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NHTSA In-House Editorial Style Guide

Revised February 2021

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16. Abstract This publication is NHTSA's in-house editorial guideline and style manual for web and print publications produced by NHTSA's Behavioral Safety Research section, NPD-300. It incorporates many style rules and guidelines from the <i>Government Publishing Office (GPO) Style Manual, 2016 edition</i> , the <i>Associated Press Stylebook, 55th edition</i> , and the <i>American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual (7th edition)</i> used by most people in the general behavioral sciences discipline. In addition, it includes many rules and terminology specific to NHTSA publications that are not covered by other general, non-specific guidelines.					
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Introduction

The *NHTSA In-House Editorial Style Guide* was created to provide guidance to writers, to standardize grammar and style rules, and to maintain overall consistency in communications within NHTSA. This guide is primarily intended for use in technical reports and research papers, and some NHTSA internal communications. The *NHTSA Style Guide* relies mainly on the *Government Publishing Office (GPO) Style Manual* (2016 edition). For material developed exclusively for NHTSA.gov, the media, or TrafficSafetyMarketing.gov, we adhere to AP style (*The Associated Press Stylebook, 55th Edition*), which differs from GPO on several style rules. We use the *American Psychological Association Publication Manual*, 7th edition, for footnotes, referencing, and bibliography material. See the table [Editorial Styles At-a-Glance](#) on the following page for a convenient overview of NHTSA’s editorial styles and their differences.

Like most government agencies, NHTSA has its own jargon, buzz words, phrases, and mission-specific terminology that can’t be found in GPO or a standard dictionary. The *NHTSA Style Guide* includes the most commonly used GPO rules as well as rules that are specific to NHTSA.

In accordance with the Plain Writing Act of 2010 (H.R. 946; Public Law 111–274), the *NHTSA Style Guide* also incorporates guidance and rules that strive to make “official” government reports and communication as accessible as possible. For more information, see www.plainlanguage.gov.

For guidance on spelling, we use and recommend *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th Edition.

Editorial Styles At-a-Glance

Style	Source	Types of Publications	Examples of Publications	Common Editorial Differences
AP	<i>The Associated Press Stylebook, 55th Edition</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website content • Earned and social media • Marketing material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pages on NHTSA.gov • Press releases, media products, and toolkits for TrafficSafetyMarketi ng.gov • Infographics/banners for the web 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't capitalize state/nation/federal. • Use the % symbol when paired with a numeral. • Write out all numbers less than 10. • ZIP code (lowercase c) • AP State abbreviations (Ala., Ariz., etc.) • Don't include acronyms in parentheses. Write out term on first use, and use acronym thereafter. See Acronyms and Abbreviations for exceptions.
APA	<i>The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some Behavioral Safety reports • EMS reports • All references and citations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological constructs related to seat belt use, volume 1: Methodology report • Older drivers' self-regulation and exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the % symbol when paired with a numeral.
GPO	The Government Publication Office Style Manual, 2016 edition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most technical reports, Research Notes, Fact Sheets, and Traffic Techs (unless APA style is specified) • Brochures, curriculum • Event material, displays, and internal posters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification of Level 2 Vehicle Events Observed on Public Roads • Overview of the 2019 Crash Investigation Sampling System (Research Note) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalize State, Nation, and Federal. • Write out the word percent, except in parentheses and tables/figures. • Write out numbers less than 10, except for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ units of time and measurement (e.g., 2 months), and ◦ when two or more numbers appear in the sentence and one is 10 or more. ◦ ZIP Code ◦ Postal State abbreviations (AL, AZ, etc.) • Include acronyms in parentheses after first use.

Levels of Editing

NHTSA's Office of Communications Services edits a variety of reports, research documents, and publications. When text is submitted to Communications Services for review it will go through one of the three levels of editing:

- **PROOFREAD:** All Level 1, 2, and 3 publications **MUST** receive at least a PROOFREAD edit to check title page, disclaimer doc page with APA citation, tech doc, reference section (if any) and in-text references (if any) to comply with APA, plus additional light editing to comply with GPO, APA, PlainLanguage.gov, and *NHTSA In-House Style Guide* rules, as described in this most recently updated version of the NHTSA Style Guide (Report No. DOT HS 812 689), as well as universally accepted rules of (American) English grammar and syntax. In some cases, factual material will be corrected or inserted, such as spelling, punctuation, and/or capitalization of corporate names and locations.
- **EDIT:** This level of editing includes all the above, plus some mild wordsmithing in compliance with PlainLanguage.gov guidelines and other routine grammatical and syntactical work: changing passive voice to active voice; creating or removing bullets in lists; reduction of awkward, complex phraseology; and similar revisions. The client may choose to reject suggested edits.
- **RE-WRITE:** In addition to everything above, the publication will receive heavy editing as well as possible reorganization of material, extensive deleting or addition of editorial matter, suggestions and commentary, as requested or desired by the client.

Most work should receive either PROOFREAD or EDIT editing.

Note to clients: Publications often contain charts, tables, and graphs, some of which are editable and can/should be corrected as necessary. However, some are placed as images that cannot be edited; in these cases, the editor will note the presence of the image, mark suggested edits in a comment, and the image will be addressed when the layout is done.

Media, marketing, and web content is treated a little differently.

- **PROOFREAD:** All web content and marketing material **MUST** receive at least a PROOFREAD that entails light editing to comply with AP, PlainLanguage.gov, and *NHTSA In-House Style Guide* rules, as described in this most recently updated version of the NHTSA Style Guide (Report No. DOT HS 812 689), as well as universally accepted rules of (American) English grammar and syntax. In some cases, factual material will be corrected or inserted, such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization of corporate names and locations.
- **EDIT:** This level of editing includes all the above, plus some mild wordsmithing in compliance with PlainLanguage.gov guidelines and other routine grammatical and syntactical work: changing passive voice to active voice; creating or removing bullets in lists; reduction of awkward, complex phraseology; and similar revisions. The client may choose to reject suggested edits.
- **RE-WRITE:** In addition to everything above, the content will receive heavy editing as well as possible reorganization of material, extensive deleting or addition of editorial matter, suggestions and commentary, as requested or desired by the client.

Fact-Checking

Fact-checking is not a job function or responsibility of Communications Services staff members. The customer is solely responsible for the accuracy of publication content. If inaccuracies or errors in data are discovered during the editing or proofreading phases of publication, these will be called to the customer's attention.

