



Tips for Writing an Effective Press Release

Spread the Good News about Girl Scouts!

A press release is a great way to spread the news about the wonderful things your girls are doing and to invite girls to a Girl Scout recruitment event.

The Girl Scout brand message asks, "What did you do today?" Through your press release you can let the public know what your girls have accomplished, invite new girls to join you, and share the many benefits of Girl Scouting.

The challenge is to create a release that makes the editor or journalist of a local paper(s) want to know more about what's going on at Girl Scouts!

The following are all possible topics for releases:

1. An upcoming recruitment event;
2. An interesting Girl Scout program your troop is participating in;
3. A local Girl Scout or volunteer being honored or receiving an award;
4. A local food drive Girl Scouts are participating in;
5. A book drive or clothing drive for charity;
6. An exciting or unique service project;
7. A Girl Scout cookie booth sale;
8. A trip the troop has recently taken;
9. How a certain badge or patch has impacted the girls or the community;
10. Anything newsworthy and positive that involves local Girl Scouts in your area.

"The Rules"

Try to follow this format when writing a press release.

1. At the top, put Girl Scouts of Connecticut along with your troop or Service Unit number, name, title, address, and one or two contact numbers.
2. NEVER include the last names or addresses (other than town) of girls, for safety reasons.
3. Leave at least two inches of white space under the title and before the body of the release. This will give the editor room to write notes.
4. Type, double space, on one side only.
5. If the release runs more than one page, write "more" at the bottom center of the page.

6. Write “###” at the very end of the release, bottom center of the page, so the editor or reporter knows that this is the end of your release and a page didn’t get lost in transit.
7. Lastly, before submitting your press release to your local paper, submit a copy to the Public Relations Manager to make certain that any message being sent out under Girl Scouts of Connecticut is consistent with the goals of our council. Tiffany Ventura can be reached at tventura@gsofct.org.

A few tips for writing an effective press release:

1. Use an active headline to grab the reader’s attention.

The headline makes your release stand out. Keep it short (two lines maximum), active, and descriptive. This is important. Editors may receive hundreds (depending on the size of the paper) of press releases a day. Make yours stand out!

2. Always put the most important information at the beginning.

A reporter should be able to tell exactly what your release is about in the first paragraph. In fact, in most cases, that’s all they’ll read. The most important information should always come first and the rest of the information thereafter in order of importance from most important to least.

And remember the five Ws! Be sure your release answers the following questions:

- **Who**—Girl Scouts of Connecticut, troop number, and town. Who are we doing this for?
- **What**—What is going on? What will be the impact or outcome of this story and what is unique about it?
- **When**—When is the event taking place?
- **Where**—Where is the event taking place?
- **Why**—Why is the event taking place? Why is it relevant to your target audience?

3. Avoid hype and unsubstantiated claims

Instead of making over-inflated statements or trying to “build up” an event by claiming it’s more glamorous than it really is, provide real, usable information. Write a release that answers questions, rather than makes outrageous statements.

4. Keep your release to two pages or less

If you can’t state your message in two pages, you’re not getting to the point. Remember, editors and journalists are busy people and prefer to read something short and to the point.

5. Make it interesting

Use language that will get your reader excited about your troop’s project or event. Do not use Girl Scout jargon like UFO and camporee! Watch your sentence length.

6. Be aware of spelling and grammar

The best way to catch spelling and grammar errors is to ask two or three colleagues to proofread your release.

7. Be sure your release is timely

Most daily papers have deadlines of one week ahead of publication for news and press releases. Be sure to submit your release on deadline. **This is especially important when dealing with weekly papers; you will need to get the release to them at least two weeks ahead of time.**

Checklist

- ✓ Is your press release timely—when is the event taking place?
- ✓ Is it relevant—will it affect the community?
- ✓ Did you have someone proofread it for you?
- ✓ Is your language clear and to the point?
- ✓ Is it interesting?
- ✓ Did you include the five Ws? Who, what, when, where, and why!
- ✓ Did you share your press release with the Public Relations Manager before you sent it out? Tiffany Ventura can be reached at tventura@gsofct.org.