

Service Assessment Style Guide

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Acronyms

- Spell out word before inserting acronym.
- Ex.** extensible markup language (XML) *not* XML (extensible markup language)
- Do NOT create an acronym unless you are going to use it elsewhere in the document.
 - Do not pluralize acronyms in parenthesis.
- Ex.** Weather Forecast Offices (WFO)

Abbreviations

- Spell out state names in text except DC
- Ex.** Washington, DC, Baltimore, Maryland.
- e.g.: *means*: for example, always put a comma before and after.
- Ex.** Several people ate lunch, e.g., Tom and Susan.
- i.e.: *means*: that is, again must have commas setting it off
 - United States: spell out when used as noun, abbreviate at adjective
- Ex.** He lives in the United States. The U.S. economy is in trouble.

Bullets

- No punctuation at end of each item unless it is a full sentence.
- Ex.**
- Books
 - Cakes
 - Cheese

Delete repeated first word—such as “The”

- Ex.**
- The books
 - The cakes
 - The cheese

Keep structure parallel.

- Baking cakes
- Reading books

Not

- Baking cakes
- Book reading

Capitalization

- Internet (initial cap)
- Web, uppercase when referring to World Wide Web
- federal: lowercase unless part of an agency name:

Ex. Federal Aviation Administration

- nation, lowercase unless referring to a specific Nation.

Ex. This Nation serves as a model for other nations in the world

- Formal references to program title are capped.

Ex. DM Initiative, Technical Efforts Committee but secondary reference would be “the initiative” and “the committee”

Capitalize FY but use lowercase when spelling out:

Ex. fiscal year, FY 07

- Seasons are lowercase: **Ex.** Washington had a hot summer.
- Capitalize Headquarters when referring to NWS Headquarters or a specific region, Eastern Region Headquarters; however, use regional headquarters for a generic usage

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Examples: (region or name)

out West -- up North --

Examples: (simple direction):

- west of the Rockies -- the

Gender Issues

- Avoid gender specific terms unless you are referring to a known person.

Ex: John Smith is the chairman. We know John is male so chairman is appropriate.

BUT: The position of committee chair is open. Non-specific since you don't know whether the next chair will be male or female.

Other non-gender specific terms:

- Firefighter, NOT fireman
- Worker's comp. NOT workman's comp
- Staff hours, NOT man hours
- Rather than using he/she recast as plural

Ex: Pilots should follow their instincts, rather than: A pilot should follow his or her instincts.

Grammar/Style

- Commas: Use a comma before **and** in series: e.g., Mary, Joe, and Tom.
- Word Division: Do NOT end a line with a numeral, title (Mr. Ms.) or part of a date.

Ex. He gave the job to

Mr. Himenez on

June 5, 1998

- Use commas to separate city from state, including comma after state name:

Ex. Rome, Georgia, had a flash flood.

- Commas, periods, go inside quotation marks but outside parens. Question marks and Exclamation points go inside quotation marks when they apply to the quote material, outside when they apply to the entire sentence.

Ex. Mary said, "I love chocolate!" I love candy (especially chocolate).

- Leave two spaces after a period and colon.
- When using a dash to separate items, hit Control, Alt, NUM LCK – (hyphen on far top right of your keyboard. Don't use single or double hyphen.

Ex. Maria—a brilliant scientist—works here.

- The word **however** can NOT start a sentence. Use a semicolon after previous sentence. The word **however** implies you must know facts in the previous sentence.

Ex. I went to the store; however, they were out of grapes. If you take out the words, "I went to the store" the "however" portion would NOT make sense.

- Avoid Parenthesis. Use commas for non-essential information. Parenthesis slow down the reader more than commas.

Ex. John Smith, who eats almonds, went to France. NOT, John Smith (who eats almonds) went to France.

Hyphenation

Hyphenate compound words when used as adjective. Do NOT hyphenate when used as a noun

Ex: Real-time weather. Measure in real time. My backup is sick. The back-up drive is down.

- No hyphens in the following words:
 - email
 - online
 - Meteorologist in Charge

Miscellaneous

- URL convention: use http:// rather than starting with www
- Avoid using the word “customer.” Substitute with partner, user, members of public
- Plural of names and decades do NOT take apostrophe: John Smith, the Smiths, 1970s
- Use the word “that” only when essential.
- Avoid using more than two prepositional phrases in a sentence. It makes the sentence hard to understand.
- **Preface of Service Assessment:** Do NOT use Acronyms
- Use active writing where possible—start with the subject:
Ex. He went to the store. NOT The store was visited by him.

Numbers/Dates

- Date format: December 19, 2010. NOT 19 December 2010.
 - Don't end a line with a numeral. Hit Shift/Enter and move the numeral down.
 - Numerals: use numerals for numbers over nine; spell out numerals under 10, *unless*:
 - They begin a sentence, which should be avoided if possible.
- Ex.** Fourteen boys went to the camp. *Better:* There were 14 boys at camp.
- Used for measurements or sections:
Ex. 6 inches, Part 5
 - Act as modifier or part of a series:
Ex. I'll go to France one day”
Ex. The 1-day meeting in France is today.
Ex. The last three years brought 4, 10 and 15 named hurricanes.
- When using a range of numbers, you must repeat amount
Ex. \$8-10 billion. Unless it's \$8.00 to 10 billion dollars it should read \$8 billion to \$10 billion

Word Usage: Commonly Misused Words

Insure: To provide a policy or program to protect

Ex. I insured by boat.

Ensure: To make sure, certain or safe

Ex. I ensured the report was turned in.

Assure: To give information that confirms information

Ex. I assured my boss I would be in next week.

Percent: Spell out do NOT use % symbol

The word Hopefully means in a hopeful manner. In general, the noun hope is more appropriate.

Ex. I hope he will get the award. NOT Hopefully, he will get he award.