Preparing Text for Editing

Before submitting your text for editing, review the following guidance on formatting and style.

Format

All reports, publications, brochures, flyers, and similar material should be submitted as Microsoft Word documents. PowerPoint presentations should be submitted as Microsoft PowerPoint documents. Do not submit documents as PDF files.

What to Include

All technical reports, whether intended for print publication or electronic web posting (as PDFs), should have:

- a title/cover page,
- a disclaimer page, and
- a Technical Report Documentation page.

Title/cover page

The NHTSA standard cover pages are not required for editing. They will be added during layout. The author is not required to include logos or publication date, just a clear title.

Disclaimer page

The disclaimer is written by the Office of the General Counsel and cannot be changed or added to. We also include a suggested APA citation below it on the same page. The standard disclaimer for every NHTSA report is below. The disclaimer paragraph is indented .5 inches on each side. The citation must use a .5-inch hanging indent, per APA.

DISCLAIMER

This publication is distributed by the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in the interest of information exchange. The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department of Transportation or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The United States Government assumes no liability for its contents or use thereof. If trade names, manufacturers' names, or specific products are mentioned, it is because they are considered essential to the object of the publication and should not be construed as an endorsement. The United States Government does not endorse products or manufacturers.

Suggested APA Format Citation:

Author, A., Author, B., & Author, C. (year, month). *Title in sentence case and italicized: First word of subtitle capitalized* [no period here] (Report No. DOT HS xxx xxx). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Disclaimer page for Vehicle Safety Research reports

The Disclaimer for all reports generated by or through the Vehicle Safety Research division, NSR-010, and its three subdivisions, the Vehicle Research & Test Center (NSR-100), Vehicle Crashworthy Research (NSR-200), and Vehicle Crash Avoidance & Electronic Controls Research (NSR-300) **must** have an additional paragraph, which reads:

NOTE: This report is published in the interest of advancing motor vehicle safety research. While the report may provide results from research or tests using specifically identified motor vehicle models, it is not intended to make conclusions about the safety performance or safety compliance of those motor vehicles, and no such conclusions should be drawn.

The proper disclaimer for these departments should therefore appear as:

<p style="text-align: center;">DISCLAIMER</p> <p>This publication is distributed by the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in the interest of information exchange. The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department of Transportation or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The United States Government assumes no liability for its contents or use thereof. If trade or manufacturers' names are mentioned, it is only because they are considered essential to the object of the publication and should not be construed as an endorsement. The United States Government does not endorse products or manufacturers.</p> <p>NOTE: This report is published in the interest of advancing motor vehicle safety research. While the report may provide results from research or tests using specifically identified motor vehicle models, it is not intended to make conclusions about the safety performance or safety compliance of those motor vehicles, and no such conclusions should be drawn.</p>

Technical Report Documentation Page

This is the Technical Report Documentation Page ("tech doc"), Form DOT F 1700.7 (8-72). This form should be submitted for editing as part of the original report. The tech doc page should be completed in 10-point font size; the text box itself should never exceed 6.5 inches wide. A standard, annotated template for NHTSA research reports is available.

Note: The publication date on the cover, APA citation, and Tech Doc page is always the month that the report is finalized and published, not the date the report is submitted, reviewed, or given to us for editing. There is a box on the Tech Doc page for a description of when the report was submitted, and/or what time period the report covers. The Office of Communication Services assigns the proper pub date just before publication. An interim date is supplied only as a placeholder.

Page Numbering

Inside page numbering begins with the technical report documentation page and is numbered lowercase roman numeral “i.” Other front matter pages are optional and might include an acknowledgment page; table of contents; lists of charts, tables and graphs; list of acronyms or glossary; an executive summary, etc. Number these pages in lowercase roman numerals.

Arabic numbering begins on the first page of main text.

Page numbering should be in the bottom middle of each page. In specific circumstances, different kinds of headers and footers may be used; however, NHTSA prefers its reports to be consistent in look as well as editing. Do not use a contractor logo in headers/footers on every page. A contractor logo may be used on the title page, but not on other pages thereafter.

Do not use blank pages as spacers between chapters or sections. Do not include blank pages or assign “left” and “right” pages to fill out signatures. Very few of these reports are printed out. If needed, the graphic artist who lays out the report in the production process will add blank pages to fill out a print signature.

Table of Contents

Use “title case” for all headings and titles. Use the same “title case” format (major words have the first letter capitalized, all minor words of three letters or less are lowercase). Use “sentence case” (only the first letter of the first word is capitalized) for sub-chapters and lesser divisions. *Note: The format used in the body of the text for titles should match the style shown in the table of contents.*

Do not use the “small caps” or “all caps” format for any titles, captions, table of contents, etc.

For large documents, format the table of contents so page numbers are automatically updated based on changes to the text.

Table of Abbreviations and/or Acronyms/Glossary

There is no requirement for a table of acronyms, abbreviations, or a glossary, but if there is one, the following rules apply.

- Only proper nouns and titles are capitalized; routine phrases that would not be capitalized in text are lowercase on the table.
- Common, well known terms are omitted, such as NHTSA, DOT and U.S. DOT, ID, mph, GPS, SUV, U.S., time zones, etc.
- If there is a glossary, it goes in the front.

- If a term is given in the table of abbreviations or acronyms, it is not necessary to put the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses after the first use in text.
- Explanations or supplemental information about the acronym or abbreviation are permitted. For example: SAE: Society of Automotive Engineers (In 2006 the SAE officially changed its name to SAE International).

Illustrations

Graphics

The Office of Communication Services develops graphics in collaboration with the COR and, if desired, the COR’s contractor. Contractors should provide only the text files in Microsoft Word to the COR. Any illustration files or spreadsheets used to create graphs should be included with the Word file in case NHTSA chooses to update them.

