

ATACH Style Guide

1. Tone and Voice

- **Calm Authority:** Maintain a composed, expert tone regardless of topic or audience.
- **Professional Precision:** Language should be factual and direct, favoring conciseness over elaborate language.
- **Plain-Spoken Intelligence:** Avoid jargon. Use clear, simple language to explain complex topics, reflecting ATACH's expertise without arrogance.
- **Neutral Objectivity:** Avoid personal judgments or subjective language, especially in political summaries or advocacy contexts. Use qualifiers like "appears," "suggests," or "indicates" over definitive terms when presenting interpretations.
- **Focus on Factual Descriptions Only**
 - Objective: Provide only the direct details without language suggesting intent, goals, or commitments.
 - Examples to Avoid:
 - "These measures reflect the state's commitment to public health."
 - "The policy aims to protect consumers through these safety standards."
 - Preferred Approach:
 - Simply describe the policy actions. For example, instead of "This measure safeguards minors from exposure," use "The regulation includes an age restriction of 21 for purchase."
- **Omit References to Purpose or Intent**
 - Avoid assumptions or statements about why a person, entity, organization, or government enacted certain policies.
 - Examples to Avoid:
 - "This ban is intended to prevent misuse."
 - "This regulation aims to promote safe dosing."
 - Preferred Approach:
 - Detail the actions factually. For instance, instead of "This framework aims to enhance consumer protection," simply write, "The framework requires licensing, potency limits, and safety standards."
- **Avoid Language Implying a State's Commitment or Focus**
 - Do not use language that suggests a state's commitment, focus, or goal concerning a policy.
 - Examples to Avoid:
 - "This policy reflects the state's focus on consumer safety."
 - "The state shows a strong commitment to responsible access."
 - Preferred Approach:

- Stick to direct statements about the policy details. Replace with phrases like, “The policy includes requirements for age restrictions, testing, and labeling.”
 - Be Precise with Regulatory Details
 - When describing specific regulations (e.g., potency limits, licensing requirements), focus solely on the exact details rather than inferred outcomes.
 - Example to Use:
 - Instead of stating, “These regulations help maintain market safety,” simply outline the specifics, like, “The state requires third-party testing for all synthetic THC products before sale.”
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2. General Structure and Formatting

- **Headings and Subheadings:** Use bold for section titles only; apply sentence case for clarity.
 - **Bulleted Lists:** Use for multiple points; ensure each bullet maintains a parallel structure (e.g., all start with a verb or noun).
 - **Line Spacing:** Single-space within paragraphs, with double-spacing between sections.
 - **Font and Margins:** Use Times New Roman, 12 pt., with standard 1-inch margins unless otherwise directed.
 - **Punctuation and Grammar:** Follow AP Style for punctuation and grammar rules (e.g., single space after a period, no Oxford comma in simple lists).
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3. Abbreviations and Acronyms

- **Titles:** Use abbreviations like Dr., Sen., Gov., only before full names on first reference; do not abbreviate on subsequent references.
 - **General Acronyms:** Avoid “alphabet soup.” Use only well-known acronyms (e.g., FDA, CBD), and define all terms on first reference.
 - **States:** Abbreviate state names only with city references, per AP Style (e.g., Columbus, Ohio). Spell out state names when standing alone.
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4. Date, Time, and Number Formatting

- **Dates:** Use numerals without suffixes (e.g., Aug. 15, not Aug. 15th). Abbreviate months with six or more letters when used with specific dates (e.g., Sept. 20).
- **Times:** Use numerals with lowercase “a.m.” or “p.m.” (e.g., 3 p.m., noon). Avoid :00 for even hours.
- **Numbers:**

- Spell out numbers under 10, except in dates, times, ages, and monetary amounts.
 - Use numerals for 10 and above, and for percentages (e.g., “4 percent”).
 - Avoid starting sentences with numbers; if unavoidable, spell them out (e.g., “Twenty people attended.”).
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5. Titles and Names

- **People’s Names:** Use the full name on first mention; last name only on subsequent mentions unless clarity requires otherwise.
 - **Job Titles:** Capitalize formal titles before a name (e.g., President Jones); lowercase if they follow a name or stand alone (e.g., “the president attended”).
 - **Classes and Departments:** Capitalize names of languages and nationalities (e.g., “French,” “Italian”) but lowercase other subjects (e.g., “math”).
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6. Punctuation Standards

