

# Writing Style Guide

The goal of writing is to convey a message that the reader understands. As you write on behalf of DGS, write in a clear, concise and consistent manner – this minimizes distractions and helps your message get through. To unify writing style across the department, this Writing Style Guide is to be used when writing or editing all departmental documents and correspondence. It is produced by the Office of Public Affairs. Contact us at [dgspublicaffairs@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:dgspublicaffairs@dgs.ca.gov).

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Other Helpful Resources	
DGS Correspondence & Format Guide	<a href="http://inside.dgs.ca.gov/dgsnet/resources/CorrespondenceGuide.aspx">http://inside.dgs.ca.gov/dgsnet/resources/CorrespondenceGuide.aspx</a> (Under “Featured Links” on DGS intranet home page)
The Associated Press (AP) Stylebook	<a href="http://www.apstylebook.com">www.apstylebook.com</a>
Merriam-Webster Dictionary	<a href="http://www.merriam-webster.com">www.merriam-webster.com</a>

Official Titles Specific to DGS
These are the preferred formats for these names. Also see <b>titles</b> .
GovOps (when using the abbreviation for California Government Operations Agency)
Director Daniel C. Kim (not “Dan Kim”)
Secretary Marybel Batjer
Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. (note: no comma preceding “Jr.”)

## SECTION 1: Style

### Simplicity

First, it's the law: Government agencies are to "write each document . . . in plain, straightforward language, avoiding technical terms as much as possible, and using a coherent and easily readable style" ([California Government Code Section 6219](#)).

- The most effective writing is clear, concise, and accurate.
  - *Don't:* The manager wants to swiftly expedite the correspondence to the outlying offices in a manner by which they will all be received at the same time.
  - *Do:* The manager would like outlying offices to receive the correspondence simultaneously on Sept. 9.
- The more clearly something is explained, the easier it is to understand. The easier something is to understand, the less likely it is to be misunderstood.
  - *Don't:* The truck delivered materials to the job site made of granite.
  - *Do:* The truck delivered the granite materials to the job site.
- Do not clutter your writing with unnecessary words. The better the explanation, the briefer the sentence. Fewer words are better.
  - *Don't:* The release of the accounting report will be delayed until December due to the fact that figures have been reported incorrectly, resulting in unexpected additional work.
  - *Do:* Due to unforeseen delay, the accounting report will be released in December.
- Use definite, specific, concrete language. Avoid general, vague, or abstract language.
  - *Don't:* It is widely regarded as the industry standard for multifunction printers.
  - *Do:* In July 2015, 72 percent of U.S. offices surveyed indicated their preference for the Acme 1000 multifunction printer due to its ease of use and output speed.
- Aim to use the active voice, rather than passive, whenever possible.
  - *Don't:* The order fulfillment goals were met.
  - *Do:* The team fulfilled its goals for order fulfillment.

## SECTION 2: General usage

<b>abbreviations</b>	Do not use abbreviations, even those commonly used or known within DGS. Assume your audience is unfamiliar with abbreviated terms.			
<b>acronyms</b>	Do not use an acronym if the entity is mentioned only once within a document. In long documents, such as reports, when an acronym is used throughout the document, state the full name/title and the acronym at its first reference in each section/subsection of the document—use your judgment, depending upon the length of the document. <b>Avoid using acronyms in a title, heading, or subject line in correspondence.</b>			
	Acronyms may be used once the full name/title has been cited.			
	<i>Example:</i> Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE)			
	Do not overuse acronyms because they can confuse, distract or frustrate the reader.			
	<i>Example:</i> According to DGS officials, PD's OSDS reported that...			
	<i>Instead:</i> According to Department of General Services officials, the Procurement Division's Office of Small Business and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Services reported that...			
	<b>Articles with Acronyms</b>			
	<b>Do not</b> include an article ("a," "an," or "the") preceding an acronym.			
	<i>Examples:</i> DSA provides construction oversight.  Auditors examined records provided by DGS.			
	<b>Plural Forms of Acronyms</b>			
	To make an acronym plural, simply add a lowercase "s" (no apostrophe):			
	<i>Examples:</i> BCPs, EIRs, GBIs			
	To form the singular possessive of an acronym, add an apostrophe plus "s." To form the plural possessive, add an "s" plus an apostrophe to the singular form.			
	<i>Examples:</i>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Singular</b> DMV's records</td> <td><b>Plural</b> PMs' reports</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Singular</b> DMV's records	<b>Plural</b> PMs' reports
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		OIG's budget	ALJs' rulings
	For singular acronyms that end in the letter "s," simply add an apostrophe after the acronym to indicate possession.		
	<i>Example:</i> DGS' policies		
<b>apostrophe</b>	Use an apostrophe and "s" to signify possessive nouns that are singular or plural.		
	<i>Examples:</i> I'll be a monkey's uncle.  The children's toys were quite expensive.		
	If the plural possessive noun ends in "s" or an "s" or "z" sound, then use only an apostrophe.		
	<i>Example:</i> The players' jerseys need to be replaced.		
	<b>Do not</b> use an apostrophe in plurals of figures and characters.		
	<i>Examples:</i> 1990s, Schedule 10s, 607s		
<b>bullets and enumerated items</b>	<p><b>Bullets</b></p> <p>Always use the Microsoft Word bullet function to create bullets. Adding spaces or tabs to create bullets can cause editing or accessibility problems.</p> <p>The sentence preceding a bulleted list should be complete and end with a colon, and always capitalize the first letter of each bullet.</p> <p>Place periods after independent clauses (complete sentences) or long phrases that follow bullets. Do not use commas or semicolons.</p> <p><b>Do not</b> use conjunctions (and, or, nor) on the second-to-last bullet.</p>		
	<p><i>Example:</i> The department should take the following steps in addition to those it has already taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute written procedures to guide staff in the activities listed above.</li> <li>• Ensure that its employees use appropriate records to calculate distributions.</li> <li>• Distribute promptly all funds collected from the assessment.</li> </ul>		
	<b>If a list consists of short phrases</b> composed of two or three words only, do not place any punctuation (comma, semicolon or period) after the entries.		

