

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

MEMORANDUM GC 10-02

March 31, 2010

TO: All Regional Directors, Officers-in-Charge,  
and Resident Officers

FROM: Ronald Meisburg, General Counsel

SUBJECT: Press Release Policy

NLRB case actions can have an important impact not only on the individuals, labor organizations and employers who are directly involved, but also on local communities and the broader public. Agency action in these cases is undertaken in pursuit of the public policy objectives expressed in the National Labor Relations Act and it is, therefore, appropriate that the public be informed in a timely fashion of significant NLRB case developments.

Accordingly, I am asking all Regional Directors to cooperate with the Agency's new Office of Public Affairs (OPA), directed by veteran journalist Nancy Cleeland, as it develops a more active public information policy. As part of that effort, Regional Directors, working with their AGCs should provide the OPA with notice of upcoming events in significant cases such as the issuance of complaints, pursuit of injunctive relief, settlements, issuance of Decisions and Directions of Elections, Post-election reports and scheduling of elections.

There are no hard and fast rules as to what actions in what cases warrant a press release. An OPA memo on 'What Makes News' is attached to aid in that analysis, but Regional Directors should use their discretion in deciding what to propose. Even an issue of apparent consequence only to a local constituency could be part of a national trend and therefore of interest to a larger audience. When in doubt, Regions should err on the side of suggesting a topic for an Agency press release.

The most efficient way to start the process is to email Ms. Cleeland and your Operations-Management contact a brief description of the case and case action concerning which a press release may be warranted, attaching relevant documents if possible. Typically, Ms. Cleeland will arrange for a brief phone discussion and then, if warranted, will draft a press release. The draft will then be emailed back to the Region and your Operations-Management contact for review. When the Region, OPA and the Division of Operations-Management agree with the appropriateness of a press release on the subject and its wording the necessary clearance for release will be pursued.

The Region should also suggest local news outlets to be contacted. When the proposed press release concerns a settlement or stipulation for election, the Region will be responsible for giving advanced notice to the party representatives that a press release may be issued.

Your cooperation in this effort to bring to the public information about the important work that we perform will promote the principles of open government, will advance the policies of the National Labor Relations Act and is consistent with [President Obama's Open Government Directive](#).

Questions concerning this outreach effort should be directed to Ms. Cleeland at [nancy.cleeland@nlrb.gov](mailto:nancy.cleeland@nlrb.gov) or at 202-273-0222; or your Assistant General Counsel.

/s/  
R. M.

Enclosure  
Release to the Public

cc: NLRBU  
NLRBPA

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## **What Makes News?**

**Timely** – Timing is the single most important factor in getting our story out. Ideally we should have a release ready within a few hours of an event, and no less than 24 -- even better if we can give reporters a heads-up beforehand.

**Big Impact** – Higher news value if the event (decision, 10(j), etc.) impacts many people, or a significant subgroup of people.

**Name-recognition**– A familiar brand (e.g. Starbucks, Hershey) or a famous person raises news value.

**Surprising** – The old ‘man-bites-dog’ rule still holds.

**Inspiring** – A story of heroism, altruism or personal growth will catch attention.

**Outrageous** – Behavior that most people would view as outrageous – such as mass firings, physical harm – is newsworthy.

**Trend** – ‘Three makes a trend’ is a familiar newspaper adage. Journalists love to be out in front on a trend.

**Record** – The biggest, longest, shortest, oldest, etc. is always more notable.

**Anniversary** – News organizations and radio talk shows love anniversaries, as they provide a peg for a story that otherwise wouldn’t be news.

Think you have a news story? We’d love to hear about it. Please contact Public Affairs Director [Nancy.Cleeland@nlrb.gov](mailto:Nancy.Cleeland@nlrb.gov), 202-273-0222; or New Media Specialist [Anthony.Wagner@nlrb.gov](mailto:Anthony.Wagner@nlrb.gov), 202-273-0187.