

CAPP 1-2

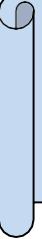
01 October 2021



The CAP Guide to Effective Communication



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS CIVIL AIR PATROL
Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama



"This report, by its very length, defends itself against the risk of being read."

Winston Churchill

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PREFACE

This pamphlet complements Civil Air Patrol 1-series Regulations, as well as other publications. It is designed to assist members in preparing Civil Air Patrol (CAP) publications and official correspondence pertaining to CAP matters. This pamphlet also offers techniques for how to conduct effective meetings and speaking engagements. Following the recommended considerations, styles and techniques in this pamphlet promotes a consistently professional look and sound of one CAP.

OVERVIEW

The effectiveness of any conversation is a direct result of the actions of both the speaker and the listener. Likewise, the effectiveness of any document is often the direct result of the actions of the person doing the writing. Regardless of whether the message is written or spoken, the crucial point remains the same – the receiver must clearly understand the message.

"I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant."

Robert McCloskey

The principles behind effective speaking are nearly identical to those of effective writing. Therefore, most techniques and styles presented in this pamphlet are applicable to both spoken and written communication.

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

Below offers some general rules of thumb to consider when preparing for a speaking engagement, including routine meetings, or written correspondence.

- a. Put simply, you must know your intended audience. When speaking or writing, do so to the audience's level or to their shared understanding of the subject matter. Talking over your audience's heads is just as non-productive as talking beneath their level of comprehension. The end result in both cases remains the same – you'll lose your audience's attention.
- b. Speak and write using plain language. Prepare all CAP correspondence and present talking points using plain language. Plain language saves time, effort, and money while improving the odds on your message being understood. Plain language means using logical organization and common, everyday words, except for necessary technical terms. For more plain language techniques, check <http://www.plainlanguage.gov>.

- c. Speaking of using plain language, use a spelling and grammar checker too. Most word processing and email programs include them. You can configure them to work automatically which could save you much embarrassment down the road. Let's face it; the last thing you want is to spend time crafting a professional letter only to have it sent containing typos and poor grammar.
 - d. Organize your material to help the reader/listener. Identify your audience for the document; write or speak to get their attention and anticipate their questions. Always start by putting your main message up front. Present information in subsequent paragraphs/slides in a logical order. See the section on Presentations for more information.
 - e. Keep in mind that in today's electronic age your correspondence or recordings of presentations, such as webinars, may be shared around the globe via the internet, with or without your consent. Internet search engines find everything! As such, keep it professional and consider that your correspondence may be referenced in other documents and viewed by unknown audiences.
 - f. Structure your communication with your audience in mind.
Consider that your audience may not be familiar with some abbreviations, may not share your technical expertise on a subject or just may have a limited background on your topic. Define each abbreviation or acronym the first time used by writing out the full term followed by the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses. Use the same term consistently to identify a specific thought or object. Use words in a way that does not conflict with ordinary or accepted usage. Ambiguous phrasing, confusing legal terms and technical jargon could mislead your reader. Similarly, using military or CAP jargon rather than common terminology may confuse your audience. However, if you believe your audience shares a common understanding of the jargon, its use might foster a better conversation.
- 

"It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech."

Mark Twain
- g. A picture is indeed worth a thousand words. Pictures and tables, when used properly, can replace paragraphs or even pages of text. Most people learn visually or through application and practice. Using graphics in presentations speeds learning and comprehension.
 - h. Use "you" and other pronouns to speak directly to your audience (active voice). Referring to people as if they were inanimate objects may be offensive. "You" reinforces that the message is intended for your audience. Use "we" in place of your organization's name. Be careful using "you" if it sounds accusatory or insulting. Instead, put the emphasis on the organization by using "we."

- i. Active voice is the best way to identify who is responsible for what action. To communicate effectively, write or speak the majority (around 75%) of your sentences in the active voice. Keep in mind that some people are uncomfortable with the direct approach of active voice. Again, know your audience, but remain aware of the intent and tone of your message; passive voice might not be effective when directing actions.
- j. Short sentences deliver a clearer message. Your sentences should average less than 20 words; never make them longer than 40 words. Complex sentences confuse your audience by losing the main point in a forest of words. Resist the temptation to put everything into one sentence. Break up your idea into its logical parts and make each one the subject of its own sentence. Cut out words that are not really necessary.
- k. Never overlook the value of good guidance. There are countless resources to help you prepare for your writing or speaking task. Air Force Handbook 33-337, *The Tongue and Quill*, available on the CAP publications website under [other publications](#), is one such resource that offers techniques and styles for both writing and speaking engagements. Another free resource is the Air University [Style and Author Guide](#). Also talk with others who might share experiences in performing what you're being asked to do. Additionally, there is tremendous value in dry-running your presentation with peers or letting others read your correspondence prior to sending. Since we often use voice inflection in reading an email or letter to your test audience, it's best to let them read the draft email or letter in silence to see if the reader receives the message with the same intent you desired.
- l. Finally, if you're writing or speaking on matters pertaining to CAP, your language should leave the recipient with a positive view of CAP. Nearly just as important is the fact that the medium you use to share your information, such as a memorandum, presentation or web page, should reinforce a consistent look, sound, and feel of One CAP. In short, authors should follow CAP's established branding standards.

BRANDING.

In the corporate world, branding is essential to developing and growing a strong customer base. Due to the broad reach of electronic communications,

"Great companies that build an enduring brand have an emotional relationship with customers that has no barrier. And that emotional relationship is on the most important characteristic, which is trust."

Howard Schultz

branding is critical to ensuring that all recipients and online viewers receive the same look, sound and feel of One CAP. As a corporation, CAP relies on branding to ensure its customers readily recognize CAP for the quality services provided. Branding is the process of

creating a unique name and image and plants this image in customer's minds to establish

brand identity. This identity is created mainly through a consistent theme that includes, but not limited to, the use of a single CAP logo and standardized appearance of CAP's web pages, email signature blocks, and business cards. The goal is to make CAP a household name with immediate recognition of a nationwide CAP. For more information on CAP's branding program, refer to CAP's Brand Portal at brand.gocivilairpatrol.com.

WE NEED TO HAVE A MEETING!

How many times have you heard "We need to have a meeting to schedule a meeting" or "Boy, that's an hour of my life I'll never get back"? The truth of the matter is we've become a society where meetings are the norm for the so-called conducting of business and, sadly, too many meetings occur that are unproductive. If time truly is money, then meetings need to be productive, mean something, and involve the right people.

"If you had to identify, in one word, the reason why the human race has not achieved, and never will achieve, its full potential, that word would be 'meetings'."

Dave Barry

There is some value to holding meetings.

- a. Meetings create an opportunity for dialogue, especially when the decision maker needs immediate input and feedback. Yes, contributors can provide input via emails, but emails are essentially a series of one-way conversations and lengthen the decision-making process.
- b. Meetings increase awareness for all participants and promote sharing of information and ideas across unrelated areas of expertise. The assumption, of course, is made that the meeting is keeping the attendees' interest, otherwise the daydreaming will begin.
- c. Meetings also enable the communicating of a message from one to many at the same time while providing clarity through question and answer. Such meetings get everyone on the same page. Let's face it, there's nothing better than hearing it straight from the horse's . . . oops . . . commander's mouth.
- d. There's also value in recurring meetings to present routine or mandatory updates. The key, as always, is to make the meeting productive.
- e. Finally, meetings can build camaraderie amongst colleagues. There's no rule that states meetings must be stuffy or boring!

There are several downsides to ill-planned meetings.

- a. First, meetings aren't always needed. If the purpose is to simply share information, then perhaps an email or document is a better way to get the message to the masses and certainly a better use of their time.
- b. Meetings can have unintended consequences. Sometimes commanders will make an innocent comment that someone interprets as a "go do" task. Commanders should be deliberate in tasking attendees. Furthermore, attendees should seek clarification on the perceived task before they "go do." Otherwise, there might be needless and wasted effort.
- c. Meetings serve to communicate information to those in attendance, with an expectation that those in attendance will further disseminate the message. In reality, this seldom happens as expected. The geographically separated nature of CAP greatly complicates the effective sharing of information.
- d. If not properly planned, the meeting will not serve its intended purpose. When that happens, invariably another meeting will be scheduled. Save everyone's time and prepare for a productive meeting.
- e. Meetings, like committees, have group dynamics. Having the wrong players at the table could take the meeting off course. The person running the meeting should set the boundaries and keep attendees focused on the matter at hand. Additionally, be alert for groupthink, the phenomenon that occurs within a group of people in which the desire for harmony or conformity in the group results in an irrational or dysfunctional decision-making outcome.



"I don't like to spend time in endless meetings talking about stuff that isn't going to get anything done. I have meetings, but they're short, prompt and to the point."

Eli Broad

Keys to a successful and productive meeting:

- a. It's imperative that the right people are in attendance. Don't hold a decision-making meeting if the decision maker or subject matter experts are not present.
- b. Define the purpose of the meeting and determine if a meeting is the best approach. You would think it obvious that every meeting has a purpose, but sometimes people habitually go through the motions. If a meeting is not needed – don't hold one.
- c. Pick a time and location that's conducive to a productive meeting. Again, the geographically separated nature of CAP and the crossing of time zones present challenges, but the use of teleconferencing and online applications such as webinars can enable productive meetings.
- d. Determine the best medium for conducting the meeting when members cannot be in the same room. Teleconferencing is inexpensive, but members don't get the luxury of placing faces to names or voices. Video conferencing and webinars provide such a luxury. Sites such as gotomeeting.com, gotowebinar.com, zoom.us and hangouts.google.com are rather inexpensive and sometimes free to use. Regardless of the medium, the individual running the meeting should remind attendees of the following general rules of etiquette:
 - State your name prior to speaking. This is more important for conference calls where video is not an option.
 - If you're not speaking, mute the phone/microphone on your end. You are participating in the meeting, not your barking dog.
 - For video conferences, consider your backdrop for possible distractions. Yes, you might have something important to contribute to the meeting, but other attendees aren't listening because they're watching the ball game on the TV behind you.
 - Likewise for video conferences, just because you're joining from your home office doesn't mean you can wear your pajamas. Dress appropriately. Keep in

"We had some very distinguished fans: I know one chancellor of a major university who used to schedule his meetings around Star Trek."

Patrick Stewart

mind that it's quite easy to record online meetings and share with your closest friends.

- e. Appoint someone to record or take minutes of the meeting. The last thing you want is for important information to be discussed or decisions to be made and nobody remembers who said what and why. Keep in mind that meeting minutes are not play-by-play transcripts; rather they serve to highlight the key points that were discussed.
- f. Send out an agenda. It is preferable to send the agenda one week in advance of the meeting; anything less than two days jeopardizes the meeting's productivity. The agenda lets attendees know the issues to be addressed, decisions to be made and actions to be taken. Plus, the agenda lets attendees know what data to bring with them to aid the decision-making process. Additionally, providing hard copies of the agenda makes it easier for attendees to take notes.
- g. Send out read ahead material. Providing read ahead material allows attendees to prepare their thoughts and be able to hit the ground running once the meeting convenes. While agendas might not be needed for routine or recurring meetings, providing read ahead material will still save time during the meeting. Ultimately, members should find the meeting to be more productive, filled with more meaningful contributions, and hopefully shorter. See the section on Presentations for more information.
- h. Don't forget that meetings can be cancelled. Go back to the first rule of ill-planned meetings – if you don't need one, don't hold one. Additionally, providing read ahead material might reveal a solution to the agenda's issue and eliminate the need for a meeting. Once a decision is made to cancel a meeting, let everyone know. While this sounds obvious, people continue to show up at empty rooms or silent teleconferences.
- i. If you are running a meeting, make sure you start on time, stick to the agenda, don't let sidebar conversations derail the train of thought, and end on time...or early.

CAN WE TALK?

"According to most studies, people's number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death. Death is number two. Does that sound right? This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy."

Jerry Seinfeld

It's often been said that average person fears public speaking more than death itself. Yep, it's true. Glossophobia is a very real and often immobilizing fear. So, if recognition is the first step to recovery, let's look at some tips that might help reduce your glossophobic symptoms.

- a. For starters, accept the fact that you're no different than most when it comes to the jitters. Even people who frequently speak in public venues will tell you they still get a little nervous. What does help is to increase the frequency of your speaking engagements, even if only in staff meetings surrounded by your colleagues. While doing so won't settle all of your nerves, over time you might feel more comfortable.
- b. Get organized. If your voice cracks, who cares? At least people will still be able to grasp the message. Even the best of public speakers will lose their audience's attention if they're not organized.
- c. Squelch your fear of rejection. Realize you're speaking to your audience for a reason. You are the expert in what you're about to present. If everyone else were the experts, there'd be no need for an assembly. People want to hear what YOU have to say.
- d. Practice does indeed make perfect. Perhaps start by speaking in front of a mirror or record your voice and play it back. Then move up to a small audience of friends and

"All the great speakers were bad speakers at first."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

- d. Practice does indeed make perfect. Perhaps start by speaking in front of a mirror or record your voice and play it back. Then move up to a small audience of friends and family. It's like washing your hair: lather, rinse and repeat. In this case, give your practice presentation several times so it's almost as if you're memorizing the entire speech. When you're speaking for real and the jitters are at their worst, the natural tendency will be to return to that moment of comfort...your memory.
- e. Breath, silly, breath...you forgot to breath! Focusing on your breathing will help you relax. Sure enough, taking a deep breath helps. Also try to speak in a rhythm to keep the flow going. Speaking in short, simple, to-the-point sentences also helps.
- f. Repeat after me...a picture, or video, is worth a thousand words. But they better be good and add to the presentation. A video that addresses your purpose could translate into less talking from you. Videos are often used to interject levity and set you and your audience at ease; however, caution is advised in that not all members of your audience share the same sense of humor. Microsoft® PowerPoint® or other presentation media can greatly enhance the effectiveness of your speaking engagement. Use of such media can help bring you back on track if you stray or are at a loss for words. However, the opposite effect could occur too. Don't read slides to your audience. If that was how you planned to present the information, then you could have emailed it to them and saved everyone's time. For more information, see the section below on Presentations.

“Public speaking is the art of diluting a two-minute idea with a two-hour vocabulary.”

John F. Kennedy

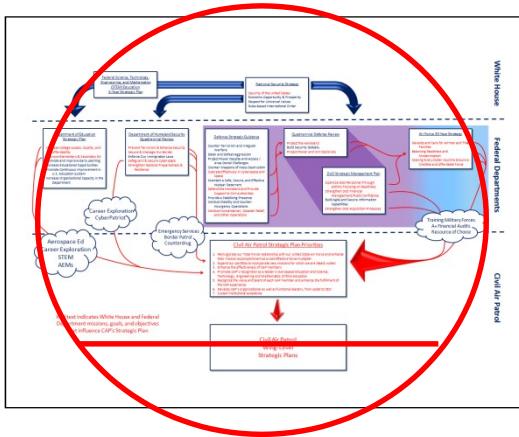
- g. Use storytelling to help share your message. People often start their presentations with a joke. Doing so adds levity and sets the presenter and the audience at ease as long as everyone shares your sense of humor. Storytelling effectively serves the same purpose, but has two distinct advantages. First, since it's your story, you'll easily remember it and regaling the audience with your experiences might calm your jitters. Second, the audience will better remember your presentation when they can relate to your story. In this situation, the notion of “been there, done that” makes the audience feel as if they're part of the conversation.
- h. Finally, pay attention to your audience, but don't read too much into what you see. Are members yawning? Well, it could be you (bummer!) or it could be you're the first briefer after a heavy lunch (still a bummer, but not your fault). Do they look confused? Perhaps that's your cue to rephrase what you just said. Watch their body language and yours; oftentimes the audience mirrors what they see in you.

PRESENTATIONS

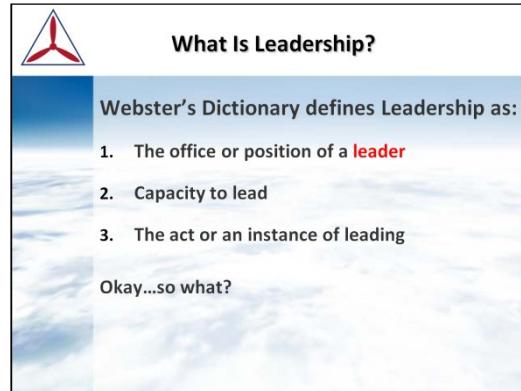
Meetings and speaking engagements are often more productive when using presentations or what is commonly referred to as “slides.” Many programs, such as Microsoft PowerPoint or Adobe® Acrobat® to name a few, are excellent products for presenting information to your viewers. The added benefit is that you can email or post online the presentations as read ahead material. Creating presentations requires some degree of skill or art; if not properly developed, the slides can be more of a distracter than a helper.