Photographs

When photos are used in agency publications, the Office of Communication Services typically uses existing photos or photos purchased through approved vendors. If a contractor or other source supplies photos for use in a publication, the photos must be high resolution images, preferably at 300 dpi (4” by 5” in size) or higher. Each photo should be supplied in either a TIF or JPG/jpeg file. NOTE: If a photograph is supplied by an outside source (contractor, grantee, national organization, etc.), a release form must accompany the photo indicating that the human subjects in the photo authorize NHTSA to use the photo in its publications and on its website. Please use caution when allowing contractors to supply photos. Make sure that you know the contractual arrangements they have made with the photographer and the subjects in the photo to ensure that NHTSA has unlimited rights to use the images in print and on the web. You must obtain a written statement from your contractor indicating that NHTSA has unlimited, unrestricted use of the photos.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

GPO (reports, internal agency products)	AP (web, marketing, media)
Spell out terms and names of organizations on first reference, unless otherwise noted below. Follow the first reference with the acronym in parentheses if the name will be used again in the same text. For all subsequent references, use the acronym alone. <i>Note: If the name or term will not be referenced again, do not use an acronym in parentheses.</i>	Spell out terms and names of organizations on first reference, unless otherwise noted on the following page. For all subsequent references, use the acronym alone. <i>Exception: In earned media and marketing material, write out National Highway Traffic Safety Administration on first use and include NHTSA in parentheses.</i>
GPO example	AP example
The blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of the driver was .06 grams per deciliter (g/dL), whereas the pedestrian had a BAC of .12 g/dL.	The blood alcohol concentration of the driver was .06 grams per deciliter, whereas the pedestrian had a BAC of .12 g/dL.

For commonly known agency acronyms, such as the CIA, FBI, or EPA, there is no need to include the acronym in parentheses.

Also acceptable on first reference: ID (meaning identification, referring to an ID card); ABC, NBC, CBS (and all other networks and radio/TV stations), GPS, AIDS, IQ, IOU, UFO, and common computer terms (CPU, JPEG, RAM, ROM, CD and CD-ROM, BASIC, C++, etc.), mpg, mph, rpm, SUV, U.S., FAQ, Q&A.

Do not use acronyms or abbreviations inside parentheticals in report titles, table of content headings, or any kinds of section headings. The acronym alone may be used in a heading if it has been used before that point.

Some common terms and their acronyms/abbreviations.

- Automated Driving Systems (ADS)
- and (&) – The ampersand may be used in titles, headings, and in the names of companies that use it (Dun & Bradstreet). In text, always write out the word *and*.
- blood alcohol concentration (BAC), measured as grams per deciliter (g/dL), never a percentage
- breath alcohol concentration (BrAC), measured as grams per 210 liters (g/210L)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Be sure to include the *s* on Centers, and to include “and Prevention,” even though it isn’t part of the abbreviation.
- grams per deciliter (g/dL) – note capital L for liter
- miles per gallon (mpg) and miles per hour (mph) may be used as acronyms on first use, lowercased
- Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP – not sTEP)
- Southeast (SE) – When referring to the sectional division of a city
- United States (U.S.) – Abbreviate only when used as a modifier (e.g., U.S. Government, U.S. highway system), *but* write out when used as a noun (All highways in the United States...).
- Virginia (VA) – When abbreviating the name of a State, use the ZIP Code abbreviation (VA as opposed to Va.), except in earned media, marketing, and web content (use AP abbreviations). Never use the abbreviation alone in text. (People in Maryland usually..., *not* People in MD usually...)
- gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR)
- horizontal gaze nystagmus test (HGN test) is lowercase. The HGN test is one of three tests used in NHTSA’s Standardized Field Sobriety Test (SFST); the other two are the Walk-and-Turn test (WAT test) and the One-Leg Stand test (OLS test).
- Mr./Mrs./Ms.: Omit their use in all cases, for reasons of consistency and privacy. Use full name on first use and use only the person’s last name for all subsequent references. In cases where two or more people have the same last name, continue to use full names to distinguish between them.

-
- sport utility vehicle (SUV) is no longer necessary to write out on first reference, nor to put (SUV) after it. Acronym may be used on first use.

For more guidance on acronyms and abbreviations, see also in the *GPO Style Manual*:

- Abbreviations and Letter Symbols (pages 147-157), and
- List of Common Abbreviations (pages 148-170).

Addresses, Phone Numbers, and URLs

Addresses

There are two correct ways to write NHTSA or the Department of Transportation's address.

As one line, in a sentence:

1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590

Note: Do not use a comma after Avenue. Do not put a period after SE (or other directions such as NW, SSE, etc.; GPO Rule 9.17, as of 2016; this is a change from previous editions); use a comma after SE (only in sentence format); place a comma after Washington; do not use periods in DC; and do not place a comma between DC and the ZIP Code.

As two lines:

**1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590**

When words such as *Avenue, Boulevard, Building, Court, Drive, Place, Road, Square, Street, and Terrace* follow a name or a number, always write them out. Only abbreviate such words in footnotes, lists, tables, etc. When these words are part of a name, do not abbreviate them – even in footnotes, lists, tables, etc. (14th Street Bridge).

Phone Numbers

The correct way to write all phone numbers is 888-327-4236, not (888) 327-4236, not 1-888-327-4236, and not 888.327.4236. Use hyphens instead of parentheses and never put a 1- in front of any phone number.

URLs

- Underline and hyperlink all web addresses in text. Most web addresses are preceded by www.; if so, omit the http:// or https:// in front of www. *For more information, visit www.nhtsa.gov.* However, when referring to the vanity name of a website, the www. can be omitted. *NHTSA.gov is a valuable source of information for consumers.* Note: http:// or https:// should only appear in front of a URL that does *not* include www in it.
- It is unnecessary to introduce a web address by saying “may be found on the web at...,” “on the World Wide Web at...,” “is online at,” and so on.
- The word internet may be used in place of the word web.

-
- Website is one word.

For more guidance on addresses, phone numbers, and URLs, see also in the *GPO Style Manual*:

- Addresses (comma rule 8.55 and 8.61 on page 204, and period rule 9.17 on page 224), and
- Phone Numbers (Rule 8.58 on page 204 and 12.7 on page 274).

Capitalization

Deciding when to capitalize can be difficult. General capitalization rules can be found in the *GPO Style Manual*. The following is just a quick reference list of commonly used terms and their appropriate capitalization.

