



# Documentation Manual and Style Guide

DM-MAN-0001

Version 7, April 2023

Last Reviewed: April 2023

**This document applies to the following locations:**

ALX ☒	CHC ☒	DEN ☒	FLD ☒	LMG ☒	McM ☒	NBP ☒	PAL ☒	PTH ☒	PUQ ☒	SP ☒
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Prepared by the Antarctic Support Contractor  
for the  
National Science Foundation Office of Polar Programs

## Version History

DATA MANAGEMENT USE ONLY				
Version	Date	Section (if applicable)	Point-of-Contact / Editor	Change Details
1	April 2012	All	Tech Comm	RPSC version updated and revised.
2	July 2012	All	T. Bjokne	Updated document name, number and inserted "Style Guide" heading to accurately reflect doc type
3	August 2014	Pages 2-4	T. Bjokne	Removed legacy #TC-A-7000; Updated Remove Hidden Data section to reflect upgrade from Office 2003 to 2010 (page 2); Changed previous copyright and trademark requirements to be covered by disclaimer text on Version History page (Pages 3-4)
3	October 2015			Annual review – no changes
3	September 2016		T. Bjokne	Annual review – no intent changes; updated cover page with USAP logo and new contract language
3	August 2017		T. Bjokne	Annual review – no changes.
3	November 2017		T. Bjokne	Converted to new document number d/t creation of Data Management department; Previously TCOM-MAN-0001; minor content changes shown by change bars
3	October 2018	n/a	T. Bjokne	Annual review – no changes.
3	September 2019	n/a	T. Bjokne	Annual review – no changes.
4	November 2020	All	T. Bjokne M. Harrington	Annual review – Minor updates, added a glossary and references, fixed broken hyperlinks, brought formatting to latest standards
5	May 2021	All	J. Mastro	Minor corrections and updates to several sections.
6	July 2022		T. Bjokne	Minor corrections and updates to sections indicated by change bars.
7	April 2023		T. Bjokne	Added Authorities & Mandates section; minor updates throughout as indicated by change bars

**HARDCOPY NOT CONTROLLED – Controlled copy available via the USAP Master List, which holds the most recent versions of all documents.**

Approved by:

  
Signature

Tim Bjokne  
Print Name

25 April 2023  
Date

Data Management Manager

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## Purpose

This manual serves as a style reference tool for producing documents. The purpose is to ensure adherence to grammatical and mechanical conventions and bring a consistent style and appearance to all documents produced by the Antarctic Support Contractor (ASC).

## Authorities and Mandates

This document is provided to aid ASC in meeting the follow Performance Work Statement (PWS) items, as required by our contract with the National Science Foundation (NSF):

1.1.1.2.01-5 - The Contractor shall review and update and deliver each functional area's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for currency, accuracy, and consistency using standardized formats.

1.1.1.2.02-4 - The Contractor shall provide oversight and insight to operations, procedures, and processes to ensure compliance with all aspects of the ASC program requirements.

1.1.1.2.02-12 - The Contractor shall maintain a process library of ASC business policies, processes, and procedures that govern the way the contractor does business.

1.3.1.5.02-6 - The Contractor shall maintain IT&C Standard Operating Procedures documentation and store it in an electronic format accessible by the USAP.

1.3.1.8.01-3 - The Contractor shall document all processes as Standard Operating Procedures. Deliverable F006 – Management, Stand Operating Procedures and Preventive Maintenance (PM) Manuals

Additionally, ISO9001:2015 compliant organizations must ensure they:

- Approve documents for adequacy prior to issue;

- Review, update as necessary, and re-approve documents; and

- Identify the changes and current document revision status.

This manual provides instructions on meeting those ISO requirements.

## Scope

This guide applies to all documents produced at ASC, whether for internal use or external dissemination. This includes manuals, standard operating procedures (SOPs), plans, and reports. This guide does not apply to web content. For web content, refer to the *IT&C Multimedia Services Web Content Provider Manual* (IT-MAN-0904). Some external-facing documents are governed by Communications as indicated in *Publications* (COM-SOP-0002)

## Responsibilities

All ASC personnel who write or edit applicable documents are responsible for following the rules and guidelines contained herein.

## Templates

All ASC employees shall use the established templates when preparing documents. These templates contain all styles necessary to produce their respective document forms (e.g., plans and SOPs). To maintain ASC-wide consistency and professionalism in document appearance, document originators and editors shall use the templates and only the included styles. The templates are on the Master List under Data Management along with the *ASC Template Usage Instructions* (DM-WRK-0001), which describes the styles and sections of the templates.

## Document File Names

Unless otherwise directed, all file names on formal, completed, and approved documents should consist of the document number (if applicable). For example, DM-SOP-0003.docx. For more information on document numbering, refer to the *ASC Document Control SOP* (DM-SOP-0005).

For documents not assigned a control number, ASC recommends use the following conventions for file naming:

- No spaces, punctuation marks, or special characters are to be used in any file name. For example: @, #, \$, %, ^, &, \*, (, ), +.
- Select a name that is easily understood and definitive.
- Web pages or documents to be posted to the web should use camel case if two words are used in a file name. For example, (camelCaseExample.doc).

## Document Review and Corrections

All documents should be edited with Track Changes enabled (if using MS Word) to clearly indicate deleted text and new text. Avoid using Track Changes for minor changes (e.g., capitalization, punctuation, style) that do not change meaning, as excessive tracked changes clutter a document. If Track Changes is not available, be sure to indicate clearly where changes have been made. All changes to figures or tables should also be clearly indicated.

## Document Delivery Requirements

Documents destined for external delivery, such as to the NSF, shall be scrubbed of hidden data (comments, personal information, and content and formatting changes) and presented in an approved format, as described below. Document properties SHOULD be retained, and, if necessary, edited to be appropriate for a formal ASC document.