Keys to a successful presentation:

- a. For starters, make sure you begin slide development using CAP's brand-standardized template found on the CAP Brand Portal at brand.gocivilairpatrol.com. Using the template ensures consistency in CAP presentation appearance and it also helps you by auto-formatting slides (i.e. font style and size, bullets, color, etc.) as you create them.
- b. People don't like “death by PowerPoint,” but that doesn't mean you have to cram everything into one slide. Slides should highlight the key points of your discussion, but not every word you plan on saying. They should be simple enough that the audience can read the slides and still listen to what you're saying. For example:



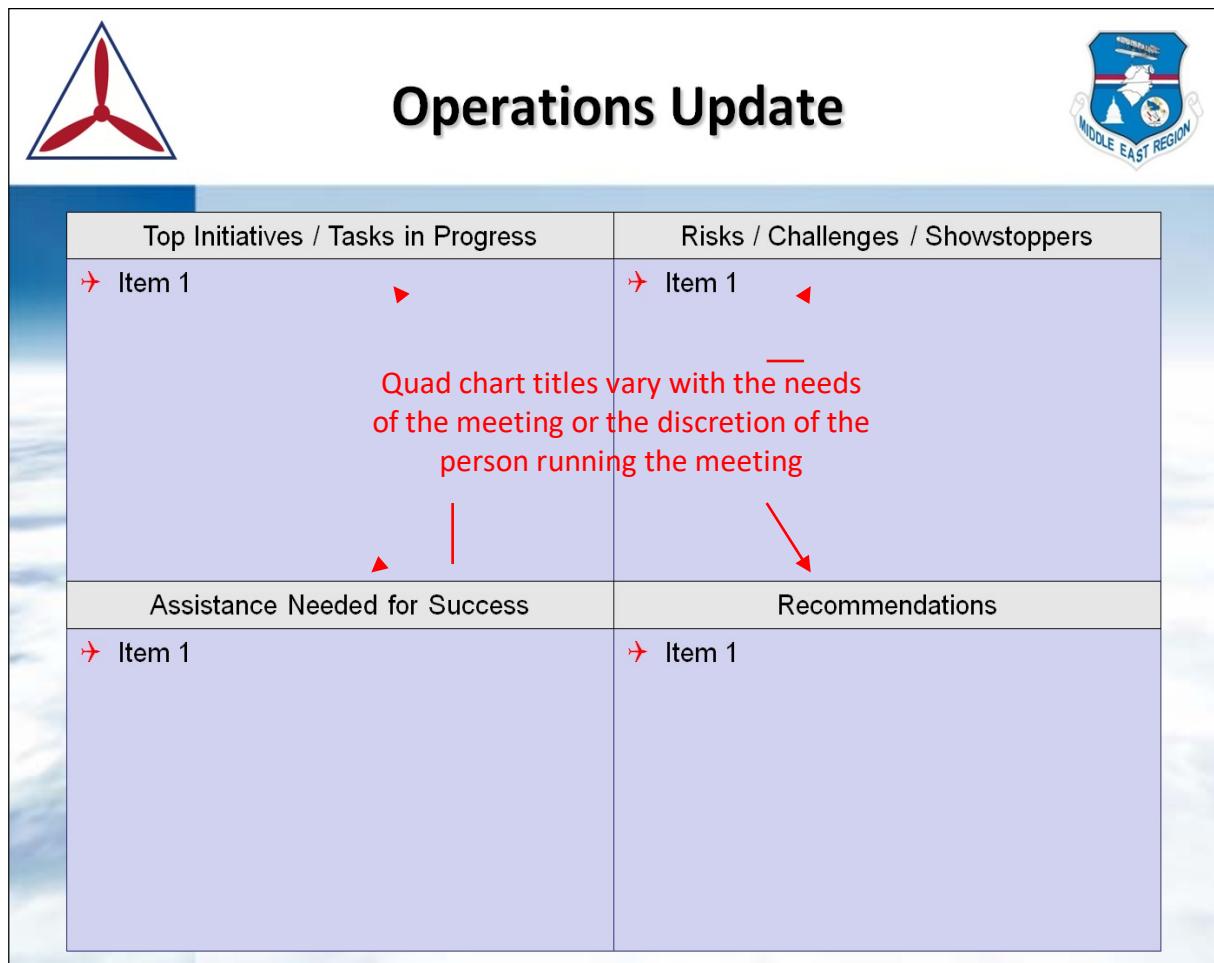
Don't be this guy, unless of course you're trying to make a point...or you don't want any friends!



Good example – clean, simple and easy to read. It's also presented on the CAP brand-standardized slide.

- c. The same goes for the size of the font. Each slide should be readable from any seat in the house. Not only do you need to know your audience, but you also need to know your venue and presentation equipment.
- d. Animation, when used effectively, can add an impressive flair to a presentation. However, don't overuse animation. People often use animation to transition from one slide to another or to "build" the slide as you're discussing it to prevent the audience from reading ahead. The problem is these transitions and "builds" are usually too slow and, when added up, can increase the duration of the presentation. Additionally, repetitive animation gets boring. Bottom line – there's a time and place for everything so use animation wisely.
- e. As mentioned previously, video and pictures are worth a thousand words. Adding video to a presentation can promote subject matter comprehension. However, imbedding video into a presentation can be finicky. Just because it worked on your home computer doesn't mean that the video will perform flawlessly when you present it at your speaking engagement, usually on a borrowed computer. Make sure you dry-run your presentation on the computer to be used for delivering it.
- f. Make sure your content flows seamlessly from start to finish. Think of your presentation as a story that has a beginning and middle that ultimately lead to a logical conclusion. To think of it a different way, imagine someone telling a joke where they start off with the punch line. It just doesn't make sense and neither will your presentation if it doesn't flow.
- g. Finally, the structure of the slides can add consistency and improve the meeting's productivity and predictability, especially for recurring events such as staff and progress update meetings. Oftentimes the structure is determined by the person leading the meeting, for example the unit commander or the director of an Emergency Operations Center. A slide structure known as the "quad chart" is commonly used due to its simplicity and to-the-point display of information. In practice, each quadrant has a title

and supporting bullets. The quadrant titles will vary with the meeting's purpose or desires of the lead person. An example of a quad chart is shown below.



I WANT TO SEE THAT IN WRITING

It is one thing to speak to an audience, but the real proof is found in written correspondence. And proof it is. If you sign your name to it, or the correspondence came from your email or social media account, it becomes difficult to say you didn't write it. As mentioned previously, it must be assumed that anything posted online, to include emails and social media sites, is visible to the entire world. Oh, and if it's on the internet, it's there forever. That's not said to scare, rather it's mentioned as a word of caution to ensure what you write is always professional and reflects favorably on the Civil Air Patrol.

"When I was growing up, my mother would always say, 'It will go on your permanent record.' There was no 'permanent record.' If there were a 'permanent record,' I'd never be able to be a lawyer. I was such a bum in elementary school and high school. There is a permanent record today, and it's called the internet."

Alan Dershowitz

Most written CAP correspondence fall into one of three types. The purpose, audience and desired “professional impact” determine which type to use. Templates for the memorandum and business style letters can be found on the [CAP publications website](#).

- a. Memorandum Style Letter. This style is used for correspondence between CAP units and when communicating with military agencies.
- b. Business Style Letter. This style is used for correspondence with private concerns and individuals not connected with CAP.
- c. Electronic Mail (Email). Email is often an appropriate substitute for an official style letter. Email also serves as the preferred avenue for coordinating publication revisions or other actions requiring approval. This coordination is usually referred to as the electronic Staff Summary Sheet, or eSSS for short.

Other types of CAP written correspondence include, but are not limited to:

- a. Meeting Minutes. Minutes become the record of what occurred during a meeting. Of most value are the issues discussed and the decisions made, to include the debate, to resolve the issue.
- b. Personalized Letters. These letters serve many purposes. Most often, personalized letters are written to show gratitude for an individual’s contributions or to foster partnerships.
- c. Point Papers. The papers serve as memory ticklers or quick-reference outlines to use during meetings or to informally pass information quickly to another person or office. The format is similar to a talking paper.
- d. Talking Papers. A talking paper is a quick-reference outline on key points, facts, positions, and views of others to use during oral presentations.
- e. Background Papers. A background paper serves as its name implies, it provides the reader with a summarized chronological background of an issue, the current matter to be addressed and possible courses of action.
- f. Position Papers. These papers evaluate a proposal, raise a new idea for consideration, advocate a current situation or proposal, or “take a stand” on an issue. Position papers are sometimes referred to as advocacy papers.

For more information on these papers, refer to Air Force Handbook 33-337

[The Tongue and Quill](#)

Or see the templates on the CAP publications web page.

Summary of Air Force Style Papers

Form	Function
Point Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single issue • Single page • <i>Bullets</i> or phrases • Minimal data 	Memory jogger: minimal text outline of a single issue to quickly inform others extemporaneously (no-notice) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conveys a single, narrow message in a very short time, such as with an “elevator speech” • Give the same short message many times • Requires prior research and content memorization
Talking Paper (TP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single issue • Single page • <i>Bullets</i> or phrases • Key reference data 	Speaking notes: outlines and narrates a single issue to inform others during planned/scheduled oral presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves as a quick reference on key points, facts, positions • Addresses frequently asked questions • Can stand alone for basic understanding of the issue
Bullet Background Paper (BBP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single issue or several related issues and impact • Single or multi-page • <i>Bullet</i> statements 	Background of a program, policy, problem or procedure; may be a single issue or combination of several related issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concise chronology of program, policy, problem, etc. • Summarizes an attached staff package • Explains or details an attached talking paper
Background Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single issue or several related issues and impact • Multi-page • Full sentences, details • Numbered paragraphs 	Multipurpose staff communications instrument to express ideas or describe conditions that require a particular staff action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed chronology of program, policy, problem, etc. • Condenses and summarizes complex issues • Provides background research for oral presentations or staff discussions; informs decision makers with details
Position Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single issue or several related issues and impact • Multi-page • Full sentences, details • Numbered paragraphs 	Working with proposals for new program, policy, or procedure, or plan for working a problem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate a proposal to generate interest (initiate the idea) • Evaluate a proposal (respond to another’s idea) • Advocate a position on a proposal to decision makers

- g. Forms. Yes, believe it or not, forms are another type of written correspondence.
- h. Greeting and Note Cards. Short and to the point, these cards make a memorable impact with visitors and new members.
- i. Hand-written Notes. In the electronic age, hand-written notes are seldom used. However, authors should never underestimate the impact these notes make with the receiver. The fact that the author takes the time to prepare a hand-written note conveys sincerity in the message.

Military style documents possess a language of their own, often using acronyms to shorten common phrases or when referring to office symbols. This is not unique to military agencies as many federal, state and local government agencies have their own style. It is preferred for authors to write in the style of their intended recipient.

CAP is no different. Given our close association to the Air Force, we too use our own acronyms and office symbols. Office symbols are shortcuts representing the organization structure and functional responsibility. Office symbols may be used on correspondence, e-mail, forms, etc. Major functions have two-letter symbols, for example, director of operations (DO). Since basic functions report to major functions, basic functions have three-letter (or more) symbols. For example, the emergency services officer is expressed as DOS. A basic function's office symbol starts with the same letters as the parent function's office symbol, and adds one more letter. In this case, the emergency services training officer is represented by DOST and the assistant ES officer would be DOSA.

There is one exception to the two-letter office symbol. CAP's Chief Operating Officer is identified as CAP/COO, a position reflecting CAP's corporate status and common across many industries.

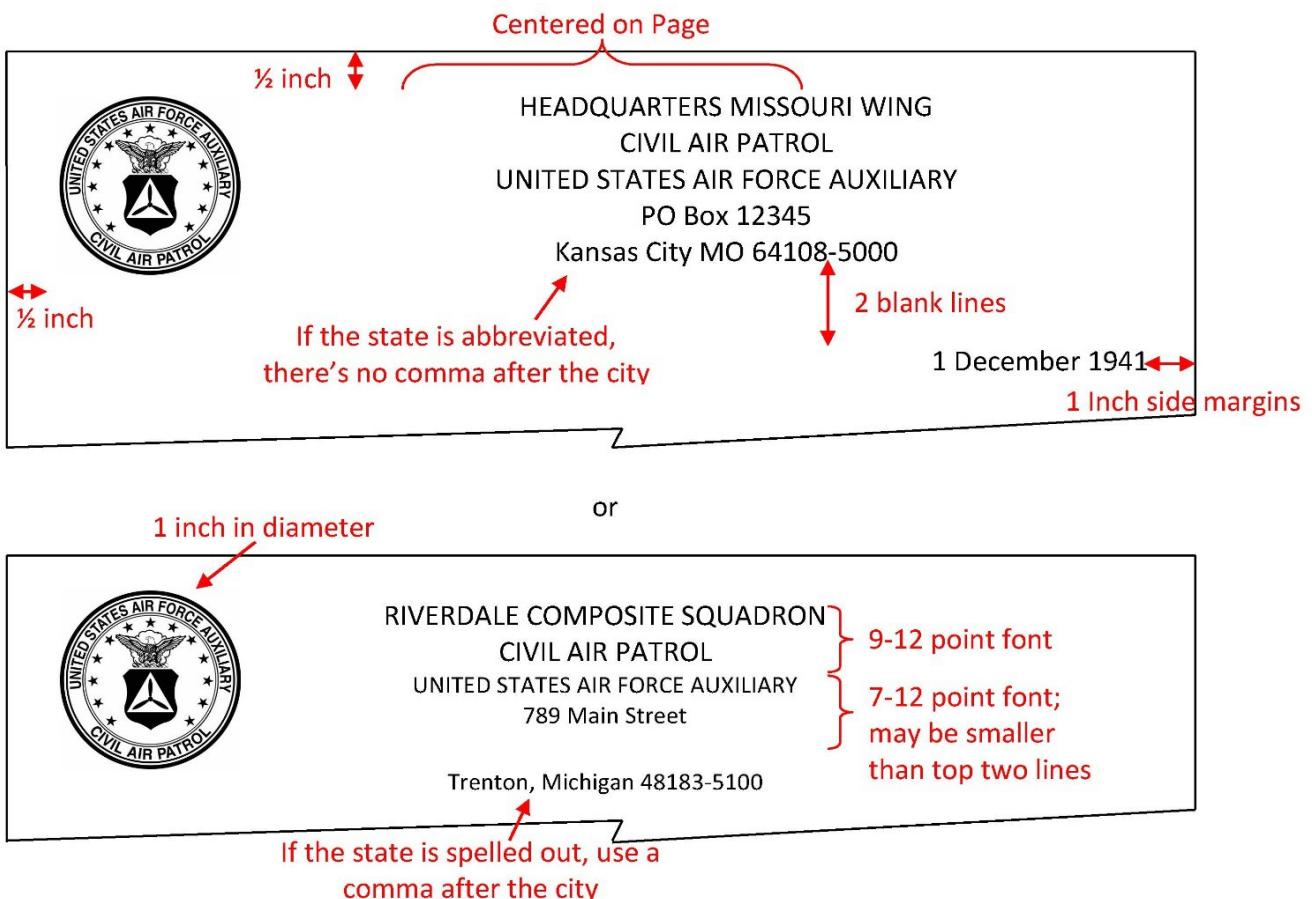
Office symbols may be used alone (CC) or with the organization designation (CAP/CC). Some office symbols apply to specific command levels or organizations. For example, GLR/XX for Great Lakes Region, MIWG/XX for Michigan Wing, MI248/XX for Kellogg Senior Squadron, or CAP-USAF/XX for Headquarters CAP-USAF. Shown on the next page are commonly used CAP office symbols.

