

WRITING A MEDIA ALERT

A media alert is used to publicize events to TV and radio. It is different from a press release because it includes only the basic information pushing the reporter to attend the event.

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HEADLINE, BOLD TYPE, CENTERED

A media alert is a “who, what, where, when, why, how” outline of a newsworthy event or announcement. It is appropriate in the following circumstances:

- The news it outlines is extremely timely and you need to get the information to the news media as quickly as possible.
- You are sending the alert as a reminder of a previous, important news release.

A media alert generally is faxed or e-mailed to newsrooms/or community calendar editors. Media advisories are short and to the point—not more than one page. A media alert begins with the most important information (often the “what”) and then moves to the second-most important area (often the “who”) and so on.

After the heading, arrange the information something like this:

WHAT: Describe what it is that’s going on.

WHO: Talk about your chapter and its role. Or, list the people who will be attending or are invited to the event or participating in the activity.

WHEN: Provide the date and time.

WHERE: Include very specific location information, including street address and directions if necessary.

WHY: Give the relevance here. Why is this important in your community or to your chapter?

HOW: If applicable, provide information on how people can get tickets, donate, etc.

URL: Your chapter's or the guest artist's URL

****NOTE:** The last paragraph of every alert should be a “boilerplate” about your chapter.

An example: The Timbuktu Chapter of the American Guild of Organists is comprised of people interested in the organ and in organ literature in the greater Timbuktu area.

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BACKGROUND:

- Focus on: Why is this relevant to your community? Why should a reporter attend?
- Statistics/facts/figures show that the issue is significant.
- Include enough material to grab a reporter's attention, but not too much-- so that the reporter still needs to attend the event.
- Let reporters know if there will be photo or interview opportunities.
- Keep it short, simple and fun!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO KEEP IN MIND:

Timing will play a large part in distributing your media alert. Ideally you will have already sent out a press release to relevant media.

The media alert will serve as a "last minute reminder" for media individuals.

Generally you'll want to send the media alert the week of the event; Monday the week of the event is the ideal time. If your event takes place on Monday or Tuesday you may want to send it out a bit earlier. Remember that it's always a good idea to make follow up phone calls.