

MILES MODELS, LLC

Model Release Forms

As a model, you're guaranteed to become a master of many things. From posing and walking to makeup and hair, there's no limit to what you'll be able to do! You'll even be introduced to the business side of modeling which is something not a lot of people know.

But don't be intimidated! Once you gain more experience in the industry, the business side of modeling will become second nature. A good place to start is by learning about model release forms, one of the most commonly used legal documents in the modeling world.

What Is a Model Release?

A model release form is a standard legal document between the model and the photographer. Essentially, It spells out how the photos will be used, releases the rights over to a client or company, and grants permission for them to be published.

If the model is a minor (under the age of 18 in most states), then the release form must be signed by a parent or guardian for it to be valid.

What's Included in a Form?

Model release forms vary in terms of content, the level of protection, and legal jargon (some are easier to understand than others!), but you can typically expect basic information like:

The creator's name, the model's name, and the date the release was created.

Who the rights are released to. It is usually the photographer, but can also be the client, ad agency, or another company who wishes to own the photos.

How the images will be used. The model gives his/her permission for the photos to be digitally altered and waives any right to inspect/approve the final photo and associated ad copy.

Where the images will be used. This can be as vague as "any and all media" or can specify certain types of media, such as print advertisements, digital advertisements, billboards, posters, brochures, greeting cards, etc. It's best when the release form specifies exactly where your image will be used (magazines only, for example). That way, you know you'll be paid fairly for the amount of exposure your photo will receive.

The duration of the agreement (how long the rights are in effect for). It is typically one or two years, but can legally be any period of time.

Details on the fees paid to the model.

The model's name, address, signature, and date.

Who Needs One?

A model release form is required when the photo is of an identifiable person and is used for commercial purposes, such as promoting a product, service, or idea through ads, posters, brochures, websites, catalogs, etc. Even if the photographer snaps the shot in a public place, they still need to ask the model to sign a release form!

Release forms aren't necessary if the photo is to be used for educational/informational purposes, such as newspapers, textbooks, encyclopedias, or photography exhibits. Still, it's wise for a photographer to ask the model to sign a release form just in case they wish to use the photo commercially in the future.

When Do I Sign It?

You will be asked to sign the release form on location at your photo shoot. Sometimes it'll be before your photos are taken, and sometimes after (the photographer doesn't need permission to photograph you, just to sell your photos).

Do I Have to Sign It?

Absolutely! If you don't sign the model release form, your photos can't be used, and you won't be paid. End of story.

But that doesn't mean you have to sign it the minute it's presented to you!! If you have any questions about the release form or are unsure if the terms match what you and your agent originally agreed upon, then resist the urge to negotiate with the photographer and instead call your agent immediately for clarification. As with all legal documents, you should never sign anything you're unsure about.