Commander	CC	Historian	HO
Vice Commander	CV	Human Resources (NHQ only)	HR
Deputy Commander	CD	Information Technology.....	IT
Deputy Commander for Cadets	CDC	Inspector General	IG
Deputy Commander for Seniors	CDS	Legal Officer	JA
Chief Operating Officer (NHQ only) ...	COO	Logistics	LG
Chief of Staff	CS	A/C Maintenance Officer	LGM
Deputy Chief of Staff	DCS	Supply Officer	LGS
Command Chief Master Sgt.....	CCC	Transportation Officer	LGT
Executive Officer	XO	National Operations Center.....	NOC
First Sergeant	CCF	Operations	DO
(Cadet or Composite Squadrons only)		Communications (NHQ only).....	DOK
Administration	DA	Counterdrug	DOC
Aerospace Education	AE	Emergency Services	DOS
Cadet Programs	CP	Homeland Security	DOH
Chaplain.....	HC	Operations Training.....	DOT
Communications (Director)	DC	Standardization & Evaluation	DOV
e-Learning (NHQ only)	EL	Personnel	DP
Finance	FM	Plans and Programs	XP
Wing Financial Analysts.....	FMA	Professional Development	PD
General Counsel (NHQ only)	GC	Public Affairs	PA
Government Relations Advisor.....	GR	Safety	SE
Government Relations (NHQ only)	GVR	Wing Administrator (NHQ employee) ..	WA
Health Services	HS		

Getting A Head Start – Using Letterhead

Preprinted letterhead is preferred when writing a memorandum or business style letter. The use of preprinted letterhead is optional for other types of written correspondence. Preprinted letterhead standardizes the look of professional correspondence and draws the reader's attention to the CAP brand.

CAP's standard letterhead includes these elements: unit designation; the words "Civil Air Patrol"; "United States Air Force Auxiliary"; and the geographic location of the unit. The words "United States Air Force Auxiliary" and the geographical information may be a smaller font than the unit designation and "Civil Air Patrol". For example:



Letterhead starts 1/2 inch from the top edge and is centered on the page. Letterhead should be in a sans serif style font, meaning that the letters do not have a "tail," "feet" or other decorative flourishes. For example:

Apple (Times New Roman serif font)

Apple (Calibri sans serif font)

Calibri is the preferred font, especially if you anticipate the document being viewed online. Studies have shown that serif style fonts are easier to read in printed format while sans serif fonts are more easily read online.

The CAP seal is used on the memorandum style letter. For all other correspondence, the CAP seal, CAP emblem, unit patch/emblem, or other distinctive decoration may be printed on the letterhead as long as it is in good taste (Refer to CAPR 900-2, *Use of Civil Air Patrol Seal and Emblem; Use and Display of the United States Flag and Civil Air Patrol Flags*, for instructions on use and illustrations of the CAP seal and emblem).

The CAP seal is 1 inch in diameter. Unit distinctive patches/emblems are 1 inch wide. Align the seal/patch/emblem 1/2 inch from the left and top edges of the paper. If a higher headquarters seal is placed in the upper left corner, subordinate units may add their unit seal/patch in the upper right corner. The unit seal/patch is also 1 inch wide; however, it's positioned 1/2 inch from the right and top edges of the paper.

CAP seal graphics are available on the CAP Brand Portal at brand.gocivilairpatrol.com.

Email Memorandum. Letterhead may be superimposed into an email that is intended to be an official correspondence. The heading element normally applies to a hard copy memorandum or to a memorandum prepared as an attachment to an e-mail, but may be used in a memorandum style email as well.

The Memorandum Style Letter

The memorandum style letter serves as an official communication internal to CAP as well as military agencies. It may also be used when writing to other government agencies; however, some agencies might be more receptive to the business style letter so it helps to know your audience. The letter is typically written on standard 8 ½ by 11 inch white paper; however, an alternate email version is acceptable to a CAP recipient.

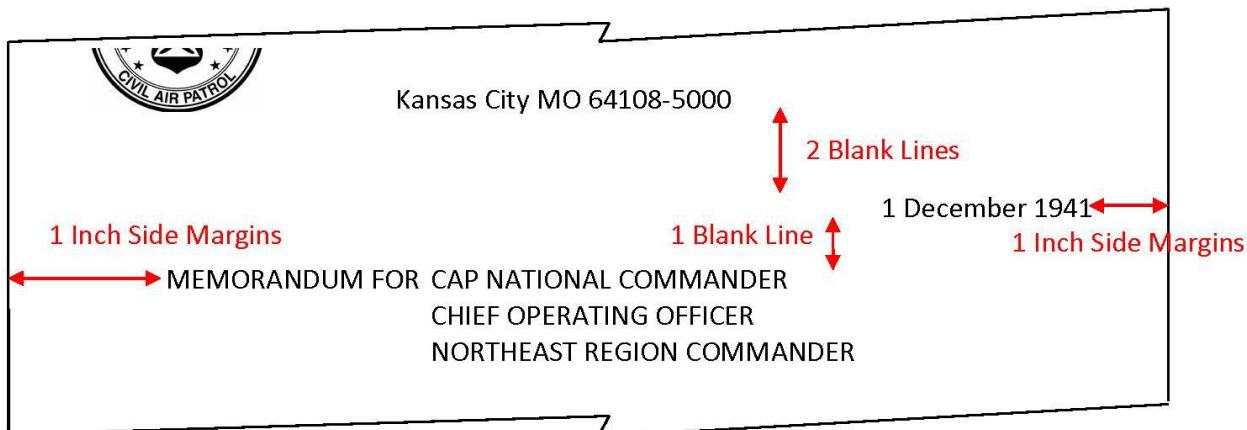
The memorandum style letter has several elements, each discussed in detail below. These elements are: heading element, body, closing element, attachment element, courtesy copy element, and endorsements.

Heading Element. The heading element of the memorandum style letter includes the date, the recipient(s), the sender, and the subject. This format is standardized for both paper and electronic memorandum letters.

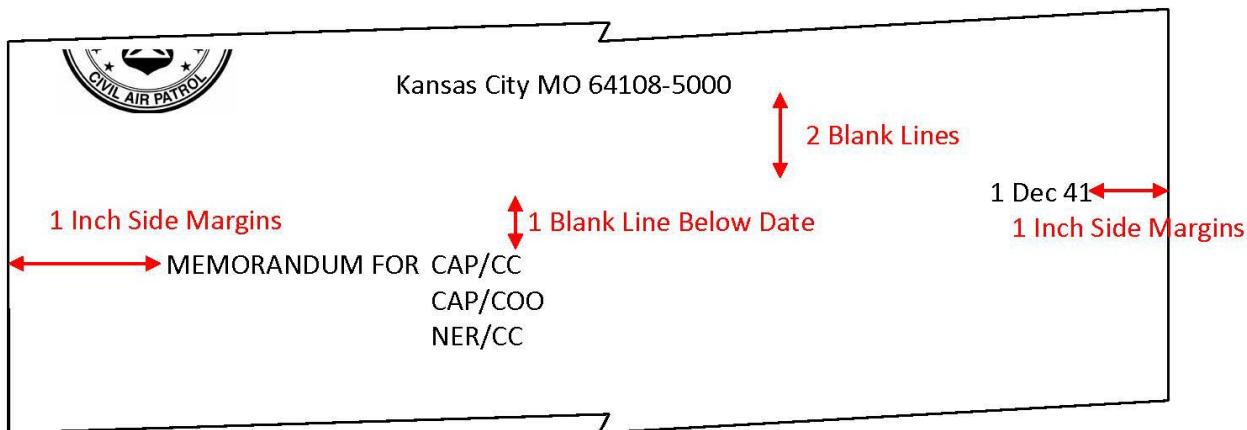
Date. Type or stamp the date on the right margin of the memorandum and on the third line below the last line of the letterhead (Note: if no letterhead is used, place the date 1 inch from the top edge of the page). Indicate the date in the format of day, month, and year; for example, 6 Jun 12 or 6 June 2012. As a general rule, when the month is shortened, such as Aug, then the year is shortened to the last two digits. When the month is spelled out, such as August, the date is completed with the four-digit year. Unless the date of signature has legal significance, date the original and all copies of the correspondence at the time of dispatch.

However, you should date correspondence prepared for reproduction with the date it will enter the distribution system.

Recipient. The recipient of the letter is indicated on the MEMORANDUM FOR. The MEMORANDUM FOR line begins on the second line below the date. Multiple recipients of the same memorandum are listed below and in line with the first recipient, in order of precedence. The MEMORANDUM FOR line is typed in all capital letters, spelling out the entire name or position of the recipient. As an alternative, it is acceptable to abbreviate organizational office symbols. Be consistent and use the same format throughout. For example:

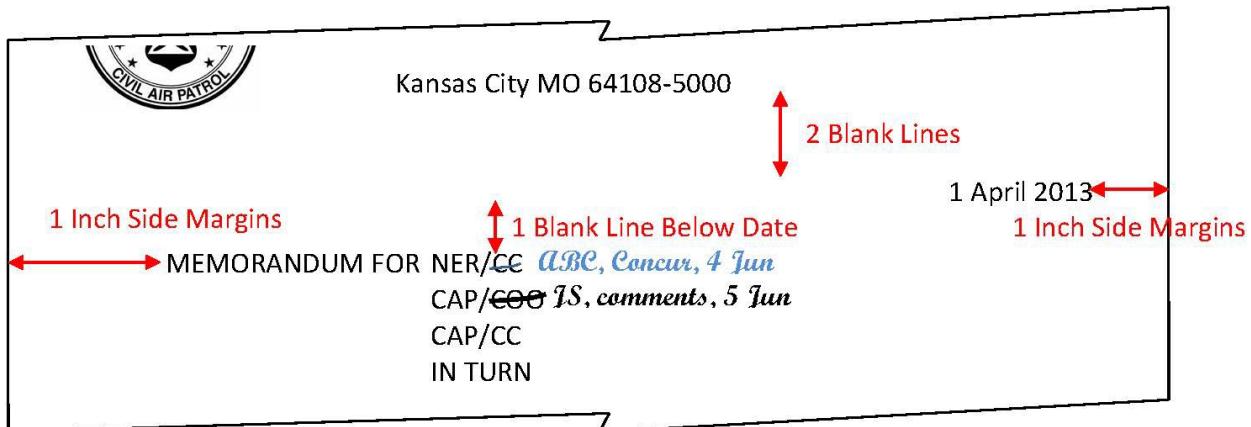


or

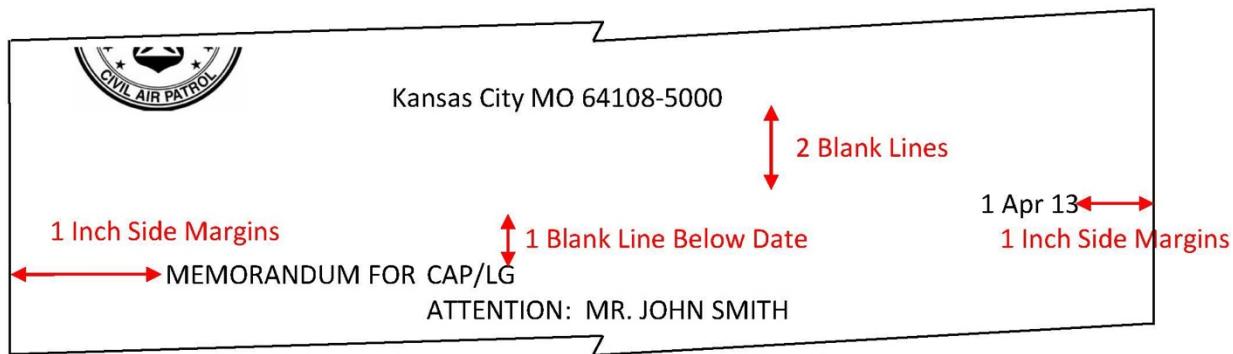


When your list of addressees is too long to list in the heading, you may enter "MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION" and place the distribution list on a separate page attached to the memorandum. An alternative is to list the recipients on the last page of the letter, two lines below the attachment or "cc:" (courtesy copy) elements, if used, or in their place if not used.

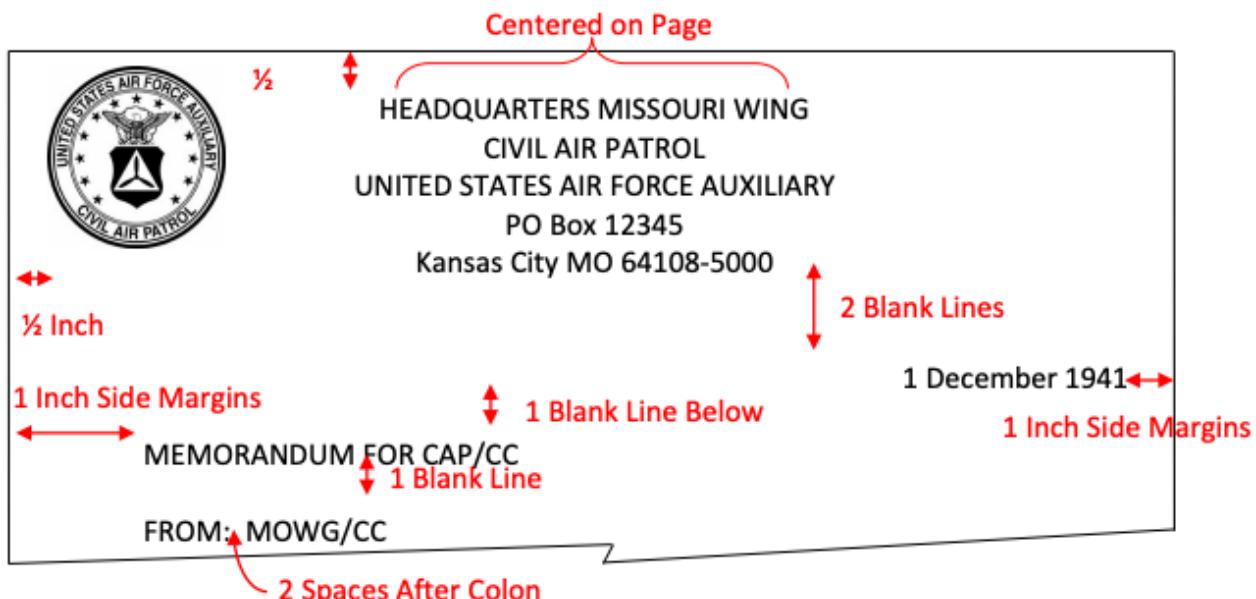
IN TURN. An "IN TURN" memorandum is used when you want to send the correspondence to several recipients in sequence. It's primarily used when the sender wants the final recipient to see the coordination or action of the other recipients as the memo moves along the chain. Unlike the above example where multiple recipients are listed in order of precedence, the IN TURN memorandum is listed in reverse order of precedence. Align "IN TURN" under the first word of the last addressee. In practice, recipients of a paper memorandum would line through their office, initial, annotate concurrence/comments and date after their address signifying receipt and acknowledgement. If comments are made, attach them to the memorandum prior to forwarding to the next addressee. For email memorandums, receipt and acknowledgement is usually reflected in the forwarded email thread, along with any comments. Here's an example of a paper IN TURN memorandum:



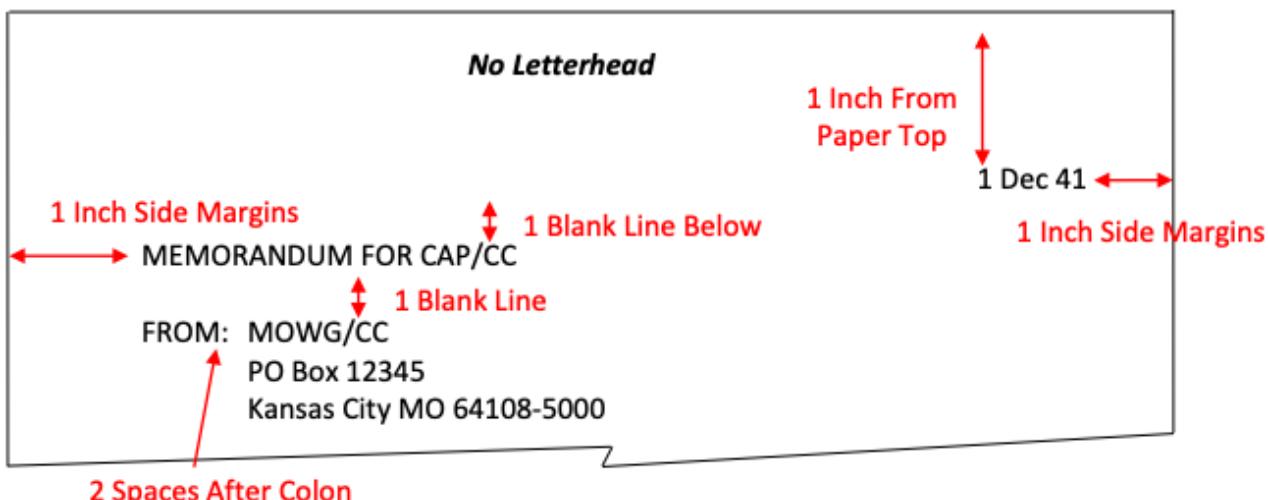
ATTENTION and THROUGH. If you address your memorandum to an office, but want a particular person to receive it, use an "ATTENTION:" or "THROUGH:" line placed immediately below and in line with the addressee's office. This line may be shortened to read "ATTN:" or "THRU:" in all caps. Here's what an ATTENTION addressee should look like:



