

## APPENDIX A. GENERAL EDITORIAL RULES

1. **Reference Books.** The books listed below are the references that will be used by HOAES for correspondence:
  - a. For spelling questions, the latest **Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary** published by G & C Merriam Company of Springfield, Massachusetts, should be consulted as a first. When consulting a dictionary, the first entry (or the preferred usage) should be used.
  - b. For rules on style, consult the latest edition of the **U. S. Government Printing Office (GPO) Style Manual**.
  - c. The Federal Highway Administration has some long-held style rules, some of which are in Appendix D on the Preparation of Reports to Congress, and in examples shown below.
  - d. Many other useful reference books are available from bookstores. Some recommendations are:  
*The Gregg Reference Manual*, Tribute Edition.  
*The Elements of Style*, Third Edition, William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White.
2. **Abbreviations.** Shown below are just two examples of specific FHWA abbreviation usage. Use the dictionary and the **GPO Style Manual** for other abbreviations.
  - a. When citing the United States Code (U.S.C.) in an abbreviated form, FHWA uses: 23 U.S.C. 101.
  - b. When citing the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) in an abbreviated form, FHWA uses: 19 CFR 341.
3. **Capitalization.** The **GPO Style Manual** will be the reference book. Within the FHWA, certain words are always capitalized. Following is a listing of those words:

**Act** is capitalized when used with the full title or number of an act. When you refer to the same act later in the letter or paragraph without the full title or number, it becomes "the act."

**Agency** is capitalized when part of name; capitalized standing alone if referring to a Federal unit.

**City** is capitalized if it is part of a corporate or popular name, such as "New York City," if not, it is read as city of "New York."

**County** is capitalized when referred to as “Frederick County,” if not, it is read as “county of Frederick.”

**Department** is capitalized when referring to the U. S. Department of Transportation or any other Cabinet level Department.

**Division** is capitalized when referring to a specific division or making reference to a specific one, i.e., “The New York Division Office will host a dinner for its secretaries on April 25. The Division [reference back to a specific Division] would like to invite all secretaries and their spouses to dinner....”

**Federal** is always capitalized when referring to the Federal Government. Do not capitalize “federally.”

**Federal Aid Highway Act of 1970** is always capitalized; but Federal-aid highway project and Federal-aid highway program are not.

**Federal Lands Highway Program** is always capitalized as it is a specific program under the Federal-aid highway program.

**Forest** is capitalized if it used to describe a Federal area. **Example:** the Modoc National Forest; but not “the national forest.”

**Headquarters and/or Washington Headquarters** is capitalized when referring to a Washington, DC, organization or office.

**Interstate System of Highways** and the following forms of Interstate are always capitalized: Interstate System, National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, National System of Interstate Highways, and Interstate Highway System.

**Office** is capitalized only when capitalizing Division or when referring to an office; i.e., the Office of Information and Management Services.

**Nation** is always capitalized when referring to the United States of America. However, national and nationwide are never capitalized.

**State(s)** is always capitalized when referring to any of the 50 States of the Union. The word “statewide” is never capitalized unless it is at the beginning of a sentence.

4. **Compound words.** The reference sources are the latest *GPO Style Manual* and the latest *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*.
5. **Corrections.** With the use of computers, there should be no erasures on FHWA correspondence.

6. **Use of name and title in body of correspondence.** When using a person's name and title in the body of correspondence, use either of these samples. Be consistent throughout the correspondence.

**Example:**

Division Administrator John Brown, or Mr. John Brown, Division Administrator

7. **Punctuation.** Special rules of punctuation used in the FHWA are:  
a. When using the full date line in a sentence, commas are used to separate the date and the year; i.e.,

**Example:**

*Thank you for your letter of January 30, 2011, concerning...*

- b. Do not type the month on one line and carry the date to the next; i.e.,  
January  
30, 2011.

- c. When a city and State reference is used in a sentence, commas are used to separate the city and State; i.e.,  
*The meeting took place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on January 30, 2011, at the Hilton Hotel.*

Do not split a two-word city or two-word State between lines; i.e., .....Silver  
Spring,.....New  
Jersey

8. **Spelling preferred in FHWA.** Reference sources on spelling will be the latest **Webster's Collegiate Dictionary** and the latest **GPO Style Manual**. When two spellings are given in the dictionary, the first spelling is the preferred usage. Do not forget the spell check feature on the computer.

9. **When not to divide a word.** Do not divide a word in the following instances:

- a. At the end of the first line of any paragraph.  
b. At the end of more than two consecutive lines.  
c. At the end of a page or on the next to last line of a paragraph.  
d. At the end of a line when the part begun there does not suggest the whole word.

**Example:**

*counter-offensive, not coun-teroffensive*

- e. Between a one- or two-letter initial syllable and the rest of the word.

**Examples:**

*identify      around      behavior*

- 10. **Informal Notes.** When a formal or an informal note is received from the Federal Highway Administrator's staff or any office requesting action or information, a copy of the note will be returned to the writer of the note with the reply.