	<p><i>Example:</i> We examined the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial statements</li> <li>• Statistical reports</li> <li>• Computer-generated spreadsheets</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Enumerated items</b></p> <p><b>Within a sentence:</b> Use parentheses to enclose numbers or letters that accompany enumerated items within a sentence.</p>
	<p><i>Example:</i> We need the following information to complete your travel expense claim: (1) the cost of the hotel, (2) the cost of the airfare, and (3) the actual time of travel.</p>
	<p><b>In a displayed list:</b> If the enumerated items appear on separate lines, the letters or numbers are followed only by periods. (Follow the same rules as with bullets, above, regarding initial capitalization and punctuation after the enumerated items themselves.)</p>
	<p><i>Example:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yellow highlighters</li> <li>2. Pencils and pens</li> <li>3. Notebook and paper</li> </ol>
<b>bold type</b>	See <b>emphasis</b> .
<b>capitalization</b>	In general, avoid unnecessary capitalization. This guide addresses many words and phrases individually in Section 3: Specific Usage.
	ALL CAPS: Use sparingly for titles and headings only.
<b>commas</b>	Do not use a comma to separate three or more items in a <b>simple</b> series:
	<p><i>Example:</i> The office of Fleet and Asset Management auctioned jewelry, tools and tires.</p>
	Use a comma before the conjunction (and, or) in a <b>complex</b> series:
	<p><i>Example:</i> Today Office of Public Affairs staff handled a public information records request with an approaching deadline, an inquiry from a TV news station for today's broadcast, and a newspaper reporter's question pertaining to the drought.</p>
<b>dash</b>	Dashes are sentence punctuations that set off the material within them or following them. Do not leave spaces before or after.

	<i>Example:</i> My favorite cars—Mercedes, Porsche, and Jaguar—are all expensive.
	<i>Note:</i> Microsoft Word can be configured to automatically convert two hyphens (without spaces before or after) to an em dash (as shown in the above example) by using the autocorrect function.
<b>date</b>	<b>When the full date is within a sentence</b> , use a comma after the day and after the year.
	<i>Example:</i> As of July 22, 2006, the program was without funds.
	<b>When using the date as an adjective</b> , do not use a comma after the year.
	<i>Example:</i> Thank you for your Feb. 20, 2007 letter requesting public records on the law enforcement vehicle contract.
	<b>When used with a specific date</b> , abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec.
	To refer to a particular date, do not use ordinal numbers (e.g., 1st, 2nd, 3rd).
	<i>Example:</i> We began the audit on March 3. <i>Not:</i> We began the audit on March 3rd (or third).
	When only the month and year are within a sentence, do not use a comma to separate them. Use a comma after the year only if it comes at the end of an introductory or parenthetical phrase.
	<i>Examples:</i> January 2007 was a wet month.  The January 2007 report specified the active programs.  The report, issued in January 2007, specified which programs were active.  In January 2007, the report specified which programs were active.
<b>emphasis</b>	Avoid using underlined text. In the past when typewriters were used, underlining was the only tool available for emphasis. Today we avoid underlining because we have the option of using boldface, italics, and varied point sizes.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bold text can <b>shout</b>.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Italicized text can <i>whisper</i>.</li> <li>• To add emphasis to headings and subheadings, change the font size or the typeface for visual contrast.</li> </ul>						
<b>font</b>	<p>The standard font for DGS is a sans serif font no smaller than 11 points. Examples of sans serif fonts are: Arial, Calibri, Helvetica and Universal.</p> <p>Sans serif fonts do not contain the extra finishing lines on each letter. Examples of serif fonts (do <b>not</b> use) are: Times New Roman, Courier and Palatino.</p> <p>Use ALL CAPS sparingly; reserve for titles and headings.</p>						
	<b>Readability</b> , the ease with which extended printed text can be read, can be hampered by too much special formatting. Whenever a feature (such as a special font) becomes noticeable, the text becomes slightly less readable. Well-formatted, readable text is perceived as more professional and credible.						
	Decorative and script fonts should be avoided for official correspondence.						
<b>fractions</b>	Spell out a fraction that stands alone (without a whole number preceding). Use a hyphen to separate the numerator and the denominator.						
	<i>Example:</i> The governor is proposing a one-half cent sales tax increase.						
	Use figures to express a mixed number or if the spelled-out form is awkwardly long.						
	<i>Examples:</i> A fixed-rate mortgage for 30 years is 5 3/8 percent.  I believe that the measurement was 5/32 inches.						
<b>hyphen</b>	<b>A compound adjective</b> consists of two or more words that function as a unit and express a single thought. Hyphenate the elements of a compound adjective that occur before a noun. Do not hyphenate compound adjectives in which the first word is “very” or ends in “-ly.”						
	<table border="0"> <tr> <td><i>Examples:</i></td> <td>a high-ranking official</td> <td>community-based organizations</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>same-day service</td> <td>well-known book</td> </tr> </table>	<i>Examples:</i>	a high-ranking official	community-based organizations		same-day service	well-known book
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	Whenever necessary, use a hyphen to prevent one word from being mistaken for another.						

