



4-H Media Relations

How to Format, Write and Place Radio PSAs

The 4-H Brand Network site provides sample radio public service announcements (PSAs) in a selection of lengths. They are supplied in Word documents, so you can pick the PSA you want to send to your local radio stations and customize it with your telephone number or other pertinent information before you send it. Remember to make a copy of your Radio PSAs document before you make any changes to the text so you'll have the other choices for the next time.

Formatting Your PSA

The Radio PSAs document is set up so that all you have to do is add the appropriate information. FOR RELEASE is the date the radio station can start running the PSA.

- KILL DATE is the date you want the radio station to stop using the PSA.
- CONTACT is the name and telephone number of the person who can confirm the PSA is valid and answer any questions the radio station might have.
- LIVE ANNOUNCER RADIO requests that a live announcer/disc jockey actually reads the PSA live on the air. Live reading usually takes a little longer so that means more time on the air for 4-H. It also could lead to some ad-libbing about 4-H by the announcer/disc jockey, which is even better!

The radio PSAs are divided into sections of 10, 15, 20, 30 and 45 seconds. Keep the time subtitle at the top of the PSA you choose so the announcer knows how long it is.

Getting Your PSA on the Air

Be sure to contact local radio stations well in advance of your event to arrange the recording and placement of your public service announcements if necessary.

Take the time to find out exactly who should receive the PSA—usually the public service director—and how they prefer to receive it—mail, fax, or e-mail. A letter telling how the PSA will help 4-H might increase your chances of getting it on the air. You might also want to place a follow up telephone call. Better yet, take the PSA to the radio station yourself and talk to the person responsible for PSAs.

Writing Your Own PSAs

Want to write your own PSA? Start by contacting the public service directors at your local radio stations. Find out their requirements for PSAs such as what length and format they prefer.

Some basic guidelines:

- Include all the information explained in Formatting Your PSA. PSAs are usually double-spaced, in all capital letters, 12-point type.
- The most likely time lengths and the corresponding number of words are:
 - 10 seconds—25 words
 - 30 seconds—75 words
 - 60 seconds—150 words
- Use short upbeat sentences and a conversational tone.
- Tell how your information can help the listener.
- Tell the listener what you want them to do. For example: "VISIT WWW-DOT-FOUR-H-U-S-A-DOT-ORG" or "COME TO OUR OPEN HOUSE".
- Make sure you include the information they need to do what you want them to. For example, a time and complete address for an event.
- Tell the listener who they can contact for more information. Include your telephone number and/or Web site. Spell them out. For example, 301-555-1234 is THREE-ZERO-ONE-FIVE-FIVE-FIVE-ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR or www.4husa.org is W-W-W--DOT--FOUR--H--U-S-A--DOT--ORG.

Read your PSA out loud and time it to make sure it is the length you say it is.