- Administrator (or Acting Administrator or Associate Administrator) is the only general, generic title that is capitalized, and only when it refers to the NHTSA Administrator, with or without a name attached.
- Agency is capitalized only when referring, on subsequent (second, third, etc.) reference, to a unit that has *Agency* as part of its formal name. NHTSA is an agency, but not an Agency.
- Automated Driving Systems is always capitalized.
- Black is capitalized when referring to African-Americans.
- Chart is capitalized in the title of a chart (Chart 2) or in reference to a specific chart (as seen in Chart 2), but lowercase when used generically in text (as seen in the following chart).
- delta V, delta V's: The phrase *delta V* is an engineering term for a change in velocity and appears in many engineering reports. The word *delta* is not capitalized (nor are any other Greek alphabet letters, per GPO).
- email is always lowercase (unless in a title or at the beginning of a sentence)
- Federal is capitalized. *Exception: Do not capitalize federal in web, marketing, and media material per AP style.*
- Figure is capitalized in the title of a figure (Figure 11) or in reference to a specific figure (as seen in Figure 11), but lowercase when used generically in text (as seen in the following figure).
- Government is capitalized when one is referring to U.S. institutions and Federal agencies (the U.S. Government), but lowercase in generic and collective uses (State and local government). The term Federal Government is always capitalized. *Exception: Do not capitalize government in web, marketing, and media material per AP style.*
- Internet and intranet, web, website, and webmaster are not capitalized.
- Nation is capitalized when referring to the United States, but lowercase in generic use. *Exception: Do not capitalize nation in web, marketing, and media material per AP style.*
- on-off switch is all lowercase
- Region” is always capitalized when it refers to any of the 10 NHTSA Regions.

- State is capitalized when referring to any of the United States, but lowercase in generic use. *Exception: Do not capitalize state in web, marketing, and media material per AP style.*
- Table is capitalized in the title of a table (Table 4) or in reference to a specific table (as seen in Table 4), but lowercase when used generically in text (as seen in the following table).
- To (and all articles, prepositions, and conjunctions less than four letters in length) is *only* capitalized when used as the first word of a sentence, or as the first word of a new line in a headline or title.
- versus (always lowercase unless in a title; always spelled out unless used in legal terms)
- ZIP Code is always capitalized (all three letters and the *c* in *Code*). *Exception: In web, marketing, and media material, AP style uses ZIP code (lowercase c).*

Consumer campaigns (always italicized):

For example:

- *Click It or Ticket*
- *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*
- *If You Feel Different, You Drive Different*

For more guidance about capitalization, see also the *GPO Style Manual*:

- Capitalization Rules (pages 27-44), and
- Capitalization Examples (pages 45-80).

For guidance on capitalization in the *AP Stylebook*, look up each word; if the word isn't given, look up the category or type of word. For instance, look up "brand names" or "governmental bodies." If you can't find the word, it's probably lowercase; consult *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th edition*.

Compounding Examples

A compound word is the joining of two or more words, either with or without a hyphen. A complete list of the compounding examples can be found in the *GPO Style Manual*, but this is a list of commonly used compound terms often used at NHTSA.

African-American	drunk driving, <i>but</i> drunk-driving crash
air bag	frontal crash and side-impact crash ratings
alcohol-impaired-crash statistics, an alcohol-impaired crash	frontal-offset crashes, left-offset crashes, right-offset crashes
alcohol-impaired-driving crash	go-cart
alcohol-involved	handheld,
alcohol-related	head-on crash
anti-drunk-driving campaign	health care, health care system
computer-simulated	heavy-truck driver
crashworthy, crashworthiness	heavy-vehicle occupant
drug-impaired driving	high-backed booster seats

high-speed crash
high-visibility campaign, high-visibility enforcement
impaired driving/driver, *but* impaired-driving legislation
intelligent-vehicle systems
lane changing, lane-changing behavior
late-model vehicle
light-vehicle occupant
long-term
low-speed test
lower-limb injury
motorcycle
multi-impact
multiple-vehicle crash but multivehicle crash
noncollision
non-intersection location
nonmotorist
nonoccupant
nonprofit (not “not-for-profit”)
ongoing
online
on-off switch

out-of-position sensors
overinflated, underinflated
pickup, pickup truck
police-reported crash
property-damage-only crash
real-time communication, *but* the real time is 6:15
real-world crash statistics
rear-end crash
roofbag
school-bus-related crash
seat belt (never safety belt)
short-term goals, *but* in the short term
side-impact air bags
side-impact crash
single-vehicle crash
speed-related
twenty-five
two-point, three-point attachments
vehicle-to-vehicle technology
website
weekend
zero tolerance, *but* zero-tolerance laws

Other common compound words for NHTSA publications

- 12-year-old passenger, *but* the passenger was 12 years old (never “years of age”)
- a 6-percentage-point decrease, *but* 6 percent of the respondents
6 percentage points (see [Percentages](#))
- MY 2021 for model year 2021. Range: MYs 2012-2016

For more guidance about compound words, see also the *GPO Style Manual*:

- Compounding Rules (pages 97-110), and
- Compounding Examples (pages 111-192).

Some Web-Specific Terms

- eBay Inc. (use EBay Inc. when the word begins a sentence)
- cell phone, two words (never cellular phone or cellular telephone)
- Facebook (not Facebook.com)
- Google, Googling, Googled
- hashtag
- IM (IMed, IMing; for first reference, use instant messenger, instant messaging)
- internet

-
- iPad, iPhone, iPod (use iPad, iPhone, or iPod when the word begins a sentence)
 - LinkedIn
 - social media, not Social Media
 - smartphone
 - YouTube, not Youtube.com

Numbers and Time Measurement

A figure is used for a single number of 10 or more with the exception of the first word in a sentence.

Exceptions: When 2 or more numbers appear in a sentence and 1 of them is 10 or larger, figures are used for every number. In web or marketing material, write out all numbers less than 10. Never “bump” two numbers together; if necessary, add a filler word to keep them apart:

- Incorrect: *In 2012, 4,789 motorcyclists were ...*
- Correct: *In 2012 there were 4,789 motorcyclists who were ...*
 - *In 2012 an estimated 4,789 motorcyclists were ...*
 - *In 2012 some 4,789 motorcyclists were ...*

BAC (blood alcohol concentration) and BrAC rules

.08, not 0.08 (for BACs and BrACs both, do not include the zero before the decimal).

Note: BAC is measured in grams per deciliter (g/dL) and should **never** be referred to as a percentage. Use *grams per deciliter* on first reference. The number alone, or the number and *g/dL*, are acceptable for subsequent references. Example: *The driver had a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .12 grams per deciliter (g/dL), and the pedestrian had a BAC of .09 at the time of the crash.*

BrAC (breath alcohol concentration) is the result of a breathalyzer (breath) test. This is measured in grams per 210 liters of breath (g/210L) and should never be referred to as a percentage. Like the BAC, it is a two-decimal-place number, .08. Use *grams per 210 liters* on first reference. The number alone, or the number and *g/210L*, are acceptable for subsequent references.