	<i>Examples:</i>	lock the coop buy a co-op	multiply by 12 a multi-ply fabric	a unionized factory an un-ionized substance
	Hyphenate between numbers and units of time when used as adjectives before a noun.			
	<i>Examples:</i>	one-year period	three-hour course	12-day seminar
	In general, <b>do not</b> use a hyphen to set off a prefix at the beginning of a word or suffix at the end of a word.			
	<i>Examples:</i>	nonfederal	copay	businesslike
	<i>Exceptions:</i>  In most cases, if the word following a prefix begins with a vowel and the prefix ends in a vowel, use a hyphen to separate them:			
	<i>Examples:</i>	re-examine	multi-utility	pre-eminent
	<i>But:</i>	reallocate	coeducation	preapprove
	Hyphenate a prefix or suffix if the word following the prefix is capitalized:			
	<i>Examples:</i>	post-Civil War	pre-Roman	un-American
<b>internet addresses</b>	When referencing an internet or email address in a document or correspondence, use lowercase letters (no bold, all caps, italics, or underline). Exception: when a hyperlink in an electronic document or web text causes the URL to be underlined. Also, do not use " <a href="http://">http://</a> " unless it is required to find the correct site (as is often the case with secure sites, as in " <a href="https://">https://</a> ").			
	<i>Example:</i> www.dgs.ca.gov			
	<i>Note:</i> Names of files to be posted on DGS websites should be no longer than 20 characters, contain no special characters (e.g., # & ! ?), and should have underscores in place of spaces. Various tools exist online to shorten web links.			
<b>italics</b>	See <b>emphasis</b> .			
<b>numbers</b>	Whole numbers nine and under should be spelled out; numbers 10 and above should be in figures.			
	<i>Examples:</i> The department hired eight new inspectors in October.			

	Our four sons consumed a total of 18 hamburgers, five large bottles of Diet Coke, 12 Dove bars, and about 2,000 cookies—all at one sitting.	
	<b>Spell out</b> a number that appears at the beginning of a sentence.	
	<i>Example:</i> Twenty-eight filing cabinets were lost in the fire, but 15 resisted the flames.	
	When possible, rephrase the sentence so that it does not begin with a number, especially a number that requires more than two words.	
	<i>Example:</i> The fire destroyed 28 filing cabinets, but 15 resisted the flames. <i>Exceptions:</i> See <b>dimensions and measurements</b> within this section and the <b>percent/percentages</b> section.	
	<b>Nouns with numbers or letters:</b> Capitalize a noun followed by a number or a letter that indicates sequence. Use a space between the noun and number.	
	<i>Examples:</i>	Appendix I Exhibit A Room 234 Chapter V Extension 4567
	<i>Exceptions:</i> <b>Do not</b> capitalize the following nouns: line, note, page, paragraph, size, step, and verse (e.g., note 1, page 344, paragraph 2a).	
	<b>Ordinal numbers:</b> Spell out numbers one through nine for ordinal numbers that designate place in a sequence.	
	<i>Examples:</i>	1614 Ninth St. the second claimant the 21st century 20th-century art
	<b>Decimal numbers:</b> Do not add a zero to whole numbers after the decimal point.	
	<i>Example:</i> The budget provides \$13.6 million, \$4 million, and \$8.7 million for funding these programs.	
	<b>Dimensions and measurements:</b> Always use numbers to indicate depth, height, length, width, temperature, clock time, age, and any other measurements that have technical significance. This rule applies even to	

	measurements that include the numbers one through nine. Also, spell out the words that denote units of measurement.		
	<p><i>Examples:</i> The package weighed 7 pounds 3 ounces.</p> <p>(No commas needed between the units of measurement.)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Because he is 7 feet 2 inches tall, the director must duck under some doorways.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The 7-foot-2-inch director played college basketball.</p>		
	<i>Note:</i> Hyphens are used in the compound modifier “7-foot-2-inch.”		
	<b>Cent notations in text:</b> For amounts under a dollar, use figures and the word “cents.”		
	<i>Example:</i> The Motor Vehicle Fuel License Tax Law also applies an excise tax of 2 cents per gallon on aircraft jet fuel sold at the retail level.		
	<b>Dollar notations in text:</b> Write dollar notations in text as follows:		
	<i>Examples:</i>	thousands	\$487,000 (Round up or down as appropriate without a decimal.)
		millions	\$3.4 million (Round to one decimal place. However, do not add a zero to whole numbers after the decimal point.)
		billions	\$9.796 billion (Do not write as \$9,796 million.)
	To prevent misunderstanding, place the word <i>million</i> , <i>billion</i> or <i>trillion</i> after each figure in a pair or group:		
	<p><i>Example:</i> Assessments increased from \$3 million to \$6 million.</p> <p><i>Not:</i> Assessments increased from \$3,000,000 to \$6,000,000.</p>		
<b>parentheses</b>	<b>If the item in parentheses falls within a sentence</b> or at the end of a sentence, put punctuation outside the closing parenthesis. Do not capitalize the first word of the item in parentheses, even if the item is a complete sentence, except for proper nouns, proper adjectives, the pronoun “I,” and the		

	first word of a quoted sentence.
	<p><i>Examples:</i> For Jane there is only one goal right now (and you know it): getting promoted!</p> <p>At last week’s hearing (I had to leave at 4 p.m.), was the new proposal presented?</p> <p>Our office is open late on Thursdays (we’re here until nine).</p>
	<b>If the item in parentheses is to be treated as a separate sentence</b> , the preceding sentence closes with a punctuation mark, the item in parentheses begins with a capital letter, and the punctuation mark is placed before the closing parenthesis.
	<i>Example:</i> I was most impressed with the speech given by the former governor. (Didn’t he once star in movies?) He knew the subject matter and the audience.
	<b>When a parenthetical element falls within another parenthetical element</b> , enclose the smaller element in brackets and enclose the larger element in parentheses.
	<i>Example:</i> Scalzo said on television yesterday that prices would begin to fall sharply. (However, in an article published in <i>The New York Times</i> [May 15, 2006], he was quoted as saying that prices would remain steady for the foreseeable future.)
<b>percent/ percentages</b>	Always express percentages in numerals, including numbers from 1–9. Always spell “percent” in text, do not use the % symbol.
	<p><i>Examples:</i> Mortgage rates increased from 6 percent to 7 percent.</p> <p>The county expects to receive a 25 percent increase in reimbursements.</p>
	<i>Note:</i> Do not hyphenate a percentage, even when used as a compound modifier as in the second example above.
	It is acceptable to use a percent symbol (%) in the data labels in a spreadsheet, table or chart.
	<b>Fractional percentages</b> should be presented in numeric form.
	<i>Examples:</i> 1.1 percent, 10.3 percent

