

# How to Write a News Release

Five basic tips to get your story in the news.





# Five Tips for Writing a News Release

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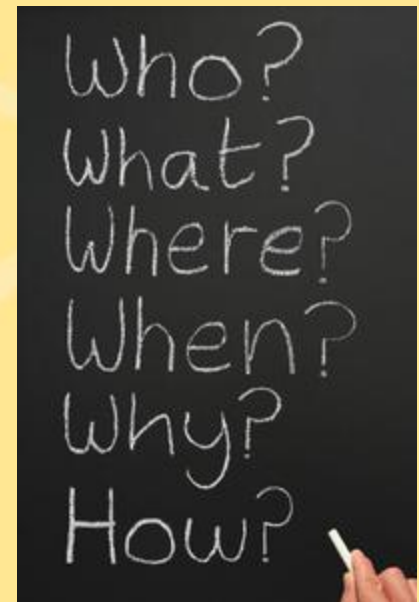
- One of the best ways to raise your Lodge's profile in your community is by getting media coverage.
- The first step is writing a news release containing the information you want released to the media.
- This presentation contains five basic tips on how to write a news release.



# 1. Think Like a Reporter

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- The news release should be written from a reporter's perspective.
- Focus on the facts and answer the five w's—who, what, where, when, why—and how.
- Write your news release exactly as you'd like it reported.





# 1. Think Like a Reporter

**WHO**

**WHAT**

**WHERE  
AND  
WHEN**

**WHY**

**HOW**

For immediate release

## Elks Give Homeless Vets a Home for the Holidays

Anytown, USA— What if you couldn't go home for the holidays? For many veterans, not having a place to call home is a daily reality. The Anytown Elks Lodge is addressing this problem by serving warm meals and holiday cheer to more than 1,200 homeless veterans this holiday season.

More than 150 Elks members volunteer with the local soup kitchen, and the Elks provide the kitchen with additional food supplies and other necessities. The Elks' support enables the Anytown Kitchen to serve meals all year to veterans in need. Last week, the Elks and soup kitchen patrons came together for their annual party, celebrating another successful year of growing friendships.

This project was made possible by a grant from the Elks National Foundation, the charitable arm of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Through its Community Investments Program, the Elks National Foundation awards grants to local Elks Lodges to help the Elks strengthen their communities. This year, the Elks National Foundation will award \$4.6 million in grants to benefit Elks communities.

To get involved with this or other Elks Lodge projects, email Project Manager Elroy T. Elk at [elroytelk@elks.org](mailto:elroytelk@elks.org). For more information about how the Elks National Foundation invests in local communities, visit the Elks National Foundation website at [www.elks.org/enf/community](http://www.elks.org/enf/community).

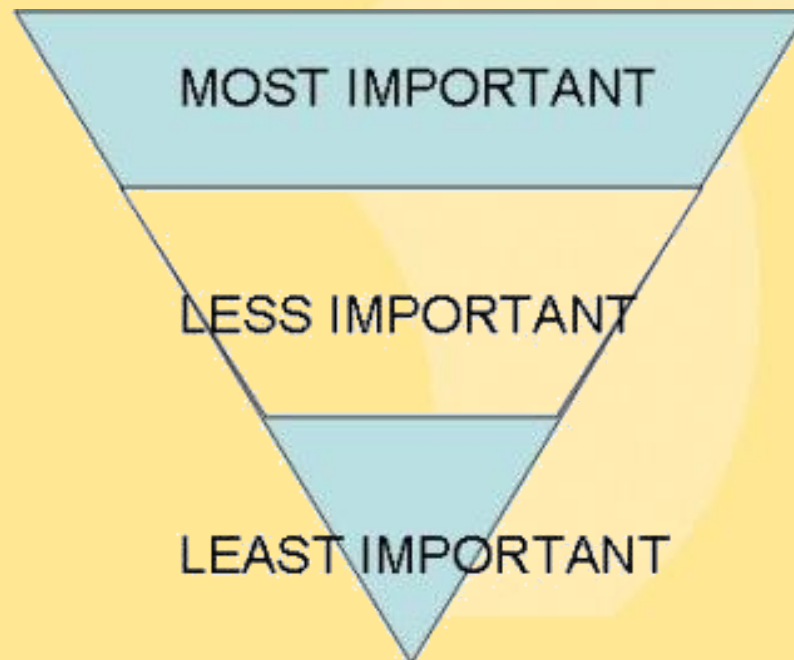
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## 2. Keep the Most Important Facts First

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Reporters always cut from the bottom of a story up, so arrange your release so that the most important facts appear first, followed by supporting facts in the order of importance to your story.





## 2. Keep the Most Important Facts First

Example.

**MOST  
IMPORTANT**

**LESS  
IMPORTANT**

**LEAST  
IMPORTANT**

**For immediate release**

### **Elks Give Homeless Vets a Home for the Holidays**

Anytown, USA— What if you couldn't go home for the holidays? For many veterans, not having a place to call home is a daily reality. The Anytown Elks Lodge is addressing this problem by serving warm meals and holiday cheer to more than 1,200 homeless veterans this holiday season.

More than 150 Elks members volunteer with the local soup kitchen, and the Elks provide the kitchen with additional food supplies and other necessities. The Elks' support enables the Anytown Kitchen to serve meals all year to veterans in need. Last week, the Elks and soup kitchen patrons came together for their annual party, celebrating another successful year of growing friendships.

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## 3. Good Headlines Are Key

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The headline of your news release will either grab the reporters' attention, causing them to read more, or give them reason to toss the release aside. Be sure to make it compelling so the reporter or editor takes notice.



# 3. Good Headlines Are Key

Example.

This headline, a play on a popular Christmas song, explains the problem and what the Elks are doing to address it.