Percentages

- Always spell out the word *percent* in text (*Exception:* documents edited in AP or APA style).
 - *The survey showed that 27 percent of drivers...*
- Use the % symbol in a set of parentheses to amplify or explain a text reference.
 - *A majority (74%) of respondents admitted to...*
- 2 percentage points
- 2 percent of the population
- a 2-percentage-point decrease or a 2-percent decrease

-
- *Explanation:* Only use a hyphen between the number and the word *percent/percentage* when the percentage is modifying something, such as an increase, decrease, change, or chance.

(a 16-percent increase in crashes)

Incorrect: *The percent of drivers that were ...*

Correct: *The percentage of drivers who were ...*

Dates

- In text, write: August 24, 1986, *not* 8-24-86, 24 August 1986, Aug. 24, 1986, or 8/24/86
- Saturday, July 20, 2002
- September 1999, *not* September, 1999

When a complete date is used in the middle of a sentence, a comma should follow the year. *The conference took place on February 4, 1994, in Baltimore, Maryland.* (but: *The conference took place in February 1994 in Baltimore.*)

- Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. are appropriate abbreviations in footnotes, but March, April, May, June, and July are never abbreviated. All months should be spelled out in text.

Time

6 p.m. (no :00) or 6:15 a.m. (a.m. and p.m. will always be lowercased and include periods)

noon or midnight (not 12 p.m. or 12 a.m.)

Age

- 6 years old
- a 6-year-old
- age 12 (*Note:* if context is clear, the word *age* is not necessary)
- 10 or older, 12 or younger. Use of “younger” and “older” makes the word “age” unnecessary.
- 18 to 24 as a range used in formal text. The range 18-24 is acceptable in a chart or graph.
- 18- to 24-year-olds
- from *birth* to age 4 (never use age 0/zero)
- Never: *years of age*. Use *years old* if anything is needed.
- Never: age 12 years. Use age 12, or just 12 if context is clear. Never *aged 12*.

Ordinal numbers

Don't superscript st, nd, rd, or th in ordinal numbers. 1st, not 1st (see GPO Rule 12.10, page 278)

Ranges

In normal text in formal reports, ranges should be expressed by the words “from” and “to” or just “to” rather than by a hyphen. Example: wrong: “People 45-65 years old...” Right: “People from 45 to 65 years old...” A hyphenated term such as 45-65 is acceptable in charts, graphs, captions, headings, and in informal web work.

For more guidance about numerals and time measurement, see also the GPO Style Manual:

- Numerals (pages 273-284)

Punctuation and Footnotes

The following are just a few commonly used (and misused) GPO punctuation rules.

Comma

The serial comma (sometimes called the “Oxford” comma) is used for reports. *Exception: The serial comma may be omitted on pages created solely for the web, media, and marketing.*

The rates were higher in Florida, Montana, and California.

Note: Never use a comma before an ampersand. Brown, Wilson & Co.

A comma is required inside closing quotation marks.

“Freedom is an inherent right,” he insisted.

Items marked “A,” “B,” and “C,” inclusive, were listed.

A comma is required to separate thousands, millions, etc., in numbers of four or more digits.

4,520

50,680

1,250,000 (better as 1.25 million)

But *1,000,000,000* is more clearly illustrated as *1 billion*.

A comma is required after the name of a State, when the name of a city precedes it.

The event held in Salt Lake City, Utah, was a huge success.

A comma is required after the year in complete dates within a sentence.

This was reflected in the June 13, 1959, report.

But *This was reflected in the June 1959 report.* (only month and year are referenced).

A comma is required before etc. and et al.

Use this rule in letters, documents, etc.

Source: Jenkins, Smith, et al.

But *Jenkins et al.* (no comma before et al. if only one name precedes it).

A comma is required after e.g. and i.e.

Some States (e.g., Maryland, New York) do not have such a law.

Most respondents (i.e., the students who were surveyed) did not agree.

Note: Never use i.e. or e.g. and etc. in the same parenthetical; pick one or the other. Very often i.e. or e.g. can be omitted entirely.

Periods

Periods are always placed inside quotation marks at the end of a sentence.

“The bridge,” according to the engineer, “will be completed in 2027.”

Colon

A colon is used to introduce any matter that forms a complete sentence, question, or quotation.

The following question came up for discussion: What policy should be adopted?

There are three factors ~~as follows~~: First, law enforcement participation; second, availability of volunteers; and third, financial resources. (“as follows” is unnecessary)

A colon or an em dash should be used after an introductory phrase that reads into subsequent lines in order to indicate repetition of such phrase.

The campaign encourages children to:

Wear helmets when riding their bicycles;

Look both ways before crossing a street; and

Keep bicycle tires fully inflated.

Em dash

When using an em dash:

The campaign encourages children to —

- *Wear helmets when riding their bicycles;*
- *Look both ways before crossing a street; and*
- *Keep bicycle tires fully inflated.*

Semicolon

See the use of semicolons in the example given above. In a list of phrases that complete an introductory phrase, use a semicolon after each line in the list, excluding the last line. Write the word and after the last semicolon, and use a period at the end of the last line.

Bullet Lists

If the bullet list is introduced by what appears to be a proper sentence (subject/noun, verb, etc.) followed by a comma or colon,

- all the elements in the bullet list are to be treated as parts of that sentence as well. That is, they must be punctuated with commas or semicolons (as appropriate),
- the next-to-last element needs to end with the word “and” (because the bullets are treated as a series),
- the final bullet must end with a period, and
- if the list is introduced by a colon, each bullet must begin with a capital letter; if the list is introduced with a comma (as a series), then each element can be lowercased (like any other series).

The items in the bullet list can be treated as complete, independent sentences.

- Each must begin with a capital letter and end with a period or question mark.
- Each one must have a noun/subject and a verb, like any other sentence.

However, a bullet list can be introduced with a title or caption that is not a proper sentence.

States With Secondary Laws

- *Colorado*
- *Florida*
- *New York*
- *Pennsylvania*

Vehicle systems

- *brakes*
- *engine*
- *exhaust*
- *seating*

It doesn't matter if the bullet list uses bullets (•) or squares (□ or ■). However, be consistent and don't use mixed systems without good reason.

