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The COPS Office Editorial and Graphics Style Manual

Guide for Authors

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The COPS Office Editorial and Graphics Style Manual

Guide for Authors

Editors

Judith E. Beres
Kenneth Washington
Marian Haggard
Erin P.T. Canning

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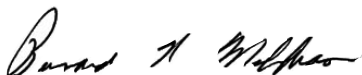
Letter from the Director

The COPS Office is proud to introduce *The COPS Editorial and Graphics Style Manual—Guide for Authors*, an up-to-date, expanded edition, featuring writing and editing guidance for COPS Office printed publications and related materials. Whether you are writing for or on behalf of the COPS Office, or have received COPS Office funding to support your writing, we encourage you to use this *Style Manual* as your reference for producing publications.

The COPS Office believes that our knowledge management and community policing advancement functions are critical to our traditional function of successful grant making. Our goal is that publications and resources developed or funded by the COPS Office are of consistently high quality and follow the approved COPS editorial style as set forth in the *COPS Editorial and Graphics Style Manual—Guide for Authors*. The purpose of a style manual for any organization is to choose rules of grammar and word usage based on recognized sources to establish consistency across the organization for all written and published material. Style does not vary according to choice, context, or matter of personal opinion, but it does evolve, as has our style manual.

The COPS Office has produced more than 1,000 publications in various formats on virtually every policing and public safety topic, and we've distributed more than 2 million of these resources to practitioners, community members and leaders, and other stakeholders to help them improve their community policing efforts. We strive to be the standard for high quality deliverables, and this *Style Manual* is intended to help ensure that we maintain a sterling reputation. We redesigned the *Style Manual* to be a more complete and invaluable resource for your writing needs and hope that it will help you to produce a quality publication.

Sincerely,



Bernard K. Melekian, Director
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

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Introduction

The COPS Office Editorial and Graphics Style Manual—Guide for Authors, is the primary writing and editing reference for COPS Office printed publications and related materials (e.g., correspondence, reports, forms). It includes correct forms for bibliographies and references, permissions, our disclaimer, a list of editorial/proofreading marks, and an alphabetical list of guidelines.

The COPS Office has an interest in ensuring that all internal documents, official written correspondence, other externally distributed materials, and publications developed or funded by the COPS office are consistent with good writing practices and standards, have continuity in thought and organization, and adhere to the approved COPS Office editorial style as set herein. This manual will aid you in producing quality documents.

The guidelines herein are based on the *GPO Style Manual* (2008 edition) and *The Chicago Manual of Style* (15th edition), with exceptions reflecting our own common use, along with points that are hard to remember, hard to find, or represent changes as style evolves. *The Big List*—an A to Z listing of guides to capitalization, abbreviation, spelling, numerals, usage, and more—is on pages 15–47. Use it as you would a dictionary.

The COPS Office Editorial and Graphics Style Manual is by no means comprehensive. If a question of an editorial nature is not covered in the manual, use the *GPO Style Manual* as your next reference and then the *Chicago Manual of Style*. If neither answers a style question, use *The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual* as the fourth reference. It addresses matters that the other two do not. All three publications are available in hard cover. Online, *GPO* is available at www.gpoaccess.gov/stylemanual/browse.html. *Chicago* is available by paid annual subscription at www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html. The Associated Press book is available by paid annual subscription at www.apstylebook.com.

For correct spelling, definitions, and word division, use the most recent edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, or online at www.webster.com.

For synonyms and antonyms to help you find and use the appropriate words to express thoughts or ideas, use *Roget's II The New Thesaurus*.

For computer and IT terms, use the *Microsoft Computer Dictionary*, latest edition.

For British English spelling, use the *Oxford Dictionary of Current English*.

For legal citations, use *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*, latest edition.

Preparing Manuscript Documents for Submission to the COPS Office

Whether written by COPS Office staff or by external authors, manuscript documents intended for publication by the COPS Office must be prepared according to certain standards. These standards encourage cleanly prepared documents that help *ensure the authors' intent, save time* in development, *decrease the number of rounds of review*—saving time and money—and enable allocation of more time to *quality control*.

This guide does not cover the process of peer review and any vetting that takes place prior to the manuscript being submitted to the COPS Publications Group. Those are addressed elsewhere by COPS guidelines covering project development.

The COPS Project Editor will review and edit all submitted manuscripts to bring them into compliance with *The COPS Office Editorial and Graphics Style Manual*—the primary editing reference for publications produced by the COPS Office. It provides the correct forms for bibliographies and references, graphic design, 508 compliance, permissions, and use of acronyms, and ensures by these standards a consistency of form and expression.

As stated in the Introduction to the *Style Manual*, the standard sources are based primarily on the *U.S. Government Printing Office Style Manual: An Official Guide to the Form and Style of Federal Government Printing* (2008) and *The Chicago Manual of Style* (15th Edition). A copy of *The COPS Office Editorial and Graphics Style Manual—Guide for Authors* is included in every award packet sent from The COPS Office. Please familiarize yourself with this document and use it as a guideline when preparing written materials for any and all COPS Office publications.

Format Standards: Keep It Simple

General Copy Requirements for Author Submissions

1. Manuscript documents must be prepared in Microsoft Word.
2. A few of the style tags in Word can be used to set the hierarchy of the manuscript **so the author's intent is clear** to the Project Editor and Designer:
 - Body copy
 - Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3, etc.
 - List Number
 - List Bullet
 - Footnote TextRemember, keep it simple—but keep it clear.
3. Turn off “tracking” and accept all your revisions before submitting the manuscript to the COPS Office.
4. Check numbering of all footnotes and/or endnotes.
5. Formatting of endnotes, footnotes, and references should be consistent. See *References and Documentation* on page 6.
6. Figures (illustrations, charts, etc.) and tables must be numbered, titled, and referenced in text. See *Standards for Publication Design and Production—Photos, Charts, Graphs, Tables, Figures* on page 10.
7. **Verification of all URL addresses in manuscript is the author's responsibility.**

Manuscript Approval

The incoming manuscript is reviewed and edited by the COPS Project Editor. Consultation with the COPS Project Manager, who may in turn coordinate consultation with the author(s), may be required. Only when this editing process is complete, is the manuscript submitted for vetting by the broader DOJ. After vetting changes have been made to the manuscript by the author, it will be returned to the Project Editor, who will incorporate any other required changes. The manuscript is then turned over for design and layout.

Graphics in the Manuscript— Figures, Illustrations, Photos, Charts, Graphs, and Tables

The guidelines for the incorporation of supporting graphics is as follows:

1. All illustrations, graphs, and tables must be referenced in the text.
2. Each illustration must have an identifying number (e.g., **Figure 1, Table 7.3**) and a title or caption. They may be numbered/organized at the author's/project editor's discretion but they must be labeled consistently.
 - Place the identifying number and title/caption above the illustration in bold title case, ending with a period, as in these examples:
Table 1: Agencies Participating in Site Visits. or **Figure 1: Agencies Participating in Site Visits.**
 - If figures or tables are provided in a separate document, they still require the identifiers described above. In the manuscript, place a sentence in bold so it is readily noticeable in proximity to the text reference calling out the figure or table. **Example: Figure X goes here.**
 - If a number of figures or tables are placed in an Appendix, they still need a title as instructed above. They can be numbered as: **Table A1: <title>.** or **Figure A1: <title>.**
3. Place illustrations as close as possible to their references in the text. Ideally, in the layout, they will be placed on the same page where referenced or on the page facing the text reference. If the size or nature of the figure or table makes that impossible, the illustration will be placed on a following page that is as close as possible to the page where it is referenced. In addition, as in this example, the text reference will cite: “...as seen in **Figure 8, on page 43...**” or “...**Figure 8, on page 43, shows...**”
4. If supplying images to the COPS Office, acceptable, desirable formats are: **JPEG, TIFF, EPS, AI**, (Adobe Illustrator), **PSD**, and **BMP**. Vector images (.eps and .ai; typically Adobe Illustrator) are most desirable because they are not resolution-dependent. Raster images (.jpg, .tif) should be **no less than** a printing resolution of 300 dpi, unless the publication is being developed for web only, in which case, 72 dpi is sufficient. *Note:* Even if the intention of a publication is that it be for web only, the higher resolution is still desirable as it may be printed out by the web user and/or printed at a later date by the COPS Office.

Graphic images placed or inserted into Microsoft Word documents are not desirable. Unless already collected or packaged with an InDesign file, the graphic image files should be provided in their original form. If transmitted via email or ftp, they can be bundled in a zipped file.
5. As a rule, COPS Office graphic designers will recreate or design graphs and charts in line with the graphics standards of the COPS Office and to be consistent with the overall design of the publication. In these cases, graphics embedded in Microsoft Word are acceptable as visual guidance.

6. **The author is responsible for obtaining permissions and credits to use any images and for providing source citations, and submitting these permissions and credits to the COPS Office prior to vetting.**
7. Place the credits or source citations underneath or in proximity to the image if placed inline in the manuscript. This may include adding text references to the figures/tables. If a manuscript is submitted that is not wholly in compliance with the above specifications, the Project Editor will notify the Program Manager. The author and Program Manager will work together to bring the manuscript into an acceptable compliance upon agreement with the Assistant Director and Project Editor, after which it will be submitted for layout.

References and Documentation

The formats described here are used by the COPS Office for all original writing and in creating endnotes and references for documents that lack them. We ask that our grantees and contributing authors use the same format when preparing documents for the COPS Office. The format is based on *The Chicago Manual of Style* (15th edition), which may be consulted for additional information.

Footnotes, Endnotes, Notes, and Bibliographic Entries

Notes documenting the text and corresponding to reference numbers in the text are called *footnotes* when they are printed at the foot or in the margin of a page and *notes* or *endnotes* when they are printed at the back of the publication or at the end of a chapter. Note reference numbers in text are set as superior (superscript) numbers. In the notes themselves, they are full size, not raised, and followed by a period.

“Nonrestrictive relative clauses are parenthetical, as are similar clauses introduced by conjunctions indicating time or place.”¹

1. William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White, 2000, *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed. New York: Allyn and Bacon, 3.

Bibliographies and *references* are lists of books and other references placed at the end of the publication or at the ends of the chapters to which they apply. The Author-Date system of documentation is recommended. All following examples are in this style.

Pay special attention to punctuation—periods, commas, order of names. Spell out states when a city is not a major, well-known city, e.g., New York, Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles. **Do not use postal abbreviations (CA, TX, IL).**

Books and Published Reports

Author (last name, first name). Year of publication. *Title in Italics* and Initial Caps. Place of publication: Publisher.

Jones, John. 2006. *History of Criminology*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Roberts, Caroline. 2010. *Crime in America*. Springfield, Illinois: Greenfield Publications.

Periodicals

Author (last name, first name). Year of publication. “Title of Article in Quotation Marks.” (Initial cap all words except articles and most prepositions and end with a period.) *Title of periodical in italics* (no comma) volume number (month of publication in parentheses): page numbers. Note colon after parentheses, en dash between page numbers, and period at end. (See also *Authors* on page 9.)

