

# ***North Central Region, Civil Air Patrol***

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*Citizen's Serving Communities: Above & Beyond*



## **Press Releases**

**Public Affairs Academy, June 27<sup>th</sup> 2009**

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# What we will discuss

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- What is a release
- It's purpose
- The components of a release
- Writing a release
- When you are finished
- Sending your release out
- Additional Resources



## A release is

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a written or recorded communication directed at members of the news media for the purpose of announcing something claimed as having news value.



# A Media Release is

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like a short newspaper article that one may send to different media outlets in order to gain interest in a writer's mind so that a story will be published about the organization in which one works for or the product which they are trying to promote.

The persons reading the media release will be looking for stories that will interest their readers, viewers and listeners. An effective media release tells a story that will interest a number of people.



# A Press Release is

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**different from a news article. A news article is a compilation of facts developed by journalists published in the news media, whereas a press release is designed to be sent to journalists in order to encourage them to develop articles on a subject.**

**A press release is generally biased towards the objectives of the author.**

**A press release is written in order to highlight an important event, program, or piece of information by an organization that succinctly describes the who, what, where, when, why and how of the story.**



# The pieces of a release

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- **Headline** — used to grab the attention of journalists and briefly summarize the news.
- **Dateline** — contains the release date and usually the originating city of the press release.
- **Introduction** — first paragraph in a press release, that generally gives basic answers to the questions of who, what, when, where and why.
- **Body** — further explanation, statistics, background, or other details relevant to the news.
- **Boilerplate** — generally a short "about" section, providing independent background on the issuing company, organization, or individual.
- **Close** — in North America, traditionally the symbol "-30-" appears after the boilerplate or body and before the media contact information, indicating to media that the release is ending. A more modern equivalent has been the "###" symbol. In other countries, other means of indicating the end of the release may be used, such as the text "ends".
- **Media Contact Information** — name, phone number, email address, mailing address, or other contact information for the PR or other media relations contact person.



# The Story could be

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- Promotions – Cadet and Senior
- Special Recognition In Unit and out (Scholarships for cadets)
- Milestone Awards – Including the Wright Bros Award
- Members receiving decorations
- Unit Events – Open Houses, SAREX
- Live Missions
- AE Events, In Schools and Units
- Changes of Command – Cadet and Senior
- When a member earns his wings
- Selected for Flight Academy or NCSA
- Special Unit Visits
- Service to the community
- Annual Awards Programs/Banquets
- Completion of Encampment
- Appointment to Encampment Staff
- National Recognition of Members

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# Include Photos

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- In their raw state
- At least 500k 300 dpi
- Correct Tagline Information