### Removing Hidden Data in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files

Use the Document Inspector to find and remove hidden data and personal information in Microsoft Office documents. It is a good idea to use the Document Inspector before sharing an electronic copy of a Word document, such as in an email attachment.

1. Open the file that needs to be inspected for hidden data and personal information.
2. Click the File tab, click Save As, and then type a name in the File name box to save a copy of the original document.

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**Note** IMPORTANT - It is a good idea to use the Document Inspector on a copy of the original document, because it is not always possible to restore the data that the Document Inspector removes.

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3. In the copy of the original document, click the File tab, and then click the Check for Issues button.
4. Under Prepare for Sharing, click Check for Issues, and then click Inspect Document.
5. In the Document Inspector dialog box, select the check boxes to choose the types of hidden content to be inspected.
6. Click Inspect.
7. Review the results of the inspection in the Document Inspector dialog box.

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**CAUTION** IMPORTANT - If hidden content is removed from the document, it might not be possible to restore it by clicking Undo. Keep this in mind before proceeding with step 8.

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8. Click Remove All next to the inspection results for the types of hidden content to remove from the document.

## Submission Formats

For all electronic/soft-copy submissions, convert documents to Adobe portable document format (PDF) before submission, unless otherwise requested by the recipient. If source files are required, submit them as Microsoft Office applications (Word, Excel, or PowerPoint) whenever possible.

When submitting documents or files via email, ensure the file size is within acceptable size limits for email transfer (less than 10 Megabytes (MB) to the stations or other locations; 5 MB if being sent to the United States Antarctic Program (USAP) research vessels). If it exceeds the limit, place the files on the secure file transfer protocol (sFTP) site for access by the recipient, or copy the files to a removable media device and send via United States (US) Mail or another delivery service.

All hard copy submittals shall be printed double sided unless otherwise requested by the recipient.

## ASC Style Guide

### Using Copyrighted Material and Trademarks

It is unlawful to reprint copyrighted material without permission from the owner, and all copyright infringement is subject to criminal investigation. Obtain permission to use copyrighted material, including graphics and product information, before using it in a document.

When requesting permission from a publisher or manufacturer, list the author, title, name of publication, and specific material of interest (entire paper, portions thereof, figures and/or tables). Also, describe how the material will be used and indicate the date by which a response is needed. Although copyright owners may sometimes require payment for the

use of their material, in most cases the only requirement will be to credit the original source.

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**Note** If there is any doubt regarding infringement, obtain written permission from the creator of the material. For further information, refer to the United States Copyright Office web site: [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).

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## Identifying Copyrighted Material

NSF owns all documents created for the USAP. Although copyright notices are no longer required under United States law, a copyright owner may request that one be added to any document containing the copyrighted material.

Include any copyright notices immediately following the title page on all reports, manuals, SOPs, and other documents. For short works, such as brochures, the notice can be placed on the first page. A copyright notice may not be required for forms. The notice should read:

Copyright © [date] [copyright owner]. All rights reserved.

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**Note** If the copyright symbol “©” is not available, substitute (C).

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When a work is revised, the notice should list the year of the most recent revision. If any of the contents of the original publication or intervening revisions still remain in the most recent revision, then the years of the original publication and of each of the intervening revisions should be included.

Example:

Copyright © 1996, 2001, 2002 Acme Corporation. All rights reserved.

If a document has been revised every year and material from all the intervening years between the first publication and the most recent revision are included, then the notice should look like the example below:

Copyright © 2000–2002 Acme Corporation. All rights reserved.

All documents shall include the following notice:

“This publication may contain copyrighted material, which remains the property of the respective owners. Permission for any further use or reproduction of copyrighted material must be obtained directly from the copyright holder.”

## Trademarks

The three elements to every trademark or service mark are symbol, descriptor, and notice.

**Symbol.** The symbol is either the TM for an unregistered trademark, SM for an unregistered service mark, or ® for a registered trademark or service mark.

**Descriptor.** The descriptor is the noun or phrase that follows the brand name.

Trademarks should always be used as adjectives and never as nouns or verbs. Trademarks should never be pluralized or used in the possessive form. Over time, non-adjectival uses of trademarks can result in common use of a generic



term or a finding of unintentional abandonment — even when such use emanates from the public rather than a trademark owner. For this reason, the owners of trademarks such as Coke®, Xerox®, and FedEx® expend considerable efforts to educate the public concerning their proper use.

To ensure that a trademark is used in proper adjectival context, follow each use with the generic noun for the product identified. For example, generic terms for the trademarked products and services mentioned in the preceding paragraph are soft drink, photocopier, and overnight courier service. Using these terms after the trademarks makes them adjectives rather than nouns. Most companies delineate on their web sites what the descriptors are for each of their products. For an example, see:

[www.microsoft.com/en-us/legal/intellectualproperty/trademarks/usage/general.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/legal/intellectualproperty/trademarks/usage/general.aspx)

**Notice.** The notice tells readers to whom the trademark belongs. Most companies delineate on their web site how they want the notices to read.

Example:

Symbol: Kleenex®

Descriptor: Kleenex® facial tissue

Notice: Kleenex® is a registered trademark of Kimberly-Clark Corporation.

If using a company name, logo, or phrase that is a registered trademark, the following rules apply:

- Use the company name, logo, or phrase as trademarked.
- Include an all-encompassing trademark statement at the beginning of the document (such as “*All brand and product names remain the trademarks of their respective owners.*”) or a specific statement at the bottom of the page on which the trademark is referenced.
- Use the trademark name, logo, or phrase as an adjective, not a noun or verb:
  - Wrong: After printing the page, Xerox it.
  - Right: After printing the page, photocopy it.
  - Wrong: Use the Xerox to make a copy.
  - Right: Use the Xerox photocopier to make a copy.
- Use the singular form of the trademark name, logo, or phrase. Using the plural or possessive form does not protect the trademark:
  - Wrong: Use the provided MS PowerPoint.
  - Right: Use the provided MS PowerPoint presentation.
  - Wrong: Microsoft’s products.
  - Right: Microsoft Corporation’s products.

