

GUIDE TO WRITING NEWS RELEASES

1. Content needs to be news--something has to have happened; a newsworthy event should be the focus.
2. All information must be accurate. In order to preserve credibility and an attractive public image, we must always do our best to carefully check any information, such as addresses, etc. and any figures, claims made, or any other data we present, for accuracy.
3. Press releases should be written in journalistic style, presenting facts, using clear, concise, simple, to-the-point sentences, with information placed in order of importance (sample news release attached). The release should give the "five W's," telling what happened or will be happening, whom is involved, where the event took place or will take place, when the news event took place or is to take place, and why it happened or will happen. "How" it happened or is expected to happen should also be included. The release should end with a journalistic closing symbol, "-30-" or "###."
4. Use no more than one sheet, if possible. Use letter size paper (8 1/2 by 11 inches). Type and double space the text, leaving large margins on the top, bottom and sides. When it is necessary to use a second sheet, put "-MORE-" centered at the bottom of the first page, and "-2-" or "page 2" at the top of the second page. Also at the top of the second page, include a short identification line, such as "Narcotics Anonymous," or an abbreviated version of the heading used on page one. This will help if the second page is accidentally mislaid or separated from the first page.
5. The top of the page should say "PRESS RELEASE" or "NEWS RELEASE." It is a good idea to use a special style of stationery instead of regular letterhead paper. The upper left hand corner of the page should give the appropriate address, including the name Narcotics Anonymous, and a phone number if there is one. Also on the heading should be a release date which says "for immediate release," or, if you need more control over the timing of the release, gives a specific time for release, such as "for release June 3, 1987" or "for release after 11:00 a.m., Wednesday June 3, 1987." The heading should also include the date of the release. Before the text of the news release, put a title line which describes the contents to follow. The line looks like a headline, but it is provided for the news editor or reporter's information, and it may not be used in print.
6. A press release should be designed to be read in a very short period of time. It should not contain advertising style attention getting statements. Reporters can contact us for background information if they want to. Then we may supply further information, such as a press kit. Provide your release to the media in a timely fashion. If you are informing the media about a community meeting to be held, be sure they get the release several days in advance.

Narcotics Anonymous
-more-
SAMPLE News release

-page #-

From: Narcotics Anonymous
P.O. Box _____

Contact: (name), Public Information Committee
(Telephone)

NUMBER of Narcotics anonymous groups in (name of town) TOPS
(number)

(PLACE OF RELEASE), (DATE OF RELEASE)--Narcotics Anonymous (N.A.), a non-profit group for drug addicts, announces that (number) N.A. groups are now meeting each week in (location). In addition to those meetings, (number) special N.A. meetings in area institutions are regularly held. The number of N.A. groups worldwide surpassed twelve thousand (12,000) in February 1988.

Narcotics Anonymous offers hope and help to drug addicts. At N.A. meetings, addicts meet other people who have had similar experiences and problems who are now staying off drugs and learning a better way to live. There is no fee for attendance at N.A. meetings.

Founded in 1953, N.A. now exists throughout the United States and in over 40 other countries. Narcotics Anonymous is for any drug addict, regardless of which drug or combination of drugs that person used. N.A. literature emphasizes that when addicts substitute one drug for another, it just releases their addiction all over again. By focusing on recovery from the common problem of drug addiction, N.A. provides an environment where addicts who may not have used the same drugs identify with and help each other.

The only requirement for membership in N.A. is a desire to stop using drugs. Open N.A. meetings may be attended by any interested members of the public. Information about Narcotics Anonymous and local meeting schedules are available from _____.

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