You *can* have an unpunctuated bullet list but *only* if the sentence that introduces it ends in a period.

Five States have introduced such legislation.

- *Hawaii*
- *Connecticut*

-
- *Texas*
 - *Nebraska*
 - *Iowa*

A report can include both kinds of bullet lists, punctuated sentence types and unpunctuated list types.

Footnotes

Footnote numbers or symbols should be placed after periods in sentences, rather than before them.[†]

The numbers should be superscripted.

The audience was identified through data.¹

In cases of multiple citations, a single space should separate them (do not separate with commas).

A previous report had indicated that the decrease in fatalities was directly related to the new legislation.^{4 5-7 19}

For more guidance about punctuation and footnotes, see also the *GPO Style Manual*:

- Punctuation (pages 193-220)
- Footnotes, Indexes, Contents, and Outlines (pages 307-312)

Charts, Tables, and Figures

Titles

The format of titles over and captions under figures, tables, charts, and graphs may be either sentence case or title case. Do not use an all-caps format. These may be either sentence fragments, or complete grammatical sentences, as long as whichever style is used is consistent throughout. If sentence format is chosen, these require proper punctuation. Fragment style does not require punctuation.

Headings

- Keep headings simple. Use as few words as possible and abbreviate if necessary. The names of months (except May, June, and July) may be abbreviated.
- When using time in tables, follow the format explained on page 14 ([Numerals and Time Measurement: Time](#)). For example, use 6 to 9 a.m., 6-9 a.m., 9 a.m.-noon, etc. Do not capitalize a.m. and p.m.
- When referring to BAC levels, follow the format explained in the [Numerals and Time Measurement: BAC and BrAC Rules](#) section of this document. Do not place a zero before the decimal point (e.g., .08) and capitalize the L in g/dL (e.g., .08-.10 g/dL).
- When using age in tables, never use 0 as a child's age (i.e., 0-4 years old). Instead, use <5.
- When using percentages, write out the word percentage in headings (Percentage Wearing Helmets) if space allows, and use the symbol with numerals within the table (42%).

References to Charts, Tables, and Figures

When referring in text to charts, tables, and figures, follow the capitalization guidelines in the [Capitalization](#) section of this guide. Capitalize the words chart, table, and figure only in the title itself or in reference to a specific chart, table, or figure (e.g., See Chart 1). Do not capitalize otherwise (e.g., As seen in the following chart).

For more guidance about charts, tables and figures, see also the *GPO Style Manual*:

- Tabular Work (pages 285-302)

Vehicle-Related Terms

Here are some words and terminology specific to NHTSA reports not otherwise covered elsewhere in this guide.

By law, all vehicles for sale must have a Monroney label (also called a “window sticker”) on one of the windows. The words label and sticker are lowercased.

NHTSA has a division called Special Crash Investigations, plural and capitalized. There is no other part of the title (department, office, division, or whatever).

Transmission gear positions: Park, Neutral, Drive, Reverse, etc., are capitalized. If the context is clear, it is not necessary to put quotes around “Park” and other gear positions.

It is Carfax, not CARFAX or CarFax.

Any numbered car part always uses the numeral, not the spelled-out number, if it refers to a commonly numbered piece of a vehicle:

2-door, 4-door hatchback

4-cylinder, 6-cylinder

4-speed transmission, 5-speed, etc.

2-wheel drive, 4-wheel drive, all-wheel drive, 4-wheel antilock brakes

7-passenger van or SUV, 15-passenger van

5-hp

18-wheeler, 3-wheeled motorcycle, 4-wheel ATV

But:

Two-lane highway, four-lane divided highway

Vehicle Identification Numbers

In a report likely to be read by the general public, spell out vehicle identification number (VIN) on first reference and use VIN thereafter. In a highly technical report such as a Special Crash Investigations report, VIN may be used as first reference especially if followed by the actual 17-digit number: “The Chevrolet was a rear-wheel-drive, 5-occupant, 4-door SUV with the VIN 1GNCS13W0XKxxxxxx manufactured in June 1999.”

Vehicle Manufacturers

It is generally advisable to use the manufacturer’s official name on first reference (the Ford Motor Company, General Motors Company, Mercedes-Benz USA, Bayerische Motoren Werke AG, etc.). Usage is entirely context-driven: If the report is discussing a company as a business entity, use the full proper name on first reference. If the report is simply discussing vehicle makes and models without regard to corporate matters, just use Ford, General Motors (GM on second reference), Buick, Chrysler, Land Rover, BMW, etc. When necessary for clarity, use the proper corporate name but give the “known” name in parentheses. Check for hyphens: Mercedes-Benz, Rolls-Royce, and Austin-Healy have them; Alpha Romeo and Mini Cooper do not.

Terms to Avoid

Instead of...	Use...
accident or wreck	crash, collision
broad/wide array	array
car (when referring to vehicles in general)	vehicle/motor vehicle
citizen, citizens (when referring to the general public)	person/people, residents
community-based (community-based meetings)	community (community meetings)
drugged driving/driver	drug-impaired driving/driver
elder, elderly/senior driver	older, older driver
impact as a verb (The campaign impacted a large percentage of the State.)	affect (The campaign affected a large percentage of the State.)
materials (if referring to a collection of information such as brochures, flyers, and reports)	material
partner, partner with as a verb (The agency partnered with the United Way on the project.)	join, work with, support, teamed, etc. (The agency worked with the United Way on the project.)
persons	people
police, police department, police officer (used generically)	law enforcement, law enforcement agency, law enforcement officer
safety belt	seat belt
utilize	use

The Plain Language site has a very useful list of short words and preferred substitutions at www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/wordsuggestions/simplewords.cfm.

Grammatical Errors

Agreement in Number

Incorrect: A child *should always wear their seat belt*.

Correct: A child *should always wear a seat belt*.

Correct: Children *should always wear their seat belts*.

Note: **Child** is singular, while **their** is plural. Companies, organizations, and groups are almost always an “it” rather than a “they.”

Correct: *The Police Chiefs Association released its annual report*.

Incorrect: *The Police Chiefs Association released their annual report*.

Achieving agreement in number can often be difficult, especially if there is a series of elements, some singular, some plural, but it is worth rewriting the sentence to get it right.

(*Note:* We are aware that some style guides have recently begun to allow “they” and “their” as third-person singulars. NHTSA does not.)

Subject-Verb Agreement

Incorrect: A committee *of local officials are expected to make the decision*.