Check company web sites to obtain the correct trademark symbols and to adhere to any special standards outlined by that company. In all other cases, follow *The*

*Chicago Manual of Style* guidelines when referencing commercial products and other items requiring attribution or permissions.

If the symbols for trademark and service mark are not available, substitute (R), (TM), and (SM).

For more information about trademarks, go to the United States Patent and Trademark Office web site at [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov).

## Document Structure

The ASC templates provide styles for all document structural elements, such as headings, body text, and lists (both bulleted and numbered).

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**Tip** To use template heading, paragraph, bullet, list, title, and other styles consistently throughout a document, Data Management recommends turning on and using the Styles pane and the Format Painter tool. Both of them make it much easier to align and format a document correctly from the start and create a table of contents that will work correctly. Ask a technical editor how to access these tools.

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See below for additional information on specific elements.

### Indentation

Use the appropriate style to indent text so it aligns with the associated heading.

### Lists

Use lists for a long series of items or a series of three or more items that need emphasis. Below are some general rules:

- Use a colon to introduce a list when the sentence preceding the list contains such anticipatory words as “the following” or “as follows.”
- Do not use a colon to introduce a list if the list itself completes the thought begun in the introductory phrase, i.e., if the introductory phrase and the list form a complete sentence.
- Capitalize the first word of each item in a list, unless the listed items and introductory phrase form a complete sentence.
- End items in a list with periods if at least one item is a complete sentence.
- Do not end items in lists with periods if the items and introductory phrase form a complete sentence. In this case, end each item with a semicolon and end the second-to-last item with a semicolon followed by “and.” End the final item with the appropriate punctuation (usually a period).
- Ensure all list items are parallel in structure (e.g., begin with the same grammatical element [noun, verb, adjective]). Verbs should be the same tense.

To create a list that completes the thought begun in the introductory phrase, the writer should

- omit the colon in the introductory phrase;
- begin each line with a lowercase letter;

- add a semicolon to the end of each line;
- end the second-to-last line with a semicolon and the word “and”;
- use the appropriate punctuation at the end of the last line; and
- make sure each line is grammatically parallel.

## Tables

Tables provide a clear and concise way to present large amounts of data in a small space. Whenever possible, organize tables to fit on a single page. When a table must carry over for more than one page, repeat complete column headings at the top of successive pages. The table number and title should be repeated at the top of the next page as well. To do this, the table number and title must be placed in the first row of the table and included as one of the heading rows.

Give tables a number and title. Number tables consecutively, in a separate series from other graphic elements and in order of their reference in the text (example: table 1, table 2, table 3). Per the *Chicago Manual of Style*, reference tables in the text with the lowercase word “table” followed by the number (example: “see table 1”). If referring to two or more tables in the same sentence, name each table separately. For example, use “see table 1, table 2, and table 3,” not “see tables 1 through 3.”

A caption for a table, if required, should immediately precede the table to which it belongs. If using an ASC template, use the TableTitle style to create it. This will ensure it will appear in a List of Tables if one is used in the document. If the text in the caption is required reading, it should also appear in the body of the document.

## Figures and Graphics

Number figures, pictures, and other graphics consecutively, in a separate series from tables and in the order of their reference in the text (example: figure 1, figure 2, figure 3). Hyphenated numbers shall not be used except in documents of considerable length.

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**Note** Labeling the first figure in a section with the section number followed by the consecutive figure number in that section (example: figure 6-1, figure 6-2, etc.) will require modifications to the figure styles. Please contact a technical editor for assistance if this is needed.

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Per the *Chicago Manual of Style*, reference a figure, picture or graphic in the text with the lowercase word “figure” followed by the number (example: “see figure 1”). If referring to two or more figures in the same sentence, name each separately. For example, use “see figure 1, figure 2, and figure 3,” not “see figures 1 through 3.”

If a caption is used, it should immediately follow the figure to which it belongs. If using an ASC template, use the Figure style to create it. This will ensure it will appear in a List of Figures if one is used in the document. If the text in the caption is required reading, it should also appear in the body of the document.

## Photo Captions

Photo captions can be sentence fragments or complete sentences. Strive for consistency within a single document or web page. If photo captions are sentence fragments, they should not end with punctuation. If they are complete sentences, they should end with the appropriate punctuation. Captions should employ sentence-style capitalization and should be written in present tense. If photos contain more than one person, indicate who's who as follows (note proper capitalization and punctuation).

Examples:

- Left to right: John Doe, Jane Smith, and Bob Johnson
- Front row, left to right: John Doe, Jane Smith, and Bob Johnson

If individuals pictured in photos are senior leaders, their titles should follow their names. Titles following names should be lower case, except for the company chairperson and CEO.

Examples:

- John Jones, Chairman and CEO, Acme Company
- Dawn Smith, president, IDS, welcomes customers.
- John Doe, software program manager, opens the forum.
- Jane Doe, director of Business Development, chats with a customer.

If photos contain more than one person and include senior leaders, semicolons should separate each individual.

Example:

- Left to right: Dan Smith, president, IDS; John Doe, software program manager; and Jane Doe, director of Business Development

## Notes, Cautions, and Warnings

Notes, cautions, and warnings are explanatory statements used in the text to offer informative suggestions or tips, for added emphasis, or to ensure the safety of personnel or equipment. From a functional standpoint, the document should be complete without these statements. Cautions and warnings are included to mitigate risks to people, equipment, or both. Notes are included to provide further detailed explanation or background on a particular topic or process.

In most cases, cautions and warnings should appear before the text to which they refer. Deviating from this standard should be the exception rather than the rule. Notes can be placed either before or after the statements to which they refer.

