



How the Media Work 101



Why media?

- Effective way to reach the public
- Introduce your issue
- Tell your story



How the media work

- Long lead times
- Short deadlines
- Breaking news





How to obtain media coverage

- Media alerts
- Press releases
- Pitches



Media alerts

- Answer Who, What, When, Where and Why
- Don't give too many details
- Offer an angle
- Clearly explain the point of the event ("Why"). If possible, include a call to action.
- Include contact information for someone who can answer a reporter's questions consistently



Media Alert

National Safety Council · 1121 Spring Lake Drive · Itasca, IL 60143 · media@nsc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 30, 2015

Contact: Maureen Vogel
Media Relations Manager
(630) 775-2226

Advocates rally on the steps of the capitol for life-saving legislation
*Lawmakers, safety professionals and victim advocates press for stronger laws around
prescription painkiller use and texting*

WHAT: Rally at the capitol for life-saving legislation around prescription painkiller use and texting

WHEN: 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 31

WHERE: West steps of the state capitol, 201 E. 14th St., Austin TX 78701

WHO: Reps. Eric Johnson (confirmed) and Tom Craddick (invited), National Safety Council President and CEO Deborah A.P. Hersman (confirmed), survivor and victim advocates

WHY: In 2013, more than 95,000 crashes in Texas involved drivers who were texting, and more than 620 Texans died of opioid painkiller overdoses. Texas is one of the only states without a texting ban for all drivers, and its opioid prescription painkiller laws are not strong enough to curb what has become an epidemic.

Lawmakers have introduced legislation that would make Texans safer. Texas House Bill 80 and Senate Bill 25 would ban texting for all drivers, Senate Bill 196 expands the state's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program and House Bill 1098 improves access to naloxone, an overdose antidote.

Lawmakers, safety leaders and advocates will gather on the west steps of the capitol to show support. The rally is the culmination of a two-day Community Safety Summit, where safety leaders, students and advocates will learn how to implement proven, life-saving programs and strategies successfully used by communities across the country.

About the National Safety Council

Founded in 1913 and chartered by Congress, the National Safety Council, nsc.org, is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to save lives by preventing injuries and deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the road through leadership, research, education and advocacy. NSC advances this mission by partnering with businesses, government agencies, elected officials and the public in areas where we can make the most impact – distracted driving, teen driving, workplace safety, prescription drug overdoses and Safe Communities.



Press releases

- Follow the guidelines for a media alert, but expand your information
- Write the release as you would a news story – like an inverted pyramid
- Include quotes from a subject matter expert, event leader or others relevant to the story
- Write in AP Style



News Release

National Safety Council · 1121 Spring Lake Drive · Itasca, IL 60143 · media@nsc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 12, 2015

Contact: Kathy Lane
Communications Director
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National Safety Council poll: Nearly 70 percent of opioid prescription painkiller users do not think it's a felony to share painkillers

In most states, sharing narcotic opioid painkillers is legal equivalent of selling heroin

Itasca, IL – Today the [National Safety Council](http://www.nsc.org) released a national public opinion poll showing nearly 70 percent of those who take opioid prescription painkillers do not believe sharing the medications is a felony. In reality, most states consider sharing opioid painkillers, such as hydrocodone or oxycodone, to be the legal equivalent of selling heroin – punishable by as many as seven years in prison.

The poll results are released in advance of National Poison Prevention Week, March 15-21.

“In many ways, the road to this public health crisis has been paved with good intentions,” said Deborah A.P. Hersman, president and CEO of the National Safety Council. “Americans often share opioid painkillers because they want to help a friend or family member manage pain. But these medications are federally controlled substances and gateway drugs to heroin. Sharing them is illegal and never worth the risk, especially when non-addictive over-the-counter pain relievers are often better options.”

Other key findings from the public opinion poll include:

- Nine in 10 opioid painkiller users are not concerned about addiction as a side effect, though 60 percent of users have at least one addiction risk factor
- 69 percent of opioid painkiller users feel opioids are the most effective medications to treat pain, though research shows otherwise
- Using heroin was ranked as the most addictive thing an American can do. Using opioid painkillers ranked fifth – behind using cocaine, crystal meth and tobacco
- Americans mistakenly believe gun violence, severe weather and commercial airline travel are more significant threats to their safety than opioid painkillers
- Many Americans do not realize the medications they have taken are opioids

A full copy of the findings can be found at nsc.org/newsroom.