Correct: A committee *of local officials is expected to make the decision*.

Dangling/Misplaced Modifier

Incorrect: While awaiting *the committee’s decision*, the new campaign material *was distributed by volunteers*. (The campaign material was not waiting.)

Correct: While awaiting *the committee’s decision*, volunteers *distributed the new campaign material*. (The volunteers were waiting.)

Troublesome Rules and Frequent Problems

Data

Whether the word “data” is singular or plural is undoubtedly the single most contentious point in all of NHTSA’s reports and departments. Most of us were taught, at some point, that it is plural and requires a plural verb. Over time, the usage has changed. The fact is, GPO allows it (Rule 5.10) as a collective singular, as do most all grammarians, editors, and style manuals.

Incorrect: The data *gathered in Florida are essential to the study*.

Correct: The data *gathered in Florida is essential to the study*.

Note: **Data** is nearly always used in the singular (collective).

Per se, per se law

This is always two words, never hyphenated, and does not require italics or quotes around it (not: Twenty-seven States have a “per se” law that...). However, on first reference, consider whether it would be useful to explain to readers (especially lay readers, rather than specialists) whether the term and the law ought to be explained. Some States have what is called an Administrative Per Se Unit that oversees impaired-driving matters; if referring to the formal name of such a unit, then the entire phrase would be capitalized. Used generically, it is lowercased.

Trademarks and Service Marks

Never use any kind of service mark, register mark, or trademark such as TM or ® under any circumstances. They are NOT required by law. The copyright mark © may be used in photo credit lines.

References

Text references, footnotes, and references pages or bibliography are governed by the *APA Publication Manual*, 7th Edition (2020). An APA citation must contain four things APA calls “elements”: Author element, date element, title element, and publisher element, each element separated by a period. Supplemental material may be added if desired.

In general, APA uses parentheticals for in-text references (NHTSA, 2005b; Smith & Jones, 1984). Do NOT use bracketed numbers [3]. Superscripted numbers¹ for citations are permissible if there are only a few of them. If a report has more than 10 such citations, these should be converted to a formal reference page with parenthetical in-text citations. If a citation is footnoted, it must still have the .5-inch hanging indent.

The proper format for reference and bibliography citations follows the general patterns of:

Jones, D. L., Smith, P. W., & Walker, R. (2008). *Title of work*. [sentence case, italicized, no quotes around title]. Name of Publisher.

Note: Earlier editions of APA required the location of the publisher; that requirement was deleted in the 7th edition. For example, “New York: John Wiley & Sons” is now just “John Wiley & Sons.”

NHTSA documents almost always have a catalog number with the format Report No. DOT HS xxx xxx, and would appear as follows:

Jones, D. L., Smith, P. W., & Walker, R. (2008). *Title of work; First word of subtitle also capitalized* [note no period here] (Report No. DOT HS 888 888). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

In text, the above reference would be described as “a study by Jones, Smith, and Walker (2008) said that ...” or “in a recent study of car crashes (Jones, Smith & Walker, 2008), the number of ...” etc. Note that “and” in a series of names is spelled out in text but uses an ampersand (&) inside parentheticals and in the list of references.

Note: When anything is in title case, the “minor words” remain lowercase. Minor words are articles (a, an, the), conjunctions (and, or, but) and prepositions three letters or shorter. Words (even prepositions)

with four or more letters are capitalized: *From, With, Among, Between*, etc. *Versus* is a preposition. However, even minor words are capitalized if they are the:

- first word of a title;
- first word of a new line in a heading; or
- first word following a colon, semi-colon, or dash in a title/subtitle.

Lists of references/bibliography:

Names of authors

Always last name, then first initials, always use ampersand. Put space between two initials. Use period at end. No full first names.

Smith, J. R., & Jones, C.

If no named author, then name of company or organization, spelled out. If the organization has initials such as NCSA, spell out in first reference then use acronym/abbreviation in following ones:

34. National Center for Statistics and Analysis. [no ampersand, no acronym in parentheses, ends with period].

35. NCSA.

36. NCSA.

37. University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute.

38. UMTRI.

39. UMTRI.

Date of publication

Always in parentheses, with period outside. Year, followed by comma if month is available, day if available. If no date is known, use (n.d.). For reports currently in house and being reviewed, but not yet published use (in press).

(2006).

(2006, March).

(2006, March 26).

(in press).

(n.d.) [no known date]

If same sources by the same date by year, add a, b, c, etc., after them:

National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2006a).

NCSA. (2006b).

NCSA. (2006c, March 3).

Title of source

Always ends with a period. If there's a colon followed by a subtitle, first word following colon is capitalized. All proper nouns are always capitalized: *The biography and exciting adventures of John Smith: From Pocahontas to return to England.*

Journal articles, magazine/newspaper articles, online articles, articles in proceedings of conferences: Sentence case, no italics.

Books, reference books/works: Sentence case, italics.

Technical and research reports: Sentence case, italicized, no period, followed by a parenthesis containing identifying number: Report No., Contract No., Task Order No., agency internal Code No., or name of series. Followed by a period outside the parentheses. Note: For NHTSA reports, the format is always (Report No. DOT HS xxx xxx).

NHTSA reports that are part of a series:

National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2006a). *Title title title title title* (Traffic Tech. Report No. DOT HS xxx xxx). ~~Washington, DC:~~ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

NCSA. (2006b). *Title title title title title* (Research Note. Report No. DOT HS xxx xxx). ~~Washington, DC:~~ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Pickrell, T., & Ye, T. (2006a, March 3). *Title title title title title* (Traffic Safety Facts. Report No. DOT HS xxx xxx). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

If the source is a chapter of a book or one article within the Proceedings of a Conference, use the rules above. However, those rules reverse when describing the larger source. For instance, for editors of the book, it becomes first initials, then last name, and the *title of the larger work is title case and italicized:*

Pickrell, T. (2004). The adventures of John Smith. In L. Jones & P. Brown (Eds.), *From Pocahontas to the Last Days of the Mohicans.*

Publisher

Note: NCSA can be the author, but it cannot be the publisher, which is NHTSA.

If the author is also the publisher, omit the publisher element entirely.