## Grammar and Usage

When writing documents, use clear and concise language. Avoid the temptation to write “officialesque” — stuffy, official-sounding language with lots of ten-dollar words, noun strings, and prepositional phrases (“of” this, “of” that). Instead of “prior to” use “before.”

Instead of “for the implementation of” use “to implement.” Instead of “at this point in time” use “now.”

Use the same term throughout the document or series of documents to designate a given concept, and avoid giving that term multiple meanings. Use consistent references, particularly when using acronyms.

### **Active Voice**

Use active voice as much as possible. While there are times when using passive voice is preferable, such instances are rare. Active voice is clearer, more concise, and more authoritative than passive voice.

#### Passive Voice Examples:

These phenomena have been studied by scientists for years to understand them better.

This sentence was written by someone using passive voice.

#### Active Voice Examples:

Scientists study the same phenomena for years to understand them better.

Someone wrote this sentence using active voice.

The latter sentences are easier to understand and shorter. Both attributes improve the readability of any document.

### **Gender-neutral Language**

In order to reflect changing practices in language usage, use generic titles (such as “chair” or “chairperson” rather than “chairman”). See another example in the Second Person section below. The following practices shall apply in cases where either gender may apply:

When writing in the third person, the phrase “he or she” should be used. The male or female pronoun alone or the variations “he/she” or “s/he” shall not be used. The plural pronoun “they” and plural possessive pronoun “their” may be used as singular pronouns, especially if referring to a position rather than a specific individual. If a particular sentence becomes cumbersome when “he or she” is used, the sentence should be rewritten in the plural or completely rewritten to avoid using pronouns, perhaps by replacing the gender-specific terms with the position title (e.g., mechanic, technician, fuels supervisor, etc.).

The indefinite pronoun “one” should also be avoided. In referring to a company, the pronoun “it” and not “we” or “they” should be used.

### **Language Patterns to Avoid**

#### Words Ending in –ion

Words such as “prioritization” and “implementation” are typically overused and tend to clutter up a document. They also frequently lead to prepositional phrases, which further thickens the prose and makes the document difficult to read. Using active voice will help reduce overuse of these words.

### “Verbization”

Avoid the urge to turn nouns into verbs by adding “-ize” to the end. Although “prioritize” and “incentivize” have entered the lexicon through constant use, it is better to say, “establish priorities” and “create incentives.” In any case, further, awkward “verbizations,” such as “systemitize” and “abilitize” should be avoided.

### Second Person

The second-person form of address (you) should be avoided in documents (e.g., “You should avoid working on lines from which a shock or slip will tend to bring your body toward exposed wires.”) This should be rewritten to identify the addressee, as follows:

“Employees should avoid working on lines from which a shock or slip will tend to bring their bodies toward exposed wires.”

### **Acronyms and Idioms**

Spell out acronyms on first use, and place the acronym in parentheses after the complete term. Thereafter, it is appropriate to use just the acronym. If the acronym does not appear again in the text, it is not necessary to include the acronym. If the term consists of only two words, do not create an acronym. To avoid confusion, try not to use too many acronyms or abbreviations in any one sentence or paragraph.

When spelling out the acronym, only capitalize the words in the series if they would be capitalized under normal circumstances (e.g., do not capitalize them just because together they form an acronym).

Examples:

During his presentation, John Smith discussed Edison Chouest Offshore (ECO). ECO owns and operates the research vessel icebreaker (RVIB) *Nathaniel B. Palmer* (NBP) and Antarctic research and supply vessel (ARSV) *Laurence M. Gould* (LMG).

During his presentation, John Smith discussed standard operating procedures (SOPs). The SOPs will be completed later this fiscal year.

Include a glossary for those terms and acronyms that cannot be found in a standard dictionary or in the *USAP Glossary* ([link](#)). If an acronym is not listed in a dictionary or the *USAP Glossary*, submit the acronym to the Help Desk for inclusion in the glossary. Please include the full name and an explanation of the acronym, if available. Another acronym resource can be found here: [www.acronymfinder.com](http://www.acronymfinder.com).

### **Abbreviations**

Avoid alphabet soup, e.g., the overuse of abbreviations. If abbreviations must be used, make sure the meaning is unquestionably clear to the reader. Spell it out on first use, followed by the abbreviation or acronym itself in parentheses. Exceptions include abbreviated titles before a full name and approved International System of Units designations (e.g., m for meter, kg for kilogram).

## ***Junior and Senior***

Abbreviate junior and senior as Jr. and Sr. only with full names of persons or animals. Do not precede the abbreviation with a comma, e.g., Joseph P. Smith Jr.

## ***Academic Degrees***

Academic degrees are noted as BA, BS, MS, MFA, MD, PhD, etc. (without periods), and they follow the individual's full name, never just a last name. When used after a name, an academic abbreviation is set off by a comma.

Examples:

John Smith, PhD, spoke at the event.

We listened to John Smith, PhD.

Do not precede a name with a courtesy title for an academic degree and follow it with the abbreviation for the degree.

Example:

Incorrect: Dr. Pam Jones, PhD.

Correct: Dr. Pam Jones, a chemist.

If mentioning the degree in running text, avoid an abbreviation altogether and use a phrase. The words doctorate, bachelor's, master's and associate are not capitalized. (Note that it is "associate degree," not "associate's degree.")

Examples:

He has a doctorate in electrical engineering.

She earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics.

He has a master's degree in computer science.

She has an associate degree in technical writing.

## ***Geographic Place Names***

The abbreviation for the United States is US. The abbreviation for the United Kingdom is UK. Spell out the names of the 50 U.S. states when they stand alone in text. Place one comma between the city and the state name and another comma after the state name, unless it ends a sentence.

Use state of Washington or Washington State when necessary to distinguish the state from the District of Columbia. Spell out state names when used with the names of cities, counties, towns or villages, unless they are in a list, table, or notes. When abbreviating, follow US Postal Service codes for state name abbreviations.

