

10 Tips on Writing for PR (Based on Industry Standards)

1. **Spelling and grammar** is *PARAMOUNT* for writing to the press. One spelling mistake could be the difference between getting published and having your press release lining the wastepaper baskets.
2. **Be clear and concise.** Anything going to the press should be 500 words or less. Don't try and cram too many ideas into one document.
3. **Find the newsworthy angle to your story.** Is your annual a milestone? Is your RO a celebrity like a Snow Bird, a politician or a war hero? Has your Cadet won a distinctive award like Top Cadet on a course or the medal of bravery? Feature that angle and the likelihood of your story being picked up will increase greatly.
4. **Stay local.** Don't look to major national papers for press like the Globe & Mail or the National Post. Focus on your local newspaper such as the Hamilton Spectator to feature your news.
5. **Send a photo.** You will increase your chance of getting published if you send your local newspaper a photo with a caption about your event. (Note: Ensure that this is a soft copy and a high resolution photo.)
6. When writing a press release, make sure you cover the **basic 5W's**: Who, what, when, where and why. Write press releases with the most important information at the top. Media will often give your press release a 30 second glance, and if it doesn't appeal to them in that timeframe, then they will throw it out.
7. **Make your title your "hook."** Make a really informational or interesting title for your press release and that will help to get your press release published. Titles should be about six words long.
8. **Don't use jargon.** Acronyms should always be written in full the first time with the short form written in brackets immediately after. Once it has been written out in full, you can use the acronym. Flight Sergeant (FSgt), International Air Cadet Exchange (IACE), Squadron (Sqdn)
9. When writing about a person, **use their rank in full, then their first and last name the first time.** After the first mention of that person, you may use their rank and last name. (I.e. Flight Sergeant John Bloggins loved being in Air Cadets. FSgt Bloggins explained to the local elementary school how he got his glider wings.)
10. Finish a press release with ### or -30-. This dates back to the days of Morse Code and would indicate the end of a press release. Also, if your document exceeds one page, include "more..." at the bottom so the media knows to look for another page.