Sender. The sender is indicated on the "FROM: " line; however, unlike the MEMORANDUM FOR line, only the word FROM, or office symbols if used, are spelled in all capital letters. The FROM line is entered on the second line below the last line of the MEMORANDUM FOR section. If the letterhead contains the organization's full mailing address, only the sender's office symbol is needed. If the full mailing address of the sender originating the correspondence is not in the letterhead or there is no letterhead, the first line includes the organization abbreviation and office symbol. Enter the delivery address (street or PO Box number), room or suite number, and then the city, state, and zip code on the next two lines. If you wish to include contact names, fax numbers, phone numbers or e-mail addresses, place them in the last paragraph of the letter's body. Here are two examples to show you how this should appear:



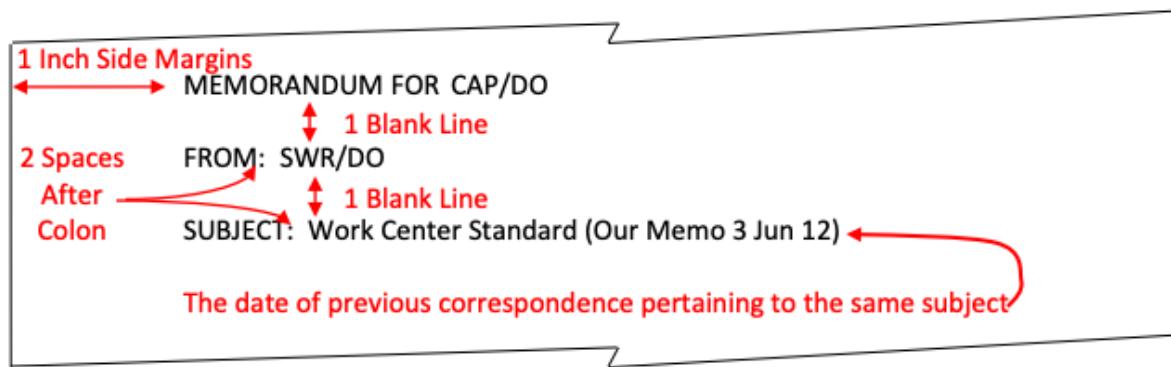
or



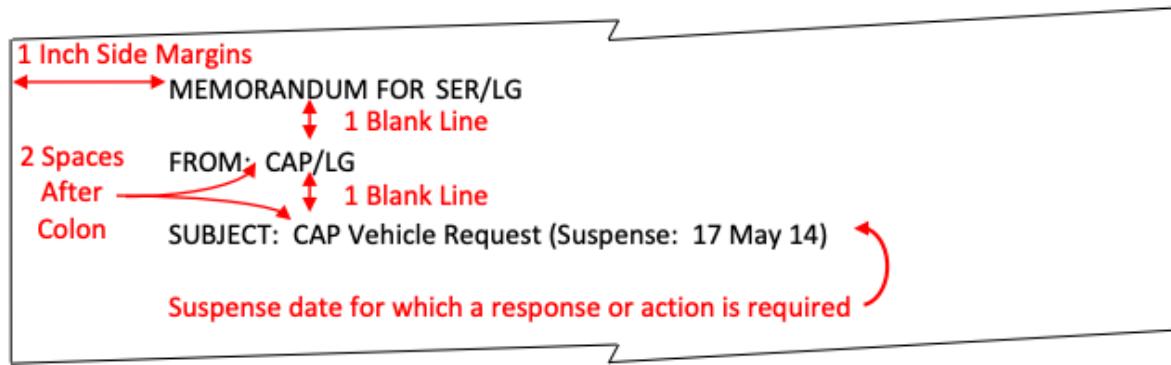
SUBJECT. The SUBJECT is nothing more than the title of the memorandum that summarizes the letter's content. Type "SUBJECT:" in all capital letters on the second line below the last line of the "FROM" section. SUBJECT is the only word spelled in all capital letters; the remainder is spelled using Title Case except for words, such as acronyms, that are always fully capitalized. As a general rule, capitalize all words with four or more letters. Words with fewer than four letters are capitalized *except* for:

- a. Articles: the, a, an
- b. Short conjunctions: and, as, but, if, or, nor
- c. Short prepositions: at, by, for, in, of, off, on, out, to, up

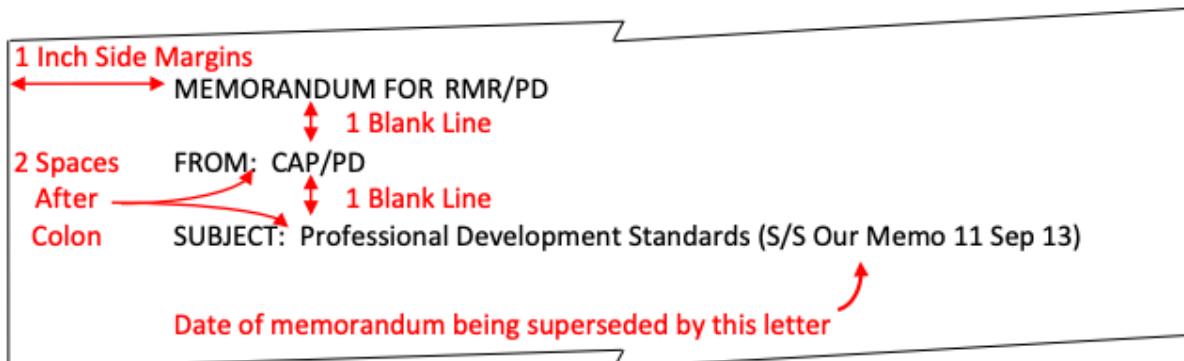
If you need a second line, begin it directly under the first word of the subject's first line. If you refer to an earlier communication to or from the addressee on the same subject, or to another correspondence or a directive, cite it in parentheses immediately after the subject. Send a copy of the referenced correspondence if you feel the reader may not have it. Here are a few examples:



or



If the correspondence supersedes a previous correspondence, you may place a statement in the subject line. Use "S/S" to indicate supersession, as indicated below:



Body. The body makes up the substance of the memorandum. Just like a speaking engagement, the letter's body should get to the point and provide sufficient information to make sure the reader understands your message. Active voice is preferred; however, some readers may find the message too direct. Passive voice softens the message, but often requires more words and could change the tone or clarity of the message. Bottom line – know your audience.

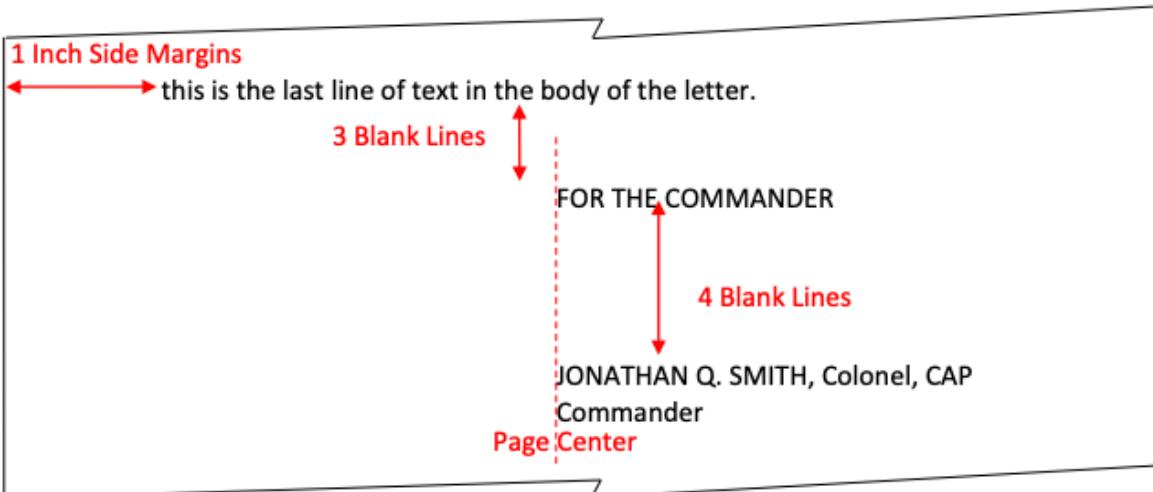
Margins. As indicated earlier, standard margins on hard copy letters should be 1 inch from all edges of the paper. The one exception is letterhead, which is placed $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the top and sides. The remainder of the letter is framed with 1-inch margins.

Font. Given that most documents are passed electronically and viewed online, the preferred font for memorandum letters is Calibri, a sans serif style font.

Paragraphing. The memorandum body, either in paper or email format, starts on the second line below the last line of the subject. Main paragraphs are numbered and not indented, with a blank line between paragraphs. Subparagraphs are lettered. A single paragraph is not numbered. In other words, there is no "1." if you don't have a second paragraph. This same rule applies to subparagraphs; if there is only one subparagraph, then it's better to make it a main paragraph.

Closing Element. The closing element is nothing more than the signature block, which starts at page center and on the fifth line after the last paragraph in the body. There is one exception to this rule – FOR THE COMMANDER.

FOR THE COMMANDER. This phrase is used only on the memorandum style letter and only when the author is directed to write correspondence, or if the author is issuing correspondence that would normally be issued by the commander. FOR THE COMMANDER begins at page center and on the third line below the last line of text. The commander's signature block follows on the fifth line. For example:



Signature Block. The signature block identifies who is releasing the letter, which may be different than the author. The signer is the person with authority to release the letter and, once signed, is an indicator they agree with the letter's content, regardless of who wrote it. The writer's signature is placed in the space immediately above the signature block.

The signature block comes in two standard formats: a two-line and a three-line block.

- The two-line format is the preferred signature block and consists of the signer's name in all capital letters, the signer's grade in Title Case, and finished with "CAP" on the first line. The second line states the signer's duty title in Title Case.
- The three-line signature block may be used when the name and grade or the duty title are too long for a two-line format.

In either of the above cases, the grade is normally abbreviated using the standard convention, such as "Lt Col" or "C/MSgt". It is permissible to spell out the entire grade if doing so doesn't needlessly force a three-line signature block, for example "Major" or "Colonel". Additionally, if the "FROM:" block clearly identifies the signer's unit, for example RMR/CC, it is acceptable to simply state "Commander" as the duty title in the signature block as opposed to spelling out "Commander, Rocky Mountain Region".

There is one exception to the "NAME, Grade, CAP" format. If it is customary to refer to someone by their specialty instead of their grade, then the specialty is reflected after the signer's name. This exception is almost always made for chaplains, but on rare occasions, it might be seen in signature blocks of medical professionals.

The use of graphics, quotes or phrases are inappropriate for signature blocks.

Here are a few examples of the various signature blocks:

1 Inch Side Margins

←→ this is the last line of text in the body of the letter.

When the "FROM:"
block clearly indicates
signer's unit, only the
duty title is necessary

Page Center

4 Blank Lines

JONATHAN Q. SMITH, Colonel, CAP
Commander

Grade may be spelled out

1 Inch Side Margins

←→ this is the last line of text in the body of the letter.

Duty Title

Page Center

Name in ALL CAPS

JASON P. KIDD, Ch, Maj, CAP
Nevada Wing Chaplain

Specialty when
member is normally
referred to by specialty
rather than grade.

BARRY M. SHARP, Lt Col, CAP
Assistant Wing Deputy Director for
Operational Resource Management

Page Center

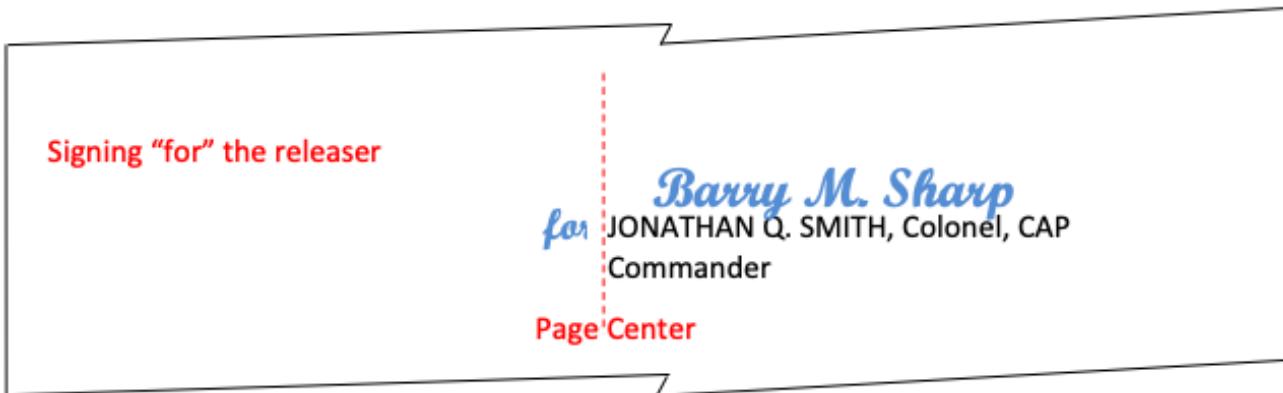
or

JEREMY J. JONES III
Brigadier General, CAP
National Vice Commander

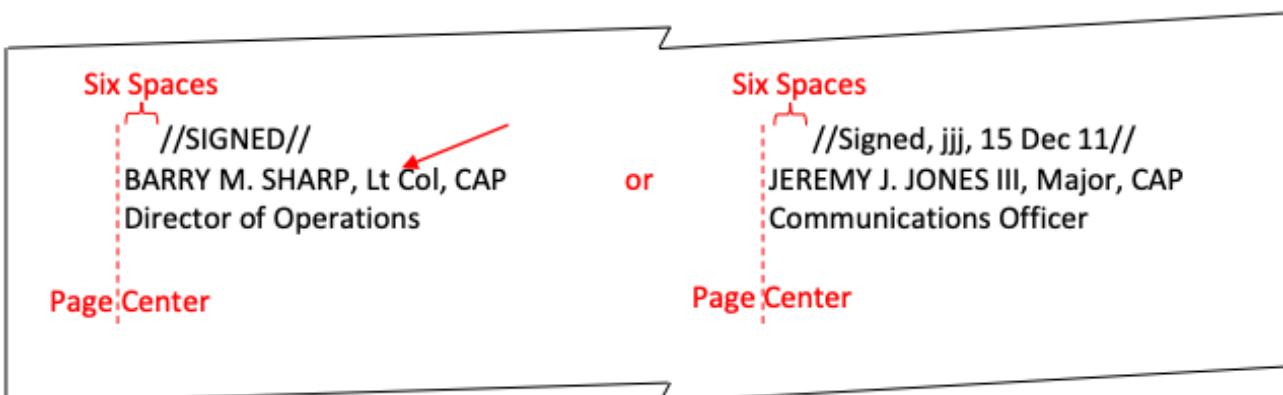
Page Center

Three-line Signature Blocks

Signing for the Releaser. Occasionally the person who would normally sign the correspondence is not available to apply his/her signature. In this case, the individual who has temporarily assumed responsibility for the unavailable individual may sign in that person's place. In addition to signing his/her own name, the signer inserts the word "for" just prior to the intended signer's printed name. See example below:

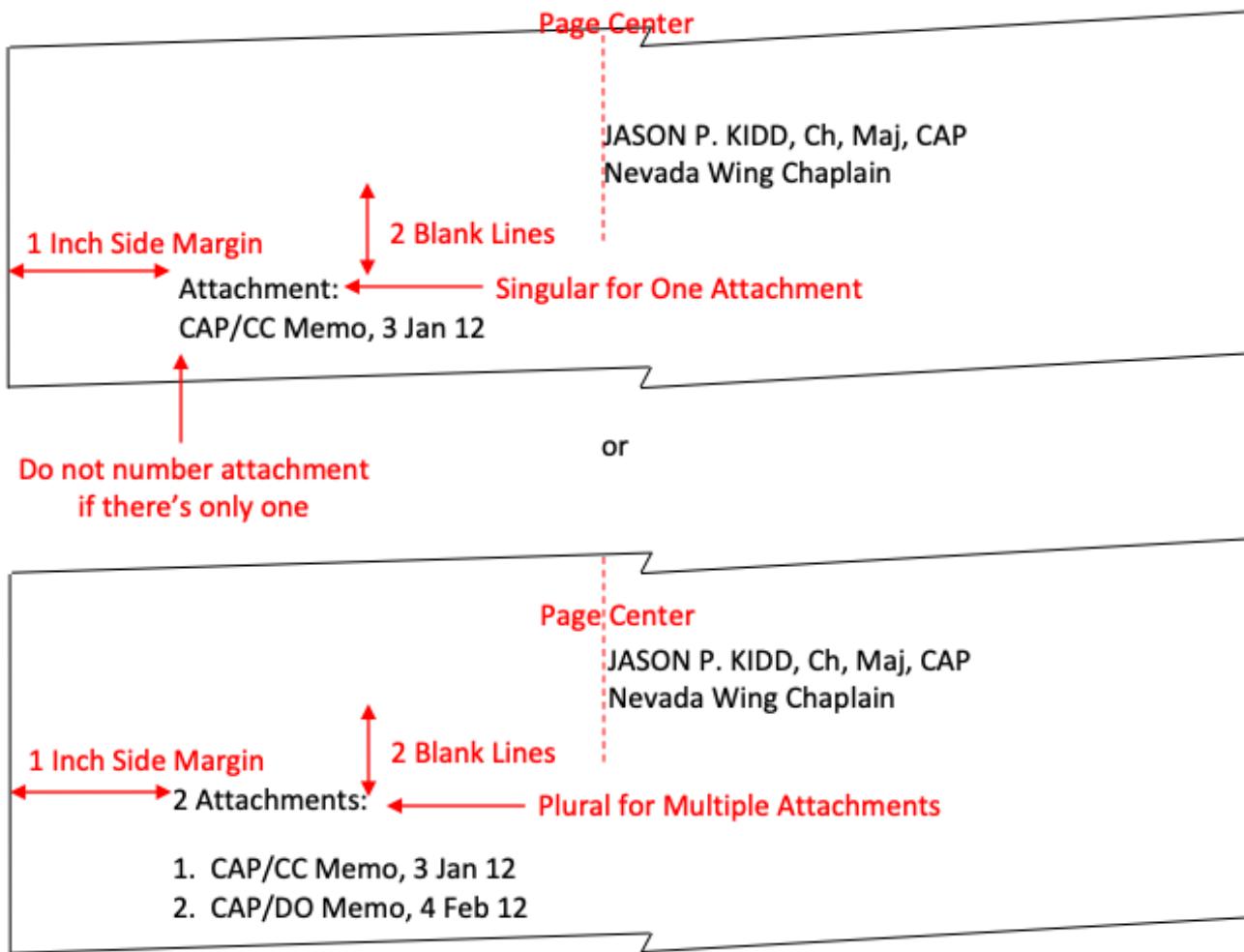


Using //SIGNED//. When the correspondence has been approved for release by the signer and applying a hand-written signature is not feasible, //SIGNED// may be used to indicate that the correspondence is approved. //SIGNED// may also be used on text copies of correspondence when the original was signed, and may also be used for signing e-mails. Consider written correspondence received via e-mail, copied or stamped "//SIGNED//" as authoritative. A common alternative to //SIGNED// is to include the signer's initials and date, for example "//Signed, bms, 15 Dec 11//". Place the //SIGNED// six spaces to the right of the center of the page as shown below.

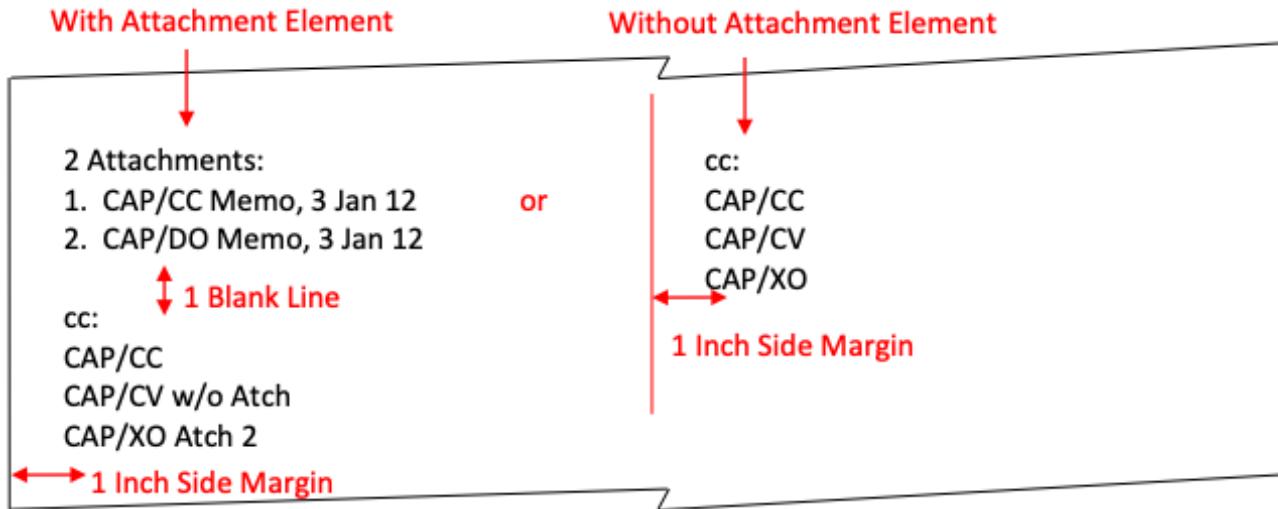


Email Memorandum Signature Block. For memorandum style email, follow the above signature block guidance; however, instead of beginning the signature block at page center, the closing element is positioned at the left edge of the document. The use of civilian or personal signature elements is inappropriate for CAP email correspondence.

Attachment Element. When attachments accompany the memorandum, type "Attachment(s):" at the left margin, on the third line below the signature element. If there is more than one attachment, list each one by number in the order you refer to them in the memorandum. Describe each attachment briefly. Cite the office or origin, the type of correspondence and the date. The attachment element should not be split by a page break. See examples below:



Courtesy Copy Element. If information copies are sent to individuals other than the addressee(s), type "cc:" at the left margin, on the second line below the attachment element. If there is no attachment element, type the courtesy listing starting on the third line below the signature block. List names or organization designations and office symbols of those to receive copies, one below the other. If a courtesy copy is sent without including the attachment(s), indicate such by adding "w/o Atch" at the end of the line. For example:

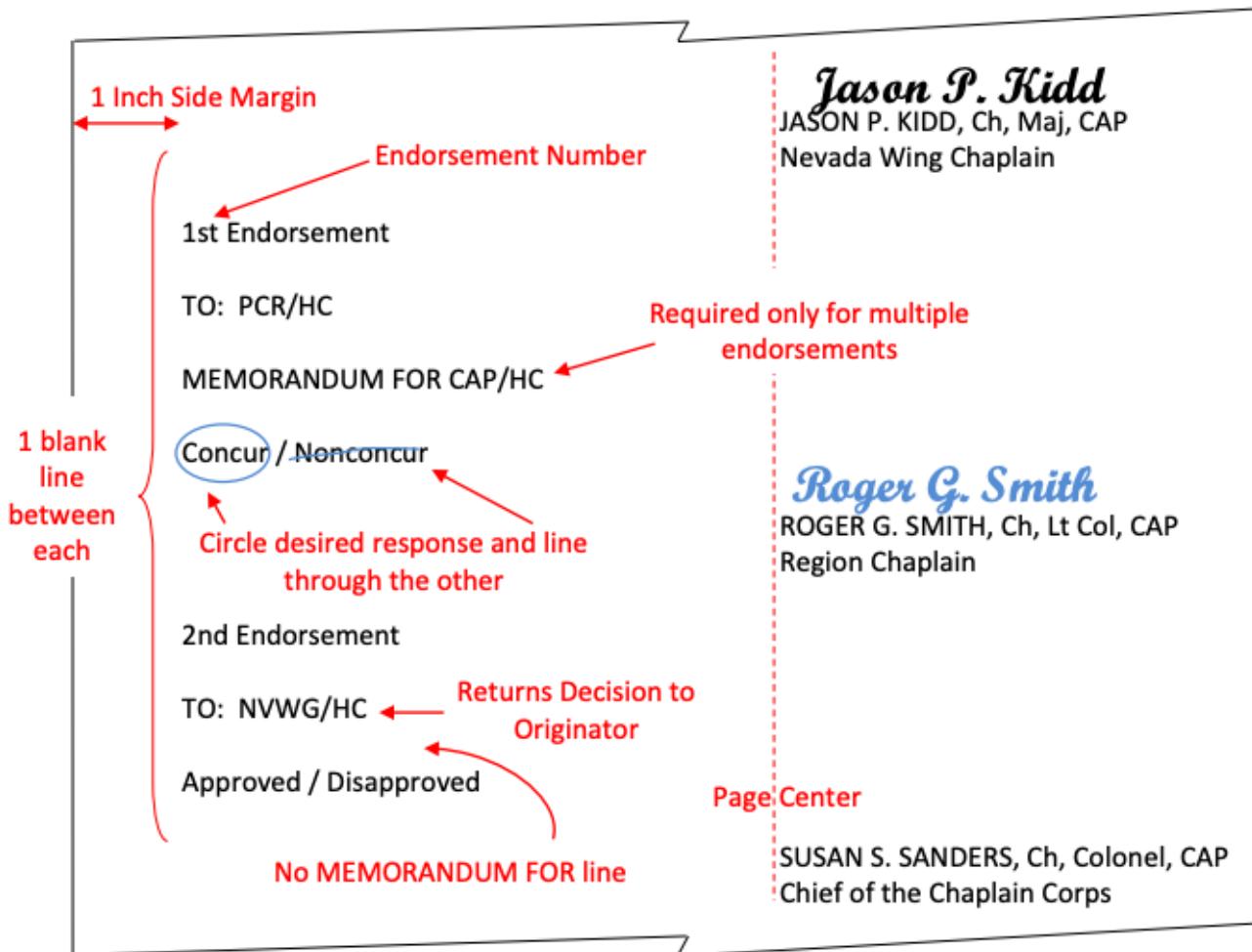


Endorsements. There are times when an originator lacks decision-making authority to initiate actions outlined in the memorandum. Sometimes the action requires concurrence of others before the approval authority makes a decision, or perhaps two approvals are required. One option is to have all parties reply to the originator with their own concurrence/approval letters. An easier alternative is to use an endorsement statement.

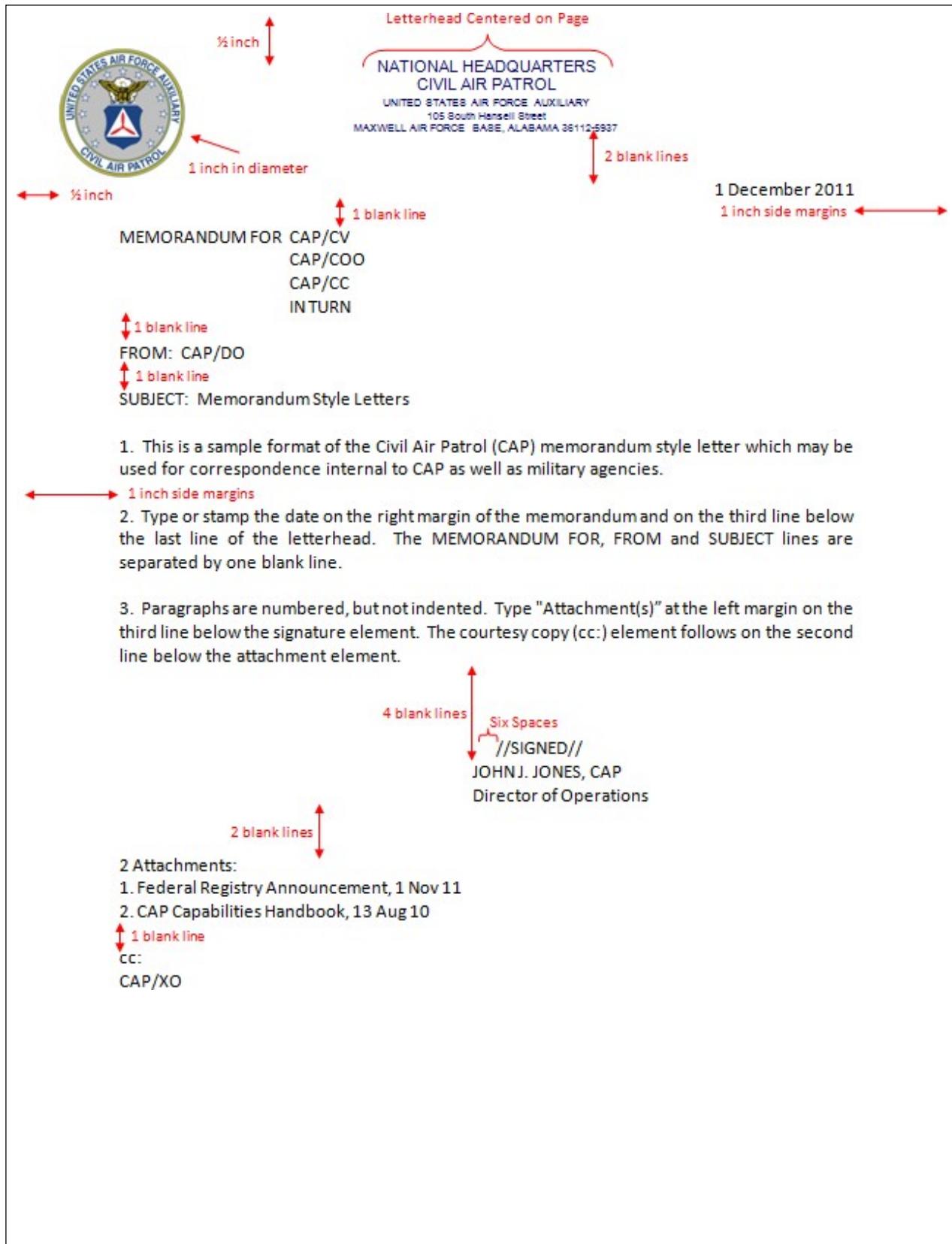
For a hard copy memorandum, endorsements follow the original correspondence, beginning on the second line below the signature block, attachment element, or courtesy copy element, whichever is last. The endorsement includes the numerical endorsement, a "TO:" line, a "MEMORANDUM FOR" line to the next person in the endorsement chain (for multiple endorsements), and an action line. It is completed with the signature block of the individual taking the action.

Endorsement statements in a memorandum style email are much simpler. Email endorsements may be positioned either above or below the original correspondence; however, they are usually found at the top of the email due to forward/reply ease of emails. There is one difference too; as mentioned previously, the email endorsement signature block is positioned at the left edge.

An example of a two-endorsement statement is shown on the next page.

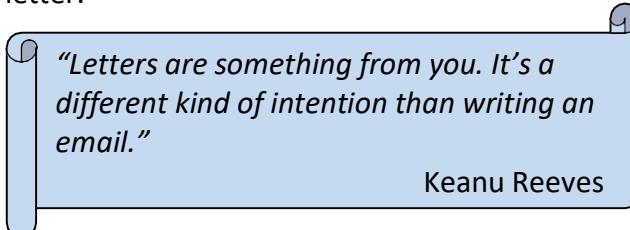


Putting it all together, the memorandum style letter might look like the example on the next page.



The Business Style Letter

The business style letter is used for correspondence of a private nature, such as a personal thank you letter, or for recipients of a non-governmental nature, such as a partnership with another non-profit organization. As such, there is much less structure than the formal memorandum style letter.



The business style letter may be written on letterhead. Like the memorandum style letter, it too has a header element, body and closing element; however, some of the other elements are optional and some are not used. Each of these elements will be discussed in detail.

Aside from the structure, there are several key differences between the business style letter and the memorandum style letter. These differences are highlighted below.

Element	Business Style Letter	Memorandum Style Letter
Letterhead	Optional	Optional
Heading Element	Date Return Address To Address Salutation	Date MEMORANDUM FOR FROM: SUBJECT:
Body	No paragraph numbers Paragraphs are indented Margins are 1 inch on all sides (unless using letterhead)	Paragraphs are numbered Paragraphs are not indented Margins are 1 inch on all sides (unless using letterhead)
Closing Element	Complimentary close, normally using "Sincerely" Normal signature block	Normal signature block
Courtesy Copy Element	Normally not used	Optional
Endorsements	Never used	Optional
Email Version	No	Yes
Overall length	Attempt to limit to 1 page	May be multiple pages

Heading Element. The business style letter heading element includes the date, sender's address, recipient's address and the salutation.

