

PUT THE BRAKES ON FATALITIES DAY

Toolkit: How to Get "Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day®" in the News

There are probably hundreds of ways to celebrate Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day. Town hall meetings, press conferences featuring local politicians and safety groups, presentations to civic groups, school assembly programs, or "Lights On For Safety" days are just a few of the possibilities. This section of the web site is intended to provide helpful hints and tips on generating local media coverage for Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day and any events you may plan for October 10, 2018. Our focus for 2018 continues to be to reduce distractions emphasized by the national theme "Don't be Driven by Distraction - Drive to Arrive!".

Encourage Your Governor/Mayor/State Legislature to Proclaim October 10 as Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day

Such a proclamation is a great way to generate both interest in the day itself and media coverage for your activities. Obtain a proclamation that October 10th is Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day in your city or state! Use the sample proclamation we have provided as your guide. Don't be afraid to contact your local mayor and state governor. You can also encourage local politicians or other celebrities to record public service announcements (PSA) that can air throughout the month of October.

Develop a Media List

You need to compile a list of names, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses for key reporters in your area. For newspapers, you should target transportation writers. Radio contacts should include the station's news director and the producers of any local talk shows. For television, you'll want to list the news assignment editor.

Start Early

Once you've identified your media targets, you'll want to let them know as soon as possible that October 10 is Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day and that your coalition has planned an activity to celebrate it. You can use the sample media advisory as a guide. It should be faxed or e-mailed to everyone on your media list at least two weeks before Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day. You'll want to follow-up your fax or e-mail with a phone call a few days before your planned activities to make sure the media in your area are alerted. Ideally, you want to pitch your targeted reporters to run a story before October 10 (so motorists in your area are alerted in advance of Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day), and then another story on the 10th or 11th detailing activities celebrating the day and any preliminary crash results.

In addition to a media advisory, the Associated Press maintains a listing of planned media activities (called a day-book) which reporters depend on to identify potential stories. Be sure to send an advisory to the day-book and follow it up with a phone call.

Host Your Event

Whether you've planned a press conference, a town-hall meeting, or some other event, October 10 will finally arrive! Keep in mind that morning events usually work best for the press. A morning press conference gives them plenty of time to attend and still meet afternoon deadlines. For radio (since most stations rarely attend press events), you may want to consider taping an interview on October 9 under agreement that the station begins airing the story on the morning of October 10.

We expect that local groups will come up with dozens of innovative and creative ideas for celebrating Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day. Please let us know (<mailto:ttanddi@asce.org>) how you plan to celebrate Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day and attach to your e-mail any materials you've developed which may assist other local groups.