



How to Write a News Release

A news release demonstrates to an editor or reporter the newsworthiness of a particular person, event or service. Many news releases are distributed directly to our residents in Chapel Hill eNews.

Communicate the "5 Ws" (and the H) clearly

Who, what, when, where, why — and how — should tell the reader everything they need to know.

Add ### to the bottom of the news release to signify the end.

Contact: Provide a contact person, the subject matter expert in your department, for reporters/public to contact for additional information.

Links to the web may be useful. When adding, use the full URL (or shortened URL) because your recipient may use a text-only email setting which will wipeout all hyperlinks.

We Can Help

CaPA issues official Town news releases. Prepare your news release using these guidelines and send to info@townofchapelhill.org

Give the CaPA Team a sense of your timeframe. After the news release has been edited, published and distributed, locate the web link. Use the link on the calendar item "for more information."

The news release is the essential first step before CaPA can assist with social media, advertising, fliers or other strategies.

Journalism 101

Inverted Pyramid: Good news releases follow the inverted pyramid structure and the "5W+H" checklist for content. The inverted pyramid means starting by telling the reader the conclusion, follow by presenting supporting information, and end by providing background information.

The Lead (lede): The lead paragraph includes the who, what, when, where and how of the story.

Get Creative: You can begin a news release with a short scene, an anecdote, a question, or a bit of dialogue to get the attention of the reader or make the story interesting.

"The Nut Graph": The "nut graph" is the paragraph that expresses the main idea of the story or article, shortly after the lead (lede). The nut graph lets readers know why they were invited to the meeting and why they should consider attending.

Third Person: News releases should be written in the third person and in a neutral, objective tone.

Not Overly Promotional: Avoid unnecessary adjectives because it will only read like an advertisement.

Authentic Quotes: Ensure they are not just self-promotional guff. Make them authentic and interesting.

Shorter is better: Suggested length is 250 to 400 words.