Jones, John. 2006. “Crime in the Community.” *Journal of Crime* 10 (June): 3–12.

Newspaper Articles

Author (last name, first name) (if known). Year of newspaper. “Title of Article in Quotation Marks.” (Initial caps except articles and most prepositions.) *Title of Newspaper in Italics*, month and day of newspaper, page (including section).

Jones, John. 2006. “Crime in the Community.” *Washington Post*, June 10, B1.

or

Editorial. 2006. “Crime in the Community.” *Washington Post*, June 10, A23.

Series

Author (last name, first name). Year of publication. *Title of Publication in Italics*. Title of Series in Initial Caps (except articles and most prepositions), volume and number. Place of publication: Publisher.

Chapman, Jefferson. 1974. *Parental Care*. Illinois Biological Monographs, vol. 22. Champaign: University of Illinois.

Government series

Follow the same format as other series, except provide the NCJ number at the end of the citation.

Visher, Christy A. 1992. *Pretrial Drug Testing*. Research in Brief, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, NCJ 137057.

Unpublished Documents

Author (last name, first name). Year of publication. “Title of Document in Quotation Marks.” (Initial cap all words except articles and most prepositions, and end with a period.) Name of sponsoring organization or conference at which document was presented, city and state of presentation, month and day of publication.

Rose, Dina R. 2008. “A Thug in Jail Can’t Shoot Your Sister: Incarceration and Social Capital.” Paper presented to the American Sociological Association, New York, August 12.

Repeating a Citation in a Note

If the source is the same as the immediately preceding citation, use “Ibid.,” and page number.

Ibid., 3.

If the source has been given a full citation two or more notes earlier in the notes, use the author’s last name, title of book, document, or article, and the page number. Follow in parentheses with the page number of the prior note.

An article in a periodical: Jones, “Crime in the Community,” 5 (see note 3).

A document in a series; a book: Visher, *Pretrial Drug Testing*, 2 (see note 17).

Citations in Text

Author-date citations in the text must agree exactly, in both name and date, with the corresponding entries in the reference/bibliography list, and there *must be an entry for every text citation*. An in-text (or at the end of a block quotation) citation should use the author’s last name followed by the year of the publication—with no comma between the two.

(Woodward 2007)

(Fowler and Haversham 2009)

(Forsham, Hoover, et al. 2010)

(Zooperman et al. 2008)

Authors

More than one author: First author, list last name first; list all other authors first name first with each **full** name separated by commas.

Winterfield, Laura A., and Sally T. Hillsman.

Winterfield, Laura A., Sally T. Hillsman, Richard G. Jordan, and Charles C. Underwood.

If no authors, only editors. List the editors in the author slot. Often, editors are listed by first and middle initials instead of names.

Jamieson, K.M., and T.J. Flannegan, eds.

If an agency or institution is both the author and publisher. Use in both places in the citation.

Federal Bureau of Investigation. 2006. *Uniform Crime Reports*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Special Situations

Chapters in a book or report, where the chapter has an author and the book has editors:

Author (last name, first name). Year of publication. “Title of Chapter in Quotation marks,” in *title of book in italics*, Ed. editors’ names (first names first), Publication place: publisher: page numbers cited (or if in a reference, list all page numbers of chapter).

Smith, Robert. 1990. “Crime and the Cities,” in *A Review of Criminal Justice*. Ed. Ellen Tomes and Edward Bock, New York: Wiley: 25–26.

Several citations in one endnote: Separate each citation by semicolons. The order of the citations can be based on importance, be alphabetical, or be by year.

Internet-Based References

When citing sources, always provide a complete reference; that is, the location and complete name of an organization or, if a publication, provide the author, title, place of publication, publisher, and date of publication so that if the URL no longer exists, a reader will have enough information to search for another source of the organization or publication referenced.

Do not insert “Last accessed on...” or any similar statement after a URL, as doing so can date the publication, particularly if URLs are included in drafts months or years prior to publishing.

Standards for Publication Design and Production

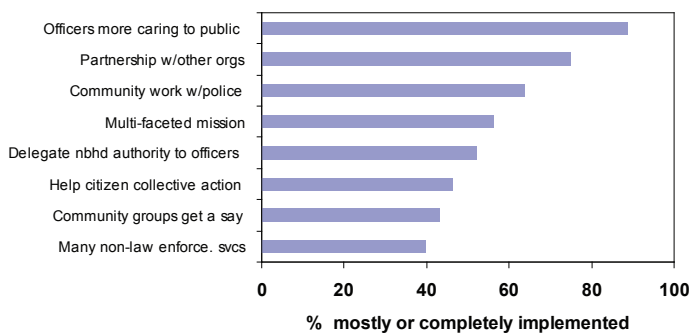
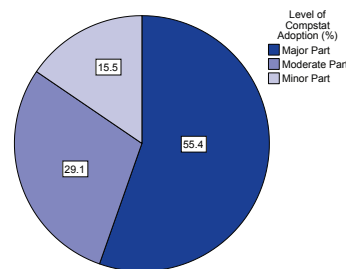
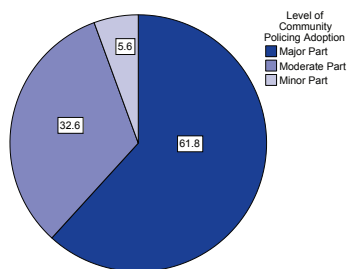
The graphics standards outlined here represent the baseline standards for all publication design and layout by the COPS Office. Except in rare circumstances, all design, layout, and production preparation is produced internally by COPS Office Graphic Designers.

Some publications are part of a series for which the design has been previously developed in a design template. Other freestanding reports and publications may contain elements such as a COPS Office disclaimer statement. Some of the page layouts in these publications are predetermined or “boilerplate.” Some are updated periodically and others are updated on each publication with information such as grant number, ISBN number, and month and year of publication.

Other than those instances, the creative direction of each publication is the purview of the COPS Office Publication Design Team, in consultation and consensus with the COPS Project Manager and Project Editor. Final approval of the publication design lies with the Project Manager, who may consult with others to obtain approvals. Ultimately, design approval is communicated by the Project Manager to the Publications Design Team.

Illustrations—Photos, Charts, Graphs, Tables, Figures

Images acceptable for use in documents are: **JPEG**, **TIFF**, **EPS**, **AI** (Adobe Illustrator), **PSD**, and **BMP**. Raster images should be **no less** than a printing resolution of 300 dpi, unless the publication is being developed for web only, in which case, 72 dpi is sufficient. *Note:* Even if the intention of a publication is that it be for web only, the higher resolution is still desirable as it may be printed out by the web user and/or printed at a later date by the COPS Office.



Permissions

Authors must secure the appropriate permissions to use or quote work that is not their own and must obtain releases for photographs (both the subject of the photograph, if a person, and the photographer) and other illustrative materials, such as logos, charts, and graphs. The COPS Office is not liable for an external author's failure to obtain permission to use copyrighted materials.

Authors must also provide a source cite for each piece used. Sample of a chart cite:

Chart modeled after data and similar chart from The Internet Factors Project, 2006.
www.mocksiteontheinternet.com.

Sample of a quote cite:

Reprinted with permission from: Brown, Joe. 2009. *Something to Remember*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham, MD.

If applicable, Department of Justice regulations permit an external author to copyright any publication that is subject to copyright and was developed with COPS Office funds. The COPS Office reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the publication, or authorize others to use the publication, for Federal Government purposes. Additionally, the COPS Office may reproduce the publication by any means, without restriction. If an external author is using copyrighted material in a COPS Office-funded publication, the author should notify the copyright holder of the COPS Office's rights in the publication.

Disclaimer

Typically, the following disclaimer statement, which includes the grant or cooperative agreement information, is placed on the first page of the front matter of a document. This language needs to be provided by the COPS Project Manager for each project.

This project was supported by a Cooperative Agreement/Grant Number XXXX-XX-XX-XXXX awarded by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. References to specific agencies, companies, products, or services should not be considered an endorsement by the author(s) or the U.S. Department of Justice. Rather, the references are illustrations to supplement discussion of the issues.

The Internet references cited in this publication were valid as of the date of this publication. Given that URLs and websites are in constant flux, neither the author nor the COPS Office can vouch for their current validity.

ISBN: XXX-X-XXXXXXX-XXX-X

April 2010 <month/year of publication>

ISBNs

An International Standard Book Number (ISBN) will be assigned by the Publications Group. An ISBN barcode can be acquired but is usually not needed as COPS Publications are typically not issued for sale.

The Big List

A

a, an – See **articles**

abbreviations:

- ▶ Spell out abbreviations or acronyms the first time they are used, as familiarity with acronyms varies and some acronyms have multiple meanings. ATM, for example, could be “automated teller machine” or “asynchronous transfer mode.” Also, do not insert “machine” after ATM because then it is “automated teller machine machine.” (See also **acronyms**.)
- ▶ Abbreviations having more than one period, such as M.D. or Ph.D., form their plurals by adding an apostrophe and an “s” after the final period (Ph.D.’s).
- ▶ Noun abbreviations with one period form their plurals by adding an “s” before the period (vol. vols.).
- ▶ If the addition of an “s” to an abbreviation forms a different abbreviation (Mr. becomes Mrs.), the plural is formed irregularly (Mr. becomes Messrs.; Mrs. becomes Mmes.).
- ▶ Abbreviations and initials of personal names that are followed by periods are set without spaces (U.S.; N.W.; J.W. Smith; etc.; e.g.; i.e.).
- ▶ Abbreviations of contractions and initials or numbers retain a space (e.g., S. 116, op. cit.).
- ▶ Federal and state agencies or departments are not punctuated with periods (FBI, FTC, COPS, DOJ).
- ▶ U.S. (for United States) – Not US

aboard – One word.

Accelerated Hiring, Education and Deployment (AHEAD) – No comma after “Education.”

accept/except – “Accept” means to receive: “I accept the award.” “Except” means to exclude: “Everyone came to the party except Bob.”

acknowledgment – *Not* acknowledgement.

acronyms:

- ▶ On *first use* of a term, place the acronym in parentheses following the spelled-out term, then afterward throughout the text use only the acronym. **Example:** “The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) will issue guidelines in June. Later in the year, the DOJ will...”
- ▶ To make an acronym plural (that doesn’t end with an “s”) simply add the s—no apostrophe. However, to make a possessive acronym, *DO* add the apostrophe. Samples:
 - Something belongs to one chief executive officer (better known as a CEO): “The CEO’s life is hectic.”
 - More than one CEO: “Many CEOs attended the networking event.”
 - Something belongs to more than one CEO: “All CEOs’ lives are hectic.”

— Contraction with “is” (informal): “The CEO’s coming to the networking event.”

— (Incorrect: There are 12 CEO’s on the board.)