	<i>Note:</i> For fractions of 1 percent, add a zero before the decimal: 0.8 percent.
<b>period</b>	Use one space, not two, after the period at the end of a sentence.
<b>phone numbers</b>	Write phone numbers in the following format:  (916) 555-1234
<b>quotation marks</b>	<b>Periods</b> and <b>commas</b> always go inside the closing quotation mark.
	<i>Examples:</i> The price tag on the leather sofa was clearly marked “Sold.”  Their latest article, “Scanning the Future,” will appear in next month’s issue of <i>Inc. Magazine</i> .
	<b>Question marks</b> and <b>exclamation points</b> go inside the quotes only when they are part of the actual quote.
	<i>Examples:</i> Mindy announced, “I love chocolate!”  Did you hear Bill say, “I’m going home”?
	<b>Semicolons</b> and <b>colons</b> always go outside the closing quotation mark.
	<i>Example:</i> Please send me the following items from the file labeled “In Process”: the latest draft of the Berryman agreement and FASB Statement 33.
	For guidelines on referencing books, magazines, TV shows and movies, see <b>titles of periodicals, books, movies and TV shows</b> .
<b>slash</b>	Use slashes sparingly; reworking the sentence or using a hyphen often works better than a slash.  <b>Do not use spaces</b> around a slash.
	<i>Example:</i> The operators are available 24/7.
	Also, do not use a slash to indicate a set of years, such as 2014/15. Use a hyphen instead.
<b>titles of periodicals, books, movies and TV shows</b>	<b>Italicize titles</b> of magazines, journals and newspapers.
	<i>Examples:</i> Scrooge McDuck appeared on the cover of <i>Fortune</i> .

	<p>An article about our controversial report appeared on the front page of <i>The New York Times</i>.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Do not capitalize the article “the” at the beginning of a title unless it is an official part of the title.</p>
	<p><b>Place quotation marks</b> around titles of shorter works, including chapters, articles and essays, as well as books, movies and television or radio shows.</p>
	<p><i>Examples:</i> H.W. Janson discusses urban planning and renewal in “Twentieth-Century Architecture,” the final chapter in his highly regarded “History of Art.”</p> <p>The Sunday newspaper carried an article titled “It Takes a Bureaucratic Village.”</p> <p>Our public television station has decided to broadcast “This Old House” every weekend.</p>
<b>tabs</b>	<p><b>Never use spaces</b> instead of tabs. You will never be able to accurately align text that is indented with spaces. What you see on the screen probably won’t be what prints out. For instructions, simply type “set tabs” into the Microsoft Word Help function.</p>
	<p><b>Never use periods</b> for leaders. (Leaders are the dotted lines often used in a table of contents between the name of the item and its page number.) Microsoft Word allows you to set leaders in your tab or table of contents setup.</p>
<b>time</b>	<p>Use numerals except for “noon” and “midnight.” Do not include minutes unless necessary.</p>
	<p><i>Example:</i> We are meeting at 11 a.m.</p>
<b>underline</b>	<p>See <b>emphasis</b>.</p>
<b>URL</b>	<p>See <b>internet addresses</b>.</p>
<b>web/website</b>	<p><b>Lowercase and one word:</b> web, website, webcam, webcast, webfeed, webmaster and webinar are expressed as one lowercased word, except at the beginning of a sentence. <b>Lowercase and two words:</b> web address, web browser.</p>
	<p><b>Uppercase:</b> World Wide Web.</p>
	<p>For guidance on how to write website names, see <b>internet addresses</b> in this section.</p>

## SECTION 3: Specific usage

<b>a vs. an</b>	Use “an” when the next word begins with a vowel sound. Use “a” when the next word begins with a consonant sound.		
	<i>Examples:</i>	an hour	an elephant
		a box	a car
<b>ad hoc</b>	A Latin phrase meaning “for a particular purpose.”		
<b>administration</b>	Lowercase when referring to the governor’s, president’s, or any official administration.		
	<i>Example:</i> The administration will propose to spend \$3.8 million.		
<b>agency/department/commission/board</b>	Capitalize complete names of entities, but do not capitalize when using “the agency,” “the department,” “the commission” or “the board” in reference to a specific entity already referenced by its full name. Alternately, an acronym may be used on second reference.		
	<p><i>Examples:</i> The Department of Education has completed the move of its headquarters.</p> <p>The department is now located on the first floor.</p> <p>The California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) is considering new building codes.</p> <p>The CBSC will meet in room 1-A, but the meeting will be available via webcast.</p>		
	Also lowercase when referring to agencies/departments/commissions/boards in general terms.		
	<p><i>Examples:</i> All departments should verify their STD. 65s and submit them to their DGS procurement analyst.</p> <p>Each agency will produce a report detailing energy usage.</p>		
<b>affect vs. effect</b>	Use <b>affect</b> as a verb and <b>effect</b> as a noun. As a verb, <b>affect</b> means to influence or change as well as to pretend or assume.		
	<i>Examples:</i> Implementation of our recommendations will not affect [change] the agency’s organizational structure.		