Example:

He moved to Washington State after living for one year and three months in Washington, D.C.

Albany, NY; Boston, MA; Honolulu, HI

## Capitalization

Avoid unnecessary capitalization. Use capitalization to identify proper nouns (names or designations of particular persons, entities, places, or things). Do not use capitals to convey emphasis (e.g., random capitalization).

Example:

Incorrect: The Manager of the Laboratory was the first person on the scene.

Correct: The manager of the laboratory was the first person on the scene.

Capitalize specific regions of the country (East Coast), but not directions (east). Capitalize the proper names of planets, but use lowercase for the sun and moon (Earth, sun, and moon). Do not capitalize spring, summer, fall, autumn, or winter. Capitalize the days of the week, but do not abbreviate, except when in a tabular format: Sun., Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs., Fri., Sat. Spell out months on first use, and then abbreviate if necessary as Jan., Feb., Mar., etc.

Capitalize titles in front of a person's name. Do not capitalize titles following a person's name.

Examples:

Integrated Defense Systems President Dan Smith

Dan Smith, president, Integrated Defense Systems

## Composition Titles

Capitalize the principal words in titles of books, journals, movies, songs, television programs, and works of art, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters. Capitalize articles — the, a, an — or prepositions and conjunctions of fewer than four letters if they are the first or last word in a title. Note that these titles should always be in italics.

Examples:

*The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*

*Gone With the Wind*

*Of Mice and Men*

If a hyphenated word or phrase appears in the title of a journal or magazine article, always capitalize the first element. Capitalize any subsequent elements, unless they are articles, prepositions or coordinating conjunctions. If the first element is merely a prefix that could not stand by itself as a word, do not capitalize the second element unless it is a proper noun or proper adjective. Do not capitalize the second element in a hyphenated, spelled-out number.

Examples (note that article titles are not normally presented in italics):

Research Team Proves Successful With Ground-Based Radar

Anti-icing Solution Proves Effective

Smith Turns Fifty-five Today



## **Government**

Capitalize “US Congress” and “Congress” when referring to the US Senate and House of Representatives. Use lowercase for the word “government” (e.g. the federal government, the state government, the US government). Capitalize president only as a formal title before one or more names, but capitalize president when referring to the President of the United States.

Examples:

President Reagan; Presidents Ford and Carter; the president of the company

## **Symbols**

Do not use symbols (&, +, =, #, w/, @, etc.) in place of words unless they are part of the official term. Symbols that are appropriate to use include: @ in email addresses, and ®, ™, and © when appropriate.

## **Web Addresses**

Do not include the final forward slash in web addresses.

Examples:

Incorrect: [www.usap.gov/](http://www.usap.gov/)

Correct: [www.usap.gov](http://www.usap.gov)

## **Common Usage Errors**

### About Versus On

People make presentations about something, not on something, unless it is a stage. Similarly, people learn more about something, not on something.

Examples:

The Human Resources manager spoke about our benefits package.

Employees can learn more about their benefits during the workshop.

### Affect Versus Effect

“Affect” is usually a verb meaning “to influence.” “Effect” is usually a noun meaning “result.” “Effect” can also be used as a verb meaning “to cause.”

Examples:

This game will affect the standings.

This test will measure the effect of temperature and other environmental conditions.

He will effect many changes within the company.

### Assure, Ensure, and Insure

You assure people by making them feel more confident that things will go well. Ensure means “to make sure.” To insure something is the business of an insurance company.

Examples:

John assured us that the project was on schedule.

John ensured the project remained on schedule by allocating more resources.

John insured the widget for \$500,000.

#### Compared To Versus Compared With

Use “compared to” to assert that two or more items are similar. Use “compared with” when citing two or more items to illustrate similarities and/or differences.

Examples:

The secretary compared the failures in missile defense testing to those experienced in the early days of the space program.

Compared with the Gulf War Patriot missile, today’s Patriot is similar in name only.

#### Compose Versus Comprise

The difference between “compose” and “comprise” is best illustrated by example:

That company is composed of six businesses.

Six businesses comprise that company.

#### During Versus Over

Use “during,” not “over,” to signify the passage of time.

Example:

During the last year, Shea noted general improvement in the quality of press releases.

#### Farther Versus Further

Use “farther” to indicate distance and “further” to indicate time or quality.

Examples:

The first weather balloon flew farther than the second.

The reason will require further investigation.

#### It’s Versus Its

These two forms are commonly misused. It’s is a contraction for “it is” or “it has.” “Its” is the possessive form of the neuter pronoun.

Examples:

It’s up to you.

It’s been a long time.

The company has achieved its goals.

### More Than Versus Over

“More than” relates to numbers. “Over” indicates a physical position.

Example:

The company has more than 50,000 employees.

The bird flew over the house.

### Principal Versus Principle

“Principal” is a noun and adjective meaning “someone or something first in rank, authority, importance, or degree.” It may also refer to the primary quantity of a debt, minus the interest. “Principle” is a noun meaning “fundamental truth, law, doctrine or motivating force” or “a scientific law that explains a natural action.”

Examples:

She is the school principal. He was the principal engineer on the project.

They fought for the principle of self-determination.

### That, Which, and Who

“That” and “which” are commonly misused. They are not interchangeable. “That” is best reserved in essential (restrictive) clauses, whereas “which” is appropriate in nonessential (nonrestrictive) or parenthetical clauses. Simply stated, if the clause is essential to the meaning of a sentence, use “that” without a comma. If removing the clause does not alter the essential meaning of the sentence, use “which” with a preceding comma. When writing about people, use “who” (not “that” or “which”).

Examples:

Defining the inputs and outputs provides a better understanding of the steps that are necessary to complete the process.

These are the bottles that fell yesterday.

The team, which finished last a year ago, is now in first place.

The leader of the team, who is standing in the front row, will be speaking first.

