

**Appendix A. NWS Correspondence Manual**

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This manual governs the formulation of NWS correspondence prepared for signature by NWS senior management and for correspondence prepared for signature at the NOAA and DOC levels. It also sets standards for all NWS correspondence. Our intent is to be consistent with the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) Style Manual. Your first point of reference is the NWS Correspondence Manual; however, as correspondence guidelines change, the Office of Executive Affairs ([http://www.weather.gov/executive\\_affairs/](http://www.weather.gov/executive_affairs/)) will provide guidance between routine issuances of this Manual. Inquiries about correspondence procedures may be directed to the NWS Executive Affairs (EA) staff at (301) 713-0675 or [nws.executive.affairs@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.executive.affairs@noaa.gov).

Visit the EA Web site at [http://www.weather.gov/executive\\_affairs/](http://www.weather.gov/executive_affairs/) for document templates. You also will find links to the templates throughout this manual.

**1. Stationery.** EA will print correspondence on the stationery of the person signing the correspondence. Within the NWS headquarters, the AA, the DAA, and Office of the Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer (OCFO) each have their own letterhead. Correspondence prepared for signature of the AA/DAA will be printed on the appropriate letterhead by EA. Action offices need only provide a signature-ready draft on plain paper and an electronic version of the document.

All correspondence prepared for signature by persons other than the AA, DAA and CFO is printed on standard NWS stationery. Correspondence prepared for signature by officials at NOAA and DOC should be submitted to EA on plain paper as all correspondence sent for NOAA signature is a draft. This correspondence will be electronically transmitted to the NOAA Executive Secretariat where it will be printed in final form on the appropriate letterhead and submitted for signature.

**2. The Letter.** The letter format is used for communications addressed to an individual or organization outside NWS/NOAA/DOC. It is also used for personalized communications, such as letters of appreciation, etc., addressed to an individual or organization within NWS. As a general rule, our reply will be in the same form as that received. Therefore, if we receive a letter, we will (generally) return correspondence in letter format.

Letters prepared within NWS fall into four categories:

1. Non-congressional letters
2. NWS-Controlled congressional letters
3. NOAA/DOC-Controlled Non-congressional letters
4. NOAA/DOC-Controlled congressional letters

The appearance of your letter is as important as the content. The format of all letters should be consistent with the following guidelines:

Use MS Word when creating documents for AA/DAA signature.

- a. Use Times New Roman font with 12-point print style on all correspondence. Boldface, italics, or underlining should not be used for emphasizing text.
- b. Do not indent paragraphs, unless the letter is for signature of the Secretary.
- c. Always put two spaces after a period at the end of a sentence.
- d. All letters are to be centered on the page from top to bottom.
- e. Always set margins at 1 inch on all sides.
- f. Use left-justification.
- g. All correspondence is to be single spaced. Double space between paragraphs.
- h. Keep letters to one page whenever possible. If necessary, use an enclosure to relay information. If the letter must be more than one page, each additional page should have the following heading:

Mr. John Doe

Page 2 (Begin the body of the correspondence three lines down from the page number.)

2.1 Date. For documents signed in your office, stamp the date just above the inside address and slightly to the right of center, under the letterhead. Be sure the date stamped is legible. Do not date stamp correspondence that will be signed in another office.

2.2 Inside Address. Type the inside address flush with the left margin. On the first line, type the addressee's appropriate title, (e.g., Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., Professor, The Honorable), followed by the full name. If it is not known whether the addressee is a man or a woman, omit the title. For example, use "Lee Doe" (Dear Lee Doe:).

On the second line, type the addressee's title, followed by the name of the organization—this may be carried over to the third line if necessary. When carrying an organization name over to the next line, indent two spaces.

**Example:**

Mr. Mike Melton  
Director, Colbert County Emergency  
Management Agency  
120 West Fifth Street  
Tuscumbia, AL 35674

If the individual's title is lengthy, (e.g., Chairman of the Board or Chief Executive Officer), put it on the second line by itself and the company's name on the next line.

**Example:**

Mr. Gerard F. Scannell  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
National Safety Council  
1025 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036-5405

Spell out the name of the organization exactly as it appears on the letterhead. Do not use abbreviations unless they are used on the firm's letterhead.

