

# Model Releases

Why does the *PSA Journal* require model releases for certain images? The simple answer is to protect the publication (and the photographer) from being sued by the subject. If an image contains a recognizable person and is not a news or editorial image, the *Journal* will require a model release: this includes model portraits and some travel images. A **model release**, known in similar contexts as a liability waiver, is a legal release typically signed by the subject of a photograph granting permission to publish the photograph in one form or another.

In general, if you are attending a public event, such as an air show, Renaissance Faire, sports event, etc., releases are not required for pictures of the participants who have a reasonable expectation of having their picture taken and published. Or if you come upon a photojournalism happening (an accident, war theater, etc.), releases are not required. “In short, photo journalists almost never need to obtain model releases for images they shoot for (or sell to) news or qualified editorial publications.” (Wikipedia)

Brenda Tharp author of *Creative Nature & Outdoor Photography* tells us that “for photos that will be used in commercial applications—ads, brochures, posters, greeting cards, catalogs, postcards, kiosks, trade shows, websites, etc.—you will need a release from your subject in order to be *legal*.”

The *PSA Journal* requires that all portrait photographers should have signed model releases from their subjects. This is also true of travel images that are more portrait in nature and do not depict a “time and place.”

Simple model releases are available online for free and it is good to get in the habit of obtaining them and carrying them with you for the purpose of obtaining permission to use the images for publication or exhibition. It is very disappointing for the *PSA Journal* and the photographer to have an image refused for publication because a model release is not available. This includes images sent to the *Journal* as part of an article and images used from the PSA International Exhibition and the *PSA Who's Who in Photography* publication. ■



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