- ▶ In a long document, follow the spelled-out term with the acronym in parentheses at first mention in each major section or chapter.
- ▶ If a term is used only once in a document, chapter, or section, do not follow it with the acronym.
- ▶ Articles (“a” “an” “the”) should accompany acronyms when warranted. See **articles**.
- ▶ Adding an “s” is the correct way to make an acronym plural. *But*, do not add the “s” to the acronym even if the phrase is plural on first full reference with the acronym in parentheses afterward: “Standard operating procedures (SOP).” *Not* “Standard operating procedures (SOPs).” This is because the acronym, when used alone later in text, may be either singular, possessive, or plural. **Examples:** “The SOP was followed to the letter. The SOP’s requirement was strict. Several new SOPs were issued the following week.”
- ▶ To make an acronym plural when it ends with an “s,” insert an apostrophe between the two, as in “SOS’s.”
- ▶ When the possessive is used on the first full reference of a term, followed by the first use of its acronym, do not make the acronym possessive. “The Department of Justice’s (DOJ) budget is subject to debate.” *Not* “The Department of Justice’s (DOJ’s) budget is subject to debate.” Again, this is because the acronym, when used alone later in text, may be either singular or possessive. **Examples:** “The DOJ budget is subject to debate; the DOJ’s budget is subject to debate.”
- ▶ If the spelled-out term is in italics, do not use italics for the acronym: *Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment* (SARA).
- ▶ Software terms (languages, programs, systems, packages, etc.) indicating specific units are set in full capitals if they are acronyms; otherwise they are spelled according to trade or market names (BASIC, FORTRAN, Pascal). Refer to the *Microsoft Computer Dictionary* for guidance.
- ▶ See the *Acronyms* section of the *Style Manual* for a quick reference list of acronyms frequently used in COPS publications.

active voice/passive voice – As much as possible, use active voice instead of passive voice because it is strong and direct, in other words, “active.” Passive voice is exactly what it says it is: “passive.” A sentence is in the active voice when the subject performs the action: “The researcher conducted a survey.” A sentence is in the passive voice when the subject is the recipient of an action: “The survey was conducted by the researcher.” Writers often use the passive voice when they don’t know the subject of a sentence or when something is not clear: “A survey was conducted and a report written.” (By whom? Find out and say so!)

ad hoc – Two words; no hyphen or italics.

addresses:

- ▶ Spell out street, avenue, boulevard, lane, and building except in footnotes, endnotes, exhibits, and lists.
- ▶ Use periods with N.W. or S.E., but do not abbreviate north, south, east, or west.

- ▶ Use periods in D.C. in running text, but use DC (the postal abbreviation; no periods) when part of a complete address. **Example:** The COPS Office is located in Washington, D.C. The address is: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, Two Constitution Square, 145 N Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20530.
- ▶ If at all possible, do not break World Wide Web URLs or e-mail addresses. If an electronic address appears at the end of a line of text, carry it to the next line rather than breaking it apart. If a web address is too long to comply, break it at a backslash or some other symbol in the address rather than using a hyphen.

administration – Capitalize the first letter when the word refers to the administration in power or is part of the name of an organization.

- ▶ Kennedy Administration
- ▶ Food and Drug Administration (capitalized as part of the title)
- ▶ The Administration

adviser/advisor (law)

affect/effect:

- ▶ “Affect” means to influence: “The budget cut affected everybody.” “Late delivery affected the schedule.”
- ▶ As a verb, “effect” means to accomplish, bring about, or cause: “The director will effect change within the department.” “His announcement effected a change in the department.”
- ▶ As a noun, “effect” refers to the result of an action: “His announcement had a positive effect on the department.” “The effect was greater efficiency.”
- ▶ See also **impact**.

African American – No hyphen, except when modifying a noun. **Example:** She married an African-American man. Synonym for “Black.”

agency – Capitalize the first letter when referring to a specific government agency: Central Intelligence Agency, the Agency; but, the local law enforcement agency of Smith County.

AHEAD – Accelerated Hiring, Education and Deployment. (No comma after “Education”)

Alaska Native – Collective term for Aleuts, Eskimos, and Indians of Alaska (GPO Style Manual).

all of – Omit the superfluous “of.” **Example:** “He took all the cookies.” Not “He took all of the cookies.”

allows – “enables” is preferred, as in “The system enables the LAN to...”

alternate/alternative – The words are not always interchangeable as nouns or adjectives. “Alternate” means every other one in a series; “alternative” is one of two or more possibilities. As the other one of a series of two, an alternate may stand for “a substitute,” but an alternative, although used in a similar sense, connotes a matter of choice that is never present with an alternate. **Example:** “The flooded road left them no alternative so they took the alternate route.”

AM – All caps: 8:00 AM. Space between 8:00 and AM. Not: 8:00AM; 8:00 a.m.; 8:00a.m.; 8:00 am; 8:00am

amendment – First Amendment; 14th Amendment; an amendment to ...

America – Do not use as a synonym for the United States.

amid/among/between:

- ▶ Use “amid” when the reference is to a quantity not considered individual items. **Example:** “He exhibited calm amid the chaos.”
- ▶ Use “among” to denote three or more items. **Example:** “The money was divided among the four winners.”
- ▶ Use “between” to denote only two items. **Example:** “She had to choose between tennis and swimming.”

and/or – A device or shortcut that could lead to confusion or ambiguity. Try not to use, or rephrase the sentence. **Example:** (Bad) “Police or businesses or both will issue warnings.” (Better) “Police or businesses will issue warnings.” (Best) “Police and businesses will issue warnings.”

anti – Prefix, do not hyphenate: e.g., anticrime, antidrug, antiviolence (but Anti-Drug Abuse Act). See also **prefixes**.

apostrophe:

- ▶ Use only to show possession: e.g., the YMCA’s computer, the 1920’s toy..., not to form the plural or contraction of a figure, symbol, or combination of letters: e.g., 1920s, OKs, YMCAs.
- ▶ County names use an apostrophe only if part of the legally constituted name: Prince George’s County, St. Mary’s County, Maryland.
- ▶ Follow the pronunciation when forming a possessive for a word ending in “s.” Harris’s house, not Harris’, but Francios’ house, not Francios’s. Omit the “s” in a possessive if including it would create three “s” sounds in succession: Jones’ name, for goodness’ sake, Texas’.
- ▶ Use an apostrophe to show the contraction for “it is” or “it has”: “It’s a lovely day.” “Its” (no apostrophe) is the possessive form of the pronoun “it” as in “The dog chewed its bone.”
- ▶ Instead of “COPS’ publications...,” use “The COPS Office’s publications...”.

appendixes – Not appendices. (*GPO Style Manual*; *Chicago*, and dictionary)

articles:

- ▶ *Definite article*—Use “the” before abbreviations and acronyms that when doing so would make the sentence read better. **Example:** “A spokesperson for the FBI said...”. But the definite article is inappropriate before some acronyms or abbreviations, for example: “The NATO will meet next month.”
- ▶ *Indefinite article*—When deciding whether to use the indefinite articles “a” or “an” before an acronym, abbreviation, or word, base your decision not on the spelling, but on whether the first letter is pronounced as a vowel. Many acronyms and nouns that begin with a consonant are pronounced as if starting with a vowel in certain circumstances: f (ef), h (aych), l (el), m (em), n (en), r (ar), s (es), x (ex). **Example:** “The show is an NBC production” (en be ce); not “The show is a NBC production” (nnnn be ce). If an abbreviation or acronym is widely pronounced as a word, the article is determined by the pronunciation of the first letter of the word: “a NATO meeting,” “a COPS Office publication,” but “an IADLEST training session,” “an NIJ employee,” and “an HTML document.”
- ▶ The same rules apply to other words: a hospital, not an hospital; but an honest man, not a honest man. With “an,” the “h” is silent; with “a,” the “h” is pronounced.

as to whether – “Whether” is sufficient.

Asian – Not oriental, when referring to race without being specific.

Asian American – No hyphen, except when modifying a noun, e.g., Asian-American women...

assure/ensure/insure:

- ▶ “Assure” means to promise or make sure by removing doubt: “Bill assured Dave that he would bring the book.”
- ▶ “Ensure” means to make certain: “The team hired a specialist to ensure that the project would meet the deadline.”
- ▶ “Insure” means to guarantee against risk or loss, to underwrite: “They insured their house against fire damage.”

ATF – Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (No comma after “Firearms”)

at this point in time – Wordy. “At this point” and “time” are redundant; use “now.”

Attorney General (U.S.), but: state attorney general; State’s Attorney.

at-risk – Unit modifier. **Example:** “It was an at-risk situation,” *but* “He put the whole department at risk.”

audiovisual – One word.

author – Noun. Do not use as a verb. *Wrong:* “He authored the book.” *Right:* “He is the author of the book.” Or, “He wrote the book.” (See also **coauthor**.)

B

bachelor’s degree – Lower case; note apostrophe. Abbreviation: B.A.

back end (noun)/**back-end** (adjective)

backup – As a noun or adjective, one word, as in “a backup plan” or “he called for backup.” As a verb, two words, as in: “She will back up her statement with facts.”

baseline – One word.

because/since – Not interchangeable. “Because” refers to a reason or condition: “He arrived late because got lost.” “Since” refers to time: “Crime has decreased considerably since 1994.”

benefited – Not benefitted.

between – See **amid/among/between**.

bibliography style – See *References and Documentation* on pages 6–9.

bill – As in, the bill introduced in Congress; but Bill of Rights.

BJA – Bureau of Justice Assistance

BJS – Bureau of Justice Statistics

Black – Synonym for “African American.”

broken windows – A well-known term in law enforcement; therefore, no quotation marks needed. If a writer considers it crucially important to emphasize the term at first mention, quotation marks are acceptable. Do not use quotation marks whenever the term is mentioned again in a document.

brackets – For second-level parenthetical information, brackets belong inside parentheses. **Example:** “Raymond Wilton was a highly respected ornithologist (His study of the flightless bird [the kiwi] was the subject of his doctoral dissertation). He also was an accomplished violinist.”

British English word usage and spelling – Use the Oxford Dictionary of Current English.

bullets/bulleted lists – (See also **numbered lists**):

- ▶ Do not use bullets for just two items, unless incorporating them into a sentence would make the sentence unwieldy.
- ▶ Bulleted lists should have an introduction with a colon. **Example:** “The COPS Office will provide the following:” Not “The COPS Office will:”.
- ▶ Begin the first word in each item with a capital letter.
- ▶ Unless a bulleted item is a complete sentence, do not use periods, semicolons, or “and.” By ending each item with a semicolon, and ending the second-last item with a semicolon and “and”, you end up with a very long sentence.
- ▶ If one bulleted item in the list is a complete sentence requiring a period, put a period at the end of each bulleted item in the list. But, if only one bulleted item is a sentence, then the series is not parallel. The preferred approach is to rewrite the series so that all elements are parallel, that is, all are sentences or all are fragments. See **parallel sentence structure**.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) – No comma after “Firearms.”

Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)

Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)

buy-in – Noun, hyphenate. **Example:** “The COPS Office will attempt to obtain buy-in for the idea.”
Verb, two words, no hyphen. **Example:** “He didn’t buy in to the concept.”