### Safe or Safety

Generally, it is preferable to avoid the use of the word “safe” unless the condition or practice referenced has been tested under all cases as being, in fact, safe. Typically, this is not the case. Thus, unless it can be demonstrated that such condition or practice is completely safe, the word should not be used. Words such as “safer” or “safest” can be used in a relative context, if such conditions can be demonstrated to be the case. For example, it is proper to say that one set of conditions or practices is safer than another, or that it is safer to employ a certain practice than not in a given situation. It is best not to use the term “safest” if it implies an absolute condition. However, in a relative context, “safest” can be used. Avoid the word “safety” to address a set of conditions or practices that do

not clearly establish safety in all the situations that the conditions or practices may be conducted.

Examples:

It is safer to use insulated tools than non-insulated ones.

Though it is not without risk, this technique is the safest out of all those that were tested.

The following safety considerations should be reviewed before implementation.

#### Shall, Must, Will, Should, May, and Can

The word “shall” is used to indicate mandatory requirements strictly to be followed and from which no deviation is permitted (“shall” equals “is required to”). The word “must” shall not be used when stating mandatory requirements. “Must” is used only to describe unavoidable situations. The word “will” also shall not be used when stating mandatory requirements. “Will” is only used in statements of fact.

The word “should” is used to indicate that among several possibilities, and without mentioning or excluding the others, one is recommended as particularly suitable (“should” equals “is recommended that”). “Should” is also used to indicate that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required; or that (in the negative form) a certain course of action is not approved but not prohibited.

The word “may” is used to indicate a course of action permissible within the limits of the document (“may” equals “is permitted”).

The word “can” is used for statements of possibility and capability, whether material, physical, or causal (“can” equals “is able to”).

#### Different

Different takes the preposition “from,” not “than.”

Example:

SPSM is different from SPST.

#### Include

Use “include” and its derivative “including” when only part of the total is intended. If the list is complete, it is superfluous to say “include” or “including.” Use “comprise” or “composed of” when the full list is given.

Examples:

The team included Communications.

The team is composed of NSF, NASA, and the Scripps Institute of Oceanography.

NSF, NASA, and Scripps Institute of Oceanography comprise the organizations on the team.

### Impact

“Impact” can be used as either a noun or a verb, although it is generally better to use it as a noun. It is also better to specify the nature of the impact.

Examples:

Not as good: This event will impact the program for the next several years. (The reader has to guess if the impact is positive or negative.)

Better: This event will have a negative impact on the program for the next several years.

### Et Cetera

Etc. is the abbreviated form of et cetera (“and other things”). It should never be used to reference people. “Etc.” implies that a list of things is too extensive to recite. Often, however, writers tend to run out of thoughts and tack on “etc.” for no real purpose. Before using “etc.”, think about whether most people would be able to finish the list based upon their own experience. Also, it is redundant to use “etc.” and “including” in the same sentence, as they both imply a partial list.

## **Number Representations**

### **Units of Measure**

When referring to scientific data, and whenever practical in documents intended for an external audience, use metric units followed by Imperial units in parentheses. For example: *13 km (8 miles)*. (For conversion formulas, refer to the National Institute of Standards and Technology at [physics.nist.gov/cuu/Units](https://physics.nist.gov/cuu/Units).)

When dictated by US industry standards, such as in construction measurements and food service recipes, use Imperial units. Also use Imperial units when referring to the purchase, shipment, or storage of goods within the USAP (example: *12,850 gallons of fuel*) unless metric units are specifically required, (e.g., items purchased in New Zealand or Chile). Use Imperial units in all documents created for use within the USAP when referring to human height and weight, clothing sizes, and vehicle speeds.

Spell out units of measure when not accompanied by numbers.

Example:

The new film was several nanometers thicker than the previous one.

Define units if they might confuse readers. Spell out the term first and follow it with the abbreviation in parentheses. Thereafter, the abbreviated term can be used.

Examples:

250 hectares (ha)

Five 10-gallon (gal) containers

When abbreviating units of measure, use a space to separate the abbreviation from numerals.

Examples:

900 W/m<sup>2</sup>

43 cm

60 Hz

**Exceptions:** When expressing degrees [temperature], percent, prime numbers, degrees [geography], minutes [geography], and seconds [geography], *The Chicago Manual of Style* observes no space between these quantities.

Examples:

17°C, 98.6°F

26°11'35"

8.2%

6'4"

## Date and Time

When writing dates, use the format “day-month-year.” When using just the month and the year, do not use a comma between them.

Examples:

4 January 2005, 4 Jan. 2005

January 2005, May 2005

If using a numeric date, apply the following US style: 02/23/2009 (for unambiguous clarity, use a two-digit month, two-digit day, and four-digit year). Use military time (24-hour clock) unless the project specifically requires other styles.

Examples:

Lunch is served from 1200 - 1300.

Lunch is served from 1200 to 1300 hours.

## Numbers, Money, and Fractions

Spell out the numbers one through nine. Use numerals for all numbers 10 and greater. In a series, apply the appropriate guidelines. To indicate depth, height, length and width, and when using terms such as million and billion, use numerals in all cases. Use a comma to separate thousands in large numbers.

Examples:

They had 10 dogs, six cats, and 97 hamsters.

I bought a 40-inch television yesterday.

The contract was for \$2 million.

4,500 (not 4500)

Spell out a number at the beginning of a sentence. If necessary, recast the sentence. There is one exception: a number that identifies a calendar year should not be spelled out. Spell out fractional amounts less than one.

Examples:

Incorrect: 67 freshmen entered the college last year.

Correct: Sixty-seven freshmen entered the college last year.

Correct: Last year 67 freshmen entered the college.

1994 was a good year.

Two-thirds

### Money

Use a dollar sign (\$). Do not use a decimal point with whole dollar amounts. For dollar amounts more than a million, round off to one decimal point unless the exact amount is essential. Write out the words “million” or “billion.” Do not use M or B.