**NOTE:** If correspondence is received from the Chair of a Senate or House committee who is writing on behalf of that committee, address the correspondent in that role.

**Example:**

The Honorable John McCain  
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science,  
and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510-6125

Suite/room numbers are not included in the inside address, only on the envelope.

If the address reflects both a post office box number and a street address, only the street address should be reflected in the inside address. However, if only a post office box number is given (no street address), then show the post office box on the inside address.

Use two-letter state abbreviations in the inside address, including Washington, DC. Do not spell out the name of the state. Abbreviate the state on the envelope. Put two spaces between the state and the zip code. If known, use the full nine-digit zip code on the outgoing letter and envelope.

"Attention" lines are only acceptable if the incoming correspondence requests that the response be directed to someone on the writer's staff. (This often occurs in congressional correspondence.) Use the following format.

**Example:**

The Honorable Constance Morella  
U.S. House of Representatives  
ATTN: John Howard  
Washington, DC 20515-1122

2.3 Salutation. Type the salutation two lines below the inside address block. A colon follows the salutation. Always use the formal salutation; the signer may personalize the salutation if desired.

**Examples:**

Dear Mr. Jones: Dear Ms. Smith:

Address all women as "Ms." unless the incoming correspondence specifically indicates a preference for "Mrs.," "Miss," or some other title.

When corresponding to a company and no person's name is given, then use the following salutation:

Dear Sir or Madam:

When corresponding to a Chair of a congressional committee or subcommittee, address the person by that title.

**Examples:**

Dear Mr. Chairman: Dear Madam Chair:

For models of address and salutations, see  
[http://home.commerce.gov/ExeSec/Address\\_Models.pdf](http://home.commerce.gov/ExeSec/Address_Models.pdf)

2.4 Body of Letter. Do not indent paragraphs (see note below). Begin the first paragraph of each letter with "Thank you for your letter regarding..." followed by a brief description of the subject of the incoming letter. If the letter is unfavorable to NWS, it is appropriate to begin: "This is in response to your letter regarding..."

Double space between paragraphs. The first and last paragraphs may be one sentence. All other paragraphs must be more than one sentence.

There should only be one "thank you" in a letter. The last paragraph might read "We appreciate your interest ..." or "Your interest is appreciated ...," depending on the tone of the letter.

**NOTE:** The first line of each paragraph should be indented (one tab position) on letters being forwarded to the Secretary for signature.

2.5 Complimentary Close. Use double spacing between the final paragraph of the letter and the complimentary close. Use "Sincerely" and place slightly to the right of the center of the page.

2.6 Signature Block. After the closing hit “enter” three times, tab over to line up the cursor directly under the closing and type the name. The title is not necessary when it is shown on the letterhead. In cases where the letterhead does not indicate the title of the signer, type both the name and the title.

**Examples:**

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Name

Name

Title

Carryover Title (indented 2 spaces)

2.7 Enclosure. If additional material is to be included with the letter, type the word “Enclosure” (or “Enclosures” for more than one item) two line spaces below the signature block, flush with the left margin. If a letter has an enclosure, the text should include a reference to it.

**Examples:**

A list of NWS employees is enclosed.

Enclosed is a summary of the report.

**NOTE:** “Attachment” is not used for letters; it is used for memoranda.

2.8 Courtesy Copy Notation. The use of “cc:” is discouraged on letters addressed to individuals or organizations outside of NWS. However, if the letter is referring the addressee to someone, include a cc: to that person. If information or courtesy copy (cc) distribution is shown on the original to inform the addressee as to the other recipients, type the “cc:” notation flush with the left margin, two lines below the last typed line. Insert two spaces after the “cc:” notation, and type the recipient’s name. Do not use routing codes to a person outside NOAA. For more than one recipient, type each name on a separate line, directly under the first name.

**Example:**

cc: Mary Johnson, NASA

Paul Jones, FAA

If the writer wishes to show that the individuals receiving copies are receiving (or are not receiving) enclosures, it is noted as follows:

cc: Mary Johnson, NASA (w/enclosure)

Paul Jones, FAA (w/o enclosure)

or

bcc: Leon Graves, FAA (w/o enclosure)

Note: Letters of appreciation cc’s should go to appropriate Office/Regional Director

2.9 Blind Courtesy Copy Notation. If the writer wishes copies of the letter be distributed without the list being shown on the original, the blind courtesy copy (bcc) notation is typed on a separate page (for use by the Action Office). Use the same format used for the courtesy copy notation.

