

Tips for Reaching Out to Media to Cover Safe Routes Stories

Courtesy of Deb Stanley, Content Creator for Denver 7 News

How do I reach out to the media?

- Call or email. Most of us prefer email.

How?

- Go to each TV station's website.
- Look for a button that says "Contact us." There's likely a form you can fill out.
- Or look for a phone number. (You likely will have to go to the bottom of their website to find a phone number.)

What do I say?

- When they answer, ask for the newsroom.
- When the newsroom answers, simply say, "What's the best email address for a news release?"
- Try to avoid calling between 8:30a.m.-10:30a.m. & 2p.m.-3p.m. when many newsrooms are in meetings.

How do I do a news release?

- Make it simple – include the basic details like who, what, when, why, and how. Consider creating a catching subject line/headline. Make sure the date is high up, because many recipients won't read very far down the email.
- There are lots of ways to do this, I have included a few below.

If you want some help, you can actually send an email that says:

Wednesday is Walk & Roll to School Day!

When: Wednesday, Nov. 8. The best time is 7:30a.m.-7:45a.m., but arrivals run from 7:15a.m.-8:00a.m. Let us know if you need a spokesperson there earlier or later!

Where: Kids, parents and teachers will be at 8th and Main at Johnson Elementary

Why: To encourage kids to walk, bike, board, etc to school.

Safety: Please ask your morning news anchors to talk about the increased need to be vigilant today because there will be more parents and kids around schools.

You're invited: We'd love to host your crew at the school. Teachers can talk about how kids who walk to school are more ready to learn, more focused, and more connected to their classmates. You can talk to parents and kids about why they walked/biked to school today.

Interesting facts:

- Only 11% of kids bike and walk to school. In the 1960's, that number was 50%
- Walking or biking just a few minutes before school increases attention span (and whatever fun facts you have)

Contact: Mary Johns, 303-555-1212. Available up to and on the day of the event.

Press Release Sample #1

May opens with Bike to School Day

Keynote Event: Bike to School Day May 4

DENVER - As a premier bicycling state, Colorado appreciates getting out on two wheels year-round. Ahead of Colorado Bike Month in June, many schools are preparing special celebrations. The Colorado Department of Transportation is encouraging schools to participate in Bike to School Day on Wednesday, May 4, to promote and practice bicycle, pedestrian, and road safety among classmates, families, and caregivers.

Bike to School Day is an opportunity to promote the many benefits of active transportation, as well as bicycle and road safety for all. It further highlights the importance of establishing safe routes to and from school and lays a foundation of sustainable active transportation practices. “Our goals are to promote bike safety, reinforce healthy habits, build community, and have FUN!” says Amy Kenreich, a parent and crossing guard at Lincoln Elementary in Denver, and organizer of Bike Rodeos at the school in honor of the day.

Organizers are encouraged to register their school at walkbiketoschool.org [walkbiketoschool.org] as a way of tracking participation and showing support for active, healthy, safe transportation. Registrations also assist Colorado’s ranking among other participating states.

Press Release Sample #2

Hi, Deb!

I'm reaching out because you expressed interest in covering the Walk to School Day gathering I organized for _____ Elementary (6070 _____ Pkwy, _____) last October. I reluctantly declined an interview then. We're celebrating Bike to School on Wednesday, May 4 (Star Wars Day!), and I thought you might be interested in covering our celebration so you may share it with your audience. Your team could interview parents and children for this gathering. I'm attaching an event flyer and itinerary for you to review. I'm hoping for a big turnout from the _____ community.

Press Release Sample #3

Get rolling for Bike and Roll to School Day Keynote event is set for May 3

Colorado – Bike and Roll to School Day, traditionally known as Bike to SchoolDay, has been expanded this year to acknowledge the numerous modes of active transportation on wheels. It is also an opportunity to establish and promote safe routes and commuting to and from school. It also lays a foundation of sustainable practices that allow students and whole communities to do so.

While Bike and Roll to School Day officially takes place on May 3, every day in May welcomes celebration.

“We have four walk and wheel challenges throughout the year,” says Michelle Mueller, physical education and health teacher at Beattie Elementary School in Fort Collins. “On Bike and Roll to School Day, our final challenge of the year, all students are invited to join me at a location approximately one mile from the school, where we form a huge walk and wheel parade that concludes with greetings from our wellness team, stickers, fresh fruit, and prizes.”

Organizers are encouraged to register their school at walkbiketoschool.org [state.us16.list-manage.com] as a way of tracking participation and showing support for active, healthy, safe transportation. Registrations also assist Colorado’s ranking among other participating states.

For this event, CDOT is providing Bike to School Day stickers in English and Spanish on a first-come, first-serve basis. Additional resources and ideas, including downloadable posters in English and Spanish, are available on the CDOT’s Safe Routes to School website at www.codot.gov/programs/bikeped/safe-routes [state.us16.list-manage.com].

Colorado Safe Routes to School is a statewide program of the Colorado Department of Transportation. It works to create and promote safe, accessible, and fun opportunities for kids to walk and bike to and from school.

Press Release Sample #4

Date: Tue, Sep 26, 2023 at 10:12 PM

Subject: Celebrity Crossing Guards at 30 Denver Schools - Oct 4

To:

Hello media people!

I'm a DPS crossing guard and Safe Routes to School advocate. I'm organizing an event to celebrate National Walk/Roll to School Day that pairs 30+ local celebrities with DPS crossing guards the **morning of October 4th from 7am-9am.**

The goal is to raise awareness of the need for crossing guards and encourage kids to walk/roll to school. Did you know 67% of kids are driven to school and 25% of our morning rush hour traffic is people driving their kids to school?

Here's the [press release \[docs.google.com\]](#) with all the details.

WHO: Celebrities include Denver Mayor Mike Johnston; Denver Department of Transportation and infrastructure Executive Director, Adam Phipps; RTD CEO Debra Johnson, 12 of 13 Denver City Councilmembers, Chief of Police Ron Thomas; Desmond Fulton Chief of the Fire Department, radio DJ's from KS107.5, 99.5 and The Drop, members of the media, singer/songwriter Rob Drabkin, EDM artist Jaenga, Nathaniel Rateliff & the Night Sweats' bassist, Los Mochachetes band, the Denver District Attorney Beth McCann and more!

[Here are the matchups \[docs.google.com\]](#) (please don't publish this link.)

Thanks for considering!