# The Header

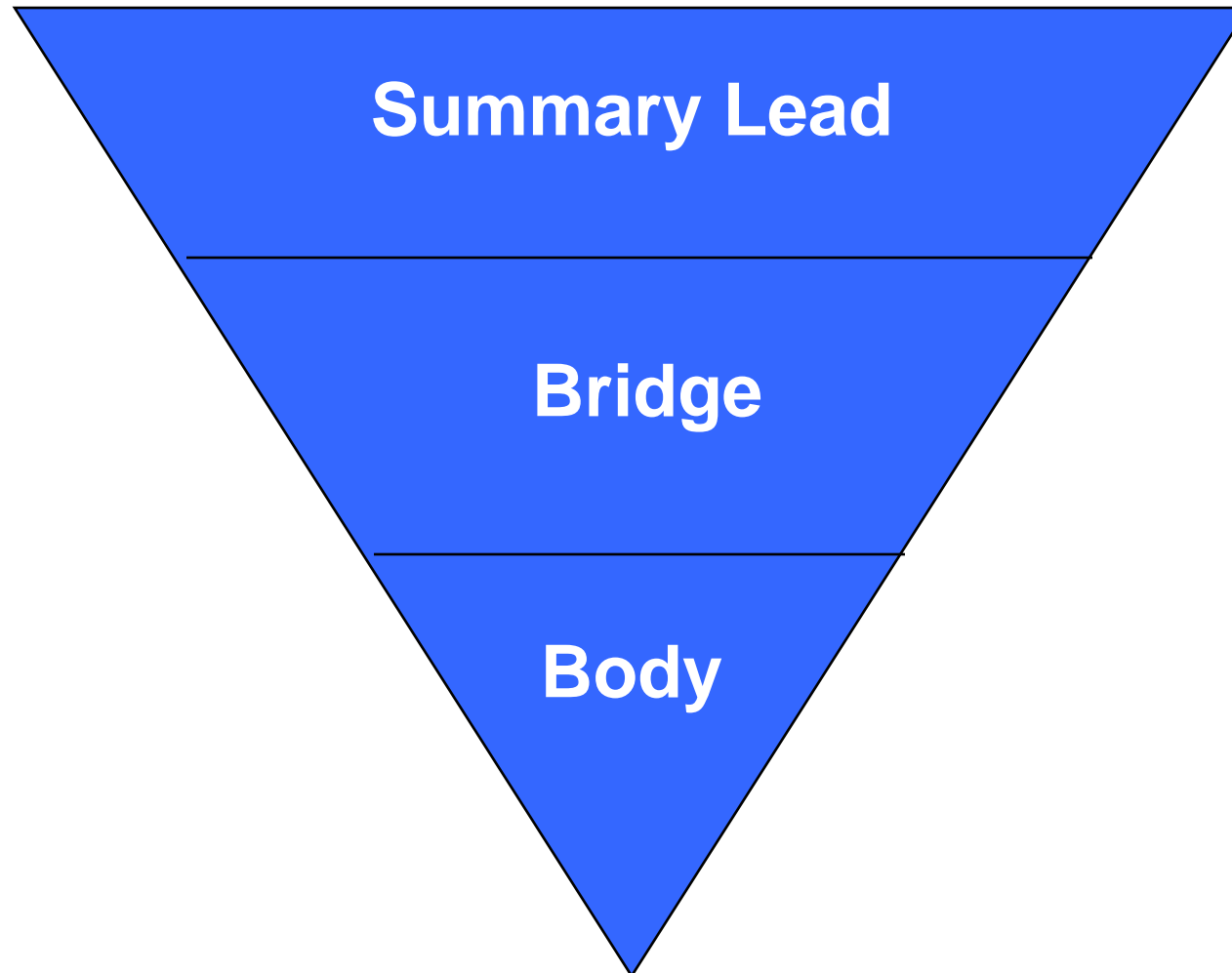
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- Squadron and Wing name
- **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
- Point of contact (PAO or commander) with duty title
- Contact information (phone and e-mail)
- -30- or ### at the end of the news release



# Inverted Pyramid Style

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# Most Important Info First

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- Readers might only read the beginning
- Editor might cut the story - they cut from the bottom
- Interest the readers so much they read the rest of the story



# Summary Lead

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- Draws Readers in
- Short works best 16-17 words per sentence is best, 25-30 maximum
- Write in active voice - good action verbs
  - NOT: He was looking for the cat.
  - BETTER: He looked for the cat



## Summary Lead: 5Ws & H

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- 5 Ws: who, what, when, where and why
- H: how
- Identifying these makes writing easier



## Summary Lead: 5Ws & H

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- Use these facts: CAP Cadets find lost aircraft and injured pilot in Hastings
- Who: CAP Cadets
- What: Found an aircraft and injured pilot
- When: Saturday
- Where: Near Highway 61 in Hastings



## Summary Lead: 5Ws & H

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- Use these facts: CAP cadets find lost aircraft and injured pilot in Hastings on Sunday.
- Why and how aren't always in the lead - can be in the next paragraph: the body.



