

APPENDIX D. PREPARATION OF REPORTS TO CONGRESS

General Remarks

Reports to Congress that originate in authorization acts (e.g., SAFETEA-LU, TEA-21 and ISTEA) are coordinated within FHWA by the Office of Legislation and Strategic Planning (HPLS). The authorization act reports are sent to the HPLS Reports Coordinator who will keep a log of reports received, assure that the Office of Policy and Governmental Affairs and the Office of the Chief Counsel reviews the reports for policy and legislative implications, and will track the reports through the review process until signed by the Secretary of Transportation.

Reports to Congress that originate in appropriation acts are coordinated within FHWA by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (HCF).

Contact the appropriate office for instructions on preparation of a Report to Congress.

Congressional Reports Manual of Style

Acronyms

- When using acronyms, be sure to spell out the word and enclose the acronym in parenthesis the first time the word appears in the document. Do not enclose an acronym in parentheses if it will not be used again in the document.
- The abbreviation “U.S.” is used when it precedes the word Government or the name of a Government organization or when used as an adjective. “United States” is spelled out when used as a noun.

Example: (Adjective) U.S. foreign policy is a major issue during the debates.

(Noun) The United States has the safest road system anywhere.

- When using organizational acronyms, avoid using “the” preceding the acronym unless the acronym is used as a modifier.

Example: OST and the SLSDC Administrator

- When an acronym begins with *a, e, f, h, i, m, n, o, r, s, x*, or the indefinite article “an” is used.

Example: An NPRM is expected to be published in the **Federal Register** shortly.

- Beginning a sentence with an acronym is acceptable.

Example: The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is part of the Department of Transportation. FHWA administers the Federal-aid Highway Program.

Capitalization

- The words “Government,” “Nation,” “Administration,” and “Federal” are capitalized when referring to the U.S. Government; adverbs such as “federally” and “nationally” are not capitalized.

Example: SAFETEA-LU helps the Nation compete in the global economy.

The federally funded program requires congressional approval.

The Department is known nationally for its transportation policies.

- Department, when used to describe the U.S. Department of Transportation, is capitalized; departmental is not. The same rule applies to Congress/congressional and Secretary/secretarial and Federal/federally.
- References to the seasons-spring, summer, fall, or winter-are not capitalized.

Hyphenation

- **Compound Words/Numbers**

Example:

Incorrect

anti-lock
decision-making
non-occupant
co-sponsored
state-wide
non-profit
county-wide
anti-theft
re-examine
mid-continent
multi-purpose
drug-testing

Correct

antilock
decisionmaking
nonoccupant
cosponsored
statewide
nonprofit
countywide
antitheft
reexamine
midcontinent
multipurpose
drug testing

- The following words are hyphenated:

5-ton trucks	State-mandated compliance
1-day bench trial	pay-as-you-go approach
FHWA-sponsored event	part-time/full-time

- Use a hyphen between the elements of compound numbers from twenty-five to ninety-nine and in adjective compounds with a numerical first element.

Example: twenty-one; twenty-first; 6-footer; 3-to-1 ratio; 10-minute delay.

Footnotes

- Use the Microsoft Word footnote feature to correctly place footnotes on a page.
- Footnotes to charts, graphs, and other illustrations are to be placed immediately beneath such illustrative material.

Format

- Begin all lines of text at the left margin.
- Do not right justify margins.
- Do not indent paragraphs.
- Do not refer to preliminary or interim data in reports; use the actual data.
- Spell out the word “percent” instead of using the “%” symbol in body of text; however, the % symbol is acceptable in charts and tables.
- Be consistent when using bullets, dashes or stars; use one or the other throughout the document. When using the bullet, dash, or star, type flush to the left margin with two spaces following the bullet, dash, or star. The first letter following each bullet, dash, or star should be lower-case.

Example: Of particular interest are:

- typing financial documents
 - communicating requirement.
- Do not leave headings or single sentences alone at the bottom or top of pages; sentences should contain at least two lines at the beginning or end of pages.
 - Ensure that charts, graphs, and tables are printed straight on the page.
 - Charts and tables referred to in reports should follow as closely as possible behind the text where mentioned; if the chart or table does not immediately follow the text, please indicate the page number on which the charts or tables appear.
 - Avoid referring to “the agency” in sentences; refer to the organization by name.

Legislative Citation

- “Et al.” and “et seq.” are set in small caps; a period is placed only after al. and seq.
- Legal references should be typed exactly as they appear in legislation.

Example: P.L. 102-240, Section 1040 (d) (1)
Title 49, U.S.C., Section 308 (c)

- If a report is overdue, update references to timeframes that have expired. References to dates in the future may be overtaken by events if the time for clearance is not factored in by drafters and considered by reviewers.

Example: If a report is written in January, but does not get cleared until July and contains sentence, “An NPRM will be drafted in the spring of 2004,” this sentence needs to be updated since spring has passed before the report is finalized.

Punctuation

- Use a comma preceding the final element in a series, such as and or, to indicate the termination of the series. (Preference only, but be consistent.)

Example: The U.S. Department of Transportation is composed of nine operating administrations, including the Federal Highway Administration, and the Federal Railroad Administration.

- The semicolon is not used where a comma will suffice.
- Place a comma after the year in complete dates within sentences.

Example: Concerns were expressed at a May 23, 2011, hearing before the committee.

- Use commas to set off clauses within a sentence.

Example: The U.S. Department of Transportation, which is based in Washington, DC, is composed of nine operating administrations.

Spacing

- There are no spaces between dashes and the words surrounding them.

Example: The U.S. economy at all levels--local, regional, and national--is contracting.

- Be sure to add two spaces after a colon or period, two lines between single-spaced paragraphs, and three lines between double-spaced paragraphs.

Table of Contents

- If the report is voluminous and/or contains numerous acronyms, be sure to include a Table of Contents and/or a list of acronyms.
- When listing chapters, tables, or figures followed by a number and period, the periods are aligned to the right.

Example: I. Budget Authority
II. Permanent Civilian Employment

Transmittal Letter

- In transmittal letters, reports are “titled” not “entitled.” Begin all letters as follows:

Example: Enclosed is the U.S. Department of Transportation’s fiscal year (FY) 2001 annual report titled “Hazardous Materials Transportation.”

- The last sentence of the letters lists other Congressmen/women who will be receiving copies.

Example: A copy of this report has also been sent to the President of the Senate.

A copy of this report has also been sent to the Chairman and Ranking Minority Members, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

For Reports Transmitted by the Secretary

- Using Secretarial letterhead, transmittal letters addressed to Congress, the President, and to the Chairman and Ranking Minority Members of Committees are addressed as follows:

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. President:
Salutation: Sincerely yours,

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr Speaker:
Salutation: Sincerely yours,

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Work
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chairman:
Salutation: Sincerely yours,

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Lewis:
Salutation: Sincerely yours,

- The Secretary’s salutation “Sincerely yours” is typed at the center point of the letter. Space down seven times to create six blank lines, and type the Secretary’s name.