Correct: The contract was for \$2 million.

Examples (if a manual costs \$65.54):

Incorrect: The new training manual costs \$66.00 to purchase.

Correct: The new training manual costs \$65.54 to purchase.

Correct: The new training manual costs \$66 to purchase.

### Percents

Spell out the word percent. Do not use the percent symbol (%) except in scientific or technical text. Do not spell out the number. Do not use a hyphen if a number and percent appear before a noun.

Examples:

9 percent (not “nine percent”)

54 percent

Incorrect: 9-percent raise

Correct: 9 percent raise

## **Punctuation**

This guide is not inclusive of all common grammar conventions. If there is a question, refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style* or contact Data Management.

## Commas

Use commas to indicate pauses in text, as when speaking and taking a breath, but be careful not to overuse them. Commas are most often used in series and to separate certain clauses from the main sentence.

### Series

Use commas to separate items in a series. Note that the convention is to separate the last item in a series with a comma before the “and.” This comma is sometimes referred to as the Oxford comma. Not doing so implies that the last two items should be considered as one, which is only appropriate in some cases.

Example:

The flag is red, white, and blue.

The main points to consider are whether the athletes are skillful enough to compete, whether they have the stamina to endure the training, and whether they have the proper mental attitude.

I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast.

### Introductory Words, Phrases, or Clauses

Use a comma to separate an introductory clause or phrase from the main clause. The comma may be omitted after short introductory phrases if no ambiguity would result.

Examples:

When he had tired of the mad pace of New York, he moved to Dubuque.

During the night he heard many noises.

### Nonessential Clauses and Phrases

Nonessential (nonrestrictive) clauses and phrases are those that can be eliminated without altering the meaning of the sentence. They should be set off by commas.

Examples:

Indian corn, or maize, was harvested.

The report, which was well written, failed to convince the client.

### Independent Clauses

An independent clause is one that can stand by itself as a sentence. They are usually joined to the main sentence by a conjunction (e.g., and, but, or, yet), with a comma preceding the conjunction. If the independent clause is short and closely connected to the main clause, the comma can be omitted, unless confusion would result and unless the clause is part of a series.

Examples:

The distinguished visitors landed at 1100 hours, but no one met them.

The carpenters decided to take a break and the foreman agreed.



### Adjective Strings

Use commas to separate strings of adjectives that are equal in rank. If a comma could be replaced by “and” without changing the meaning, the adjectives are equal. Do not use a comma when the last adjective before a noun outranks its predecessors because it is an integral element of a noun phrase, which is the equivalent of a single noun.

Examples:

a thoughtful, precise manner

a dark, dangerous street

a cheap fur coat, the old oaken bucket

### Dialogue and Quotes

Commas always go inside closing quotation marks.

Example:

“The problems we are having with the project,” John said, “are not new.”

### Duplicate Words

Use a comma to separate duplicated words that otherwise would be confusing.

Example:

What the problem is, is not clear.

### **Periods**

Use a single space after a period at the end of a sentence, not two. This is particularly important in two-column documents, where two spaces following periods may leave a “river” of white running through the text.

### **Colons and Semicolons**

Colons and semicolons were originally used to designate pauses shorter than a period and longer than a comma. Whenever possible, replace a colon or semicolon with a comma or break the sentence into two separate sentences.

#### Colon

The most frequent use of a colon is at the end of a sentence to introduce lists, tabulations, and quotes. Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence.

Examples:

His lunchbox contained three items: a sandwich, an apple, and a bottle of water.

She had four favorite places to visit: France, her mom’s house, Sedona, and Quebec.

He promised this: The company will have a successful fourth quarter.

#### Semicolon

Use a semicolon to separate independent clauses within the same sentence. A semicolon used in this way generally indicates that the two clauses share a close association. A simple test is this: If a period can be used to start a new sentence, then a semicolon can be used. Semicolons are also used to separate items in a series that contain commas.

Examples:

The package was due last week; it arrived today.

Waltham, MA; Merrimack, NH; and Albany, NY

## Ellipses

Ellipses are used to indicate the deletion of one or more words when condensing quotes, texts, and documents. Avoid deletions that would distort the meaning. A space typically follows the ellipsis, unless the sentence ends with a quotation mark. When a sentence ends at an ellipsis, use a period or other appropriate punctuation as shown below. Punctuation using ellipses can be complex; refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style* for more detail.

Example:

Much work remains to be done. . . . We will continue . . . until it is finished.

## Exclamation Points

Use an exclamation point to express a high degree of surprise, incredulity, or other strong emotion. Exclamation marks are used sparingly, if at all, in formal business documents.

## Parentheses

Parentheses are used to enclose information that is incidental and not imperative. If a sentence must contain incidental material, then commas or two dashes are frequently more effective. Use parentheses sparingly.

## Slashes

Use a slash (/) to mean “or” between words. Do not use a slash to represent the words “to” or “between.”

Examples:

yes/no

Incorrect: man/machine interface; Raytheon/Lockheed Martin partnership

Correct: man-machine interface; Raytheon-Lockheed Martin partnership

## Dashes

### em Dashes

Long dashes, called em dashes (—), are less formal but more emphatic substitutes for other punctuation marks. Treat an em dash like a word. Place a space before and after it. To preserve the impact of dashes, avoid overusing them. Also, avoid using more than one pair of em dashes in a sentence.

em dashes have three main uses. First, use an em dash to explain, justify, or stress in the second part of a sentence something in the first part.

Examples:

The new bridge will open Tuesday — if the paving is finished.

The project was finished on time, within scope — and under budget.

The manager was new to the agency — brand new.

Second, use a pair of em dashes to make an emphatic pause or abrupt, parenthetical change in thought within a sentence.

Example:

The change — coming after 10 months of discussion — is effective Aug. 1.