	He affects [assumes] an innocent manner.
	As a verb, <b>effect</b> means to cause or bring about.
	<i>Example:</i> The director intends to effect many changes in the department.
	As a noun, <b>effect</b> indicates a result or impression.
	<i>Example:</i> We could not assess the full effect of the automated system.
<b>afterward</b>	Not “afterwards.”
<b>alot</b>	Incorrect term; use “a lot.”
<b>alright</b>	Incorrect term; use “all right.”
<b>although vs. while</b>	Both words introduce dependent clauses.  Use <b>although</b> to mean “even if.”  Use <b>while</b> to mean “during the time that” and to suggest a temporal relationship.
	<i>Examples:</i> Although it had suffered budget cuts, the department could have managed its programs more effectively.  While contractors were installing the new computer system, the department had difficulty running its programs.
<b>among vs. between</b>	Use the preposition <b>among</b> when referring to more than two persons or things; use <b>between</b> when referring to two persons or things.
	<i>Examples:</i> The grant divides the funds among the three agencies.  We tried to distinguish between the two adults.
<b>Assembly Member</b>	Two words, both capitalized when preceding a name (or when a specific person is implied). Use instead of Assemblyman or Assemblywoman.  Also see <b>political affiliation</b> .
<b>assure vs. ensure vs. insure</b>	“Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition” discusses these verbs’ connotations:
	<b>Assure, ensure, and insure</b> all mean “to make secure or certain.”

	<p><b>Assure</b> refers to persons, and it alone has the sense of setting a person’s mind at rest: <i>to assure a leader of one’s loyalty.</i></p> <p>All three verbs may be applied to the act of making something certain: <i>Success is assured (or ensured or insured).</i></p> <p><b>Ensure</b> and <b>insure</b> also mean to make secure from harm: <i>to ensure (or insure) a nation against famine.</i> Only <b>insure</b> is now widely used in the sense of guaranteeing life or property against risk.</p>
	<p><i>Note:</i> Use <b>ensure</b> (rather than <b>insure</b>, which often indicates action related to the insurance industry) to mean “the taking of necessary measures beforehand.”</p>
<b>because vs. since</b>	<p>Use <b>because</b> to point to an obvious cause-effect relationship, and reserve <b>since</b> to denote temporal relationships or a logical sequence of events in which time plays a part.</p>
	<p><i>Examples:</i> We conducted the audit because the Joint Legislative Audit Committee asked us to do so.</p> <p>Because our report revealed so many fiscal errors, the agency decided to reorganize its operations completely.</p> <p>We have examined no additional files since we reviewed those documents last Wednesday.</p> <p>Since we have been here, the crowds have scattered.</p>
<b>Bills</b>	<p><b>Bills</b> are capitalized when referring to a specific bill. Upon second and subsequent references, bill names may be abbreviated as “SB 14” or “AB 15.”</p>
	<p><i>Examples:</i> Senate Bill 14 and Assembly Bill 15 were both signed today.</p> <p>The information is contained in Assembly Bill 45.</p>
	<p>When bills are not used as a proper name, the word “bill” is lowercased.</p>
	<p><i>Examples:</i> The Assembly bill language was received today.</p> <p>We believe the program will be implemented through a Senate bill.</p>
<b>branch (executive, judicial, legislative)</b>	<p>These terms are not capitalized.</p>

<b>Budget Act</b>	Budget Act of XXXX should be followed by the Chapter (i.e., Budget Act of 2004, Ch. 324, Stats. 2004).
	<b>When referring to a legislative bill</b> , cite year of legislation (SB 120 of 20xx). Once a bill has become a law, always use the statutory citation rather than the bill number. However, you may also use the following reference:
	<i>Example:</i> Chapter 1145, Statutes of 1996 (SB 350), allows state employees to have the day before Christmas off.  Also see <b>Bills</b> .
<b>Budget Bill, Governor’s Budget</b>	These terms are always capitalized.
	<i>Examples:</i> We should receive the Budget Bill language later this afternoon.  The Governor’s Budget has provided for new preschool programs.
	Do not capitalize “budget” when it is used as an adjective or if not part of a title such as Governor’s Budget, Budget Bill, or Budget Act.
	<i>Examples:</i> The downward trends were carried into the budget year.  The Department of General Services’ budget will be released Friday.  The state budget was enacted before the deadline.
<b>California code sections</b>	Capitalize when citing a specific code.
	<i>Example:</i> Government Code Section 6251 is the California Public Records Act.
<b>California Constitution</b>	Capitalize this formal title. Use Roman numerals to designate articles both outside and within parentheses.
	<i>Example:</i> Article III, Section 3 of the California Constitution
	Within parentheses, use “Cal.” before abbreviation “Const.”
	<i>Example:</i> (Cal. Const., art. III, § 3.)*
<b>California Regulations</b>	Use unabbreviated name, title, and section. Capitalize “Title” and “Section.”

	<i>Example:</i> California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Section 1183				
	Within parentheses, use name and title abbreviations followed by a comma and section symbol before regulation section number.				
	<i>Example:</i> (Cal. Code Regs., Tit. 2, § 1183.)*				
	<i>Example:</i> (80 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 203 (1997).)				
	<i>Note:</i> To make a section symbol in Microsoft Word, select the “Insert” tab at the top of the page, then “Symbol,” and “More Symbols.” Select the “Special Characters” tab, then “§” symbol, and press “Insert.”				
<b>capital vs. Capitol</b>	Use <b>capital</b> when referring to assets that add to a long-term net worth.				
	<i>Example:</i> The company experienced capital gains in its stock.				
	Use <b>Capitol</b> only when referring to a state Capitol building, the U.S. Capitol building or Capitol Hill.				
	<i>Example:</i> The governor is located at the Capitol office.				
<b>cash flow</b>	Two words.				
	<i>Example:</i> The department projected a positive cash flow for the year.				
<b>City and County</b>	Capitalize only when they are part of a proper name or formal title:				
	<i>Examples:</i>	Kansas City	The city of Sacramento		
		Yuba County	The county board of supervisors		
<b>citywide</b>	One word, no hyphen.				
<b>co</b>	This prefix usually needs no hyphen unless the hyphen is necessary to prevent misreading or the dictionary shows the word spelled with a hyphen.				
	<i>Examples:</i>	coauthor	cofounder	cooperation	coworker
		co-officiate	co-organize	co-op	co-payment
<b>cost-saving</b>	Hyphenate <b>cost-saving</b> when it functions as an adjective.				
	<i>Example:</i> The department is taking cost-saving measures.				
<b>cost savings</b>	<b>Cost savings</b> is a compound noun, not requiring a hyphen.				