**Example:**

bcc: Mary Johnson, NASA  
Paul Jones, FAA

**NOTE:** Indicate only one NWS bcc for each program office included in the bcc list; that office can then do its own internal distribution.

2.10 Courtesy Copy Protocol Order. Entries in cc and bcc lists should be listed in protocol order as follows:

Outside DOC	W/OS
DOC	W/OST
NOAA	W/OHD
W	W/OPS
Wx1	W/ER
W/CFO	W/SR
W/CIO	W/CR
W/EEO	W/WR
W/IA	W/AR
W/SP	W/PR
	W/NP

2.11 Distribution. After signature by the AA/DAA, EA will date stamp the response, make copies for its files and return the original response to the Action Office for distribution.

2.12 Multiple Letters. When preparing a letter to more than eight (8) addressees for the signature of the AA or DAA (such as award or recognition letters), either submit an electronic file of each addressed letter or one completed mail merged letter for signature along with the mail merge form and data files containing the inside address and salutation to complete the mail merge. Prepare separate letters when sending to 8 or less addressees.

Place the list of addressees on the left inside of the folder. The remainder of the letters will be signed using the autopen on electronic versions of the letters. To use the electronic signature process, a file must be submitted to EA containing (1) the list of addressees, formatted as stated above, and (2) the completed letter.

2.13 NOAA Corporate Names. The term “NOAA” should be used to precede the official organization name, “NOAA’s National Weather Service” on all correspondence, memoranda, web sites, and other references to your organization.

However, “NOAA” may not be used preceding the official organization name in a legally binding document or any other document that is mandated by law or regulation, i.e., grants, contracts, memorandum of understanding, reports to Congress, etc.

Note: Acronyms should continue to reflect the official name, NWS.

**3. The Memorandum**. Memos prepared within NWS fall into several categories. Although all memos follow the basic format, the purpose of the memo affects additional features. See Section 6 for additional guidance regarding correspondence prepared for the Secretary.

For NOAA and DOC memorandum templates, see <http://www.dco.noaa.gov/correspondence.html>.

**NOTE:** All memoranda addressed to the Under Secretary, Assistant Secretary, and Deputy Under Secretary must be prepared for signature by the Assistant Administrator. All memoranda addressed to the Secretary must be prepared for signature by the Under Secretary and must be accompanied by a NOAA transmittal memo from the AA to the Under Secretary.

The appearance of your memorandum is as important as the content. The format of all memos should be consistent with the following guidelines.

- a. Times New Roman font with 12-point print style. Boldface, italics, or underlining should not be used for emphasizing text.
- b. Do not indent paragraphs.
- c. Always put two spaces after a period at the end of a sentence.
- d. All memos should start at least eight lines below the printed letterhead. When necessary, the memo may begin higher on the page to keep the memo to one page. Memos are **not** centered on the page.
- e. Set margins at 1 inch on all sides.
- f. Use left-justification.
- g. All correspondence is single spaced. Double space between paragraphs.
- h. Keep memoranda to one page whenever possible. If necessary, use an attachment to relay information. If the memorandum must be more than one page, beginning on page 2, type the number one inch from the top, in the center of the line. Type only the number—do not use dashes or parentheses. Begin the body of

correspondence four lines down from the page number.

3.1 Date. For documents signed in your office, stamp the date just above the heading and subject block and slightly to the right of center, under the letterhead. Be sure the date stamped is legible.

Do not date correspondence that will be signed in another office.

3.2 Heading and Subject Block. Flush with the left margin, type the words "MEMORANDUM FOR: " Tap the space bar two times and type the name of the individual to whom you are sending the memorandum. Directly below, in line with the first letter of the first name, type the individual's title (if any). Indent two spaces if a second line is needed for the title. If there is no title, then type the office in which the person works.

Drop down two lines and type the word "FROM:" flush with the left margin. Type the name of the sender so it starts in the same column as the name of the person to whom the memorandum is addressed. If the memo is not being prepared on the sender's letterhead, the sender's title must be shown directly under the name. Indent two spaces for any carryover lines of the title.