Date. Type or stamp the date on the right margin of the letter and on the third line below the last line of the letterhead. If letterhead is not used, place the date 1.75 inches (or 10 lines) from the top edge of the page.

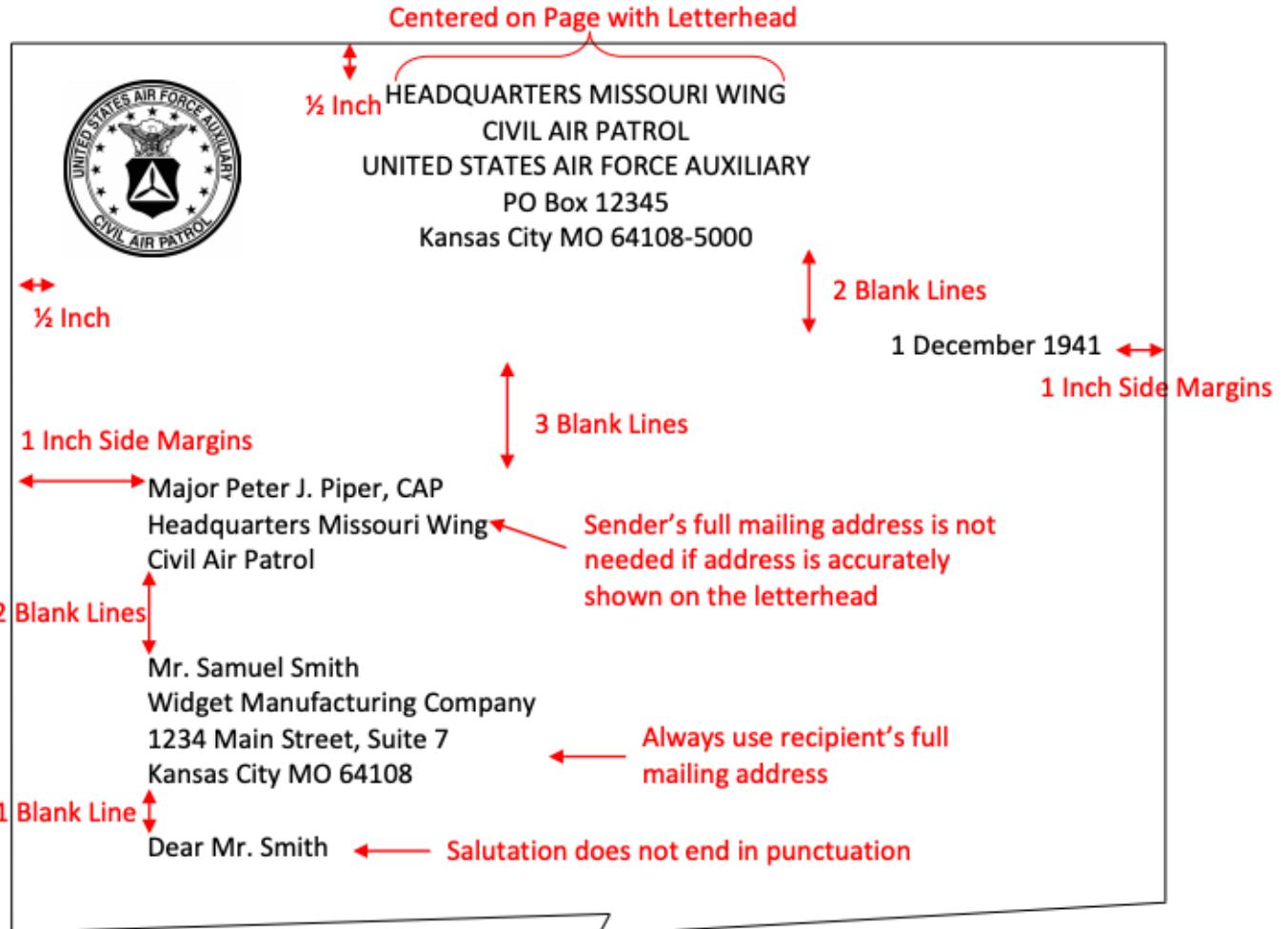
Indicate the date in the format of day, month, and year; for example, 7 Dec 12 or 7 December 2012. As a general rule, when the month is shortened, such as Aug, then the year is shortened to the last two digits. When the month is spelled out, such as August, the date is completed with the four-digit year. The date reflects the date the letter is actually signed.

Sender's Address. If the stationery is not preprinted with the full address of the sender or sender's organization, then type the sender's address using Title Case format. Begin typing the address at the left margin on the fourth line below the date. Include name, grade and, if not on letterhead, the complete mailing address of the sender.

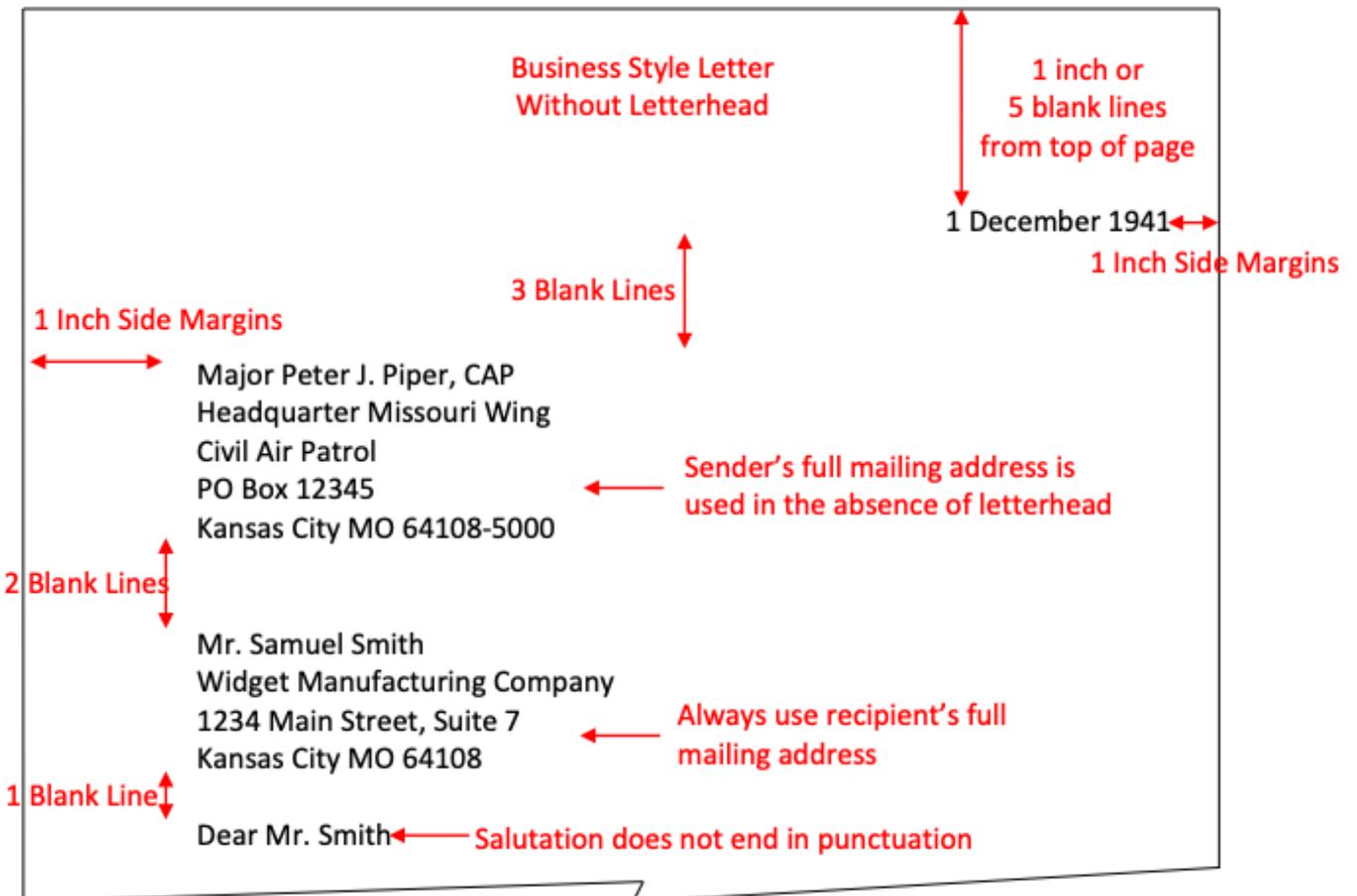
Recipient's Address. The recipient's address follows the same format as the sender's. Unlike the sender's address where the full address is optional if accurately displayed on letterhead, the recipient's address is always provided in full. The recipient's address begins on the third line below the sender's address block.

Salutation. The salutation introduces the body of the letter and begins on the second line below the recipient's address block. It is preferred that the sender know the name of the recipient. In this case, the appropriate salutation takes the form of "Dear *Title Last Name*", as in "Dear Inspector Jones" or "Dear Mr. Brown". If the recipient's name is not known, an acceptable salutation is "Dear Sir" or "Dear Ma'am" however doing so presents the sender with a 50-50 chance of getting the gender correct. A better alternative is to address the letter by professional or organizational title, such as "Dear Department Head". In any case, no punctuation is used at the end of the salutation. Use punctuation after abbreviations such as "Mr.," "Mrs." and "Dr."; however, no punctuation is used with abbreviated CAP/military grades.

The Tongue and Quill offers an extensive list of addresses, salutations and closures in the Personal Letter section. For example, using letterhead might appear as shown on the next page.



An example of the business style letter without letterhead is shown on the next page.



Body. The body makes up the substance of the letter and should get to the point while providing sufficient information to make sure the reader understands your message. Business style letters are best presented on one page; however, additional information may be included as attachments.

Like the memorandum style letter, active voice is preferred; however, some readers may find the message too direct. Passive voice softens the message, but often requires more words and could change the tone or clarity of the message. Bottom line – know your audience.

Margins. Standard margins on hard copy letters should be 1 inch from all edges of the paper. The one exception is letterhead, which is placed $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the top and sides. The remainder of the letter is framed with 1-inch margins.

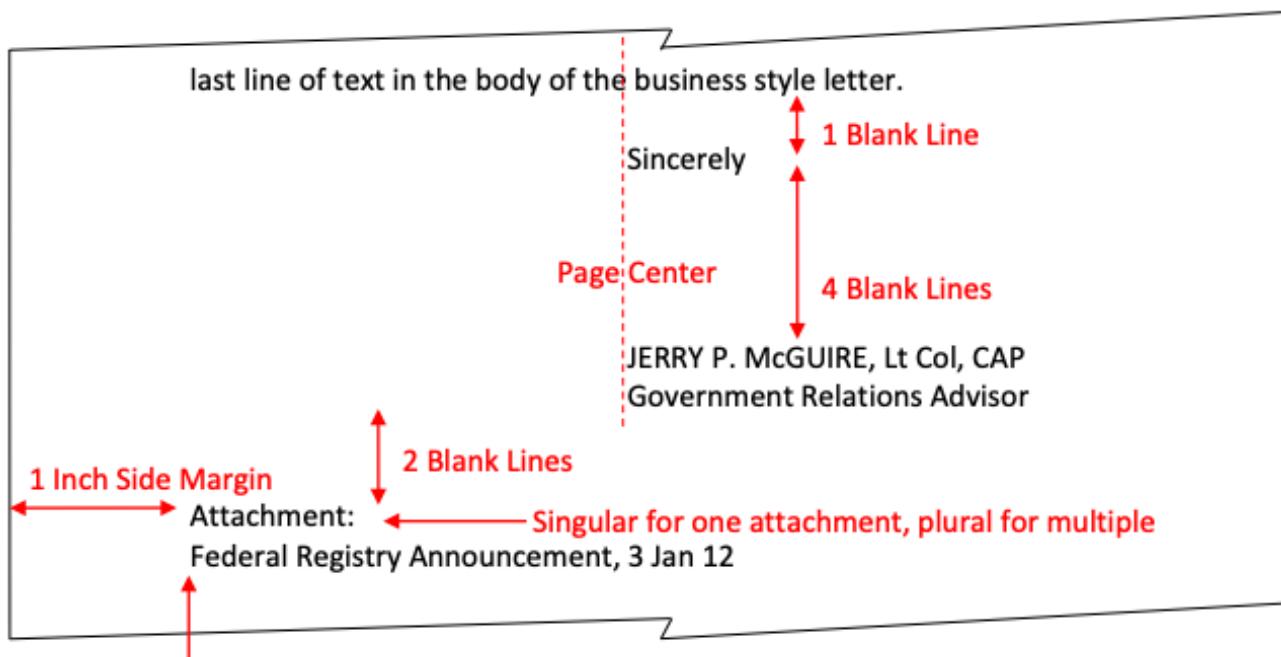
Font. Unlike the memorandum style letter, there is no acceptable email format for the business style letter. However, an alternative to mailing the letter is to email the letter as an attachment. Given that sans serif style fonts are more easily viewed on a computer, the preferred font for business style letters is Calibri, a sans serif style font.

Paragraphing. Start the first paragraph on the second line below the salutation. Each paragraph should be indented with a blank line between subsequent paragraphs. Do not number paragraphs.

Single paragraph letters of less than eight lines may be double spaced to prevent an awkward appearance with a lot of white space. An alternative to double-spacing short letters is to format the letter in landscape mode, but only type on one half of the page. When printed, the unused half may be removed. A better alternative is to print on appropriately sized stationary.

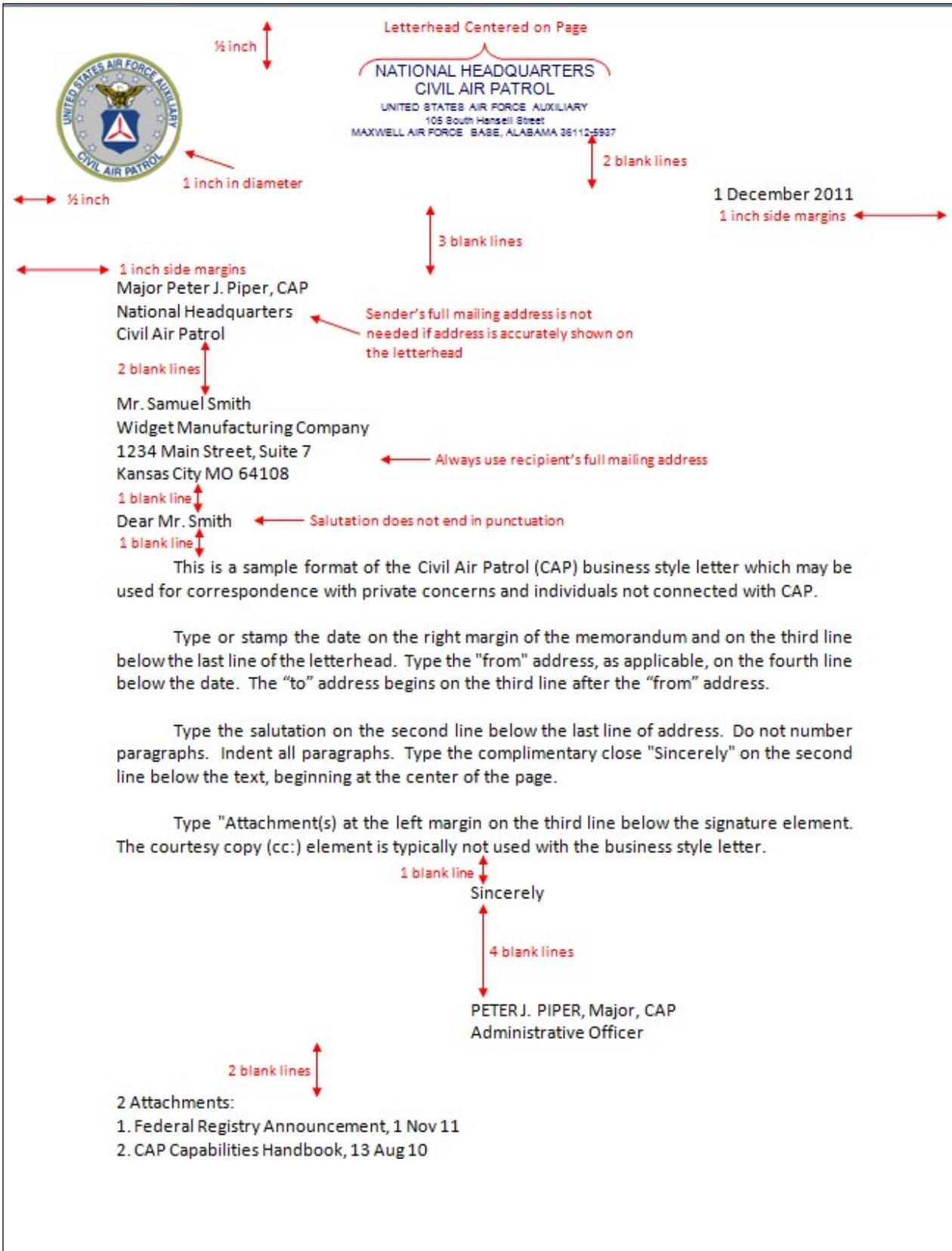
Closing Element. The business style letter closing element is sometimes referred to as the complimentary close. The accepted convention is to type "Sincerely" starting at page center on the second line below the last line of the body. There is no punctuation after "Sincerely" and the standard signature block (see memorandum style letter) begins on the fifth line.