	<i>Example:</i> We analyzed the cost savings that resulted from the agency's actions.
<b>countrywide</b>	One word, no hyphen.
<b>countywide</b>	One word, no hyphen.
<b>departmentwide</b>	One word, no hyphen.
<b>directions</b>	Lowercase north, south, northeast, western, etc. when indicating compass direction, but capitalize when referring to specific geographical areas.
	<i>Examples:</i> They live in the Midwest. He is a Southern congressman. <i>But:</i> Chicago is east of Kansas City.
<b>e.g. vs. i.e.</b>	Latin words and phrases. <b>e.g.</b> means "for example" and <b>i.e.</b> means "that is." Both should always be followed by a comma.
<b>email</b>	Short for electronic mail; expressed in lowercase, except at the beginning of a sentence. There is no hyphen between "e" and "mail."
<b>entitled, titled</b>	This refers to the right to do or have something. Do not use it to mean "titled."
	<i>Examples:</i> You are entitled to two tickets for the event. The article was titled "How to Get Ahead."
<b>et al.</b>	Latin abbreviation that appears in the titles of legal documents, court cases, or other types of documents meaning "and other people." Follow with a period.
<b>executive order</b>	Capitalize only when preceding the name of a specific executive order. Upon second and subsequent references, executive orders may be referred to as "EO B-18-12."
	<i>Examples:</i> Executive Order B-18-12 establishes mandates for green buildings. The governor will be signing a new executive order related to the drought.
<b>federal</b>	Capitalize only when part of a name or title.
	<i>Example:</i> They are from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

	<b>Do not</b> capitalize federal in other uses.
	<i>Example:</i> The federal government requires state agencies receiving block grants to submit yearly reports on the use of the grants.
<b>fieldwork</b>	Noun: one word.
	<i>Example:</i> The officers completed their fieldwork in a timely manner.
<b>fiscal year, personnel year, prior year, current year, budget year</b>	When referring to fiscal year, use “fiscal year 200X-0X” when first used in your narrative. Do not refer to fiscal years thereafter with the terminology “fiscal year,” simply refer to as “200X-0X.”
	<b>Do not use the abbreviation</b> FY in the narrative. It is acceptable to use “FY” in tables and charts.
	<i>Note:</i> References to the turn-of-the-century fiscal year 1999-2000 will be reflected traditionally as “1999-00.”
	Reference to current year, budget year, personnel year, or prior year should be spelled out in the narrative. <b>Do not</b> use their abbreviations (CY, BY or PY).
<b>full-time, full time</b>	As an adverb or compound adjective: hyphenate.
	<i>Example:</i> Leonard has a full-time job.
	<i>But:</i> He could not sustain his music career full time.
<b>funds</b>	General Fund: initial caps.  special funds or federal funds: lowercase unless a specific fund name is cited.
<b>General Fund/general fund</b>	Capitalize references to the state’s General Fund; lowercase references to any other entity’s general fund.
<b>governor</b>	Lowercase unless it precedes the name of a governor.
	<i>Example:</i> The historic California recall election in 2003 replaced Governor Davis with Governor Schwarzenegger.
<b>Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.</b>	Please note the way Governor Brown prefers his name to be written in formal documents (note no comma before “Jr.”).
<b>governor’s office</b>	Lowercase.
<b>groundwater</b>	One word.

<b>health care</b>	As a compound adjective or noun: two words.
	<i>Examples:</i> The company offers comprehensive health care insurance. John wanted a career in health care.
<b>home page</b>	Two words, lowercase.
<b>internet</b>	Lowercase.
<b>intranet</b>	Lowercase.
<b>Item</b>	Capitalize when referring to a specific budget item number.
	<i>Example:</i> Special funding is provided in Item 4260-333-1212. This item will be included in the 2007-08 Governor’s Budget.
<b>irregardless</b>	Not a word; use “regardless.”
<b>it’s, its</b>	The word “it’s” is the contracted form of “it is.”
	<i>Example:</i> It’s a sure bet that Doug will be late for the interview.
	<b>The possessive</b> form of “it” is “its” (no apostrophe).
	<i>Example:</i> When we checked the file cabinet, we discovered that someone had tampered with its lock.
<b>legislation</b>	<b>When citing new legislation</b> and/or legislative changes, identify the statutory authority (Chapter xx, Statutes of 20xx). If the legislation was introduced in an extraordinary session, add the session after the statutes (Chapter xx, Statutes of 20xx, First [Second, Third, etc.] Extraordinary Sessions). After referencing the citation (i.e., Chapter xx, Statutes of 20xx), it is not necessary to restate the full citation; simply refer to it as “chapter.”
	<i>Example:</i> Chapter xx, Statutes of 20xx, provides for a general salary increase. Specifically, this chapter states that all Department of Finance employees should receive a 10 percent cost-of-living adjustment.
<b>Legislature</b>	Capitalize at the beginning of a sentence or when preceded by the name of a state. Retain capitalization when the state name is dropped but the reference is specifically tied to that state’s legislature, as well as in subsequent specific references and in such constructions as: <i>the state Legislature</i> .

	<i>Examples:</i> California Legislature  Both houses of the Legislature adjourned today.	
<b>lie vs. lay</b>	Lie means “to rest or recline.”  Variations: lie(s), lay, lain	Lay means “to put or place something down.”  Variations: lay(s), laid
<b>life cycle</b>	Two words.	
<b>legal case/decisions</b>	Cite a specific legal case or decision in italics.	
	<i>Example:</i> The arbitration panel awarded \$1 million in attorney fees for the case of <i>Smith v. Claus</i> .  <i>Note:</i> Always use “v.” rather than “vs.” when citing a legal case.	
	<b>California Court of Appeal Decisions</b>  <i>Example:</i> <i>Department of Finance v. Commission on State Mandates</i> (2009) 170 Cal.App.4th 1355	
	<b>California Supreme Court Decisions</b>	
	<i>Example:</i> <i>Haynie v. Superior Court</i> (2001) 26 Cal.4th 1061	
	<b>Attorney General Opinions</b>	
	Use volume, page, and year.	
<b>login, logon, logoff</b>	Two words as a verb, one word as a noun.	
	<i>Examples:</i> Please log off the computer.  I forgot my login name.	
<b>long-term, long term</b>	As a compound adjective: hyphenate.	
	<i>Example:</i> We have a long-term plan for accomplishing our mission.	
	As the object of a preposition: two words.	
	<i>Example:</i> Your solution will not work for the long term.	