Drop down two more lines and type the word "SUBJECT:" flush with the left margin. Start the title of the subject at the same point as the names in the two lines above. If the subject is more than one line in length, do **not** indent the subsequent line(s); begin each line directly below the first word in the subject line. Drop down **three** lines and begin the body of the memorandum.

Do not indent paragraphs.

**Example:**

MEMORANDUM FOR: (Name)  
                                    Under Secretary of Commerce  
  for Oceans and Atmosphere

FROM: (Name)

SUBJECT:                   XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
  XXXXXXXXXXXX

The title of the person identified in the "FROM" line is not typed unless the sender's title is not printed on the letterhead.

3.3 Alternatives to the "Through" Line. The use of "Through" lines is discouraged due to timely back and forth that could occur if the memo is edited between the time it is signed by the Action Office and prior to AA's signature. The use of a concurrence line is the recommended alternative. Add a concurrence line at the bottom of the memorandum, e.g.:



Pacific Region  
National Centers for Environmental Prediction

**NOTE:** The Tropical Prediction Center/National Hurricane Center, Storm Prediction Center, Aviation Weather Center, Central Operations, Environmental Modeling Center, Hydrometeorological Prediction Center, Ocean Prediction Center, Climate Prediction Center, and Space Weather Prediction Center fall under the National Centers for Environmental Prediction organizationally, which is a regional office.

If you use *NWS Staff Offices*, the following offices would receive copies.

Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management  
International Activities Office  
Strategic Planning and Policy Office

If you have more than two addressees who do not comprise a standardized group like those listed above, address the memo to "Distribution." Type "Distribution:" flush with the left margin, two lines below the last line of text. Drop down a line and begin a list of the individuals. The use of routing codes is appropriate on distribution lists for memoranda.

**Example:**

Distribution:  
W/Wx1 – (Full Name)  
W/IA – (Full Name)  
W/OPS – (Full Name)  
W/WR – (Full Name)

Entries in distribution lists should be in the protocol order shown in article 2.10. If a memo contains both a distribution list and a courtesy copy notation, list distribution first. Start the cc notation two lines below the distribution list.

3.5 Signature. Signature on the memorandum is to the right of the typewritten name on the "FROM:" line.

3.6 Attachment. Type “Attachment” two lines below the last line of text in the memorandum. “Attachment” always precedes a distribution list or a courtesy copy notation. As noted, "Attachment" is used when writing memoranda, and "Enclosure" is used when writing letters.

3.7 Courtesy Copy Notation. If courtesy copy distribution is shown on the original to inform the addressees as to the other recipients, type the “cc:” notation flush with the left margin, two lines below the last typed line. Insert two spaces after the “cc:” notation, and type the recipient's name. If there is more than one recipient, list the second and succeeding names on separate lines, below the first recipient. The use of routing codes is appropriate on a memorandum.

**Example:**

cc: W/SP - Edward Johnson  
W/OS - David Caldwell

3.8 Blind Courtesy Copy Notation. If the writer wishes copies of the memo be distributed without the list being shown on the original, the blind courtesy copy (bcc) notation is typed on the NWS file copy only. Use the same format used for the courtesy copy notation.

**NOTE:** Indicate only one bcc for each program office included in the bcc list; that office can then do its own internal distribution.

3.9 Courtesy Copy Protocol Order. Follow order listed in article 2.10.

3.10 NOAA Cover Memorandum. Correspondence drafted by NWS for DOC/NOAA requires a cover memorandum. The format for the cover memo is the same as that for the basic memo.

3.10.1 Text. It is **not** necessary to restate the incoming correspondence or summarize the response, provided that all issues are answered and no additional background information is necessary. The signer will not sign without reading the correspondence.

3.11 Decision Memorandum. To recommend an action by or obtain approval from the AA or DAA for a certain activity, a decision memorandum is appropriate. This form of memo is also used when the AA or DAA seeks approval or action from the Under Secretary or Secretary. The content should concisely present the facts, necessary background, and a recommendation. The recommendation should be expressed so it can be approved or disapproved.

3.12 Information Memorandum. To advise the AA or DAA, an information memorandum is appropriate. Examples of the use of this type of memo are power outages, computer problems, etc. This form of memo is also used to inform the Under Secretary and Deputy Under Secretary. The content should concisely present the facts.