Attachment Element. When attachments accompany the business style letter, type "Attachment:" at the left margin, on the third line below the signature block. If there is more than one attachment, list each one by number in the order you refer to them in the letter. Describe each attachment briefly. Cite the office or origin, the type of correspondence and the date. The attachment element should not be split by a page break. An example of the closing and attachment elements looks like this:



Do not number attachment if there's only one, otherwise number attachments in order presented in the letter.

Putting it all together, the business style letter might look like the example on the next page.



ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

"Social media is the most disruptive form of communication humankind has seen since the last disruptive form of communications, email."

Ryan Holmes

Electronic communications are prevalent in the world today and occur in all forms, from a simple email to social media, online video conferencing, smart phone applications, texts, web pages, and many more. In fact, there are so many forms of electronic communication that this topic could have its own publication. Couple that with near daily introduction of new means to communicate and such a publication would be out of date before it's even released. With this in mind, the information below is more of a guide for do's and don'ts in CAP, and not necessarily a "how to" manual.

If you're new to social media, most sites offer a help page to get you started. Additionally, there are countless other resources available, many of which are free, to assist you in creating professional emails, web pages and other forms of electronic communication. One such resource is [The Tongue and Quill](#) chapter on Electronic Communication.

Communication is no longer challenged by distance; rather people on opposite sides of the globe can communicate with the click of a mouse. The ease of electronic communication presents both benefits and challenges. Probably the greatest benefit is the speed in which a recipient, to include large audiences, can be reached. On the flip side, and probably worst of all, never forget that if it's on the internet, it's there forever. So care must always be used when communicating electronically.

Email. In CAP, email is by far the most frequently used form of electronic communication to conduct daily business. Not only does email serve to communicate between one or multiple recipients, but it also establishes a record of what was communicated. For actions requiring approval, this record is vitally important.

"People live too much of their lives on email or the Internet or text messages these days. We're losing all of our communication skills."

Tracy Morgan

A traditional email can replace or supplement other CAP written correspondence such as the official memorandum. A memorandum style email may be used if guidelines for a memorandum style letter are followed. Emails may also be used to send other written correspondence by adding documents as attachments to the email.

There are a number of factors to consider before using any form of e-mail. Some of the advantages to using email are: 1) it's fast; 2) it can get to more people; 3) it's paperless.

Conversely, the same advantages can prove to be disadvantages: 1) it's fast...a quickly written email can fan as many fires as it extinguishes; 2) it can get to more people, some of which the sender may not desire to be recipients, such as when a copy is forwarded into the wrong hands; 3) it's paperless and while email does leave an electronic trail, hard drive failures and other anomalies can make things disappear.

The following are general rules of thumb pertaining to emails and are also applicable to texting and online postings to social media sites:

 "A wise man is superior to any insults which can be put upon him, and the best reply to unseemly behavior is patience and moderation."

Moliere

a. Repeat after me...never, ever send an email when you're mad! While it may be your initial reflex to a situation, DON'T DO IT. If the situation is an ugly dog, sleep on it. If it's still an ugly dog when you awake, then it's probably an ugly dog. Oh, and if it's truly unprofessional, there are better ways to handle the situation than a return email.

b. Don't type using all capital letters. Doing so comes across as SHOUTING...unless, of course, that is your intention.

c. Email is essentially a one-way conversation and, unlike verbal communication, there is no way to insert voice inflection or enunciation into an email. Invariably, the emotion felt in crafting an email is seldom the same emotion sensed when reading the email. The same goes for sense of humor. If it's an important email, ask a colleague to read it silently before you hit the send button. If your colleague senses the same emotion or humor as you intended, then the real recipient is likely to sense the same.

 "I do love email. Wherever possible I try to communicate asynchronously. I'm really good at email."

Elon Musk

d. Know the difference between "To:", "Cc:" and "Bcc".

To: are the recipients you actually want the email to go to; those who need the information you're providing or are acting on something in the email.

Cc: are the "guest recipients" for which you're providing awareness of the information or action in your email. Don't expect those in the Cc: line to act on your email. Likewise don't get offended if they provide their two cents worth.

Let's face it; you invited them into the conversation. Caution – sometimes replying to all changes recipients from the Cc: line to the To: line.

Bcc: is a blind courtesy copy. It's blind because neither the To: or Cc: recipients know others are receiving the email too. Just because your email program allows Bcc'ing others it doesn't mean that you should use the feature. Many believe such blind copying is unethical and therefore its use is not advised. Another problem with Bcc'ing is that occasionally the individual Bcc'ed will reply to all. Guess what – you're now busted. An acceptable alternative is to forward the email you just sent (without Bcc's) to your intended Bcc: recipients.

- e. Know the difference between "Reply" and "Reply to All". Surprisingly, a large number of people don't know the difference...that or they don't care if they generate a lot of unnecessary emails for others. Oftentimes mass emails are sent to provide awareness to a large number of people, not to solicit feedback.

"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."

Stephen Covey

"Reply" goes only to the previous sender. "Reply to All" responds to everyone in the To: and Cc: lines. There are times when "Reply to All" is appropriate, for example when coordinating on a project. Bottom line, use care when replying to emails.

- f. Read the entire thread before forwarding or replying. A thread is the entire email including the original and all subsequent forwards and replies. Too many times something is mentioned lower in the thread that's inappropriate, unprofessional or may be considered rude to anyone new added to the thread. You have been warned! There are two solutions to this problem:

1. Always be professional so you don't regret something later.
2. Delete all but the germane part of the email and respond only to that portion. In fact, wise individuals that have learned from the experiences of others, make it a habit to reply only to the original email.

- g. Keep it short...period. Nobody likes to read a novel, especially busy people. Furthermore, people have a tendency to skip over portions of long emails and ultimately miss what you're asking them to do or answer a question that you didn't ask simply because you buried the salient points in a tome. Remember the rule: KISS.

- h. Speaking of acronyms and abbreviations, we're all bad at using them, especially people who do a lot of texting. The problem is not everyone uses or understands the same acronyms or abbreviations, even within the same organization. The same goes for using jargon; use plain language when sending an email outside CAP. If you

don't heed these words, the end result is the recipient's confusion could lead to a misunderstanding or, worse yet, the recipient takes no action at all ☹.

- i. Which brings up the next topic: smilies, emoticons and emoji. These symbols are used to insert emotion into an otherwise stoic electronic communication. Smilies are facial expressions made from typed characters, such as :-) for a smiling face or ;- for a wink. Similarly, emoticons are actual characters often used in text messages, but are also found in certain font styles. Emoticons are shortcuts to display an emotion (i.e. emotion icon). Examples include ☺ happy faces or ☹ frowns. Conversely, emoji are pictograms that serve as shortcuts to written text, for example "how 🍔 sound for dinner?"

Here are a couple of things to think about when using smilies, emoticons and emoji:

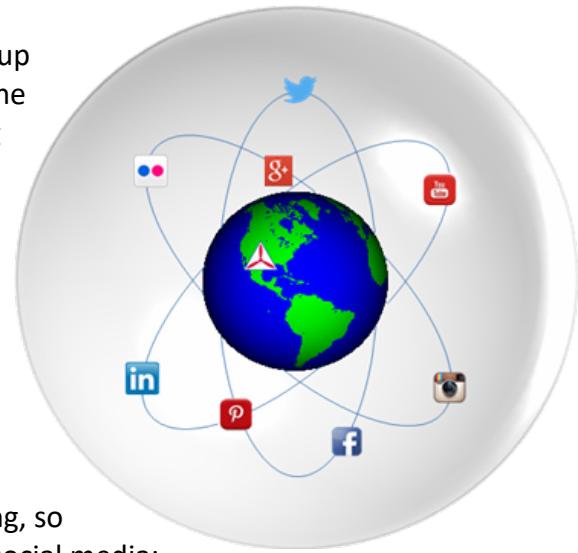
- 1. Use them sparingly and NEVER in a professional correspondence. While they may appear cute, they're certainly not professional. Furthermore, not everyone understands what these symbols mean and could turn a bad reflection on you.
- 2. Adding a smilie or emoticon after a rude or unprofessional comment does not soften the blow. It's like saying "that dress does a nice job at hiding your belly" ☺ or "that great looking tie makes your big head look smaller" :-)
- j. If you include links in your email, make sure they work. Too many times people have typed a link for what they thought was a legitimate, professional website only to have the recipient find themselves facing a web page not suitable for younger viewers. Yep, mistyping .com for .gov can really work wonders for developing partnerships!
- k. The average member receives a tremendous amount of communications every day, from emails, to texts and social media announcements. As a professional courtesy and to improve your chances of a timely response to your sent email, add a descriptor to the beginning of your subject line. Words such as "ACTION" will get the recipient's attention and helps them prioritize over emails that include "INFO" in the subject. "HOT" may be used; however, this word is often overused and like the old saying, when everything is hot, nothing is hot!
- l. Finally, closing the email with a signature block. Many people like to add quotes or phrases to their signature blocks. Doing so is considered inappropriate in professional correspondence. When sending the memorandum style email, use the signature block detailed on page 26. However, when sending a non-memorandum email, the signature block follows the standardized form that aligns with CAP's branding effort.

Email Signature Block. As mentioned previously, email is the primary method of communicating in the conduct of CAP's daily affairs. With such prevalent use, a standardized signature block is crucial to CAP's branding efforts. CAP has developed several standardized signature blocks, which are available on the CAP Brand Portal at brand.gocivilairpatrol.com.

Social Media. Social media is another powerful form of electronic communication, with the potential to be both powerfully beneficial and powerfully damaging. Social media is used to share information, videos, photographs and such, but is never used to conduct CAP official business.

Social media sites are plentiful with new ones popping up near daily. Their sphere of influence and reach circles the globe. Therefore, it's vitally important that any posting of a CAP nature be professional, respectful and present a positive reflection on CAP. Hint – remember CAP's Core Values when making CAP-related posts to social media. Another hint – if it's on the internet, it's there forever!

Each site has their own rules regarding use and etiquette, usually found on the help page. There are also many other websites that provide social media etiquette tips. Trying to list all rules would be exhausting, so here a just a few pointers to ponder before posting to social media:



- a. Do you think anyone else besides you will be interested in the post? Yes, we all know people that like to hear themselves talk...or in this case, post. If you answered "no" to this question, then you are encouraged to start a blog.

"It is better to remain silent at the risk of being thought a fool, than to talk and remove all doubt of it."

Maurice Switzer

- b. Will you intentionally offend someone with your post? Are you hiding behind online anonymity so the offended party doesn't know who you are? Remember the Golden Rule – do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Bottom line is if you wouldn't say it face-to-face, don't say it online.
- c. Do you care if the entire world sees your post? The internet is global in reach. Oh yeah, the internet never forgets.
- d. Will your post reflect poorly on Civil Air Patrol? If in doubt, don't do it. If you do and you're wrong, well...2b or not 2b, that is the question!

The intent of these pointers is not to restrict a member's freedom of speech. However, when you're posting online or sending emails that reflects poorly on CAP, just remember this – membership is a privilege and not a right.

If your unit's CAP website provides links to your unit's social media sites, the unit's social media icons should be at the top of the web page to ensure ready visibility to visitors. Only the main unit landing page should be used as a website destination.

CAP PUBLICATIONS

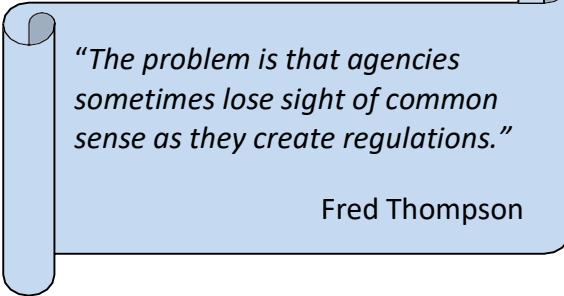
Publications are methods of communicating too. CAP's publications fall into one of two categories: directive and nondirective. All publications released at any level fall into these two categories. Technically speaking, a publication is anything that's published or made generally known, including forms, certificates, visual aids, tests, controlled documents and the many other documents described in this pamphlet. Refer to CAPR 1-2 for more information on publications.

Directive Publications. These publications live up to their name. They direct actions and prescribe procedures that must be followed. In other words, compliance with directive publications is mandatory. Directive publications include:

- a. CAP Regulations – publications approved by CAP/CC, released by National Headquarters (NHQ) and applicable to all CAP members. Regulations are structured in their appearance.

b. Supplements – auxiliary publications that augment CAP regulations. They cannot stand alone; rather they must be linked to the parent regulation. Supplements are approved by the NHQ office of primary responsibility (OPR) for the parent regulation, issued by a commander at any level (unless prohibited by the regulation), and applicable to all members of the issuing headquarters and their subordinate units. A template for producing supplements is found on the CAP publications website.

c. Operating Instructions – publications that mandate procedures or actions of a local nature within one unit (charter number) or office. Operating Instructions (OIs) are approved by the NHQ office of primary responsibility (OPR) for the subject matter, issued by a commander at any level (unless



"The problem is that agencies sometimes lose sight of common sense as they create regulations."

Fred Thompson

prohibited by a regulation pertaining to the matter), and applicable to all members within the chartered unit. OIs may stand alone and do not require a parent regulation. A template for producing OIs is found on the CAP publications website.

All directive publications require an annual review to ensure the publication is current, essential and relevant. Supplement and OI reviews are recorded as annual certifications (see CAPR 1-2). Since new commanders might not be aware of all supplements or OIs issued by their predecessor, it is recommended that they review these publications and direct a re-certification after assuming command. In the future, all supplements and OIs, to include approved waivers to regulations, will be posted on the CAP publications website for all members to view.

Nondirective Publications. These publications live up to their name too. Just like the pamphlet you're reading now, nondirective publications are informative or "how to" in nature and often provide suggested methods, techniques or best practices for maintaining compliance with directive publications. Pamphlets are less structured than directive publications and may be released at any level.

The pamphlet structure and writing style depends largely on the subject matter. In essence, due to the informative or "how to" nature of pamphlets, these documents should be formatted and styled in a manner that best presents the information to the reader. The use of graphics, tables, flowcharts and colored text is highly encouraged to enhance readability and comprehension. A template for producing pamphlets is available on the CAP publications website.

Forms, Certificates and Visual Aids...Oh My! Okay, tests and controlled material are included in this discussion too. Of these documents, forms are the most structured and, in accordance with CAPR 1-2, their use must be prescribed in a regulation, supplement or Operating Instruction. Historically, forms, certificates, visual aids, tests and controlled material have collectively been kept separate from the traditional multi-page documents like regulations,

supplements and Oils. Unique to the formerly mentioned items is that they usually have

discreet development or handling rules, and oddly enough, some can fall into both directive and nondirective categories of publications. For example, a directive might require the use of a specific form; therefore the form could be viewed as directive in nature.