C

CALEA – The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies

Canadian English – A mixture of British English and American English. There seem to be no set guidelines, other than the use of the “...our” spelling in some words (labour, favour, for example) and other such British forms. Work with your Canadian author on correct usage.

canceling/canceled/cancellation – Note spelling.

cannot – Not can not.

capital/capitol – The Nation’s Capital (Washington, D.C.); the state capital; the U.S. Capitol (the building housing the legislative branch of the U.S. Government); Capitol Hill (the site of the U.S. Capitol).

capitalization:

- ▶ Capitalize formal titles when used immediately before a name. **Examples:** Director Jones; Vice President Alice Green.
- ▶ Capitalize formal titles following names on a list (e.g., of contributors or participants), for participants in workshops, names in photo captions, and other such uses. **Examples:** Moderator: Robert Oakes, Assistant General Counsel, ABC Corporation; Presenter: Margaret Anderson, Executive Director, Foundation for Justice.
- ▶ Lower case formal titles in text when used generically, alone, or when set off from a name by commas. **Examples:** The unit’s director; the association director didn’t comment; Smith Jones, vice president of the organization; six mayors sat on the panel; a police chief; the new sheriff. **Exception:** capitalize when referring to the President of the United States or other heads of state: “The President said...”
- ▶ Capitalize terms such as Agency, Bureau, Center, Department, Institute, or Office as part of a proper name or when referring to a federal or international entity.
- ▶ Capitalize federal and state in the formal names of government or corporate bodies (Federal Bureau of Investigation, State Department of Corrections), but lowercase when used as an adjective to distinguish federal, state, county, or city entities from private entities.
- ▶ Capitalize text references to elements of a document. **Examples:** Chapter 1, Note 2, Exhibit 5, Appendix A.
- ▶ Lowercase the “s” on “see” when within a sentence (see Exhibit x); uppercase it if the parenthetical stands as a separate sentence after a lengthy or complex sentence. (See Exhibit 2-1.) The final period then goes inside the parentheses.

capitalization: title case (for major titles and captions in a publication; all major words have an initial cap):

- ▶ *Capitalize:* All forms of the verb “to be” (e.g., Is, Are, Be, Was, Were, Will)
- ▶ *Capitalize:* Than, That, Who, Which.
- ▶ *Capitalize:* All elements of hyphenated compounds (e.g., Problem-Oriented Policing).
- ▶ *Lowercase:* All articles (e.g., a, an, the, unless as the first or last word in a title).
- ▶ *Lowercase:* All conjunctions of three or fewer letters (e.g., and, but, or).
- ▶ *Lowercase:* All prepositions (e.g., with, between, from).

capitalization: sentence case (for secondary titles and run-in heads in a publication):

- ▶ *Capitalize:* The first letter of each sentence.
- ▶ *Capitalize:* All proper nouns.
- ▶ *Lowercase:* All other words in the sentence.

catalog – Not catalogue. (*GPO Style Manual* and dictionary)

categorize – Do not overuse, for a change, use: “put into” or “arrange in” categories.

Caucasian – Also White. Capitalize both.

CD-ROM – Not CD-Rom.

Center for Problem-Oriented Policing (POP Center) – Note hyphen.

charts – See **illustrative material**.

checklist – One word.

CHRP – COPS Hiring Recovery Program

CIS – COPS in Schools

client/server – Not client-server.

coauthor – Noun, no hyphen. Do not use as a verb. *Wrong*: “She coauthored the report.” *Right*: “She is a coauthor of the report.” (See also **author**.)

colocate; colocation – Note spelling: one “l”. “To locate or be located jointly or together, as two or more groups, military units, or the like; to share the same place or common facilities.” (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary and dictionary.com)

commas:

- ▶ Use serial commas. **Example:** “red, white, and blue,” not “red, white and blue.”
- ▶ Use a comma before and after explanatory phrases.
- ▶ Use a comma after a state when using a city and state. **Example:** “Police in Newark, New Jersey, responded to a call.”
- ▶ Do not use a comma after the year in a date sequence. **Example:** “He gave the speech on May 1, 2006 in New York.”
- ▶ Do not use a comma if writing only the month and year. **Example:** “He gave the speech in June 2006 in New York.”
- ▶ Use a comma after an introductory phrase of three words or fewer if a date ending the clause is followed by a number or unless the sentence would be misread without the comma. **Example:** “In June 1994, 123 juveniles were arrested.”
- ▶ Use a comma before “Sr.” or “Jr.” in a name. **Example:** “Joseph Smith, Sr.” but not with “III”, “IV”: “Joseph Smith III”

Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA)

community-based (adjective)

community oriented (adjective)

Community Oriented Policing Services (Office of) – the COPS Office, COPS. No hyphen between “Community” and “Oriented.” When preceded by “U.S. Department of Justice” do not insert a comma: “U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.”

community planning (unit modifier; noun)

community policing (unit modifier; noun)

compare – To “compare to” is to point out or imply resemblances between objects regarded as essentially of a different order; to “compare with” is to point out differences between objects regarded as essentially of the same order. **Examples:** Life has been compared to a pilgrimage, to a drama, to a battle; Congress may be compared with the British Parliament. Paris has been compared to ancient Athens; it may be compared with modern London.

compound words – Most compounds formed with the following prefixes are closed (not hyphenated), whether they are nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs: ante, anti, bi, bio, co, counter, extra, infra, inter, intra, macro, meta, micro, mid (except with numbers: mid-20s), mini, multi, neo, non, over, post, re, pro, proto, pseudo, re, semi, socio, sub, super, supra, trans, ultra, un, under.

compounding and unit modifiers – See **hyphenation**.

complement/compliment – Not interchangeable. “Complement” means “Something that completes, brings to a whole or makes up a perfection.” Whereas “compliment” means “An expression of praise, admiration or congratulation.” **Examples:** “To complement the committee, they had to ask for two more people.” “He complimented her on the report she wrote.”

comprise/compose/constitute – Literally, “comprise” means “embrace.” “A committee comprises representatives of six departments” (because it embraces or includes them). Do not use “is comprised of.” *Alternative:* “The committee is composed of...” On the other hand, a number of smaller items constitute or compose the whole: “Representatives of six departments constitute the committee.”

CompStat – The New York City Police Department’s computer statistics (CompStat) program for collecting crime statistics from city precincts. Other law enforcement agencies have their own versions and spellings, e.g., COMPSTAT, Compstat, compstat, comstat. Be sure to use the correct spelling specific to the agency and be consistent. When in doubt, use the New York City Police Department’s spelling because it is the original spelling.

computer terminology – Use the Microsoft Computer Dictionary, latest edition.

Congressman/Congresswoman – Use Representative instead.

congressional references – Congress (the U.S. Congress; the Congress of Racial Equality); congressional (generic); congressional districts; the 1st Congressional District.

contact – As a transitive verb, the word is vague. If providing just a telephone number, “call” is correct; when providing telephone number, fax number, e-mail, and postal address, “contact” is acceptable.

continual/continuous/continuing/ongoing – “Continual” means frequent occurrence with short intervals; “continuous” means nonstop; “continuing” and “ongoing” mean an activity that is happening at the moment.

COPS Office:

- ▶ The first time that the COPS Office is referred to in text, spell it out completely and follow with: (the COPS Office, not just COPS). Always refer to the COPS Office as the COPS Office, not COPS. **Example:** “The U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office)...”
- ▶ Every time thereafter in the text, the acronym COPS can be used. **Example:** “The U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office) was created as a result of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. The COPS Office provides grants to...”
- ▶ There is no comma between “Justice” and “Office.”

COPS in Schools (CIS)

COPS Fact Sheet(s)

COPS in Action

COPS Innovations

COPS Office Response Center

corporations, organizations – Use “it” or “its” as in “The ABC Corporation will announce its (not “their”) earnings...” Conversely, as an employee of the COPS Office, use “we” and “our” when referring to the COPS Office.

cost-benefit analysis – Not cost/benefit analysis.

cost-effective – (Adjective; noun). **Example:** “A cost-effective program.” **cost effectively** (adverb).

Example: “The test was conducted cost effectively.” **cost effective** (predicate adjective).

Example: “The program was cost effective.”

cost-recovery – Adjective

counterterrorism – One word, no hyphen.

country – When meaning the United States, as in “our country.” “Nation”, as in “our nation” is acceptable, too, but be consistent in a document.

county – Lowercase except when a specific county: Montgomery County, Prince George’s County, Fairfax and Loudoun Counties, but “The county authorities will...”

court

- ▶ The U.S. Supreme Court adjourned. The Court ruled.
- ▶ The New York Court of Appeals adjourned. The court ruled.
- ▶ The appeals court ruled.

coworker – No hyphen.

CPTED – Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

crimefighter/crime-fighting

criminal justice-related

cross-check – Noun; verb. Hyphenate.

cross-examine/cross-examination – Note hyphens.

cross fire – Two words, no hyphen (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*).

cross-reference – Noun; verb. Hyphenate.

cross section – Noun. Two words, no hyphen.

cross-train – Hyphenate.

cut back (verb)/**cutback** (noun; adjective)

curriculum (singular)/**curricula** (plural)

cybercrime – One word, no hyphen.

cyberstalking – One word, no hyphen.

D

D.A.R.E.[®] – Drug Abuse Resistance Education. Note periods and superscript registered trademark symbol. Use the trademark symbol only at first mention of D.A.R.E. in a publication.

data – Plural (data are); use “datum” for singular.

database – One word.

data set – Two words.

dates – mm/dd/yy or month and year; civilian, not military. **Examples:** 10/14/2006; 10/14/06; January 2006. Not January 6th; but acceptable in correspondence, as in “I will call you on January 6th to make further plans.”

Day 1, Day 2... – Capitalize “Day” and use the Arabic numeral: “The new rules go into effect on Day 1 of the grant.”

DEA – Drug Enforcement Administration

decision-maker; decision-making

definite article – See **articles**.

department – Capitalize when part of a proper name or when referring to a federal or international entity. **Example:** “The Department of Justice will issue new rules next week. They are the result of the Department’s reevaluation of...”

desktop

dialogue – Not dialog.

different from/different than – “Different from” is Standard English. “Than” is used only with the comparative or superlative degrees: e.g., better than; rather than.

direct quotes – With a direct quote from another publication, present it as originally published and always include citations in the text, followed by the full reference in the bibliography. Do not edit it to comply with COPS Office editorial style.

disinterested/uninterested – “Disinterested” means impartial, showing no favor (a judge is disinterested); “uninterested” means not interested in something (children are not interested in doing chores).

District of Columbia – Spell out when used as a noun (crime is down in the District of Columbia). Abbreviate with periods (D.C.) in text (crime in Washington, D.C., is down), but abbreviate without periods (DC) in a complete address (Two Constitution Square, 145 N Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20530).

do’s and don’ts – Punctuate as shown. Without the apostrophe, “dos” on its own could be interpreted as the Spanish word for “two” or for “disk operating system” in computer terminology.

downtime

drive-by – As in “a drive-by shooting.”

drug dealer/drug dealing (noun); **drug-dealer** (unit modifier) – **Examples:** “He is a drug dealer.” “He is involved in drug dealing.” “He is not concerned with drug-dealer safety.”

Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)

drug seller/drug selling (noun); **drug-selling** (unit modifier) – **Examples:** “He is a drug seller.” “He is involved in drug selling.” “The police conducted a surveillance of drug-selling locations.”

drug-free – **Example:** “The neighborhood has been drug-free for a year.”

Drug Abuse Resistance Education – See also **D.A.R.E.**®

due to – Loosely used for through, because, in adverbial phrases, as in, “He lost the first game due to carelessness.” *Better:* “He lost the second game through carelessness.” *Or* “He lost the game because he was careless.”

due to the fact that – Wordy, as in “We cannot finish the project due to the fact that...” Better to use “because” as in “We cannot finish the project because...”

E

editorial/proofreading marks – See *Editing/Proofreading Marks* on pages 12–14.

educational degrees – Lower case; note possessive: bachelor’s degree; master’s degree. Use periods with the abbreviations: B.A., M.A., Ph.D.

effect – See **affect/effect**.

e.g. and i.e.:

- ▶ The terms are not interchangeable. “e.g.” is short for *exempli gratia*, which means “for example,” while “i.e.” is short for *id est*, which means “that is.”
- ▶ Follow each by a comma. **Example:** i.e., a comma follows the abbreviation and period.
- ▶ Insert a period after each letter.
- ▶ They do not always have to be enclosed in parentheses.
- ▶ See also **etc.**

either/or – Not, for example, “either...nor” or “neither...or.”

ellipsis – There is no space before or after the ellipsis. An ellipsis at the end of a sentence is followed by a period (...).

e-mail, Internet, other web-related content:

- ▶ Hyphenate e-mail; capitalize only when the word starts a sentence. Use “E-mail” in an address or telephone list.
- ▶ Hyphenate e-business, e-commerce, e-government, e-grants. In title case, capitalize as follows: E-Business, E-Commerce, E-Government, E-Grants.
- ▶ Capitalize Internet; lowercase intranet and extranet.
- ▶ Website is one word; lowercase unless it starts a sentence.
- ▶ Refer to the COPS Office website as COPS Online. **Example:** Visit COPS Online at www.cops.usdoj.gov
- ▶ Do not include “http://” in a web address unless absolutely required to access the website. In some cases, the URL does not contain “www”; therefore, provide the complete address, including <http://>, to show that it does not contain “www.”

embedded – Not imbedded.

em dash/en dash/ hyphens:

- ▶ An em dash (—) is the equivalent of two hyphens and denotes a break in thought or to introduce an explanatory element in a sentence. There is no space on either side of the em dash. **Example:** “Take this report with you—it is very informative—when you go to the meeting.” To insert an em dash, type (Windows) Alt + 0151.
- ▶ An en dash (–) is longer than a hyphen but shorter than an em dash. Use it to separate dates, times, and page numbers. There is no space on either side of the en dash. **Examples:** 1996–2002; 4:00 PM–6:30 PM; pages 100–200. To insert an en dash, type (Windows) Alt + 0150.
- ▶ There is no space on either side of a hyphen when used in a word. Try not to break a hyphenated word at the end of a sentence. Restructure the sentence or adjust the spacing so that the word is not broken.

end user (noun); **end-user** (adjective) – **Examples:** “The instructions are for the benefit of the end user.”
“Each package contains end-user instructions.”

ensure – See **assure/ensure/insure**.

EPIC – El Paso Intelligence Center, a section of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

epilogue – Not epilog.

etc. – Literally, “and other things.” At the end of list introduced by such as, i.e., e.g., or a similar expression, etc. is incorrect. An item important enough to call for etc. probably is important enough to name, otherwise it leaves the reader guessing about what “etc.” includes. If used in the middle of a sentence, follow with a comma: ect.,

exhibits – See **illustrative material**.

ex-convict

ex-offender

F

facility – Use alone; do not combine, as in “jail facility,” which is redundant. A jail is a facility. Preferably, use the word (hospital, school, jail, office) instead of “facility.” But also: “He worked on the project on building community policing into a police facility.”

Fact Sheet (when a proper name); **fact sheet** (generic)

farther/further – “Farther” refers to physical distance; “further” is for time or quantity. You drove the car farther down the road but you pursue the discussion further.

FAST – Funding Accelerated for Smaller Towns

fax numbers – Follow this style: 000.000.0000 not (000) 000-0000. Same style applies to telephone numbers.

federal/ federally – Lowercase (a federal decision) unless it begins a sentence or is part of the name of an entity (the Federal Government today...). But lowercase when used as an adjective to distinguish something from state, country, city, town, or private entities (federal assistance, federal District Court, federal court, the federal government).

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

Federal Government – Capitalize for specific governmental bodies.

Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC)

fewer/less; over/under; more than/less than:

- ▶ “Fewer” refers to numbers, items you can count. **Example:** “Fewer than 300 people attended last year’s conference.”
- ▶ “Less” refers to quantity. **Examples:** “There was less of a crowd at last year’s conference.” “We had less snow last winter; hence, fewer snowflakes.”
- ▶ “Under” and “over” refer to spatial relationships. **Examples:** “The mouse hid under the desk. The cow jumped over the moon.”
- ▶ Use “more than” or “less than” instead of “over” and “under” when speaking of quantities. **Examples:** “More than 50 people came to the party.” Not “Over 50 people came to the party.” And, “He paid less than \$50 for the sweater.” Not “He paid under \$50 for the sweater.”
- ▶ Use “during” (not “over”) as in “During the past several years...”

figures – See **illustrative material**.

finalize – An ambiguous verb. Instead, use complete, conclude, make final, finish, or produce in final form.

FLETC – Federal Law Enforcement Training Center

flip chart – Two words.

flyer (brochure); **flier** (aviator)

follow-up (noun; unit modifier); **follow up** (verb)

FOP – Fraternal Order of Police

foreword – Prefatory comments written by someone other than the author or editor of a publication and placed near the front of a document. Note spelling: not forward or foreward or forword.

for-profit – As in “a for-profit enterprise.”

fort – Always spell out: Fort Worth, Fort Lauderdale; not “Ft.”

fundraising/fundraiser

FY2010 – No space between FY and full four-digit date.

G

GAD – Grants Administration Division (of the COPS Office).

GAO – Government Accountability Office, *formerly* General Accounting Office.

Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) – Periods in the acronym, no commas when spelled out.

General Services Administration (GSA)

gender – Use instead of the word “sex” in tables.

governor – Lower case unless it is used as a title: **Examples:** “The governor will review it;” “We asked Governor Smith to review it.”

government – Lowercase unless it begins a sentence; but, the Federal Government.

graffiti – Always plural.

graphs – See **illustrative material**.

grassroots (adjective); **grass roots** (noun)

G.R.E.A.T. – Gang Resistance Education and Training. Periods in the acronym, no commas when spelled out.

GSA – (U.S.) General Services Administration

H

handheld – One word.

HAPCOA – Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association

hard copy – Two words unless used as a compound modifier (hard-copy manuals).

hardware – Do not abbreviate. Also applies to “software.”

health care – Two words.

help desk – Two words. Lowercase when generic; initial caps if part of the official name of a specific help desk.

HIDTA – High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

his and her; his or her – Do not use slashes: his/her or his/er.

Hispanic – Initial cap.

Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association (HAPCOA)

home page – Two words.

hopefully – Widely used to mean “I hope” or “It is hoped;” its use is wrong. *Wrong:* “Hopefully, I can leave on the noon flight” (meaning that you’ll leave on the noon flight in a hopeful state of mind). *Right:* I hope that I can leave on the noon flight.”

hotline – One word.

hot spot – Two words; no quotation marks.

however – Do not start a sentence with however when the meaning is nevertheless. However serves better when not in the first position. **Example:** “Recent analysis, however, revealed an interesting trend.” Not “However, recent analysis revealed an interesting trend.” When however comes first, it means “in whatever way” or “to whatever extent.” **Example:** “However you advise him, he probably will do as he thinks best.”

hyphen – See **em dash/en dash/hyphens**.

hyphenation:

- ▶ Use a hyphen between words, acronyms, or abbreviations of words that when combined, form a unit modifier immediately preceding the word modified. **Examples:** high-level decision; COPS-sponsored seminar.
- ▶ Do not hyphenate a word if the meaning is clear and readability is not improved by using the hyphen. **Example:** high school student.
- ▶ Do not hyphenate a two-word unit modifier when the first word is an adverb that ends in -ly or is a comparative or a superlative. **Examples:** congressionally chartered group, lower income group, highest level decision, *but* low-income group, high-level decision.
- ▶ Hyphenate numerical compounds that are unit modifiers. **Examples:** 5-year program, three-story building, *but* for 5 years.
- ▶ Hyphenate noun phrases and unit modifiers relating to age.. **Examples:** 18-year-old offender, an 18-year-old, *but* 18 years old.

IACA – International Association of Crime Analysts

IACLEA – International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators

IACP – International Association of Chiefs of Police

IADLEST – International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training

IALEIA – International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts

IALEP – International Association of Law Enforcement Planners

IC – Intelligence Community (initial caps always)

ICMA – International City/County Management Association

ICTP – Interoperable Communications Technology Program (of the COPS Office)

idioms and puns – Idioms and puns have no place in professional, technical or business publications.

Although a writer might think that a certain idiom or pun is well-known in his or her profession, plenty of people in that profession will not know what it means. It is better for a writer to say exactly what he or she means rather than risk confusing readers.

illustrative material (exhibits, figures, graphs, tables, photographs):

- ▶ In publications, “table” can be used for tables, while “figure” can be used for all nontabular graphic elements (charts, graphs). They may be listed on the Contents page.
- ▶ Always reference the illustration in the body of the text. Capitalize Figure, Table, Exhibit, Section, Paragraph when referenced. **Example:** “The department’s promotional ladder (see Figure 3) is unique for several reasons.” *Or*; “As shown in Figure 3,....”