**NOTE:** When preparing either a Decision Memorandum or Information Memorandum, particularly for the Under Secretary or Secretary, provide relevant supporting legal documentation. If the justification for a recommended decision, or the information being conveyed, is based upon an Office of Management and Budget circular or regulatory or statutory language, include that source. It is not necessary to include the full regulation or statute or circular; in most cases, this supporting language should be no more than a few paragraphs.

**4. Correspondence Prepared for the Secretary.** All documents prepared for submission to the Secretary are presented through and by signature of the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere. There are special formats for specific documents prepared for the Secretary, as set forth below.

4.1 Cover Memorandum for the Secretary. A cover memo from the Under Secretary to the Secretary is submitted whenever the Secretary's signature is required (e.g., a DOC/NOAA controlled letter to be signed at the Secretary level).

4.2 Letter Response for the Secretary. Letters prepared for the Secretary's signature contain specific language regarding the contact for additional information, and may use a complimentary close different from that for the Assistant Administrator and the Under Secretary.

4.3 Information Memorandum for the Secretary and Deputy Secretary. This memo is used to transmit information the Secretary and Deputy Secretary have a real need to know. The memo should begin with "One Thing You Must Know," which should convey the purpose of the memo in a clear and concise statement.

4.4 Decision Memorandum for the Secretary. If the Assistant Administrator wishes to obtain approval from or recommend an action by the Secretary for a certain activity, a decision memorandum is required.

4.5 Briefing Summary for Meeting with the Secretary. This document is used whenever a meeting with the Secretary has been scheduled and a briefing is necessary. It must be submitted to the Under Secretary for signature prior to the meeting. The Under Secretary will then sign the briefing and submit it to the Secretary.

**5. Assembly of the Correspondence Package.** In addition to following procedures for the preparation of the correspondence, the Action Office must properly assemble—or package—the folder. NOTE: NOAA and DOC actions (begin with ##-123456, where ## indicates the 2-digit calendar year) are packaged in red folders and all other responses are packaged in manila folders.

### 5.1 Front of Folder

- NWS Correspondence Control Sheet

### 5.2 Inside, Left Side of Folder

- Incoming
- Background Material

All signature folders must be accompanied by electronic files containing **only** the final versions of the correspondence, any attachments, and the clearance/coordination sheet being submitted, as edits may occur once the package is submitted to EA. Each document must be saved as a separate file. The file name must clearly identify the file. The files must be e-mailed to [nws.executive.affairs@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.executive.affairs@noaa.gov), at the time the package is submitted.

Staple all material flush with the top of the folder. If bulky, use two binder clips to secure to the top of folder.

If the background material contains more than two separate documents, refer to them individually in the Clearance/Coordination sheet and tab them (e.g., A, B, C, etc.) using blank pages as spacers. The reader should be able to lift up a tab and view the first page of each separate document.

- If the AA returns correspondence to the Action Office for revision, fold the marked-up copy lengthwise and paper clip it to the inside left hand side and return the folder to EA.

**NOTE:** Action Offices are responsible for mailing all responses.

### 5.3 Inside, Right Side of Folder

- Signature-ready draft of correspondence for signature on plain paper (place a signature tab at each place requiring a signature).
- Attachments/enclosures.

The above items should be paper clipped, or binder clipped if bulky, flush with the top of the folder, under the attachments/enclosures.

- Clearances

Staple the coordination documentation flush with the top of the folder separated from the attachments/enclosures by a blank piece of paper with a tab labeled “clearance”. If it is bulky, include it with the outgoing response under two binder clips. Identify the coordinators by writing the coordinator's routing code at the lower right-hand corner of the first page of the e-mail or fax.

