

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Press Release Guidelines

October 2021

About these Guidelines

The following guidelines are created for Council staff and the public to outline Council procedures for writing, editing, publishing, and forwarding press releases. Press releases sent out through our Council listserv are an integral part of the Council's communication strategy and serve as the core method for communicating meeting notices, regulation updates, and other Council related business.

Press Release Types and Triggers

The Council produces and shares a variety of press releases. Some are triggered automatically and some are produced or shared at the discretion of Council staff. The following is an outline of the different types of press releases, including information on what triggers their production.

Meeting Notices

Public meetings held by the Council are subject to public meeting notice requirements and are published in a Federal Register Notice (FRN). Meeting notice press releases are triggered by the publication of the FRN for each meeting. Ideally, a meeting notice press release will be published the day the FRN publishes. Meeting notices should be reviewed by the technical staff member responsible for the meeting.

Council Meeting Summaries

Immediately following each Council Meeting, staff will produce and publish a press release summarizing the work completed during the meeting. Ideally, this summary will be published early in the week following a Council meeting. Each section of the Council meeting summary should be reviewed by the appropriate technical staff member. The entire release should be reviewed by the Executive Director, Deputy Director, and Lead Fishery Biologist. An administrative staff member should review the final draft before it's published.

Regulatory Changes

There are two types of regulatory changes that are published as press releases. First, when the Council takes final action on a fishery management issue, staff will issue a press release outlining the final decisions immediately. This final action press release should be reviewed by the relevant technical staff member and approved by either the Executive or Deputy Director. An administrative staff member should review the final draft before it's published. Second, NOAA Fisheries will publish notices when new regulations are implemented. Council staff will review and share those press releases across the Council communication network. Note, the Council does not share NOAA press releases on NOAA related comment periods. This has proven to be confusing to

our constituency since notice of Final Action by the Council precedes these rule-making comment periods. The Council staff may, at their discretion, choose to send press release notices about scheduled fishery closures or openings.

Other Council Business

Something's Fishy opportunities, Request for Proposals, Job Postings, Advisory Panel/Scientific and Statistical Committee solicitation and other press releases related to Council business are developed by the Public Information Officer with assistance from the appropriate staff member.

NOAA and Other Agency Press Releases

The Council automatically forwards NOAA Fisheries Bulletins that pertain to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council business and managed species. The Council can also forward other agency press releases when they are germane to Council business or impact Council stakeholders. In such cases, the Council Executive Director, Deputy Director, or the Public Information Officer should approve the forwarding of other agency press releases. When possible, the forwarded releases should contain the appropriate agency branding including headers, logos, and the general aesthetic of the original release. Each forwarded press release will contain a caveat indicating that the release is forwarded to the Council contacts as a courtesy.

Press Release Editing

Each press release written by Council staff should be reviewed by the appropriate technical staff member. Once the release is put in the listserv service (Constant Contact), one administrative staff member should review each release before it is published. Council Executive and/or Deputy Directors should review all Council Meeting Summary Press Releases and any other appropriate releases.

Press Release Publishing

Press releases should be published both through the Council's listserv service (Constant Contact) and on the Council's webpage under Hot Topics and the appropriate year.

Press Release Amplification

Press releases related to regulatory changes and Council meeting summaries should be amplified on social media immediately. Press releases related to other Council business should be amplified on social media and/or shared with Council Advisory Panel, Scientific and Statistical Committee, and Council meeting email lists at the discretion of the Public Information Officer and the Executive and Deputy Directors. Information contained in Council meeting notices should be shared on social media one week prior to each meeting.

Press Release Archiving

Each press release should be saved on the H drive. At the end of each year, press releases on the website should be archived in the appropriate year.