<b>multi</b>	This prefix usually requires no hyphen unless the following word begins with an “I” or the entire word could be misread.			
	<i>Examples:</i>	multicolor	multifaceted	multipurpose
		multi-industry	multi-ply	
<b>nationwide</b>	One word, no hyphen.			
<b>non</b>	This prefix usually requires no hyphen unless a capitalized word follows:			
	<i>Examples:</i>	nonessential	noncompliance	
		nonfederal	non-American	
<b>off-site, on-site</b>	Both terms are hyphenated when used as an adjective or adverb.			
<b>one-time, onetime</b>	Adjective: hyphenated (meaning having been only once).			
	<i>Example:</i>	Jesse Ventura was a one-time governor.		
	Adjective or adverb: one word (meaning former).			
	<i>Example:</i>	Phil Isenberg was a onetime mayor of Sacramento.		
<b>online</b>	One word, lowercase, no hyphen.			
<b>ongoing</b>	As an adjective or adverb: one word.			
	<i>Example:</i>	ongoing investigation		
<b>part-time, part time</b>	As an adverb or compound adjective: hyphenate.			
	<i>Example:</i>	She is a part-time writer.		
	<i>But:</i>	The nanny helps the family part time.		
<b>political affiliation</b>	It is rarely necessary to indicate a legislator’s political affiliation except when discussing or analyzing legislation. In this case:			
	<i>Example:</i>	The bill is being carried by Senator Peter Griffin (D-Long Beach).		
<b>principal vs. principle</b>	According to “The Associated Press Stylebook,” the noun or adjective <b>principal</b> designates “someone or something first in importance, rank, authority, or degree.”			

	<p><i>Examples:</i> Dr. Snowden is the school’s principal.</p> <p>We applauded the principal actor in the repertory theater.</p> <p>Fiscal mismanagement was the unit’s principal problem.</p>
	The word <b>principle</b> , which functions only as a noun, means a fundamental truth, code, or guiding force.
	<p><i>Examples:</i> The principle of liberty motivated the colonists.</p> <p>We used basic principles of accounting during our review.</p>
<b>program</b>	Capitalize only when it is officially part of the program title.
	<p><i>Examples:</i> We eliminated the Personal Leave Program.</p> <p>The program provided significant savings to the General Fund during the state’s fiscal crisis.</p>
	Do not capitalize “program” when it is not part of the program title.
	<i>Example:</i> The governor plans to control costs within the Medi-Cal program.
<b>re</b>	As with most prefixes, the prefix <b>re</b> (meaning “again”) should not be followed by a hyphen. A few words require the hyphen so that they can be distinguished from other words with the same spelling but a different meaning.
	<p><i>Examples:</i> reelection reevaluate</p> <p>recover from an illness (vs. re-cover a chair)</p>
<b>seasons</b>	Not capitalized unless part of a formal name.
	<p><i>Examples:</i> The budget proposal is released in the winter.</p> <p>We are so excited to attend the Summer Olympics.</p>
<b>senator</b>	Capitalize when the title precedes a senator’s name. Lowercase when used generally.
	<p><i>Examples:</i> We requested a meeting with Senator Griffin.</p> <p>All but two of the senators were present for the vote.</p>

	Also see <b>political affiliation</b> .
<b>short-term, short term</b>	As a compound adjective: hyphenate.
	<i>Example:</i> He made some short-term investments.
	As the object of a preposition: two words.
	<i>Example:</i> That strategy will work only for the short term.
<b>staff</b>	<b>This collective noun takes a plural or singular verb</b> , but keep the verb form consistent throughout the document — or at least throughout a section or subsection.
	<i>Examples:</i> Staff <b>are</b> working hard on <b>their</b> project. (Here “staff” is treated as a plural noun.)  The procurement staff <b>was</b> celebrating <b>its</b> annual picnic. (Here “staff” is treated as a singular noun.)
<b>State vs. state</b>	Capitalize “State” when it is part of the official name of a state agency or part of an entity’s official name.
	<i>Examples:</i> The State and Consumer Services Agency is located at 915 Capitol Mall.  The state controller is holding a press conference today at 1 p.m.
	<b>Lowercase “state” in all other usages.</b>
	<i>Examples:</i> The governor projects that state operations will be cut 10 percent.  The budget cuts will have a considerable impact on the state of California.  The state lost \$5 million because the county mismanaged funds.
<b>statewide</b>	One word, no hyphen.
<b>Statutes (California)</b>	<b>Use unabbreviated code names</b> and spell out “Section” before code section number (use a capitalized “S” in “Section”).