For immediate release

## Elks Give Homeless Vets a Home for the Holidays

Anytown, USA— What if you couldn't go home for the holidays? For many veterans, not having a place to call home is a daily reality. The Anytown Elks Lodge is addressing this problem by serving warm meals and holiday cheer to more than 1,200 homeless veterans this holiday season.

More than 150 Elks members volunteer with the local soup kitchen, and the Elks provide the kitchen with additional food supplies and other necessities. The Elks' support enables the Anytown Kitchen to serve meals all year to veterans in need. Last week, the Elks and soup kitchen patrons came together for their annual party, celebrating another successful year of growing friendships.

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—End—





## 4. Focus on the Lead Paragraph

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The lead paragraph is the most important element of your release. It summarizes the news you are releasing and must hook the reporter. The lead should be short—no more than one to three sentences. Be sure you **don't bury your lead** in the body of the release.





# 4. Focus on the Lead Paragraph

Example.

**This lead generates interest by making the situation personal. It also explains the problem the Elks are addressing (homelessness among veterans), and how and when the Elks are helping.** →

**For immediate release**

## **Elks Give Homeless Vets a Home for the Holidays**

Anytown, USA— What if you couldn't go home for the holidays? For many veterans, not having a place to call home is a daily reality. The Anytown Elks Lodge is addressing this problem by serving warm meals and holiday cheer to more than 1,200 homeless veterans this holiday season.

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—End—



# 5. Proofread. Proofread. Proofread.

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Always proofread your release; do not rely on spell-check alone. Ask at least one other person to look over your release before distributing it to media outlets.



# Other Important Elements of a News Release

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**Quotes.** Bring your story to life and give your release a voice. Quotes allow you to state an opinion and editorialize your news. Always be sure to obtain permission from the person you are quoting.

Example: “The increase in Community Investments Program funding is wonderful news,” says Bill George, ENF Chair of the Fairfield, Conn., Lodge. “It gives us the opportunity to expand our Lodge’s charitable and youth programs, making them so much more meaningful to our community.”



# Other Important Elements of a News Release

**Notations.** It is customary to include the word “more” at the bottom of the first page of a release if it’s longer than one page. Ideally, press releases should be less than 400 words and fit on one page. At the end of the news release, be sure to include one of the common end notations (### or -30-). This way, an editor knows that there is no more information.

## Example:

To learn more about the Community Investments Program and how the Elks are helping your community, visit [www.elks.org/enf/community](http://www.elks.org/enf/community).

Contact: Elks National Foundation  
Kristen Scaletta, Communications Specialist  
2750 N. Lakeview Ave., Chicago, IL 60614-2256,  
773/755.4864, [KristenS@elks.org](mailto:KristenS@elks.org)

-End-



**END NOTATION**

*Helping Elks Build Stronger Communities*



# Other Important Elements of a News Release

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**Boilerplate.** Don't forget to include standard language to describe the Elks and the Elks National Foundation at the bottom of every release after the end notation. Remember, your readers are potential members.

## Example:

With nearly 900,000 members and more than 2,000 Lodges nationwide, Elks are providing charitable services that help build stronger communities across the United States. The Elks National Foundation is the charitable arm of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. To learn more, visit [www.elks.org/enf](http://www.elks.org/enf).



# Other Important Elements of a News Release

**Contact Information.** Include a link to your website so interested readers can learn more about the Elks project or event covered in your release. Also, include the project manager's email address and phone number so reporters know whom to contact to learn more.

## Example:

**WEBSITE**

To learn more about the Community Investments Program and how the Elks are helping your community, visit [www.elks.org/enf/community](http://www.elks.org/enf/community).

-End-

Contact: Elks National Foundation  
Kristen Scaletta, Communications Specialist  
2750 N. Lakeview Ave., Chicago, IL 60614-2256,  
773/755.4864, KristenS@elks.org

**CONTACT  
INFORMATION**

*Helping Elks Build Stronger Communities*



# Other Important Elements of a News Release

**Logo.** Help raise Elks visibility by adding the Elks or ENF logo to all releases. For downloadable ENF and Elks logos, visit

[www.elks.org/enf/mediabrochures/logos.cfm](http://www.elks.org/enf/mediabrochures/logos.cfm).

Example:

**Elks National Foundation**  
News Release

October 1, 2011

For immediate release

**PROMINENTLY PLACED LOGO**





# Sample News Release

Use this sample news release to formulate your release. Update the highlighted portions with your Lodge and project information.



## Elks National Foundation News Release

### DATE

For immediate release

### Elks Help Veterans Feel at Home for the Holidays

Anytown, USA—The Anytown Elks Lodge served more than 1,200 homeless veterans this holiday season, providing them with warm meals and holiday cheer.

More than 150 Elks members volunteer with the local soup kitchen and the Elks provide the kitchen with additional food supplies and other necessities. The Elks support enables the Anytown Kitchen to serve meals all year to veterans in need. Last week, the Elks and soup kitchen patrons came together for their annual party, celebrating another successful year of growing friendships.

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–End–

Contact: Anytown Elks Lodge  
Elroy T. Elk, Project Manager  
1234 Anytown Street  
Anytown, USA  
773/555-1234, [elroytelk@elks.org](mailto:elroytelk@elks.org)

*Helping Elks Build Stronger Communities*

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# News Release Examples

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- For a news release generator that you can use to formulate your release, visit [www.elks.org/enf/mediabrochures/prgenerator.cfm](http://www.elks.org/enf/mediabrochures/prgenerator.cfm).
- For a list of the latest releases sent by the ENF, visit [www.elks.org/enf/mediabrochures/newsletter.cfm](http://www.elks.org/enf/mediabrochures/newsletter.cfm).