Some of these documents may be produced locally; however, several are available only from National Headquarters as indicated in the Index 0-2, *Numerical Index of Regulations, Manuals, Pamphlets and Visual Aids*, and the Index 0-9, *Numerical Index of CAP Forms, Test Material, and Certificates*. The indexes indicate which documents are available online and which are requested through the OPR or by using the Material Orders web page in eServices. Here's a summary of each:

- a. Forms. By definition, forms are tools used for the collection, recording, and/or extraction of information whereby a predetermined set of data fields have been established and defined to meet a definitive CAP purpose or objective.
- b. Certificates. These documents may be issued by any headquarters. Certificates are used to recognize individuals or teams for a specific accomplishment, such as completing a course of instruction or an "ataboy" for a job well done that doesn't meet the threshold for a decoration or award. Certificates issued by National Headquarters are standardized in appearance.
- c. Visual Aids. These documents succinctly capture guidance found in directive and nondirective publications. They may also be used to summarize confusing information or information found in multiple publications. An example of a Visual Aid is the Cadet Super Chart, a poster that lists all requirements to attain milestones and awards in the cadet program.
- d. Test. Tests are a form of controlled material, even though they may be both open- and closed-book. Tests are used to validate comprehension and application of material necessary to complete a milestone or course objective. Tests may not be reproduced locally without the express permission of the National Headquarters office of primary responsibility (refer to CAPR 1-2 for more information).
- e. Controlled Material. Documents and information are placed in the Controlled Material category when the information is sensitive, not suitable for public consumption, or is directed to be controlled by higher authority. In other words, information that's released on a need to know basis. Examples of Controlled Material include tests and CAP's assigned radio frequencies.

I NEED APPROVAL?? THE SECRET TO GOOD STAFF WORK

Much of CAP's daily mission-related affairs require approval prior to taking action. The Web Mission Information Reporting System, or WMIRS for short, automates the approval process. But what if you needed approval for something that's not covered in WMIRS? Approvals for waivers, publications or special activities are examples of such actions requiring approval that reside outside WMIRS' capabilities.

The Electronic Staff Summary Sheet (eSSS) is the tool to get the information to the right people for coordination and approval. It's "electronic" in that it's often sent as the body of an email as opposed to an actual form. It gets its name from our Air Force partners. Since many of our initiatives require Air Force endorsement, coordination or approval, it's only natural that our process meshes with that of our parent organization.

Originators need to understand that securing approval is all about marketing and how well you sell your proposal. The following are secrets to help get the approval you seek:

- a. Get the right people involved. Too many times these "staff packages" fail or stall because the originator forgot to include a key player in the coordination process. Those with approval authority are quick to pick out these key players in the coordination chain. If their name is not present, the staff package will likely be returned or delayed until such coordination is received. Ultimately, it's a poor reflection on you, the originator.
- b. Don't involve the wrong people. The opposite of getting the right people involved is creating a coordination chain that involves too many people. You guessed it – everyone included in the coordination chain has an opportunity to comment...and they will. As a rule, include only individuals who play a direct role in the proposal, people like the lead subject matter expert(s) and your chain of command.
- c. Be succinct and to the point. Nobody likes a longwinded email. The eSSS is no different; remember the second "S" is for summary. A good technique is to imagine yourself as the approving official. If you were handed the proposal, what questions would you ask? What information would you need to make a sound decision? What do others think of the proposal? That's what you need to capture in the eSSS.
- d. Set a realistic suspense (due date). Contrary to popular belief, most people don't sit around waiting for your eSSS to hit their inbox. They all have their own projects and daily fires that they're trying to extinguish. Like the old saying goes, poor planning on your part doesn't make an emergency for others (or something along those lines). Okay, another old saying...junk in equals junk out. Bottom line is you'll get better quality feedback if you give coordinating and approving officials ample time to review your proposal.
- e. Leave your emotions at the door. The most effective proposals are those based on fact, logical rationale and likely impact should your proposal be accepted. Inserting emotions could be perceived as whining, that or you're too close to the situation to make a reasonable argument. The end result is that your proposal is likely to receive an overabundance of scrutiny.
- f. Buy-In is Important. Frame your proposal in such a manner that the likelihood of a nonconcurrence is eliminated. While that's not always possible, prepare yourself for the fact that approving authorities really like it when everyone is in agreement. That's

not to say your proposal won't be approved if there's a nonconcurrence, only that you might have to better articulate your argument.

Electronic Staff Summary Sheet (eSSS). The eSSS loosely mirrors the content of the AF Form 1768, *Staff Summary Sheet*. Even though the Air Force has a form to document the coordination/approval process, they too have a tendency to complete staff work via email, hence the eSSS.

The eSSS has seven major elements: subject and date, coordination/approval chain, originator's information, suspense date, body or summary, signature block, and the tabs. Each element is detailed below.

Subject and Date Element. Since we're talking about the eSSS, the subject is nothing more than the subject of the email. The same guidelines used in the memorandum and business style letters apply here. By standard convention, the subject starts with "eSSS" followed by a title that reflects the contents of the proposal. A suspense date normally follows the subject. For example, "eSSS FY15 Appropriated Budget (Suspense: 1 Jul 15)." The eSSS date is the date the email is sent.

Coordination and Approval Chain Element. The chain makes up the top of the eSSS and varies with the nature of each request. It consists of those providing coordination, approval, and any action caused by the decision. Routine actions, such as seeking approval for a publication, typically have the same chain. It's also possible for some activities to have multiple rounds of coordination. For example, regulation revisions might see a round to coordinate inputs from subject matter experts and a second round to coordinate inputs from CAP senior leaders and secure CAP/CC approval.

The coordination and approval chain element identifies individuals (or their office) by unit and organization symbol, and the desired action. Individuals performing the desired action annotate completion by typing their last name, CAP grade, date and result of their action. Oftentimes, coordination and approval are recorded in the email thread and not necessarily by typing one's name next to their respective line in the chain. Read replies and forwards carefully.

Here are some examples of common desired action and possible results of those actions:

Common Desired Actions

Coord – means to review and comment, if needed

Approve – means just that. It's conceivable that some actions require multiple approvals, such as both CAP-USAF/CC and CAP/CC. If so, annotate this dual approval accordingly.

Sign – used if the desired action is to have the approving authority sign something

Action – signifies the individual charged with acting on the approval authority's decision. Action, when used, is typically assigned to a person not the originator. For example, a proposal that requires the contributions of multiple functional areas might assign the Chief of Staff in the Action line.

Common Results of Actions

Concur – means that the reader agrees with everything as presented and has no comments to add.

Concur with Comment – a remark used when the coordinating individual agrees, but has comments that may improve the proposal or add clarity.
Sometimes "Concur with Comment" is shortened to simply say "Comment."

Nonconcur – means that the reader does not agree with the proposal as written

Approved or Disapproved – a decision rendered by the approval authority

Here's how an eSSS coordination and approval chain element might appear:

NHQ staff members typically do not have a grade		Name/Grade/Date
GLR/CC	Coord	Smith/Col/5 Dec 12 Concur
CAP/DO	Coord	Jones/6 Dec 12 Concur w/ Comment
CAP/CV	Coord	Davis/Brig Gen/8 Dec 12 Comment
CAP/COO	Coord	
CAP/CC	Approve	← Approval Authority
CAP/XO	Action	← Individual, other than the originator, charged with taking action based on the approval decision (optional)

-----STAFF SUMMARY----- ← This line separates the coordination/approval chain from the rest of the eSSS

The coordination and approval chain follows a logical hierarchy, beginning with coordinating officials and terminating with the approval authority. In rare cases, you'll see an action official listed last. When coordinating officials are from the same peer group, you can list officials alphabetically or by using a commonly accepted convention. As a rule of thumb, the hierarchy should look similar to a chain of command (peer groups listed in parentheses):

Squadrons (list numerically or alphabetically if squadron names are spelled out)

Groups (list numerically)

Wings (list alphabetically)

Regions (list by historical order – NER, MER, GLR, SER, NCR, SWR, RMR, PCR)

NHQ staff (list in order of significance to the subject matter or alphabetically)

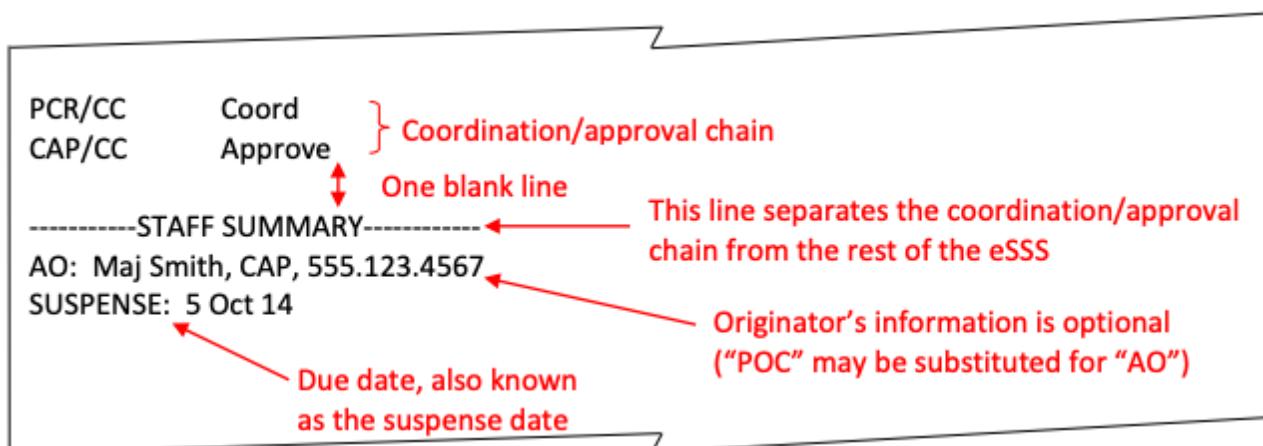
CAP/COO

CAP-USAF/CC

CAP/CC

The Originator's Information Element. The originator's information is optional. This information is usually included when the point of contact for the subject matter is not the person releasing the eSSS. For example, the wing standardization and evaluation officer is making a proposal and wants the wing commander to release the eSSS for more impact. The intent is to provide contact information for the originator so the wing commander doesn't have to field a lot of questions.

The originator's information takes the form of "AO" (short for action officer) or "POC" (short for point of contact) followed by the originator's grade, name, CAP, and contact number. The information is provided immediately below the "-----STAFF SUMMARY-----" line as shown below.



Suspense Date Element. The suspense date is simply the due date. Originators indicate the suspense below their information as indicated above.

The eSSS Body Element. The body element is the heart of the eSSS and begins on the second line below the suspense date. Paragraphs are numbered. The body consists of the following sections, each being spelled in all capital letters so they stand out:

- a. PURPOSE. The purpose is the summary of what you're seeking to accomplish. It is typically no longer than one or two lines.
- b. BACKGROUND. The optional background highlights what has happened to compel the need for your proposal.
- c. DISCUSSION. The discussion is your argument; why someone should accept your proposal.

- d. VIEWS OF OTHERS. This optional section presents opposing views or different approaches to solving your problem. Sometimes views of others can be shown in a tab. For example, when coordinating a publication, the views of others are the comments received using the Comments Resolution Matrix (one of your tabs).
- e. RECOMMENDATION. What is it that you really want? Spell it out succinctly in the one to two-line recommendation statement.

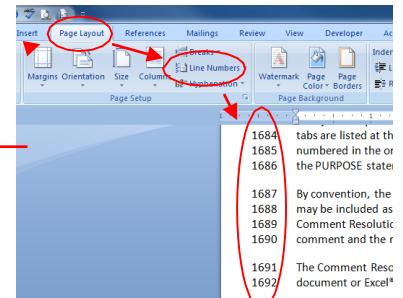
The eSSS Signature Block. The eSSS signature block is the same used in the memorandum style email, located at the left margin on the fifth line below the last line of text in the eSSS body.

The eSSS Tabs. Tabs are nothing more than attachments. Tabs are identified in the body of an eSSS just like you would a reference to an attachment. Like the memorandum style email, the tabs are listed at the left margin on the second line below the signature block. Tabs are numbered in the order they're presented in the eSSS, with Tab 1 normally being referenced in the PURPOSE statement.

By convention, the primary document is Tab 1 (for example, the letter to be signed). Other tabs may be included as supporting documents. As a minimum, one of the tabs should be the Comment Resolution Matrix listing all comments received, the acceptance or rejection of the comment and the rationale for the decision.

The Comment Resolution Matrix, or CRM for short, usually takes the form of a Microsoft Word® document or Excel® spreadsheet. The CRM typically lists the following entries:

- a. The contributor of the comment, identified by office, such as GLR/CC.
- b. The type of comment:
 - 1) C – Critical (contentious issue that will cause nonconcurrence with proposal)
 - 2) M – Major (incorrect material that may cause nonconcurrence with proposal)
 - 3) S – Substantive (factually incorrect material)
 - 4) A – Administrative (grammar, punctuation, style, etc.)
- c. The page number as reference.
- d. The paragraph number or title as reference.
- e. The line number, if used, as reference.
- f. The comment to be addressed. For example, “change to read: ‘The quick brown faux fox jumped over the lazy dog.’”
- g. The rationale for the comment. For example, “proper word use.”
- h. The OPR’s decision to accept, reject or modify (A/R/M) the recommended comment, with rationale for nonconcurrence or modification.



An example of a CRM entry is shown at the top of the next page.

ITEM	SOURCE	TYPE	PAGE	PARA	LINE	COMMENT	RATIONALE	DECISION (A/R/M)
1	1AF	S	5	Figure 1	152	Consider adding National Defense Strategy and National Military Strategy in Figure 1 and Figure 2.	Informative strategies on how DoD will conduct the NSS.	Not accepted due to dated NDS (2008) and NMS (2011).
2	DO	A	14	7	508	Change Surrogate Predator to Surrogate UAS	Name changed to replicating both MQ-1 and MQ-9	Added as Surrogate Unmanned Aerospace System

Putting it all together, an eSSS might look like the example shown here.

To... CAP/CC
Cc...
Subject: eSSS -- Concept of Operations for CAP Publications Reengineering (Suspense 1 August 2015)
Attached: Tab 1 -- CONOPS for CAP Publications Reengineering v11 (DRAFT).docx (2 MB); Tab 2 -- CAP CC Decision Points for Publications CONOP.DOCX (17 KB); Tab 3 -- Publications Reengineering CONOP Comment Resolution Matrix.docx (2 MB)

CAP/COA Coord
CAP/GC Coord
CAP/COO Coord
CAP-USAF/CC Coord
CAP/CC Approve
CAP/COO Action

Coord
Coord
Coord
Coord
Approve
Action

Coordination/Approval Chain

Suspense (due) date in Subject line

Attachments include "Tab #" in title to ensure correct reference

Person responsible for carrying out Approval Authority's decision

-----STAFF SUMMARY-----
AO: B. Smith, 555-123-4567
SUSPENSE: 1 August 2015

Action Officer (AO) or Point of Contact for this proposal
Suspense (due) date

1. PURPOSE: To obtain CAP/CC approval on Concept of Operations (CONOP) to reengineer CAP's publications (Tab 1)

2. BACKGROUND: Over the years, numerous surveys and comments have indicated that CAP's regulations are overly complex, challenge units' ability to maintain compliance, and present an undue burden on members.

3. DISCUSSION:

- a. This CONOP proposes a new methodology for how CAP develops publications with the ultimate goal of reducing or eliminating needless requirements and garnering efficiencies in the development and staffing process.
- b. Yellow highlights in the CONOP indicate changes from the coordination version.
- c. As indicated in the CONOP, CAP/CC's determination is required on several Decision Points (Tab 2). Responses to Decision Points, in concert with the approved CONOP, will lay the groundwork for how CAP proceeds.

4. VIEWS OF OTHERS: Comments received during coordination of the CONOP are presented in Tab 3. Entries highlighted in yellow draw CAP/CC's attention for consideration and are addressed separately as Decision Points. Items highlighted in blue were accepted in part and those in red were not accepted with justification provided for each partial/non-acceptance.

5. RECOMMENDATION: CAP/CC approve CONOP and provide determination on each Decision Point by returning to CAP/COO.

The recommendation is what you really want to be accomplished

John Q. Member
CAP Publications Manager

3 Tabs
1. CONOPS for CAP Publications Reengineering v11 (Draft)
2. CAP CC Decision Points for Publications CONOP
3. Publications Reengineering CONOP Comment Resolution Matrix

Tabs (attachments) are numbered in the order presented and mirror the attached file name

CONCLUSION

That's it. Everything you need to know to be an effective communicator in CAP. Okay, that's not true, but at least you now have an understanding of things to consider when conducting a meeting, how to prepare yourself for public speaking, how to craft an effective and professional memorandum or business style letter, not to mention a number of other documents, and how to wrap it all up in a nice eSSS to get approval.

So stop reading and get to work...

