

WRITING OBITS -- CHECKLIST

1. Confirm the spellings of all names, particularly the deceased.
2. Check the addresses of funeral homes, churches, cemeteries etc. Be careful about publishing the deceased's address -- beware of burglars.
3. Check the birthdate against the age
4. Verify with the mortuary or family any obit phoned or faxed in.
5. Check the archives or Google for previous stories about the deceased
6. Don't replace "*died*" with the silly euphemisms you see in the paid mortuary notices.
7. Don't use "*sudden death*" unless you are talking about football. "*Died unexpectedly*" is probably what you want. Also, you don't die of "*an apparent heart attack,*" rather "*you apparently died of a heart attack.*"
8. On giving places of birth, avoid the use of the phrase "*a former native.*"
9. Check AP for religious references and titles of clergy, places of worship.
10. Don't misspell "cemetery"
11. Watch out for gossip and potentially libelous phrases: "*He was the black sheep of the family*" or "*She had been living in sin with ...*"
12. Reporting or not reporting the cause of death can be controversial, especially in the time of AIDS.
13. Be careful with stories about suicides
14. Make sure to include the MAJOR survivors
15. Include pertinent information about funeral services, wakes, etc.
16. Include info about the need for info on donations for funeral expenses