- ▶ As much as possible, given layout considerations, place the illustration on the same or facing page as its reference in the text. When it cannot be placed on the same or facing page because of size or layout issues, add “on page xx” to the sentence referencing the illustration. **Example:** “As shown in Figure 3 on page xx,…” Place the illustration on a page as close as possible to the page after which the reference is mentioned. If the illustration is on the same spread as the text reference, the page location is not necessary. “As shown in Figure <X>” is sufficient.
- ▶ Each illustration must have a number and a title. The illustration set in bold title case (initial caps) should be placed above the illustration: **Table** (or **Figure**) **3: Agencies Participating in Site Visits.**
- ▶ If there is a required source line citation, it should be placed below the illustration in a point size smaller than that in the illustration.

impact – Not every action that causes something to happen is an impact. “Impact” is defined as “to strike forcefully; to push against; to press together; a forceful contact; a collision; a significant or major effect.” **Examples:** “The changes had an impact on productivity,” or “The changes will affect productivity,” or “The changes had an effect on productivity.” Do not use as a verb. *Wrong:* “The change will impact productivity,” or “The changes impacted productivity.” (Impacted means “packed or wedged in” as an impacted tooth.)

imply/infer – Not interchangeable. Something implied is suggested or indicated, although not expressed. Something inferred is deduced from evidence at hand. **Examples:** “Farming implies early rising.” “She was a farmer, so we inferred that she got up early.”

importantly – Means “in an important way,” as in “‘I am the king,’ he said importantly.” Do not use “more importantly” or “most importantly” when you mean “more important” or “most important.” **Example:** “Most important (or More important), such partnerships between universities and communities are mutually beneficial.” The same rule applies to “First,” “Second,” “Last,” “Thus,” not “Firstly,” “Secondly,” “Lastly,” or “Thusly.”

incentivize/incentivization – Made-up words. Use “motivate” and “motivation,” or use as a noun: “The agency will provide incentives to…”

in-depth/in depth – Adjective, as in “We had an in-depth conversation,” *but:* “She studied the report in depth.”

indexes – Not indices.

i.e. – See **abbreviations** and **e.g. and i.e.**

in close proximity to – For brevity use “next to” or “near.”

indefinite articles – See **articles**.

Indian country – Note lower case “c” in “country.”

information-sharing (adjective); **information sharing** (noun) – **Examples:** “The software improved information sharing.” “The information-sharing software led to more effective multijurisdictional investigations.”

in-house/ in house – Hyphenate when used as an adjective: “The COPS Office conducted an in-house study.” Two words when used as a prepositional phrase: “The COPS Office will conduct the study in house.”

in-kind – Consisting of something other than money, such as goods or services: “in-kind relief for the poor.”

inner city (noun); **inner-city** (unit modifier) – **Examples:** “He lives in the inner city.” “It is an inner-city problem.”

in order to – A superfluous phrase, padding. Drop “in order.” *Wrong:* “We will address terrorism in order to keep communities safe.” *Right:* “We will address terrorism to keep communities safe.”

in-service – Adjective; going on or continuing while one is fully employed (an in-service workshop); relating to, or being one who is fully employed (an in-service police officer), *but*, “The maid was in service to the queen.”

insure – See **assure/ensure/insure**.

in terms of – An overused phrase. *Wrong:* “The car was unattractive in terms of its color.” *Right:* “The car was unattractive because of its color,” *or*, “The car’s color was unattractive.”

International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA)

International Association of Crime Analysts (IACA)

International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)

International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST)

International Association of Law Enforcement Planners (IALEP)

International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

Internet – Initial cap, *but*, intranet, extranet (lower case).

issue – As a noun, issue is an overused word. As alternatives, use problem, concern, question, interests, worry/worries, trouble/troubles, or the precise word, for example, “a traffic accident” instead of a “traffic issue.”

italics:

- ▶ For emphasis, if absolutely necessary, use italics or quotation marks instead of underscoring, but don’t overdo it. The reader will get your point the first time.
- ▶ Do not italicize foreign words unless they are Latin legal terms used in legal documents.
- ▶ Italicize case names, but not the “v.” (*United States v. Smith*).
- ▶ Use italics when referring to publication titles (COPS Innovations). **Example:** “The new edition of that particular *COPS Innovations* will contain updated statistics.”
- ▶ When the title of a publication is used in a sentence that is set in italics, do not set the publication title in italics. It should stand out from the rest of the text.
 - *“The new edition of that particular COPS Innovations will contain updated statistics.”*
 - The new edition of that particular *COPS Innovations* will contain updated statistics.”

its/it’s:

- ▶ “Its” is the possessive form of the pronoun “it.” “The committee held its meeting on Tuesday.”
- ▶ “It’s” is a contraction for “it is” or “it has.” “It’s a lovely day.” “It’s been a long time since we last met.”
- ▶ An organization or other group is “it” not “their.” In American English, correct usage is as follows, with the verb in singular: “The police department has tested its new procedure.”
- ▶ In British English, an organization often is referred to in plural; therefore, the verb has to be plural: “The police department have tested their new procedure.”

J

JJC – Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse

JJRC – Juvenile Justice Resource Center

job titles:

- ▶ Capitalize formal titles when used immediately before a name. **Example:** Director Jones; Vice President Alice Green.
- ▶ Capitalize formal titles following names on a list (of contributors or participants, for example), for participants in workshops, names in photo captions, and other such uses. **Examples:** Moderator: Robert Oakes, Assistant General Counsel, ABC Corporation; Presenter: Margaret Anderson, Executive Director, Foundation for Justice.
- ▶ Capitalize formal job titles in “Acknowledgments,” “About the Author,” other such sections of a publication, and in the “Biography” section of COPS Office conference programs: “Before becoming an Associate Professor at Yale, he was Treasurer of ABC Corporation.” **Note:** This is a COPS Office departure from GPO, The Chicago Manual of Style, and The Associated Press Style Book.
- ▶ Lower case formal titles in text when used generically, alone, or when set off from a name by commas. **Examples:** The unit’s director; Smith Jones, vice president of the organization; six mayors sat on the panel; a police chief; the new sheriff. *Exception:* when referring to the President of the United States or other head of state: “The President said...”
- ▶ Law Enforcement – For law enforcement job titles, the individual’s name should come first, followed by his or her job title (and possibly the organization). **Examples:** Jim Jacob, police chief of Newark, New Jersey; and Bill Forbs, commanding officer of Johnson County (Kansas) Sheriff’s Office; not Johnson County, Kansas, Sheriff’s Office, Commanding Officer Bill Forbs; or Johnson County (Kansas) Commanding Officer Bill Forbs.

Johns Hopkins University – Not “John.”

judgment – Not judgement.

JUSTINFO – NCJRS Internet listserv.

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (JJC)

Juvenile Justice Resource Center (JJRC)

K

kickoff (noun); **kick off** (verb)

knowledgeable – Not knowledgable.

L

LAN – local area network

Latina/Latino

Law Enforcement Jobs – See **job titles: law enforcement**.

Law Enforcement Organizations – When including the state in the title of a law enforcement organization, always place the state in parentheses. **Examples:** Anaheim (California) Police Department, Newark (New Jersey) Police Department. Do not rework the title to read, for example, the Police Department of Anaheim, California.

legal cases – Italics except for “v.” *John Jones v. Richard Smith*

LEO – Law Enforcement Online

less/fewer – See **fewer/less; over/under; more than/less than**.

LEIU – Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit

life cycle (noun); **life-cycle** (adjective)

lists – See **bullets/bulleted lists** and **numbered lists**.

listserv – Generic. LISTSERV (all caps) is a commercial software package for operating and managing e-mail mailing lists and discussion groups. It is produced by L-Soft International. LISTSERV does not mean “e-mail list.” Not all e-mail mailing lists use LISTSERV software.

local area network (LAN)

logon (noun); **log on** (verb)

long-standing – Hyphenate.

-ly endings – Not hyphenated. **Example:** “a closely guarded secret.”

M

Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCC)

Major County Sheriffs’ Association (MCSA) – Note position of apostrophe.

Making Officer Redeployment Effective (MORE)

MAN – metropolitan area network

marshal – Lower case, unless used before a name. **Examples:** “The marshal made the arrest,” *but* “The U.S. Marshal made the arrest,” *or* “He asked Marshal Thomas to make the arrest.”

master’s degree – Lower case; note apostrophe.

mayor – Lower case unless used before a name. **Examples:** “The mayor will make a statement.”
“The reporter asked Mayor Jones to comment.”

MCC – Major Cities Chiefs Association

MCSA – Major County Sherriffs’ Association

medium (singular); **media** (plural, “media are”)

memorandum (singular); **memoranda** (plural)

metropolitan area network (MAN)

MORE – Making Officer Redeployment Effective

more than/over – See **fewer/less**; **over/under**; **more than/less than**.

MS13 or MS-13 – The Mara Salvatrucha gang. Both forms exist, but be consistent in a document. Use one or the other, but not both.

multi – Do not hyphenate words starting with “multi.” **Examples:** multiagency, multicultural, multijurisdictional, multisite.

myriad – Countless; a great number; having innumerable elements.

N

NASRO – National Association of School Resource Officers

nation; national – As in “all across the nation” or “our nation” or “national policy.” “Country” is an acceptable alternative to “nation,” but be consistent throughout a document. Use one or the other, but not both.

National Center for Forensic Science (NCFS)

National Center for Women and Policing (NCWP)

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)

National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)

National Institute of Justice (NIJ)

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)

National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)

National Native American Law Enforcement Association (NNALEA)

National Sheriffs’ Association (NSA) – Note position of apostrophe. Not “Sheriff’s” or “Sheriffs”

nationwide – No hyphen.

NCFS – National Center for Forensic Science

NCJRS – National Criminal Justice Reference Service

NCVS – National Crime Victimization Survey

N.E. – Not NE or NE. **Example:** 145 N Street, N.E. Same for S.W., N.W., S.E.

near real time/near-real-time – Hyphenate all three words only when used as a modifier. **Example:** a near-real-time system. See also **real time/real-time**.

Neighborhood Watch – Initial caps when affiliated with national programs. When generic, lower case: neighborhood watch.

neither/nor – Not “neither...or;” “either...nor.”

NIBRS – National Incident-Based Reporting System

NIJ – National Institute of Justice

NIST – National Institute of Standards and Technology

NNALEA – National Native American Law Enforcement Association

NOBLE – National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives

non – Do not hyphenate “non” words, e.g., nonprofit, nonlethal. *Exception:* non-key, as in “non-key personnel.”

NSA – National Sheriffs’ Association. Note position of apostrophe. Not “Sheriffs” or “Sheriff’s.”

numbered lists:

- ▶ Use numbers (not bullets) when listing the steps in a procedure. Capitalize the first letter of the first word; end each line with a period.
- ▶ Use numbers (not bullets) when the text specifies a certain number of things that will be described, such as “The six chapters and their contents are as follows:” Again, capitalize the first letter of the first word and end each numbered line with a period.

numbers:

- ▶ Spell out numbers one through nine except units of measurement and time, degrees, decimals, money, percentages, or proportions: one dog, 4 hours, seven people, 99 books, *but* 6 feet, 4 degrees F, 50 cents, 5 percent, \$100. (“Units of measurement and time, actual or implied, are expressed in figures.” GPO section 12.9.)
- ▶ Spell out ordinals first through ninth: first floor, Seventh Street, *but* 21st century, 35th President of the United States.
- ▶ For ordinals used as figures: 22nd. Do not use ordinals in dates. *Wrong:* May 6th; May 6th, 2006. *Right:* May 6, May 6, 2006 (although “May 6th” is acceptable in correspondence).
- ▶ Spell out numbers that start a sentence: Thirty people attended the meeting. Also, spell out any related number that appears within three words of the spelled-out number at the start of a sentence. **Example:** “Eighty-six of the ninety-four respondents supported the change.”
- ▶ Capitalize time of day: 8:00 AM, 8:30 PM. Not am, a.m., pm, p.m.
- ▶ Use figures to denote percentages (36 percent). In text, always spell out “percent.” Use the percent symbol (%) in tables, graphs, figures, exhibits.
- ▶ 911 (police emergency telephone number – not 9-1-1); 9/11 (September 11, 2001). 311 for nonemergency numbers (not 3-1-1).
- ▶ Spell out fractions standing alone or followed by “of a” or “of an”: three-fourths of an inch, a quarter of a mile. Do not mix percents and fractions. *Wrong:* “Three-fourths of the women and 20 percent of the men.”
- ▶ Use en-dashes (–) between groups of numbers, such as a page range (pp. 25–26), a range of years (1995–99), or a nine-digit ZIP code (20849–6000). To insert an en-dash: Control Minus (minus on the numerical keypad). No space on either side of an en dash.