- **Oxford Comma:** Avoid in simple lists (e.g., “red, yellow and blue”). Use in complex lists or where clarity requires.
 - **Quotation Marks:**
 - Periods and commas go inside quotation marks.
 - Use quotation marks for titles of articles, reports, and publications; do not use for magazine or newspaper titles.
 - **Dashes:**
 - Use en dashes (–) for ranges (e.g., 5–10 years).
 - Use em dashes (—) for emphasis or breaks in thought, with spaces on each side.
 - **Hyphens:** Use hyphens for compound modifiers before nouns (e.g., “high-quality products”) but not after (e.g., “the products are high quality”).
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7. Terminology and Consistency

- **Hemp:** Cannabis with less than 0.3% THC by dry weight. Use “hemp” specifically and avoid “cannabis” unless context requires.
- **Synthetic THC:** Lab-created THC compounds; avoid using “hemp-derived” unless necessary for clarity.
- **Intoxicating Cannabinoids:** Encompasses psychoactive cannabinoids from hemp, such as delta-8 and delta-10.
- **State Authority:** Preferred term for ATACH’s stance on state-level control over intoxicating cannabinoids.

- **Legal Terms:**
 - **Prohibited:** States that ban specific hemp-derived intoxicants.
 - **Regulated:** States with specific regulatory frameworks for hemp products.
 - **Gray Market:** Refers to states with unregulated or ambiguously regulated markets for intoxicating cannabinoids.
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8. Numbers and Units

- **Ages:** Always use numerals (e.g., “7-year-old”).
 - **Measurements:** Use numerals with units, spelled out (e.g., “6 miles,” “5-foot-3”).
 - **Monetary Values:** Use the dollar symbol for amounts (e.g., \$5, \$1.5 million); avoid extra zeros (e.g., \$5, not \$5.00).
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9. Document-Specific Guidelines

- **Reports on Congressional Members:**
 - Follow the template from “Instructions - Report on Member of Congress.” Include all sections, using “Not Available” if data is missing.
 - Avoid subjective language when summarizing political positions or votes; use full sentences for statements and “Yea”/“Nay” for recorded votes.
 - **Hemp Policy Analysis:**
 - Use the “Hemp Criteria” framework to analyze state or federal bills. Present each criterion in sequence, using plain language and state-level references.
 - Maintain consistent terminology in categorizing state policies (e.g., “Prohibited,” “Regulated - Hemp-Specific”).
 - **Public Statements and Press Releases:**
 - Maintain a formal, factual tone with no exclamation points or emotive language.
 - Outline ATACH’s position with specific legislative references (e.g., “The Miller Amendment in the House version of the 2023 Farm Bill”).
 - **Internal Memos and Informal Communication:**
 - Use a respectful, straightforward style. Subtle humor is permitted but should not detract from the professional tone.
 - Keep language constructive when offering suggestions (e.g., “One alternative could be...”).
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10. Citation and Source Protocol

- **External Documents:** Use Bluebook citation for statutory and regulatory references.
- **Internal Drafts:** Informal references are acceptable but should include statute numbers when available.

- **Quotations:** Attribute all quotations accurately, and use sparingly to support factual points.
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11. Key Terminology for Consistency

- **Hemp and Cannabis Classification:**
 - *Hemp*: Defined as cannabis with <0.3% THC; legally distinct from “marijuana.”
 - *Cannabis*: Broad term covering low-THC hemp and high-THC marijuana. In ATACH contexts, distinguish these unless synonymous usage is necessary.
- **THC Derivatives:**
 - *Synthetic THC*: THC synthesized in a lab, often from CBD derived from hemp; usually prohibited.
 - *Delta-8 THC*: Synthetic psychoactive cannabinoid derived from hemp.
 - *Intoxicating Cannabinoids*: Encompasses all psychoactive cannabinoids, including delta-9, delta-8, delta-10, and others.
- **Regulatory Classifications:**
 - *Legalization State*: States with recreational (adult-use) cannabis laws.
 - *Medical Marijuana State*: States with cannabis laws limited to medical use.
 - *Gray Market*: States allowing hemp products without addressing intoxicants.
- **Advocacy and Policy Terms:**
 - *State Authority*: ATACH’s stance that states should regulate intoxicating cannabinoids.
 - *Public Health Risks*: Refers to the adverse health impacts of unregulated hemp intoxicants.
 - *Market Integrity*: ATACH’s goal of separating non-intoxicating and intoxicating hemp products.