Technical Publications Style Guide

2 Writing Conventions

2.1 Grammar

Follow standard American English grammar rules unless otherwise specified in this guide.

2.1.1 Parts of Speech

2.1.1.1 Nouns and Pronouns

Guideline	Not Recommended	Recommended
Use common nouns when possible.	The ▮▮▮▮ *system* is portable. The ▮▮▮▮ *system* includes a display.	The term "system" refers to the Legion™ system… The *system* is portable. The *system* includes a display.
	Bundle the cables with *Velcro®*.	Bundle the cables with *hook-and-loop fasteners*.
Use compound nouns in favor of prepositional phrases or hyphenated words unless the compound noun uses more than 3 consecutive nouns.	rate of aspiration	…aspiration rate
	The ▮▮▮▮ system IR remote control…	The IR remote control for the ▮▮▮▮ system…
Avoid compound nouns with words that are redundant, conflict, or that are not related to each other.	Footpedal	Pedal
	Original copy	Original
	Benchmark	Goal
Avoid pronouns.	If *you* have any questions, contact ▮▮▮▮.	For more information, contact ▮▮▮▮.
Use singular nouns or pronouns when possible.	*Footswitches* control the handpiece.	*The footswitch* controls the handpiece.
Use gender-neutral nouns or pronouns when possible.	Set the parameters to the preferences of the operator or his assistant.	Set the parameters to the preferences of the operator or an assistant.
Use second person for instructions and omit the subject (you).	*You* need to connect the cable.	Connect the cable.
Use third person for sentences other than instructions.	Note that the system is intended for use in hospitals.	The system is intended for use in hospitals.
Do not use first person.	We, at ▮▮▮▮, recommend…	▮▮▮▮ recommends…
Do not use possessive case.	The doctor's team…	The surgical team…

Note: Pronoun antecedents must agree with the referenced noun in number, gender, and case.

Technical Publications Style Guide

2.3 Punctuation

Use the following punctuation rules based on standard American English. These rules do not apply to text in foreign languages. **Note:** For UI labels, use the punctuation as it appears.

2.3.1 Periods

Guidelines	Example
Use a period after the last word in a sentence. Separate sentences with a single space.	Connect the cable. Turn the system on. He said, "hello world."
Use a period after abbreviations except for acronyms or units of measurement (see Units of Measurement).	Alcon Laboratories, Inc. DFU 12 cm
Use a period as the radix point in non-integers.	12.51
Use a period to separate octets in IP, subnet mask, DNS, and gateway numbers.	255.255.255.255
Use periods as required for company version control conventions.	Version 1.010
If defined by the applicable template, use a period to separate a list marker from the list item content.	1. Start the system. a. Turn on the computer.

Note: Add a single space after periods that end a sentence.

2.3.2 Commas

Guidelines	Example
Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction that links two independent clauses. In general, avoid this situation.	This feature must be disabled*, and* the monitor must be configured to remain on when the input signal is lost.
Use a comma after a dependent clause that starts a sentence.	*If a knob cover is damaged,* discard and replace it.
Use a comma before and after appositives. In general, avoid this situation.	The touchscreen*, the primary interface,* controls system parameters.
Use a comma between list items in a series when the series is included in one sentence (include an Oxford or serial comma).	The system includes the console, a footswitch, a handpiece or injector, and an automated (with the cart) or manual IV pole.
Use a comma when attributing quotes. In general, avoid this situation. **Note:** when ending a quote with a comma, include it before the ending quotation mark.	If the system displays*, "do not remove,"* do not eject the USB device.
Use a comma to separate elements in an address when on one line.	████████████████████████████ ████████

Technical Publications Style Guide

4 Styles and Formatting

Use the following guidelines to establish consistency and cohesion between content or documents. Use the Technical Publication templates for exact values of specific properties.

4.1 General Typography

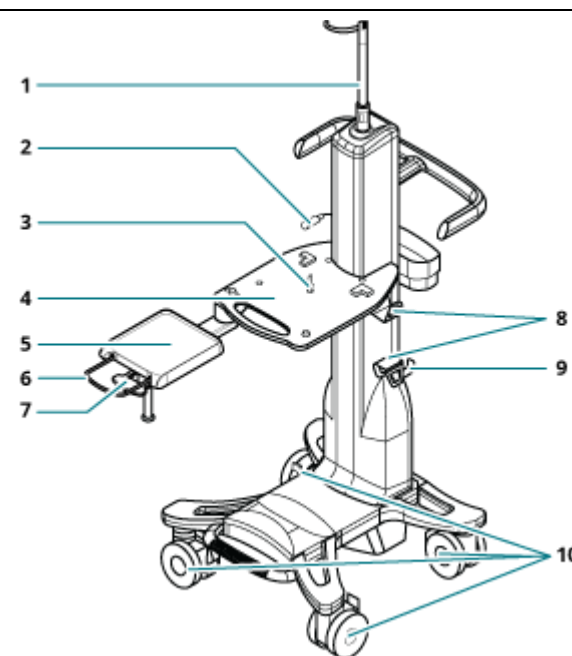| Guidelines	Example
Use legible typesetting.	Use a simple font family with a readable font size. Use contrasting background and font colors without them being too saturated or vibrant.
Do not use colors that directly contradict standardized safety color definitions.	Do not define red text as being safe if ANSI Z535.1, OSHA 1910.145, or ISO 3864-1 standards define it as not being safe.
Do not use the same styles and formatting for multiple purposes.	Do not use all uppercase letters for both acronyms and trademarks (unless the acronym is a trademark).
Avoid color schemes not specified by the Alcon branding guidelines.	N/A

4.2 Paragraphs

4.2.1 Alignment, Indents, Spacing, and Hierarchy

Guidelines	Example
Use block paragraphs distinguishable from each other.	Use flush left (ragged right) alignment, 20% leading between lines in a paragraph, >20% leading between paragraphs, no indent with the first line of the paragraph. For example, this is a second paragraph. The spacing between lines and paragraphs is different and there is not indent on the first line.

Use the same indent spacing between nested paragraph levels. However, the initial indent may be unique.	Level 0 = 0 spaces (initial indent)
	    Level 1 = 4 spaces
	        Level 2 = 8 spaces

Do not use more than 3 total indent levels.	• List marker = level 0; text = level 1 o List marker = level 1; text = level 2 (3 total)

Technical Publications Style Guide

5.4   Callouts and Leader Lines

Callouts are symbols or numbers identifying parts of a visual. Leader lines are strokes or lines establishing a connection between parts of a visual or callouts.

Guidelines	Example
Use callouts and leader lines obviously separate from the subject of the visual.	
Use legible callouts.	
Avoid text in images.	
Use minimal angles or changes in direction with leader lines.	
Avoid overlapping leader lines.	
Avoid non-sequential callout placement.	
Use a unique format for callouts and leader lines identifying parts or components.	
Avoid placing callouts in more than 2 directions from the image and avoid them being in adjacent directions (for example, place callouts to the left and right of an image rather than on the top and right).	
Avoid placing callouts different distances away from the envelope dimensions of the image subject (for example, place callouts 0.25″ from the furthest left point on the subject and 0.25″ from the further right point on the subject).	**Note:** This example uses the following values: - Callouts = Open Sans, 10 pt, bold, 100% black - Front leader lines = 1 pt, solid stroke, PANTONE 7474C, rounded corners and caps - Back leader lines = 3 pt, solid stroke, white, rounded corners and caps