- ▶ Spell out “to” when using “from” (from 1995 to 1997); spell out “and” when using “between” (between 1963 and 1966). In both cases, do not shorten the second year.
- ▶ When referring to a fiscal year or to a continuous period of 2 or more years, use only the last two digits of the second year (1997–98) unless there is a change in century or to avoid three or more zeros together (1999–2001, 2000–2005, but 2000–11). If both years have a zero as the third digit, use only the last digit of the second year (2005–8). For a single fiscal year, use FYXXXX (FY2002).
- ▶ Use a comma in numbers with four or more digits (1,350; 14,275).
- ▶ Do not follow a spelled-out number with the numeral in parentheses. *Wrong*: “forty-five (45) brochures.” *Right*: “45 brochures.”
- ▶ Use civilian style for dates (month, day, year) with no abbreviations. “April 7, 2006” or “04/07/06” not “Apr. 7, 2006.”
- ▶ Do not use a comma after the year in a sentence: “The March 5, 2006 report”
- ▶ Do not use a comma with only the month and year: “The March 2006 report”
- ▶ Do not use an apostrophe when making a decade plural: e.g., 1990s, but do when possessive: e.g., 1990’s.
- ▶ Use numbers, not bullets, when listing the steps in a process.
- ▶ Use \$1 million; \$1.3 million, but \$4,473,000 (not \$4.473 million).
- ▶ In running text, “24/7” is an accepted word in *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*.

O

Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)

Office of Justice Programs (OJP)

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

Office of Law Enforcement Standards (OLES)

Office of Law Enforcement Technology Commercialization (OLETC)

Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)

Office of Science and Technology (OS&T)

offline – One word, not hyphenated.

off-site (adjective); **off site** (noun) – “The COPS meeting will take place at an off-site location.” “The COPS meeting is at a location off site.”

OJJDP – Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

OJP – Office of Justice Programs

OLES – Office of Law Enforcement Standards

OLETC – Office of Law Enforcement Technology Coordination

on a daily basis; on a regular basis – An overused phrase. It is simpler to use daily, monthly, regularly, every day, each day, every month, each month.

ONDCP – Office of National Drug Control Policy

only – Place as close as possible to the word it qualifies. *Wrong*: “The police only arrested the gang leader.” *Right*: “The police arrested only the gang leader.”

on-site (adjective); **on site** (noun) – **Examples**: “The meeting will take place in an on-site room.”
“The meeting will take place on site.”

ongoing – No hyphen.

online – No hyphen.

operationalize – Jargon. Instead, use “carry out,” “work on,” or simply “do.” **Example**: In “The challenge will be to operationalize the six steps,” change “operationalize” to “take.”

organization chart – Not organizational chart.

orphan – One word or two or three small words on a new line at the end of a paragraph. Rewrite the paragraph or change the spacing to eliminate the orphan. See also **widow**.

OS&T – Office of Science and Technology

OVC – Office for Victims of Crime

over – See **fewer/less; over/under; more than/less than**.

OVW – Office on Violence Against Women

P

paragraph – Capitalize as a heading (Paragraph 5) and when referenced in text (as in, See Paragraph 5.)

parallel structure – The point of parallel structure is that the structure of a sentence or list must be consistent, readable, and logical. The words or phrases must be of the same grammatical structure. It is the repetition of a selected grammatical form within a sentence or list that makes a sentence or list parallel. Verbs, for example must be in the same tense (past, present, or future) with the same suffixes (such as “...ing” or “...ed”). **Examples**:

- ▶ Enforcement agencies face specific challenges in managing the patrol function, such as keeping patrol officers informed, keeping patrol officers involved, using patrol units to redirect activities, providing routine police services, and ensuring officer safety.
- ▶ Critical services that an agency must perform in the investigation include the following:
 - *Provide* surveillance
 - *Establish* roadblocks
 - *Identify* potential crime sites

In the second example, the three verbs in the bulleted list are in the present tense.

Another example of parallel structure:

- ▶ *Wrong*: The conference room has good lighting, is carpeted, has a round table, and the chairs are comfortable.
- ▶ *Right*: The conference has good lighting, carpeting, a round table, and comfortable chairs.

parentheses and brackets – For second-level parenthetical information, brackets belong inside parentheses. **Example:** “Raymond Wilton was a highly respected ornithologist (his study of a flightless bird [the kiwi] was the subject of his doctoral dissertation).”

PATRIOT Act – Also known as the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001: Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001.

percent – Spell out when used in running text: “The police chief said that the budget was cut by 15 percent.” If starting a sentence, spell out the numeral: “Thirty percent was marked for...” Use % in tables, charts, graphs.

periods, parentheses, and quotation marks:

- ▶ Full sentence: place period inside the parentheses.
- ▶ Phrase: place period outside the parentheses.
- ▶ When text is a phrase ending in a period: place period outside the parentheses, e.g., (...etc.).
- ▶ Quotation marks: place period inside quotation marks.

PERF – Police Executive Research Forum

Ph.D. – Note periods. Do not use PhD.

photographs – See **illustrative material**.

plural/possessive – Plural: add an “s” (three cats); plural possessive: add “s” followed by an apostrophe (the three cats’ toys); singular possessive: (the cat’s toy).

PM – All caps: 8:00 PM. Space between 8:00 and PM. *Wrong:* 8:00PM; 8:00 p.m., 8:00p.m., 8:00pm, 8:00 pm

Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)

policymaker (noun, one word); **policy-making** (noun; adjective)

POP – problem-oriented policing

POP Center – Center for Problem-Oriented Policing. Note hyphen.

postal abbreviations:

- ▶ Use postal abbreviations (CA, OH, TX) only in complete addresses, and in tables, charts, graphs, and figures.
- ▶ The postal abbreviation for the District of Columbia is “DC”; use when a full address is given. In text, use “D.C.” (The COPS Office is in Washington, D.C.).

PowerPoint – Not Power Point or Powerpoint.

PPSE – Program/Policy Support and Evaluation Division (of the COPS Office), renamed Research and Development (R&D) Division in 2010.

precede/proceed – “Precede” means to be, go, or come ahead or in front of: “The awards ceremony preceded the dinner.” “Proceed” means to move forward, begin and carry on an action: “The committee will proceed with its plans.”

prefixes – Only hyphenate prefixes for the following reasons:

- ▶ The meaning of the word is confusing or wrong (as in re-create [to create again] and recreate [to take recreation], re-cover [to cover again] and recover [to get back, to save from loss])
- ▶ The second element is a number (mid-1990s)
- ▶ The word following the prefix is a capitalized proper name (mid-Atlantic)
- ▶ The first element ends in a vowel and the second element begins with the same vowel (semi-independent, anti-inflammatory) and is difficult to read without the hyphen.
- ▶ When alternative prefixes are offered for one word, the prefix standing alone takes a hyphen and is followed by a space: over- and underused; macro- and microeconomics
- ▶ **Exceptions:** subcontractor; reengineer; reelect; reentry, reorder; anticrime; antidrug; multipurpose; preexist.

prepositions – With words of four or fewer letters, use lower case in title case headings, e.g., for, from, of, over, past, on; capitalize if they begin a sentence. See also **capitalization: title case**.

president – Capitalize when referring to the President of the United States or other such heads of state: “The President will sign the bill today.” “She said that President Jones will sign the bill today,” *but* “Robert Logan is president of the organization.”

preventive – Not preventative.

principal/principle – “Principal” means the head person, the chief executive officer of an educational institution, a matter or thing of primary importance, foremost: “She is the principal of the new high school.” “The committee’s principal purpose is to...” “Principle” is a law, rule or code of conduct, or doctrine: “The principles of moral behavior.”

problem-oriented (as in problem-oriented policing)

problem solver (noun): “He considers himself a problem solver”; **problem solving** (noun): “Educational planning helps with problem solving”; **problem-solving** (adjective) “The class dealt with problem-solving exercises.”

Problem-Solving Partnership (PSP)

pronouns – Do not mix singular and plural nouns and pronouns: use singular nouns or pronouns with singular antecedents; plural with plural antecedents. **Examples:** “Each officer will write his or her (not their) report.” “The officers completed their reports.” “Everyone offered his or her (not their) version of the event.”

proved (past participle): “You have proved your point”; **proven** (adjective): “A proven remedy.”

public sector (noun); **public-sector** (unit modifier)

Q

quotation marks:

- ▶ Place periods and commas inside quotation marks.
- ▶ Place colons, semicolons, question marks, and exclamation points outside of quotation marks unless they are part of the material being quoted.
- ▶ Use quotation marks (or italics) only on first use of an expression in text that is unusual or that you want to highlight. The reader will get the message the first time; do not continue to use quotation marks (or italics) thereafter when using the expression.
- ▶ Do not use quotation marks (or italics) for terms that have a commonly accepted meaning in the criminal justice field, e.g., hot spot or broken windows.
- ▶ Use single quotation marks for a quote within a quote.

R

R&D – Research and Development Division (of the COPS Office), formerly known as PPSE.

rank and file – (noun): no hyphens: “The rank and file will vote on the contract.” **rank-and-file** – (adjective): hyphens: “Rank-and-file officers will vote on the contract.”

RCPI – Regional Community Policing Institute

real time (noun, two words); **real-time** (adjective, hyphenated) – See also **near real time/near-real-time**.

record-keeping – Hyphenate.

re-create – Hyphenate when it means “to create again.”

reelect – No hyphen.

reengineer – No hyphen.

reentry – No hyphen.

references and documentation – See *References and Documentation* on pages 6–9.

Regional Community Policing Institute (RCPI)

Representative – Use instead of Congresswoman or Congressman.

road map – Two words.

S

SACOP – State Associations of Chiefs of Police. Note plurals: “Associations” and “Chiefs.”

SAMHSA – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

SARA – Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment. No comma after “Response.”

SBP – School-Based Partnerships

scalable – Not scaleable.

Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment (SARA) – No comma after “Response.”