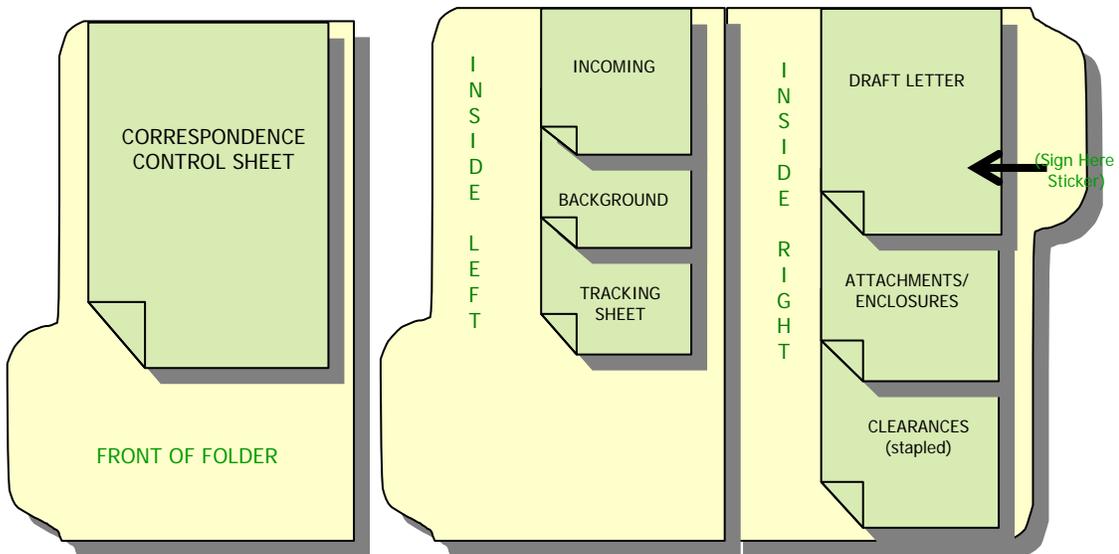
**NOTE:** Only the most recent version of the letter/memo should be included in the folder. No file copy or prior revisions prepared in the Action Office should be included. However, comments made on prior revisions by the Office Director or coordinators (e.g.,

Regions, GCW, LAW) should be included. The author of all comments should be identified.

See the following graphic for additional guidance on packaging the signature folder.

5.4 Assembly of Signature Folder

**THE FRONT • INSIDE LEFT • INSIDE RIGHT**



**FOLDER CONTENTS**

NOTE: (1) Tabs for background material are placed on blank sheets of paper used as spacers  
(2) Clearances are stapled flush with the top of the folder.

**6. Models of Address and Salutations.** Follow the models of address and salutations at DOC Executive Secretariat's page at [http://home.commerce.gov/ExeSec/Address\\_Models.doc](http://home.commerce.gov/ExeSec/Address_Models.doc)

**7. Effective Written Communication.** This section provides some editorial rules to follow when preparing NWS/NOAA/DOC correspondence. The purpose of editorial rules is to ensure consistency. Inconsistencies detract from the quality of a document.

This is not an exhaustive list of grammatical and style rules. See the Appendixes for a list of resources all writers and support staff should have at hand.

**7.1 Abbreviations.** When used as a noun, United States should be spelled out; when used as an adjective, it should be abbreviated.

**Example:**

While touring the United States, he visited Washington, DC, and sat in on a session of the U.S. Supreme Court.

**7.2 Acronyms.** Type the entire phrase the first time it appears, followed by the acronym in parentheses; then use only the acronym in the text following. Do not put the acronym in parentheses after the spelled out phrase if the acronym is not used again.

**Example:**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. NOAA is a bureau under the Department of Commerce.

**7.2.1 Plurals of Acronyms:** An apostrophe is not used to indicate the plural of an acronym.

**Examples:** There are 122 WFOs.  
The MICs agreed on the plan.  
Have the FMCs submitted documents?

**7.2.2 Possessives of Acronyms:** An apostrophe is used to indicate the possessive form of an acronym.

**Examples:** WFO's staffing  
MIC's duties  
FMC's budget ceilings

**NOTE:** Do not include the *s* or *'s* in the parentheses with the acronym when using an entire phrase as a plural or possessive.

**Example:** NOAA’s National Weather Service's (NWS) policy is ....  
 The NWS established this policy ....  
 Meteorologists in Charge (MIC) follow this policy ....

7.2.3 Acronym Choices: Listed below are words or phrases where a choice of acronyms is permitted. The rule is consistency, i.e., the acronym used for that word or phrase must be consistent throughout the document.

**Examples:** electronics technician                      use el tech or ET  
 Silver Spring Metro Center                      use SSMC2 or SSMCII  
 Building 2

7.3 Capitalization.

Capitalize "Federal," only when using it in a name or as an adjective synonymous with the United States.

