, try to get all of the information on one side of one page.

17. If the release continues to a second page, make sure that the first page ends with a completed paragraph or sentence. Sometimes, editors use scissors to cut releases into paragraphs so that they can arrange the information. Make it easy for them to do so.

18. If the release continues to a second page, type "More" in the center at the bottom of the first page. This informs the editor that there is more information on the next page.

19. If the release continues to a second page, type a brief heading either flush left or flush right that identifies the company, the date, the page number, and what the release concerns at the top of the second page. Sometimes, pages can become separated on editors' desks.

20. In a two-page news or press release, use at least one subhead, if relevant, to break up the copy.

21. At the end of the release, type "30," "# # #," or "End" in the center. This informs the editor that there is no additional information.

22. If needed, a fact sheet or illustration or photograph may be included with the release. If an illustration or photograph is included, make sure that a cutline or caption explaining the artwork is included as well.

23. Study the medium or media to which the news or press release is being sent. For instance, if the medium is a newspaper, learn if the publication publishes stories that are similar. If so, find out in which sections such stories appear. Then learn who is responsible for this section or these sections. This may be the editor or editors you need to contact.