



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

# Press Release 101

*Press Release Basics  
for Someone Not Trained in Writing*

## What are you trying to accomplish with your press release?

A press release is a brief – one page is best, but two pages is the maximum – but informative communication that is typically tied to a business or organization and distributed to, and subsequently through, a media organization or organizations. While normally a press release likely isn't “news”, in the event of an emergency, the information shared is likely significant and specific, and will be considered newsworthy.

## Components

- **Headline** – A strong headline will draw in your audience (media) and ensure they propel your message. However, do not sacrifice accuracy for engagement.
- **The Lead** – Assume that only the first sentence of your press release will get read, and everything else will be skimmed. That first sentence should give a reader a significant amount of information and compel them to want to learn more.
- **Hard Data** – A press release is not intended to be flowery. Back up your statements with data that cannot be disputed. If you are identifying a trend, you will need to ensure data backs up your statement(s).
- **Grammar** – Be critical of your writing and enlist multiple people to read it before it is sent out for public consumption. A grammatical mistake will call into question everything you are stating.
- **Subject Matter Experts** – Utilize others (SMEs) to give your press release credibility, particularly with quotes. A good quote can make a press release bulletproof.
- **Call to Action** – You are going to want to give individuals something to do once they have completed the press release. Even if it is to wait for more information, your audience must be given some sort of direction.
- **Contact Information** – Include an email address and a phone number, preferably at the top of the page, so reporters can follow up on the release.
- **Access to More Information** – Providing relevant links gives people more information and depth of knowledge. You can also use these links to position your own organization or view as an expert.
- **This Is The End** – Be sure to end your press release with one of two alerts that show there is no more information: ### or –30–.



## Make Sure Your Press Release Answers the Following Questions

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- Why
- How



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**Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health**

## News Release

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### Attached Artwork:

IMG\_4827w

## Keep Hydration/Health in Mind During Upcoming High Temps

**[Bismarck, ND – July 5, 2017]** – With temperatures expected to be north of 90 degrees during the next 7-plus days, Central North Dakota has wandered into a potentially dangerous stretch of Summer. An estimated 618 Americans are killed each year by extreme heat. Heat-related illnesses, such as cramps, heat exhaustion or heat stroke, occur when the body is pushed beyond its limits and is not able to cool itself. In extreme heat and high humidity, evaporation is slowed and the body must work extra hard to maintain a normal temperature. The most vulnerable populations to extreme heat illnesses are the elderly, individuals who work or exercise outdoors, infants and children, the homeless or poor, and people with a chronic medical condition. It is important to understand the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke and what the response should be:

### Heat Exhaustion

- **Symptoms:** heavy sweating, weakness, pale and clammy skin, a thready (weak) pulse, fainting and vomiting. Normal temperature is possible.
- **Treatment:** Get victim out of the sun. Lay him or her down and loosen clothing while applying cool, wet cloths. Fan or move victim to an air conditioned room.
- **Hydration:** Provide sips of water, but discontinue if nausea occurs. If vomiting continues, seek medical attention immediately.

### Heat Stroke (Sunstroke)

- **Symptoms:** High body temperature (106° F or higher) and hot skin. Rapid, strong pulse. Victim is potentially unconscious.
- **Treatment:** Call 9-1-1 and get victim to the hospital immediately as delay can prove fatal. Reduce body temperature with cold bath or sponging. Remove clothing, use fans and air conditioners.
- **Hydration:** If victim is alert and able to drink liquids, provide cool water or other beverages that do not contain alcohol or caffeine.

### Easy Safety Tips

- Drink water or drinks with electrolytes unless you are a fluid-restricted diet. If so, consult your doctor.
- Spend the warmest part of the day in air conditioning or a cool room.
- Never leave children or pets in closed vehicles.
- Avoid strenuous work or exercise during the warmest part of the day.
- Take cool showers or baths to lower your body temperature.

### Available Resources

- City of Bismarck Summer Weather Safety - <http://nd-bismarck2.civicplus.com/1031/Summer-Weather>
- Emergency Preparedness Resources - <http://www.bismarcknd.gov/353/Emergency-Preparedness>
- NDDDES Extreme Heat Safety - <https://www.nd.gov/des/uploads/resources/176/extremeheatsafety.pdf>
- Heat Safety Mobile Phone Tool - [https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat\\_index/heat\\_app.html](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat_index/heat_app.html)

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