



A news release is provided to the media when a project is conceptualized, usually following the preliminary field review. Another news release is distributed to the media prior to each public meeting, in concert with a display advertisement (please see [guidelines for display ads](#) for additional information).

The basics

- Answer the basic questions of journalism: who, what, when, where, why, and how.
- Organize facts in descending order of importance (like an inverted pyramid).
- Be concise... it shows you respect the time of busy editors and reporters.
- Focus on what's newsworthy. Answer questions you anticipate the public may have.
- If the release announces a second or third public meeting about a project, state the purpose of the additional meeting. Otherwise, people who have attended earlier meetings may not be motivated to attend.

Accommodations

The contact person in the last paragraph for those needing special accommodations in order to participate in the public meeting would usually be someone from the consultant firm. Assistance is available from public involvement and MDT civil rights staff on fielding those requests. Call Paul Grant 406.444.9415 or civil rights staff at 406.444.6331 for help.

Time frame and responsibilities

- A draft should be submitted to public involvement staff for review prior to the release being disseminated to the news media.
- The news release should be sent to all news media (newspaper, TV, and radio) at least one week prior to the meeting. Please cc Paul Grant on the electronic distribution.
- Provide an electronic copy of the final release to Paul Grant for publication to MDT's web site (<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/scripts/news.pl?>)
- All public involvement activities must be coordinated directly through the MDT consultant manager assigned to the project.

If you have question about news releases, please contact [Jan Nessel](#) 406/556.4707 or [Lori Ryan](#) 406/444.6821.