	<p><i>Examples:</i> Government Code Section 6250</p> <p>Welfare and Institutions Code Section 4514</p>
	<p><b>Within parentheses</b>, use code abbreviations followed by a comma and section symbol before code section number. Use two section symbols when citing more than one section.</p>
	<p><i>Examples:</i> (Gov. Code, § 6250.)</p> <p>(Gov. Code, §§ 6250, 6251, 6253.)</p>
	<p><b>When citing subdivisions</b>, use a comma after code section number and spell out “subdivision.”</p>
	<p><i>Example:</i> (Penal Code Section 13730, subdivision (b).)</p>
	<p><b>For subdivisions within parentheses</b>, use another comma after the code section number and use the abbreviation “subd.”</p>
	<p><i>Example:</i> (Pen. Code, § 13730, subd. (b).)</p>
	<p><i>Note:</i> To make a section symbol in Microsoft Word, select the “Insert” tab at the top of the page, then “Symbol,” and “More Symbols.” Select the “Special Characters” tab, then “§” symbol, and press “Insert.”</p>
<b>than vs. then</b>	<p>Use <b>than</b> to make comparisons. Use <b>then</b> to indicate the order in which things occurred.</p>
	<p><i>Examples:</i> The membership costs more this year than last year.</p> <p>Meg completed her chores and then relaxed on the couch.</p>
<b>that vs. which</b>	<p>Use <b>that</b> to introduce essential clauses that are necessary to the reader’s understanding of the sentence. <b>Do not</b> place commas around clauses introduced by “that.”</p>
	<p><i>Example:</i> The unit that handles accounts receivable is the subject of our review.</p>
	<p>Use <b>which</b> to introduce nonessential (interrupter) clauses and place commas around such clauses.</p>
	<p><i>Example:</i> The department, which has its headquarters in West Sacramento, is the subject of our review.</p>

	For both essential and nonessential clauses, substitute <b>who</b> for <b>that</b> or <b>which</b> when the clauses refer to individuals.		
	<p><i>Examples:</i> Writers who do not review their work should not be surprised at an editor’s corrections.</p> <p>Editors, who need to take breaks periodically, sometimes overlook errors.</p>		
<b>time frame</b>	Noun—two words.		
	<i>Example:</i> Is the time frame to complete the project feasible?		
<b>titled</b>	When referencing the name of a report, article, etc. use this term, not “entitled.”		
	<i>Example:</i> The report was titled, “State Fleet Fuel Purchases”		
<b>titles</b>	In general, confine capitalization to formal titles used directly before an individual’s name.		
	<i>Examples:</i>	Governor Smith	Secretary Chan
	<i>But:</i>	James Smith, director of the Department of General Services, will testify at the Senate hearing.	
	When writing about legislators, also see <b>political affiliation</b> .		
	Lowercase and spell out titles when they are not used with an individual’s name.		
	<p><i>Examples:</i> The governor signed a bill.</p> <p>The director thanks all DGS employees.</p>		
<b>toward</b>	Not “towards.”		
<b>under</b>	This prefix usually requires no hyphen.		
	<i>Examples:</i>	underdeveloped	underemployed
			underpaid
<b>vice versa</b>	Not “visa versa.”		
<b>vs., v.</b>	Always use <b>v.</b> rather than <b>vs.</b> when citing a legal case.		
<b>who vs. whom</b>	Simple rule: Rephrase the sentence to use an alternate word instead of <i>who/whom</i> .		

	The word “whom” stands in the place of him, her or them (remember, “him” ends with “m,” and so does “whom”).
	<i>Example:</i> <i>Who/whom</i> did you meet at the party?  Rephrase as “I met him/her at the party.” Therefore, “whom” is correct.
	The word “who” stands in the place of he, she or they.
	<i>Example:</i> “Bob wondered <i>who/whom</i> was the winner.”  Rephrase as “He/she was the winner.” Therefore, “who” is correct.
<b>zero-emission vehicle</b>	Lowercase, hyphenate the compound modifier “zero-emission.” Use the acronym ZEV upon second reference to “zero-emission vehicle.”

## SECTION 4: Proofreading marks

Use the standard editing symbols displayed here to ensure clear communication among authors, editors, proofers, and publishers. Mark all changes in **red ink**. Call attention to small edits, such as for punctuation, by marking “x” in the margin near the edit. Handwrite using printing, not cursive. Provide a MS Word or text file for text alterations longer than two sentences.

To indicate:	Use this mark-up:	And notate in margin:
Delete word	... travel <del>and</del> expense claims ...	
Replace word	... travel and <del>expense</del> claims ...	mileage
Leave as is (ignore instance of editing mark-up)	Community Program Development <del>stet</del>	
Set capital	state ≡	Cap
Set boldface	<b>state</b>	BF
Insert Punctuation	... employment programs, From this point ...	⊙
	Note: Call attention to punctuation edits by placing a circle around the punctuation mark in the margin near the edit.	
Insert space	Attachments A, B, and C	#
Spell out	4 years ...	SP
Delete several lines or paragraphs	The grant program provides grants to local government and funds for joint state / federal projects.	
Insert word/ words	The grant program provides grants to alleviate ...	intended
Insert several lines or paragraphs	The intended grant program provides grants ...	insert (A)
	Note: When inserting two or more sentences, provide a corresponding MS Word or text file.	
Make new paragraph	... report is finished. [The conclusion ...	¶
Run sentences together	... report is finished. The conclusion ...	run-in

Indent one space	To accomplish this objective, the Department ...
Indent two spaces	To accomplish this objective, the Department ...
Set flush	To accomplish this objective, the Department ...
Set centered	Property Management Services Program <i>center</i>
Italics	Federal Trust Fund <i>ital.</i>

## **SECTION 5: Guidelines for the use of photographic images in DGS publications**

According to the Associated Press, “Any use of a photograph without permission of the owner of the copyright is likely to raise legal issues.”

- If you are using a photograph in a public presentation, Department of General Services publication, or DGS website, ensure that you have the copyright owner’s written permission to do so. An email from the copyright owner is acceptable. If you are using a photograph from a vendor such as iStockPhoto.com, you will have already purchased a license from the vendor, which serves as “permission” to use.
- Determine whether the copyright owner requires a photo credit and ensure that the credit runs with the photo.
- Do not download photographs from the internet and proceed to use them without prior permission from the copyright owner.
- Do not assume that photographs on government websites are “in the public domain” and therefore do not require prior permission before being republished or reposted. Get permission in writing.

These are general guidelines. Should you have questions or concerns, contact your office or division’s assigned Office of Legal Services attorney for legal guidance.