# Summary Lead: News Angle

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- One of the Ws/H will always be strongest, called the news angle or news peg.
- Usually its' Who or What
- Organize 5 Ws/H, putting them in this order: who, what, when where



## Organizing by 5Ws/H

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- Who: Capt John Park, MN State Patrol
- What: Reported more than 200 accidents
- When: Saturday
- Where: Twin Cities Metro Area
- Why: 2.6 Inches of snow fell during day
- How: recording accidents from midnight Friday to Midnight Saturday



## Summary Lead

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- The MN State Patrol reported more than 200 accidents Saturday in the Twin Cities Area in the 2.6 inches of snow that fell during the day. (26 words)
- Bridge: Officer John Park, State Patrol Public Affairs Officer, said no injuries were reported in the accidents, occurring between midnight Friday and midnight Saturday.



# Bridge

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- Lead to Body Link
- Give Detailed Identification
- Bring in Secondary Facts
- Attribute info to an Authority
- Explain one of the other Ws or H



# The Tag Line

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“Civil Air Patrol, the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force, is a nonprofit organization with more than 56,000 members nationwide. Its volunteers also perform homeland security, disaster relief and counter-drug missions at the request of federal, state and local agencies. The members play a leading role in aerospace education and serve as mentors to the nearly 22,000 young people currently participating in CAP cadet programs. CAP has been performing missions for America for more than 66 years. For more information, visit [www.gocivilairpatrol.com](http://www.gocivilairpatrol.com)”

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# Additional Guidelines

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- Text should be in body of e-mail, not an attachment (Unless the media outlet specifies differently)
- Must include rank and full name of all individuals.
- Use correct name of squadron (as it appears on the Charter)
- Avoid abbreviations.
- Include at least one and no more than five action shots of high quality. Photos should be jpeg attachments not included in the copy.
- Photos must include complete cut line information including a statement of what's going on. Be sure to include a photo credit and, if appropriate, a byline.



## Additional Guidelines

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- Do not send everything that happens in your squadron. Submissions should include the best of the best of what occurs in your squadron.
- Submit complete information for all proper nouns.
- Never use first person.
- Other types of submissions:
  - Standalone photos. Provide high-quality shots with comprehensive cut line information.
  - When sending a story to CAP Online News please include Media links to high-profile print and broadcast media stories.



# Abbreviations of Grades

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- Use correct abbreviations as per CAP Regulations
- Do not use Army/USMC abbreviations

**2LT, COL, CPT, BG**

**2ndLt, LtCol, BrigGen**



# Whn you finish writing

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- Take a break before sending
- Have another set of eyes look at it
- Use <http://www.pressreleasegrader.com/>
- Get your Commander's ok
- Then release



# **Sending your release internally**

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- Your Squadron Website
- Group PAO
- Wing PAO (Website, Newsletter, Magazine)
- Region PAO (Newsletters)
- CAP Online News (The Volunteer)



# **Sending it externally**

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- Local Print Newspapers
- Online News Papers
- Radio Stations
- Community TV (Local Origination) Channel
- Broadcast TV News
- Friendly Bloggers (especially aviation oriented)
- Political Supporters
- Local Supporters
- The local school district



# Additional Resources

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- Templates
- Hometown News Releases
- Your Resource DVD



# Release of Information on CAP Accidents

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- No fatalities
  - Release the following (after approval of the Wing/PA and Wing/CC)
    - Statement that accident occurred
    - Location and time of accident
    - Time and place of aircraft or vehicle departure and destination
    - Biographical information
    - Type of aircraft or vehicle
    - Purpose of trip



# Accidents involving casualties

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- Same info as accidents with no fatalities except:
  - Do not release names of members killed before next of kin are notified

*Clear with your Wing/CC and Region/PA*



## Other Civilian Accidents

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- Do not release any information about the accident
- Refer media to whatever agency has jurisdiction over the accident
- Do not speculate



# Military Accidents

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- CAP personnel or PAOs will not release information about military accidents unless the appropriate military authority specifically requests CAP do so thru CAP-USAF and the release is cleared by National HQ/PA.



**Questions?**