### **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.”

#### **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).

#### **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.

#### **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.”).

#### **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”).

#### **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”).

#### **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.

#### **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).

#### **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…”).

#### **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.

#### **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.