Capitalize "Government," and "Federal Government" when referring specifically to the U.S. Government.

Capitalize the word "Nation" when using as an adjective synonymous with the United States. Do not capitalize national, unless it is used as part of a formal name.

Capitalize "State" when it refers to a State as a unit of government.

Capitalize words relating to the U.S. Congress.

House of Representatives	the House
U.S. Senate	the Senate
Members of Congress	the 95th Congress
the Committee (specific committee)	

Congressional is not capitalized (per GPO Style Manual).

Capitalize Headquarters when referring to NWS Headquarters or any of the NWS regional headquarters; for example, Northern Region Headquarters. However, use lower case when using the term generically, such as regional headquarters.

Capitalize compass points when they refer to a geographical region or a street name, but they are lowercase when they refer to simple direction.

**Examples: (region or name):**  
 out West -- up North -- Long Island's North Shore -- the East

**Examples: (simple direction):**

west of the Rockies -- the west coast of Florida -- southern California

Use initial caps when used with a name (as a title), “Meteorologist in Charge John Smith”; but use lower case when using the term generically, such as, “The meteorologist in charge will administer NWS policies.” The same rule applies for OIC and HIC.

Capitalize the abbreviations for fiscal year, but not the term itself.

Correct: fiscal year, FY 07 -- fiscal year 2007 -- FY 2007

Incorrect: Fiscal Year, FY '07 -- Fiscal Year 2007 -- Fiscal 07  
(Note: Do not use apostrophe for year designation)

The same rules apply to CY 07, calendar year 2007 and CY 2007.

#### 7.4 Comma. Use commas to:

- a. separate city from state, including comma after the name of the state.
- b. set off the year when both month and day precede it.

**Example:** He moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, on May 1, 1994, and lived there for 2 years.

- c. separate a person's name and title.

**Example:** NOAA will be represented at the meeting by Thomas Jefferson, Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, and by George Washington, Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere.

- d. separate words, phrases, or clauses in a series with a coordinating conjunction before the last member of the series. Per the GPO Style Manual, include a comma before the conjunction.

**Example:** Funds are available to revise the programming study, but the cost, schedule, and space allocation must be reviewed.

Do not use a comma to separate the month from the year when the day is not given.

**Example:** The reorganization was implemented in October 2000.

- 7.5 Compound Words. Be careful with compound words. Make sure you're hyphenating only when appropriate, and double-check to determine if you should use one word or two. It's helpful to figure out which part of speech you need before you decide which word(s) to use.

**Examples:**

Back-up (compound adjective): I asked for a **back-up** disk.

Backup (compound noun): My **backup** edits correspondence when I am on leave.

Back up (verb phrase): When working on a large document, it's best to **back up** the file often.

Off site (prepositional phrase): The conference will be held **off site**.

Off-site (adjective): The conference will be held at an **off-site** location.

- 7.6 Dash. An em dash—or a pair of dashes—is used to segregate material completely:

- To mark a sudden break or abrupt change in thought
- To indicate an interruption or an unfinished word or sentence
- To clarify a meaning (instead of using commas or parentheses)

Omit the spaces before and after the dashes.

**Example:** These are shore deposits—gravel, sand, and clay—but marine sediments underlie them.

7.7 Hyphen. Use a hyphen between elements of a compound modifier when placed in front of the noun. There is no hyphen if the modifier is after the noun.

**Example:**

a Government-wide distribution **but** the distribution was Government wide

Do not hyphenate the last word in a paragraph, the last word on a page, or the last word on two consecutive lines.

Do not hyphenate proper nouns or company titles.

7.8 Quotations, Commas, and Periods. The comma and the period are placed inside the quotation marks; the semicolon and the colon fall outside the quotation marks. The question mark and the exclamation point fall within the quotation marks when they refer to the quoted matter only; they fall outside when they refer to the whole sentence.

7.9 Gender-Free Terminology for All NOAA Documents. Since the English language lacks a generic singular pronoun, “he” and the possessive “his” have customarily been used in expressions such as "Each student should bring his permission slip." It is possible—and desirable—to minimize, if not altogether eliminate, this usage. For example:

- a. Use the singular but non-possessive form: "Each student should bring a permission slip."
- b. Recast in the plural: "All students should bring their permission slips."
- c. Replace masculine pronouns with employee, person, applicant, etc. (and possessive form when appropriate): "Instruct each student to bring the student trip permission slip."

