



Sail Training International

*... the international voice of sail training
... changing young people's lives*

Sail training guide to writing a news release

A good news release is one of the most effective ways of getting your vessel and inspirational sail training stories covered in the your local and national media.

What is a news release?

A news release is a standardised way of communicating with journalists. If written well it will tell them what the story is at a glance – making their job easier and making it more likely they will cover your issue. Journalists get hundreds of press releases every day so you need to make sure yours stands out from the crowd.

What should your news release be about?

The most important thing about a news release is its content. What you are writing about has to be of interest to the journalist or they won't cover it. It has to be newsworthy.

News has to be new and relevant. There is no point publicising an event or activity that happened a few weeks ago. You need to talk about what's happening now or what's about to happen. Your story has to be relevant to the people reading it or hearing about it. For the local media this means finding a local angle; for your national media a national angle. To feature in the international media is difficult - if you achieve this let us know!

News story ideas:

- the launch of a new sail training voyage or vessel or signing up for a race
- people stories of a new Captain, new manager and personal achievements
- a competition to win free berth places or sail training
- a lottery win or new confirmed funding source
- winning a race, award, Blue Flag status
- interesting statistics i.e. vessel birthday, 1000th trainee,
- human interest story i.e. how a young person has turned their life around, involve a celebrity
- an unusual or humorous event
- make your vessel available for events, weddings, business functions
- give the media a 'money can't buy' opportunity i.e. a free sail, meet the Captain, behind the scenes tour.

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Members: the national/representative sail training organisations of Australia, Belgium, Bermuda, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, UK, USA

Probationary Members: Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, India

Insert your
logo here

NEWS RELEASE TEMPLATE

For immediate release: *insert date* (If you want the media to use the story as soon as they receive it)

OR

Embargoed to: *insert date/time* (This gives journalists time to prepare and to ensure they don't use it until a specified time)

Headline: *insert a snappy headline, but not too clever*

Photo opportunity: *insert WHAT it is, WHERE it is, WHEN it is and CONTACT details*

Paragraph 1: *Summarise the story - who, what, where, when and why. All key information needs to be in this paragraph*

Paragraph 2: *Put in more details to flesh out the story you have outlined in the first paragraph*

Paragraph 3: *"Quotes from you or someone relevant to the story." Don't try to cram too many points into one quote – each quote should make one point*

Paragraph 4: *Extra relevant information*

- **ends** - *(shows you have finished writing copy which can be printed)*

Editors notes:

- *Provide background information in case they run a longer story*
- *Outline what you have to offer: pictures, interviewees*
- *Outline any additional relevant information or facts and figures, but keep it short.*

Contact: *Insert name, title, organisation, telephone number, email of people that are available 24/7. Include postal address, website, Facebook and Twitter links (where available).*

Eight top tips:

- 1 Know your media** – read your local paper, listen to your local radio and watch your local TV so you know how they report stories and what type of stories they like. Ring them up and check which journalists cover your issue and when their deadlines are. Introduce yourself and tell them what issues you work on.
- 2 Keep your news release short and to the point** – preferably all on one page or maximum two.
- 3 Send your news release in the body of the email** – don't send it as an attachment and don't include logos. Emails with attachments often bounce back.
- 4 Follow up your news release** – ring the news desk to check they have your release, if they will be covering the story and if they have all the information they need.
- 5 Pick your time to ring journalists** – don't ring close to deadlines as they won't have time to chat. You can find out their deadlines by ringing the news desk. For example, journalists on daily papers are usually very busy in the late afternoon – it's best to ring them mid-morning.
- 6 If the journalist isn't interested in your story, ask why** – it will be useful learning for your next story.
- 7 Don't be put off** – there will be many reasons why your story isn't used – a bigger news story might have squeezed it out, they may have just run a similar story or it might not have grabbed the editor of the day. Keep trying.
- 8 Interesting photo and filming opportunities generate media interest** – particularly for TV, which needs something to film.

REMEMBER

“Persuading the media to publicise your vessel or sail training message is more effective and credible than advertising. Almost anything can be made newsworthy if you package it appropriately.”

“Ask yourself who the audience is and what you want the coverage to achieve i.e. more young people to take part in sail training; to show how you have changed a young person's life, or demonstrate you are a respected organisation in your community. The more people that hear about you, the more confident they become in your ability.”

STI can help to publicise your stories and photographs and copies of your media coverage via their e-magazine and social media channels. Send your news releases and photographs to themasthead@sailtraininginternational.org