Third, use a pair of em dashes to set off a phrase that has a series of words separated by commas.

Example:

James Hansen described the qualities — intelligence, initiative, and assertiveness — that he wanted in a manager.

### en Dashes

A short dash, called an en dash (–), may be used to mean “up to and including” when placed between numbers, times, dates, and other uses that indicate range. Do not put spaces before or after an en dash.

Examples:

1993–96

\$20–\$40

\$340,000–\$370,000 (but \$20 million to \$35 million)

55–65 years

1:30–4 p.m. (but 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.)

ages 25–30

pages 145–63

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**Note** A hyphen (–) is not a dash. Most current desktop publishing and design software can create em dashes and en dashes. If this is not possible, use two hyphens to create an em dash and substitute a hyphen for an en dash.

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### **Hyphens**

Hyphens are joiners. Use them to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words. When unsure about hyphenating a word, consult a dictionary.

### Doubled Vowels and Tripled Consonants

Generally, hyphenate a word if the prefix ends in e and the main word begins with e. Hyphenate also when other vowels are doubled-up, or when consonants are tripled-up. Examples: *re-edit*, *pre-eminent*, *anti-intellectual*, *shell-like*

### Strings of Words

Hyphenate strings of words or commonly used phrases.

Example:

*The presentation won the best-in-class award.*

### non-

For consistency, hyphenate words that use “non” as a prefix. Example: *non-emergency*, (*not non emergency*)

### Compound Modifiers

When a compound modifier — two or more words that express a single concept — precedes a noun, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound.

Exceptions: Do not hyphenate the adverb *very* and all adverbs that end in *-ly*.

Examples:

low-altitude flight

a well-known man

a very good man

an easily remembered man

**Exceptions:** The phrases “fixed wing [aircraft, pilot, etc.]” and “rotary wing [aircraft, pilot, etc.]” are written without a hyphen to conform to current aviation industry practices.

Many combinations that are hyphenated before a noun are not hyphenated when they occur after a noun.

Examples:

The plane flew at a low altitude.

The radar scanned a wide range.

### **Suspensive Hyphenation**

When the second part of a hyphenated expression is omitted, the hyphen is retained, followed by a space.

Example:

He received a 10- to 20-year prison sentence.

### **Quotation Marks**

Commas, periods, and exclamation marks go inside quotation marks. A question mark generally goes inside the quotation mark, unless it applies to the whole statement. Colons and semicolons go outside quotation marks.

Examples:

“The problems we are having with the project,” John said, “are not new.”

John said, “I have never worked on this product.”

Shea said, “The N.Y. Rangers will win the Stanley Cup”; however, Shea is often wrong.

Shea said, “Will they ever get it right?”

Did Shea say, “They got it right”?

## Apostrophes

Apostrophes generally indicate missing letters in contractions. Avoid contractions in formal writing, such as legal documents, white papers, proposals, or other external documents. Contractions are acceptable for pieces that are more conversational in tone, such as web site articles, email, and some employee newsletters. Apostrophes are also used to make nouns possessive.

Example:

The cat’s bed was covered in fur.

Plural nouns ending in -s are made possessive by adding an apostrophe to the end. If the plural does not end in -s, then add an apostrophe plus -s. Examples: *cars’*, *children’s*

A single letter is made plural by adding an apostrophe plus s. Example: *a’s*

Acronyms, abbreviations and numerals are made plural by adding “s” without an apostrophe. Example: *CBTs*

An apostrophe can be used for omitted figures. However, do not include an apostrophe when referencing decades.

Examples:

The spirit of ‘76

The roaring ‘20s (not the roaring ‘20’s)

1960s (not 1960’s)

Do not use apostrophes in place of quotation marks to set off words or phrases. A quotation inside a quotation is the only place to use single quotation marks.

Examples:

Incorrect: The word ‘it’ is often overused.

Correct: The word “it” is often overused.

Jane said, “I was there when Tom said ‘Don’t do that.’”

## Records

This document generates no records.

## References

### Internal Documents

*ASC Document Control* (DM-SOP-0005)  
*ASC Form Template* (TCOM-TMP-0005)  
*ASC Guide Template* (TCOM-TMP-0007)  
*ASC Letterhead Template* (DM-TMP-0007)  
*ASC Manual Template* (TCOM-TMP-0009)  
*ASC Plan Template* (TCOM-TMP-0002)  
*ASC Policy Template* (TCOM-TMP-0010)  
*ASC Report Template* (DM-TMP-0007)  
*ASC SOP Template – un-numbered headings* (TCOM-TMP-0003)  
*ASC SOP Template – numbered headings* (TCOM-TMP-0003)  
*ASC Work Instruction Template* (TCOM-TMP-0008)  
*ASC Template Usage Instructions* (DM-WRK-0001)  
*External Document Cover Page* (TCOM-TMP-0012)  
*IT&C Multimedia Services Web Content Provider Manual* (IT-MAN-0904)

### External Documents

*Chicago Manual of Style* (17<sup>th</sup> Edition)

## Glossary

Refer also to the list of approved terms at [den.usap.gov/empresources/sctnglossary.cfm](https://den.usap.gov/empresources/sctnglossary.cfm)

<b>ARSV</b>	Antarctic Research and Supply Vessel
<b>ASC</b>	Antarctic Support Contract
<b>CD</b>	Compact Disc
<b>DVD</b>	Digital Video Disc
<b>ECO</b>	Edison Chouest Offshore
<b>FTP</b>	File Transfer Protocol
<b>LMG</b>	<i>Laurence M. Gould</i>
<b>MB</b>	Megabytes
<b>NBP</b>	<i>Nathaniel B. Palmer</i>
<b>NSF</b>	National Science Foundation
<b>PDF</b>	Portable Document Format
<b>RVIB</b>	Research Vessel Icebreaker
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>USAP</b>	United States Antarctic Program