

What are Property, Talent & Model Releases?

[What are Property, Talent & Model Releases?](#) [1]



What are Releases

Releases are legal documents designed to protect photographers, agencies, models (people) from legal problems. They provide a written record that a model agrees to have their image used as a stock photo. Releases can also apply to property and voice talents.

Model Release or MR (MRF - model release form)

Signed by a model, or models legal guardian if they are not of legal age. It forms proof that the

photographer had permission from the model to take their picture and upload it for sale.

Property Release (PR)

Property releases are signed by property owners (this can include pets, cars as well as buildings and artworks) to allow images of their property to be taken. Most people think of famous buildings or sculptures and product designs for which property releases are rare - it's unlikely you will get a release for something like The Empire State building or Disney's Cinderella's Castle. It is more likely that you need a property release for something much more mundane like a private home. This does not mean that you need a property release for every article contained within a photo, it 'tends' to be for those where the property forms the main subject or the photo was taken on private property - beginners should take notice of places like zoos, stadiums, theme parks etc. which usually prohibit commercial work as part of the contract of admission.

Talent Release

Talent releases are required for stock audio, for the composition of the music and also for all artists either singing, creating spoken sounds or playing an instrument.

Generic Model Release Form

There was a simple time back in the mid to late 2000's where all the agencies (stockxpert etc :) would accept a single generic model release without a problem - the istockphoto release with the istock logo/address removed was usually fine.

Then things started getting a little less convenient around 2008 and 2009. The Getty istock take over meant that istock started using a standard Getty model release. This is not a bad thing at all, in fact you hear a lot of photographers referring to the "[standard Getty release](#) [2]" or "based on the Getty release" etc. as some kind of de-facto industry standard. The new releases needed descriptions, shoot dates and models' date of birth.

I'd love to just make a generic release and offer it for download here, but for more than one reason I would be playing with legal fire by cutting and pasting a release and providing it here as a legal document. So it's up to you to find a suitable release. If, hypothetically, you wanted to create a generic release then here's how you might do it...

(Unreassuring Disclaimer: This information is provided for guidance only, it should not be considered legal advice.)

[istockphoto uploads page](#) [3] (you need to be logged in) - the istock uploads page links to model, property and talent releases). You might also look at the [Alamy model release](#) [4] (pdf).

The pertinent things to change on the above releases to make them generic include:

- Remove the company logos and addresses (kind of obvious I hope)
- Change "Governed by the laws of ___" to match the country or legal jurisdiction nearest your own, New York - USA, Alberta Canada, England, Australia, New Zealand Etc. (it seems that the current istock release is written to select this for you).
- Confirm that your release contains all the fields included in the release forms provided by the agencies you submit to. If you provide all the info they require on your generic release then any extra info e.g. an identification photo, description of the shoot, ethnicity etc. should not cause any problems. Miss a required field or legal phrase and you will find your submissions

rejected (inconvenient if you have to travel to meet up with the model again!).

All (most?) model releases feature the words "For good and valuable Consideration", where a space is provided it's for you to specify the sum - can be a token amount of \$1 exchanged to make the contract binding.

istock offer their MRs translated into 10 different languages.

When do I need to get a Model Release signed?

You should get a model release for each shoot you take with a person in it - even if it's just a figure in silhouette. Even if you use the same model, same location but a different day, it will take seconds to create a second release (the initial explanation etc. if any will not be needed if the model is already happy). It's better to get a release at the time than go chasing for one at a later date. An excellent article in the istock training manual about [when and where MRs are needed](#) [5] is well worth reading. It's clear you need a release for a photo of someone, and don't need a model release for a photo that does not contain a person, but there is an awkward middle ground in between. Often photos of someone facing away from the camera or below the neck are still identifiable but only by the context they are in e.g. with a group of other people they would recognize only if seen together, showing a birthmark or scar etc.

Only at some agencies can you get away with a catch all release with which you can submit from multiple shoots of the same model - to be future proof one shoot setup = one model release. Even if there is for example a shoot at the beach and a shoot in the studio during one day, then get two releases to be on the safe side each describing the two shoot locations.

Further Reference:

[Copyright and trademarked subjects](#) [6]

The istock 'legal' section
(for photographers)

currently located at <http://www.istockphoto.com/help/sell-stock/training-manuals/photography/...> [7]

2008 article by Yuri Arcurs, The MR is now out of date

but there is a useful thread of comments <http://www.arcurs.com/what-is-a-model-release> [8]

0 Comments

It's quiet in here!

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Links:

[1] <https://www.microstockinsider.com/guides/what-are-property-talent-model-releases>

[2] http://contribute.gettyimages.com/producer/documents/Model_Release_English_Dec_2008.pdf

[3] <http://www.istockphoto.com/xnet.php>

[4] <http://www.alamy.com/contributors/Alamy-stock-photography-model-release-form.pdf>

[5] http://www.istockphoto.com/article_view.php?ID=648

[6] <http://microstockinsider.com/guides/copyright-and-trademarked-subjects>

[7] <http://www.istockphoto.com/help/sell-stock/training-manuals/photography/legal-requirements>

[8] <http://www.arcurs.com/what-is-a-model-release>