Society of Automotive Engineers. (2003a). J2420 – COE frontal strength evaluation—Dynamic loading heavy trucks. (Issued January 1998, revised December 2003). ~~Warrendale, PA:~~
~~Author~~

SAE. (2003b). J2422 Cab roof strength evaluation – Quasi-static loading heavy trucks. ~~Author:~~

Note: The Society of Automotive Engineers changed its name in 2006 to SAE International. Reports dated 2006 and earlier continue to use Society of Automotive Engineers as the author; after 2006 the author must be SAE International. Either one may be abbreviated to just SAE on the second and subsequent reference.

Retrieval statements

Per the 7th edition of APA, we now remove “Retrieved from” and “Accessed on” statements from citations. Don’t remove the URL, just the intro clause.

However, sometimes text will say that somebody accessed something such as the VIN database or the Recalls database on March 3, 2020, or some such; those kinds of date statements remain; they aren’t citations.

Leave in the citation statement “Available at,” because these specifically link NHTSA documents we want people to find easily. (An “Available at” statement is significantly different from a “Retrieved from” statement.)

Note also that 7th APA now removes ALL publisher locations, including our own:

~~Washington, DC:~~ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Leave the publisher standing by itself.

Journal and magazine articles

Some journals are very well known and use abbreviations, such as *J Am Med Assoc*. However, APA requires that journal names be fully spelled out and *italicized*.

Smith, J., & Jones, T. (2008). Title of journal article. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 8(24), 73-80.

Note: After the name of the journal, followed by a comma, include the italicized volume number of the journal. If the journal has an issue number, place it in parentheses after the volume number, WITHOUT a space and NOT italicized. If there is no issue number, it is just *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 8, 73-80.

The last elements are the page numbers, ending with a period.

The name of a magazine or newspaper is capitalized, never lowercased.

Online articles and sources

If the source URL begins with <http://www> or <https://www>, omit the [http\[s\]://](http[s]://) and just begin with www. (Note: This is an in-house style rule based on PlainLanguage.gov guidance, and not an APA rule. Any website that has www in its URL does *not* need <http://> in front of it.) If a URL does NOT have www in its address, then you must keep the <http://> in front, as in <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/behaviorism/>.

Do not put a period after an “Available at” statement’s URL.

Many NHTSA reports are available online; however, always use the print format for the source, especially including the DOT HS xxx xxx number. Only cite the web availability at the end.

Proceedings and conferences

Many sources commonly found in NHTSA reports are published in proceedings of conferences. Unlike most other references, these *should* include the location and date of the conference itself. Note: Even though location is now omitted in a general reference, the location of a conference is still required. The date range of the conference is included in the date element.

Levick, N. R. (2007, **June 24-27**). Emergency medical services: A transportation safety emergency. Paper presented at the 14th American Society of Safety Engineers Professional Development Conference; Orlando, FL. Available at www.objectivesafety.net/2007ASSE628Levick.pdf

Format of sources within text

APA requires the use of the author-date system in text (APA, 2009), and that the reference list be in unnumbered alphabetical order, by author (Smith & Jones, 2013). When two or more use the same authors, the oldest report is listed first (2003 before 2007 and 2006a before 2006b). In text, multiple sources can be listed in whatever order the authors decide (Smith & Jones, 2004; Alberts, 2009; Havelock et al., 1989), separated by semicolons.

However, many of our reports are written by engineers and other kinds of consultants, and use different systems, which we allow if the number of references is too long to convert. Sometimes the references are simply footnoted in numerical order, and then the reference list is therefore numbered to correspond to the footnote numbers. Some engineering firms use [1], [2] numbered brackets instead of footnotes. Although we sometimes allow use of these non-standard formats, the actual references themselves are converted to APA style.

Legal citations and government regulations

None of the above rules apply to legal citations and government rules, statutes, laws, and regulations, which have a completely different system that is encoded in *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (Bluebook, 18th ed., 2005).

Abbreviations are allowed on first reference: Cong., H. R., S. Reg., F. Supp., Fed. Reg. (the Federal Register), CFR (Code of Federal Regulations), etc.

Examples:

Lessard v. Schmidt, 349 F. Supp. 1078 (E.D. Wis. 1972). No italics in reference list—but in text it is *Lessard v. Schmidt* (1972) with name of case italicized (*Lessard v. Schmidt*, 1972).

Final Regulatory Evaluation, FMVSS No. 301 Upgrade, November 2003, NHTSA, Docket No. 2003-16523-2.

65 FR 67693, Docket Number 2000-8248.

68 FR 67068 - Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Fuel Systems Integrity.

49 CFR parts 400 to 571 revised October 1, 2012.

CFR, Title 49, Part 571, 571.121 Standard No. 121; Air Brake Systems. (2009). [Note: this is how Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 121 is cited.]

Fed. Reg., Vol. 68, No. 198, October 14, 2003, Docket No. NHTSA-2001-9663; Notice 3, Page 59250. Consumer Information; New Car Assessment Program; Rollover Resistance.

Fed. Reg., Vol. 74, No. 142, July 27, 2009, Docket No. NHTSA-2009-0083, Page 37122. Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Air Brake Systems.

Mental Health Systems Act, 42 U.S.C. § 9401 (1988).

Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. Pub. L. No. 101-336, § 2, 104 Stat. 328 (1991).

See the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for guidance on references for other specific types of documents (e.g., journal articles, conference proceedings, legal citations and government regulations).

Recommended Resources

English usage and style

- GPO doesn't say much about grammar and usage, so it recommends the following resources.
 - *Chicago Manual of Style*
 - *New York Times Manual of Style and Usage*
- *Garner's Modern American Usage* by Brian Garner
- *Associated Press Stylebook (AP Stylebook)*, 55th edition (for web, marketing, and media)
- *Lapsing Into a Comma* and *The Elephants of Style*, both by Bill Walsh
- *Woe Is I* and *Words Fail Me*, both by Patricia O'Connor
- *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage*, 1996
- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition (2020) (a.k.a., the APA style manual; note that APA is different from AP, above)
- *Dreyer's English: An Utterly Correct Guide to Clarity and Style*, by Benjamin Dreyer

Dictionaries

- *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition*
- *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged*

Online

- *Government Publishing Office Style Manual Online* at www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-STYLEMANUAL-2016/pdf/GPO-STYLEMANUAL-2016.pdf
- *Merriam-Webster Online* at www.m-w.com
- The Plain Language movement at www.plainlanguage.gov/howto/wordsuggestions/simplewords.cfm
- *Garbl's Editorial Style Manual* at <http://home.comcast.net/~garbl/stylemanual/index.htm>

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