Use occupational and functional designations that are gender-free whenever possible. For example, use:

artificial	NOT	man made
business executive	NOT	businessman, businesswoman
chair, presiding officer, leader, moderator	NOT	chairman, chairwoman
council member, councilor	NOT	councilman, councilwoman
four-member commission	NOT	four-man commission
hours worked, work-hours, staff hours	NOT	man-hours
humanity	NOT	mankind
Member of Congress	NOT	Congressman, Congresswoman
personnel, worker, work force	NOT	manpower

police officer  
reporter

NOT policeman, policewoman  
NOT newsman

7.10 "THAT". There are times when the conjunction "that" is necessary and appropriate; but, most of the time clarity can be achieved without it. Re-read your sentences without the "that." If the meaning is still clear, you don't need "that."

**Example:**

The meteorologist predicted that we'd have four inches of snow.

**Better:**

The meteorologist predicted we'd have four inches of snow.

7.11 "THAT" versus "WHICH". "That" defines and restricts; "which" is explanatory and nonrestrictive.

**Example:**

The faucet that drips is in the basement.

The faucet, which drips badly, also needs attention.

The lawn mower that is in the garage .... (Tells which one.)

The lawn mower, which is broken, is in the garage.

(Adds a fact about the only mower in question.)

7.12 Word Division. Words are divided only between syllables. Please consult the dictionary. Do not separate a title from a person's name.

Incorrect

For the position of Director, I am nominating Mr.  
Shackleford.

Correct

For the position of Director, I am nominating  
Mr. Shackleford.

In proper names, avoid separating the first name from the last name. If it cannot be avoided, separate it after the middle initial.

In listing a date, never divide the month from the day.

Incorrect

We will be pleased to meet with the group on June  
13, 1994.

Correct

We will be pleased to meet with the group on  
June 13, 1994.

## 8. General Guidance – Preferred Style

- In the address of the letter, spell out the name of the state. When writing Washington, DC, do not include the periods.
- The first sentence should be "Thank you for your letter [include date if appropriate] regarding (not concerning) ..." followed by a brief description of the subject of the incoming letter.
- Do not refer to the date of the incoming letter in responses prepared for signature at the NWS, NOAA, or DOC levels.
- If the signer of the letter is not the addressee of the incoming, acknowledge the addressee in the response. For example, a letter addressed to the Secretary of Commerce with a response being signed by the Under Secretary should say, "Thank you for your letter to Secretary (Name) regarding ...."
- Keep letters and memoranda to one page whenever possible. If necessary, use an attachment or an enclosure to relay information. If the letter must be more than one page, beginning with page 2, type the number centered on the top line of the page. Type only the number—do not use dashes or parentheses. Begin the body of correspondence four lines down from page number.
- Do not apologize. Do not use "I regret .....", or "I am sorry ...."
- Avoid "I want to assure you ...." and "Please be assured ...."
- Do not repeat the incoming correspondence in the response.
- Do not refer to the writer by name in the body of the letter.
- Do not state too many "thank you's" in the letter. For example, after stating in the opening sentence, "Thank you for your letter regarding ....," do not say "Thank you for your interest" in the last paragraph. It is appropriate to let the writer know that we appreciate his interest by stating: "Your interest in NOAA's National Weather Service is appreciated."
- The first and last paragraphs may be one sentence. All other paragraphs in the body of the letter must be more than one sentence.
- Use plain English—avoid cumbersome, overstated, and redundant words and phrases. Make your point early in the letter or memorandum.
- When using "headings" in a report or letter, do not type the heading at the bottom of the page with the text on the following page. Instead, go to the next page and

type the heading followed by the text.

- When referring to a NWS forecast office, use "Lake Charles Office" rather than "WFO Lake Charles."
- Use the precise word or phrase.
  - datum (singular) - data (is established both as a singular and as a plural noun)
  - criterion (singular) - criteria (plural)
  - subsequent means after, not before
  - different from, not different than
  - insure means to guarantee against financial loss
  - ensure means to make sure or certain (although insure and ensure share the same meaning, this usage is preferred.)
  - affect means to influence; to act upon; to alter; to assume; to adopt
  - effect means to cause to come into being; to accomplish