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Letters to the Editor vs. Op-eds

An Op-ed is:

- An opinion piece that runs in the editorial section of the newspaper
- Provides a unique perspective on a relevant issue
- Written by an expert or recognizable, public figure

A Letter to the Editor is:

- Short – often no more than 200 words
- Written in response to a previously published article
- Offers a personal viewpoint
- Timely. Letters are often submitted the same day or one day after an issue is covered.



Letters to the Editor

Tips:

- Create a target list of papers
- Always reference a recent article, opinion piece, etc.
- Submit letters quickly
- Be concise
- Don't write too often
- Avoid being rude or insulting



Op-eds

Remember:

- Op-eds are reviewed by editorial boards, which slows the acceptance process
- Make sure the op-ed is focused with a clear call to action
- Use facts that are relevant to your state or community
- Pitching an op-ed should be an exclusive
- Follow your target paper's submission guidelines



Pitching media

- DO:
 - Your homework
 - Build relationships
 - Understand why your event or issue is newsworthy
 - Think about your goals
 - Consider how your event or specific issue is different

- DON'T:
 - Send a pitch to 100 reporters at the same time
 - Pitch the wrong reporter
 - Pitch during the wrong time





Crafting a pitch

- Get to the point
- Explain the local angle and big picture
- Offer sources and facts to support your story
- Make sure to follow up

Hi Kim,
I hope you're well.

Deborah Hersman will be in Charlotte next Thursday and Friday, if you are interested in having her in studio. She could talk about:

1. The estimated number of highway fatalities that will occur during the Thanksgiving holiday period. NSC estimates more than 400 people will die on our roadways. Debbie can offer tips to travel safely, including refraining from using your cell phone, preparing for inclement weather and designating a non-drinking driver.
2. Prescription painkiller abuse. The most fatally abused drug today is legal and sitting in the medicine cabinet. Debbie can discuss how North Carolina could curb this epidemic and why you must lock medications this holiday season.
3. Elder adult falls. The leading cause of unintentional death for older Americans is falls, and they have risen 112 percent in recent years. Debbie can talk about how to fall proof your home, especially before having guests over the holidays.

Please let me know if you are interested in having Debbie in studio while she is in Charlotte.

All the best,
Maureen



Monitoring media

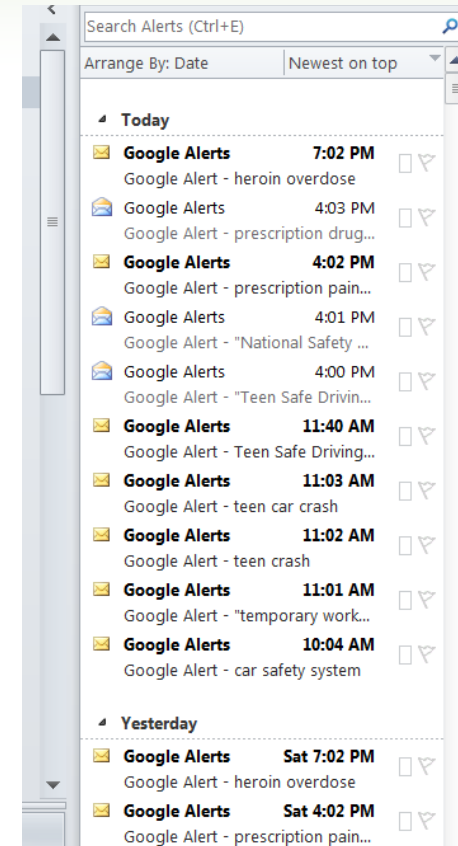
- Read the paper and watch the local news
- Track your own publicity
- See how other groups are making headlines on the same issue
- Monitor the issue in your area
- Build a contact base of reporters, key influencers, possible future partners, etc.





Google alerts

- Open a Google email account by visiting gmail.com.
- Once you've opened your account, visit google.com/alerts.
- Type a phrase in the search bar that is important to your cause. Here are some examples:
 - “prescription drug abuse”
 - “distracted driving”
 - “teen car crash”
 - “prescription” and “painkiller”
 - “National Safety Council”
- Choose the “Type” of media you want to monitor from the first drop-down menu
- Choose “How Often” you want to receive media clips
- Click “Create Alert”
- Google will email you to confirm that you want the Alert created
- Create an Alert for each phrase you want to monitor





Contact information

- NSC Media Relations: media@nsc.org