Press and Spokesperson

Learn to talk to journalists and get the traditional media (newspaper, TV, radio) to run your stories

- How to write a press release
- Press release templates
- Photos for the press
- Press contacts lists
- Spokesperson (doing media interviews)

How to write a press release

A press release is a written document you will send to your local or regional media that contains a description of your action, your message and quotes from participants.

This page offers a step-by-step tutorial with recorded videos to learn to write a press release. It's also available as slides, though these are not as detailed. This PDF sums up the process but we encourage you to watch the videos below (they are hosted on Youtube which enables you to use close captions should you need them).

1. Create your message

Read the Desiging your Message page in the Messaging book

2. Prepare your media list

These are the contacts you're going to send your press release to. It's very likely there is already an existing list for your region for you to use (so you won't have to start one from scratch)

▶ Watch the video (5 min): https://youtu.be/9ZaXR1aDJIY

◫ Press contact lists for each nation/region

3. Quotes

Quotes bring emotions and personal opinions to your press release. Learn how to write some that will convey your message further:

▶ Watch the video (6 min): https://youtu.be/wSMcEmPHytg

4. Images

How to pick the best photos to send to the press:

▶ Watch the video (7 min): https://youtu.be/Gt2vh5Zrs8w

◫ Read the photographers' briefing to prepare your photographers before the action.

▶ Tutorial to set up a Google Drive for your press photos

5. Content

- How to **structure your press release**:

  ▶ Watch the video (5 min): https://youtu.be/DmbqlgrKJ4A
- **Write the headline** of your press release to catch the journalists' attention:

  ▶ Watch the video (3 min): https://youtu.be/z18hlMYc31o
- Discover what a **media introduction** is and when to use it:

  ▶ Watch the video (2 min): https://youtu.be/j7JouT2IGwI
- Why and how to **engage politicians** in the press:

  ▶ Watch the video (5 min): https://youtu.be/VSBajJ4xESw
- Some extra tips:

  ▶ Watch the video (5 min): https://youtu.be/zWqnvCmiAAk

6. Send your press release

When to send your press release depending on your local media and the action you're doing:

▶ Watch the video (1 min): https://youtu.be/rIBK8972yDg

Why and how to follow up after you sent your press release:

▶ Watch the video (5 min): https://youtu.be/e9fVjSU5cy8

7. Press contact role

This is the person whose phone number will figure on the press release and who will take calls from journalists about the action. They must know your message and be available on the day of the action but it's a role that can be done from home.

▶ Watch the video (5 min): https://youtu.be/VhPUdHzYxog

Press release templates

Generic and tailored templates. And also some examples that resulted in publications.

Templates

- Generic template
- COP 26 edition
- Community Assemblies (workshop and notes)

Examples and publications

Make Amazon Pay - November 2021

- Press release
- Publication

Arms Fair Blockade in Malvern - November 2021

- Press release
- Publication

Photos for the press

You need quality photos fast. So you need to prepare: who is taking photos, how are they getting them to you, and do they know what photos to get?

Read this page and brief your photographers before your action, so everything runs smootly on the day.

Press contacts lists

It's a good idea to build an press list locally - starting with searching for all local publications (print and online) and also radio and TV.

There are some old lists of contacts, if you are interested in these or want more help, contact LGsupport@extinctionrbellion.uk

Spokesperson (doing media interviews)

Check out these training slides (including the slide notes).

You can also watch this 1-hour training video.

Get preparing

- What is the one message you want to get across in this interview?
- What do you hope the person who is listening will remember?
- What do you want the listener to do? (Call to action).

Work out how to say your message in simple, plain English and keep it short (a maximum of a couple of sentences, and preferably one).

Write a note to remind you of a human interest story that is relevant to the message you want to get across. This “story” needs to be about people (or animals) and evoke an emotional / human interest response.

Why a story? Stories make the audience engage with what you’re saying on a personal level - you’re not just giving a lecture.

Write notes to remind you of a **maximum of 3 facts that support the 1 message** you are trying to get across. Keep facts simple, in plain English and short (a maximum of a couple of sentences).

Why three? People are unlikely to remember more than three things. If you try to get too much across, you risk losing the most important things you want to say.

Rehearse

Practice the message, telling your story, and your supporting facts. Say them in different ways. Get comfortable with what you want to say, and practice getting your ‘call to action’ into the interview.

Do the interview

Focus on getting your key message and your three facts across. That is your aim. Whatever questions you are asked, answer them in a way which allows you to use the answer as an illustration of your message, or answer it as briefly as possible and return to your planned

interview.

Don’t simply answer the questions - answer them and without pause, return to the material you’d planned to say.

Don’t allow the line of questioning to wander off topic: remember, the interview will be edited, so don’t think because you got your key message in, you can just be less focused now. Aim for everything you say to be something that would achieve your aim if it was the only thing broadcast.

This might not be possible, but the more it can be, the better your chance of success. So many times people have said “oh they didn’t use the good bit, they cut out what I really wanted to say.” Everything needs to be something you really want to say!

Don’t worry about repeating yourself in a pre-recorded interview. It’s also fine to re-cap your message or your call to action in a live interview.

Connect to the UK Spokes team

For inquiries about training or being a Spokesperson, you can email

press@extinctionrebellion.uk