

# Learn it. Do it. Live it!

## PRESS RELEASES IN THE ZONE



Safe Routes to School programs are often most successful when the surrounding community is aware and supportive. This is especially true for Zone In, Not Out.

Media outreach can bring awareness of SRTS programs and campaigns to the greater community. You can send a press release to local news agencies or other organizations who can help publicize your program or attend and cover your event. A press release provides basic information that an organization or media outlet would need if they wanted to write an article or otherwise promote your event. Ideally, they would contact you to get more information so that their coverage is more complete.

### ZONE IN, NOT OUT

Zone In, Not Out is a package of resources that can help make school zones safer for all travelers, especially children. The idea for the program was part of an in-person training for Virginia Safe Routes to School local coordinators in the winter 2015. Charged with the task of coming up with a comprehensive approach to school zone safety with branding, messaging, materials, the local SRTS coordinators worked in small groups to develop an outline of the program.



The materials are available for download on the Virginia SRTS program website. The Zone In, Not Out logo can be customized with a school name. The materials offer both 'how to' information and resources for school communities to access for expanded or more in-depth information.



## HOW TO USE A PRESS RELEASE

You can distribute press releases as part of a program launch or in conjunction with a SRTS event.

You may also plan to use them as part of a larger media effort, perhaps with a community partner.

Topics included

- **Speeding**
- **Distracted driving**
- **Distracted walking and bicycling**
- **Crossing guards**
- **Safety patrols**
- **Parent drop-off**
- **Walkabouts**



Download our Word Template which includes editable press releases for all topics above.

## USING THE TEMPLATES

The templates are designed with places for you to insert specific information about your organization or event. The basic elements are the template are described below.

- **Logo:** We encourage you to use your school's logo and add the Virginia SRTS Zone in, Not Out logo.
- **Contact Information:** It is important to choose a point person for the news release who will be available both once the release is distributed and throughout the event. Use the contact phone number that has the greatest likelihood of reaching the person.
- **Length:** The ideal news release is no longer than one page in length.
- **Identify Media Contacts:** Use these [tips](#) from the National Center for SRTS to help identify local contacts. The National Center also has a tip sheet with [10 Tips for Getting Media to Cover Your Event](#).
- **Distribution:** A few days or the day before the event, distribute the release to local media contacts (television, radio, and newspaper). Email, fax, mail and hand-delivery are all ways to distribute the release.
- **Materials:** Have copies of the news release available at the event. You may also want to compile a press kit, including fact sheets, backgrounders and biographies. Find example press kit materials from the [California Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance Resource Center's website](#).