



TIPS AND HINTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Before you begin your press and ally outreach about the new law, it would be ideal to have a basic website up so you can refer interested parties there for more information, including facts, Q&A, the bill language, information on approved seats, etc. If you have Twitter and Facebook accounts you can post them on the website, as well. You can also provide a link to the CDPH website.

Twitter accounts are a good way to get ongoing information about your organization out to the media. If you find and follow key reporters on Twitter, they should follow you in return. You can list your Twitter account on all of your materials (press releases, etc.) as well.

Note: The California Department of Public Health will have a page with many resources, including the educational flyer, the law, booster seat tips and many other links. Please feel free to share this link so that we are sending consistent messages.

Media Advisories vs. News Releases:

A **media advisory** is used to **promote an event**, anything from a large event to a small car seat check to demonstrate booster seats. Media advisories are best for events that have:

- Good visuals
 - Cute kids of different sizes
 - Fit tests
 - People busily helping parents
 - People in uniform
- More than one spokesperson offering different perspectives
 - A physician to describe the kinds of injuries they see when kids are not buckled up
 - Parents
 - A child who will say positive things about booster seats (make sure you have kids who are six and seven and obviously need a booster)
 - Law enforcement
 - Technicians

Event Ideas:

- In late December, pitch a story that a new law will go into effect January 1st that impacts six and seven-year-olds. Not many people are aware of it and you need media help getting this important information to parents. Use law enforcement and a couple of six or seven year olds of different shapes and sizes to demonstrate the fit test and the booster. It is typically a very slow news week and usually easy to get coverage.

- A week or two after the first of the year, hold a small car seat check (even just a few cars if you want). Tell the media, “We are getting lots of calls about the law and parents are obviously not aware.” “We will be holding events in the coming weeks and we need your help notifying parents of this free service.”
- As a follow up, “Come hear the common questions and concerns from parents about boosters.” Give some examples:
 - How to choose the right booster that will last my child until he’s tall enough for a seat belt?
 - Can I really get a ticket if my child is over eight and she doesn’t fit properly in a seat belt?

A **news release** will **inform reporters about the law** (don’t assume they know) and can position you as the best resource for information on child passenger safety. The news release (or “press release”) should be a one to two-page document best used when:

- Your news is time sensitive or you have a big announcement
- You have local papers that will print whatever you send

News release tips:

- 1) Call local television stations to follow up the day after you send the release and offer an on air interview and demonstration.
- 2) Call your local newspaper to follow up within a few days of sending the release to see if the information will be included in their “new laws” story. If you have a victim or survivor story it will help newspapers create an article around the issue.
- 3) CA news desks (print and television) experience lots of staff changes, but emails can be found online if you have staff or an intern who can look them up. (please see the attached email contact list)

Morning Shows:

Local morning shows typically have more air time to devote to the story and you often can shape the story. Plenty of kids and parents are home over the holidays, too, so that is a good time to start.

- Be sure to bring a kid or a teaching doll to demonstrate proper fit. They like visuals.
- Get them a list of key points or even questions.
- On screen tips are good, too – just boil down your talking points to sentences of less than seven or eight words. They may not always use them, but if they do it will decrease the odds of the media messing up your key points.
- Offer to take calls for a few segments.
- Suggest ideas for more than one segment, such as having a physician join you and talk about the kinds of injuries they see when a child is not restrained properly.

Approaching the media for events:

- E-mail the advisory a few business days in advance, then again the day before.
- Call the assignment desk(s) the day of the event to see who’s coming.
- Prepare your 20 second pitch about what a great story it will be and all the visuals and potential interviews they could have. Most stations have their assignment meetings at around 8 am, so make your calls after 9 when they know what else is going on.

Best time and dates for events:

- 10 am and 2 pm are usually the times that you will get the most coverage.

- Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday tend to be slower news days so your odds of getting coverage are better.
- Be prepared for the morning shows to ask you to start earlier to accommodate their schedule.
- Local TV stations may ask you to stay around for a live tie-in at the noon or evening broadcast. This usually means they are making a bigger story and it is usually worth it.

Learn your local scene:

If you haven't done this before, call someone who works with the media frequently. A seasoned Public Information Officer with the CHP, Fire or local Police Department or marketing department at a hospital will know what the best times are in your community for obtaining coverage. They should be able to provide you with a list of email addresses and phone numbers for your local media.

- Find out if a particular TV station has a large market share and really work on that station to encourage them to cover the story.
- If you can get the story in print, many TV stations will follow, but offer it to print first.
- Develop as many bilingual spokespersons as appropriate for your community.

Grassroots Activities:

Create an **Action Alert** or newsletter article (including information about the law - similar to the press release) to send via email to allied organizations whose constituents will benefit from information about the law. Request that they post the information in communications with their members, etc. in newsletters, on Twitter, Facebook, on their websites, etc. Some of these organizations would likely include:

- Superintendent of Schools
- PTAs
- Local School Boards
- Local hospitals
- Insurance companies
- Public Health Departments
- Health and Human Services
- Physicians/Pediatrician's organizations/AAP
- California Highway Patrol
- County Sheriff's Dept.
- Police Department
- Head Start
- WIC
- Family Resource Centers
- Latino Coalitions
- Healthcare Foundations
- Boys & Girls Clubs
- Parks and Recreation
- Child Care Centers
- Professional sports teams

Editorial Board Contacts (these change frequently, be sure to check):

wwarford@avpress.com; llabarth@appealdemocrat.com; dhatfield@bayareanewsgroup.com;
deric@goldcountrymedia.com; rprice@bakersfield.com; tcowenhoven@bakersfield.com

dlittle@chicoer.com; stephanie.woo@dailybreeze.com;
paul.gullixson@pressdemocrat.com; kwear@times-standard.com
jboren@fresnobee.com; jkaczmarek@HanfordSentinel.com;
mike.brossart@inlandnewspapers.com; henrik.rehbinder@laopinion.com
tbolton@santamariatimes.com; larry.allison@presstelegram.com
nick.goldberg@latimes.com; jim.newton@latimes.com; mariel.garza@dailynews.com
ccloud@maderatribune.net; dwyatt@mantecabulletin.com; bbreithaupt@marinij.com
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dryan@napanews.com; rharris@nctimes.com; james.folmer@thedesertsun.com
ctaylor@ocregister.com; steve.scauzillo@sgvn.com; news@dailydemocrat.com
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egrunder@recordnet.com; jdiaz@sfchronicle.com; bill.osborne@uniontrib.com
lkazakoff@sfchronicle.com; steve.hunt@sgvn.com; bmarshman@mercurynews.com
mheller@newspress.com; jpremako@the-signal.com; dmiller@santacruzsentinel.com;
aflanz@taoedailytribune.com; letters@thetribunenews.com; jmendelson@tracypress.com;
swilliams@vvdailypress.com; rmiller@thereporter.com pkostes@theunion.com; udjcm@pacific.net;
mcraft@vcstar.com; swilliams@vvdailypress.com; phurley@visalia.gannett.com;
jglennon@bayareanewsgroup.com; dmorain@sacbee.com