School-Based Partnerships (SBP)

section – Capitalize as a heading: “Section 8.” When referenced in text: “See Section 8.”

self – Hyphenate when part of a compound word: self-important, self-confident.

semi – Generally, do not hyphenate (semiannual, semicolon), but semi-independent, semi-automatic weapon.

semicolon:

- ▶ Use a semicolon when you need something stronger than a comma but not as final as a period. **Example:** “It cannot depend simply on extraordinary and talented individuals; rather, it needs to become routine at the city level.”
- ▶ Use semicolons to separate items in a series that contains commas. **Example:** “The problem can be divided into three components: overall trend; seasonal, daily, weekly cycles; and random fluctuations.”
- ▶ Use a semicolon to connect two clauses when there is no “and” between them. **Example:** “Hot areas are where crime is concentrated; they arise for a variety of reasons.”

sentence case – See **capitalization: sentence case**.

sentences, length of – For comprehension and ease of reading, a sentence typically should not be more than 20 to 25 words in length. Rather than writing one long, complex sentence, break it into shorter sentences or make a bulleted list. The following example is an 81-word sentence that was rewritten into a more readable form.

Original sentence:

Initial review of the data, including computation of descriptive statistics (e.g., measures of central tendency, such as the mean, median, minimum, maximum, and sum) on single data elements or performance measures, and simple cross-tabulations (e.g., showing the number of crimes reported by crime type, by month [or other unit of time], and/or by district, precinct, or other jurisdictional category) will greatly assist the Performance Management Team in assessing the overall quality of the data and the data-collection process.

Sentence as rewritten:

Initial review of the data will assist the Performance Management Team in assessing the overall quality of the data and the data-collection process. Initial review includes the following:

- Compute descriptive statistics on single data elements or performance measures; for example, the measure of central tendency, such as the mean, median, mode, minimum, maximum, and sum
- Compute cross-tabulations; for example, the number of crimes reported by type, by month or other unit of time, and/or by district, precinct, or other jurisdictional category

September 11:

- ▶ As a modifier, no year is needed: “The September 11 attacks.”
- ▶ If there is ambiguity, insert the year: “The attacks of September 11, 2001.”
- ▶ 9/11 is acceptable, as long as the reference is understood. Do not use 9-11 or 911.

serial commas – Use serial commas with three or more items used with: *and*, *or*, or *nor*. **Example:** “Red, white, and blue.” Insert a comma before the final *and*, *nor*, or *or*; not “red, white and blue.”

setup (noun); **set up** (verb)

shall/will – “Shall” typically is a legal use to express what is mandatory; “will” is for nonlegal uses.

since/because – See **because/since**.

social security number – Lowercase.

soft copy – Two words; hyphenate if used as a modifier, as in “soft-copy manual.”

software – Do not abbreviate.

SOS – Secure Our Schools

SRO – school resource officer

staff – Takes the plural verb form: “COPS staff are reviewing the applications.”

stand-alone – Adjective; hyphenate.

standoff – Noun; adjective.

start-up (noun; adjective); **start up** (verb)

state – Lowercase, as in “Each state will develop its own program.”

state abbreviations – In running text, the names of states, territories, and possessions of the United States should always be spelled out when standing alone and preferably (except for D.C.) when following the name of a city. **Example:** “Lake Bluff, Illinois, was incorporated in 1895.” In bibliographies, lists, and mailing addresses they are usually abbreviated as the two-letter, no-period state abbreviations preferred by the U.S. Postal Service. In references/bibliographies/notes, these cities can be listed without a state abbreviation because they are well known for publishing: **Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco**. In addition, when the publisher is a university and the name of the state (or Canadian province) is included in its name, do not repeat the state (or province) in the publisher location.

State Associations of Chiefs of Police (SACOP) – Note plurals: “Associations” and “Chiefs”

State’s Attorney, state attorney general, State’s Attorney’s Office

statewide – One word.

subcontractor – No hyphen.

subject matter expert – No hyphen.

subsystem – One word.

symposia (plural); symposium (singular)

systemwide – One word.

T

table – See **illustrative material**.

table of contents – Use “Contents” instead.

team member – Not teammate, unless you’re talking about a sports team.

telephone numbers – Follow this style: 000.000.0000 not (000) 000-0000. Same style for fax numbers.

that/which:

- ▶ “That,” a defining or restrictive pronoun, introduces information essential to a sentence: “The weapon that was used in the robbery was introduced as evidence.”
- ▶ “Which,” a nondefining or nonrestrictive pronoun that introduces information not essential to a sentence: “The weapon, which was used in the robbery, is in the evidence room.”

time-consuming – Adjective.

time frame – Two words.

timeline – One word.

title case – See **capitalization: title case**.

titles – See **job titles**.

toll-free (the toll-free number); **toll free** (call toll free)

toolbox – One word.

toolkit – One word.

toolset – One word.

toward – No “s” (towards is British usage).

trademarks – Use the trademark symbol (™) or registration symbol (®) only at first mention of the trademarked word in a document, or at first mention in each chapter or major section of a lengthy document.

trade-off (noun) – Note hyphen.

trafficking

Training and Technical Assistance Division (T&TA) of the COPS Office – Reorganized into the Partnerships and Technical Assistance Division in 2010.

troubleshoot – Use “performed troubleshooting” for past tense, not “troubleshoot.”

Tribal Resources Grant Program (TRGP)

turnaround – (noun, adjective): one word, no hyphen; (verb): two words – to turn around.

U

UHP – Universal Hiring Program.

U.K. – United Kingdom. Not UK

under – See **fewer/less/over/under**.

under way

unique – Something is either unique or it is not. It is never “somewhat unique” or “really unique” or “rather unique” or “the most unique.”

United States – Spell out when used as a noun (in the United States), as an official term (United States Code), legal title (United States Steel Corp.), or as part of a case name (United States v. Smith). Abbreviate when used as an adjective (U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Congress). Also, U.S., not US.

Universal Hiring Program (UHP)

up-to-date

URL – Uniform Resource Locator (world wide web address)

USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 – Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001. Also known as the PATRIOT Act.

U.S. Attorney; U.S. Attorney’s Office

USCM – U.S. Council of Mayors

U.S. Government

U.S. Marshal; U.S. Marshals Service – No apostrophe in “Marshals.”

V

Value Based Initiative (VBI)

versus – Always write out in text except when referring to court cases (*Roe v. Wade* [the case names are in italics, but not the “v.”]); OK to use “v.” or “vs.” in graphs, tables, and charts, but stay consistent within document.

videocassette

videoconference

videotape

W

WAN – wide area network

web

webcast – One word.

web page – Two words.

website – One word.

well – Hyphenate words with the prefix “well.” **Examples:** well-being, well-bred, well-defined, well-funded, well-informed, well-known, well-off, well-read, well-spoken, well-timed.

when – Meaning time.

where – Meaning location.

which/that – See **that/which**.

White – See also **Caucasian**.

white-collar crime

white paper – Two words.

-wide – Close all words ending in “wide” unless the word would be very long and cumbersome.

Examples: companywide, systemwide, worldwide, community-wide.

wide area network (WAN)

widow – One word or two or three small words, or anything less than a full line at the top of a page or column. Rewrite the paragraph or sentence or change the spacing to eliminate the widow.

See also **orphan**.

workday – One word.

workers’ compensation – Not capitalized. Note position of the apostrophe.

work flow – Two words.

work force – Two words.

work group – Two words.

workload – One word.

workplace – One word.

work plan – Two words.

work-release – Noun, adjective.

work site – Two words.

work space – Two words.

workstation – One word.

workweek – One word.

worldwide – One word.

World Wide Web (WWW)

X

Xerox – Use when referring to the Xerox Corporation. Do not use as a verb; use “photocopy” or “reproduce.”

X-ray – Not “x ray” or “X ray.”

Y

years of experience – Not years’ experience or years experience.

youth (singular and plural); **youths** (plural)

Z

ZIP Code – U.S. Postal Service spelling.

Acronyms

- ATF** – Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (No comma after “Firearms”)
- BJA** – Bureau of Justice Assistance
- BJS** – Bureau of Justice Statistics
- CALEA** – The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies
- CD-ROM** – Not CD-Rom.
- CHRP** – COPS Hiring Recovery Program
- CIS** – COPS in Schools
- COPS** – Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
- CPC** – Community Policing Consortium. Also known as “The Consortium.” The organization is defunct.
- CPTED** – Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
- D.A.R.E.**[®] – Drug Abuse Resistance Education. Note periods and superscript registered trademark symbol. Use the trademark symbol only at first mention of D.A.R.E. in a publication.
- DEA** – Drug Enforcement Administration
- EPIC** – El Paso Intelligence Center, a section of the Drug Enforcement Administration.
- FAST** – Funding Accelerated for Smaller Towns
- FBI** – Federal Bureau of Investigation
- FLETC** – Federal Law Enforcement Training Center
- FOP** – Fraternal Order of Police
- GAO** – Government Accountability Office, formerly General Accounting Office.
- G.R.E.A.T.** – Gang Resistance Education and Training. Periods in the acronym, no commas when spelled out.
- GSA** – (U.S.) General Services Administration
- HAPCOA** – Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association
- HIDTA** – High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
- IACA** – International Association of Crime Analysts
- IACLEA** – International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators
- IACP** – International Association of Chiefs of Police
- IADLEST** – International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training
- IALEIA** – International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts
- IALEP** – International Association of Law Enforcement Planners
- IC** – Intelligence Community (initial caps always)
- ICMA** – International City/County Management Association
- ICTP** – Interoperable Communications Technology Program (of the COPS Office)

- JJC** – Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse
- JJRC** – Juvenile Justice Resource Center
- JUSTINFO** – NCJRS Internet listserv
- LAN** – local area network
- LEO** – Law Enforcement Online
- LEIU** – Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit
- MCC** – Major Cities Chiefs Association
- MCSA** – Major County Sherriffs’ Association
- MORE** – Making Officer Redeployment Effective
- NCFS** – National Center for Forensic Science
- NCJRS** – National Criminal Justice Reference Service
- NCVS** – National Crime Victimization Survey
- NIBRS** – National Incident-Based Reporting System
- NIJ** – National Institute of Justice
- NIST** – National Institute of Standards and Technology
- NNALEA** – National Native American Law Enforcement Association
- NOBLE** – National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
- NSA** – National Sheriffs’ Association. Note position of apostrophe. Not “Sheriffs” or “Sheriff’s.”
- OJJDP** – Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
- OJP** – Office of Justice Programs
- OLES** – Office of Law Enforcement Standards
- OLETC** – Office of Law Enforcement Technology Coordination
- ONDCP** – Office of National Drug Control Policy
- OS&T** – Office of Science and Technology
- OVC** – Office for Victims of Crime
- PERF** – Police Executive Research Forum
- POP** – problem-oriented policing; also Problem-Oriented Guides for Police (published by the COPS Office)
- PPSE** – Program/Policy Support and Evaluation Division (of the COPS Office), renamed R&D (Research and Development) Division in 2010.
- RCPI** – Regional Community Policing Institute
- SACOP** – State Associations of Chiefs of Police. Note plurals: “Associations” and “Chiefs.”
- SAMHSA** – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
- SARA** – Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment. No comma after “Response.”

SBP – School-Based Partnerships

SRO – school resource officer

T&TA – Training and Technical Assistance Division (of the COPS Office), reorganized into the Partnerships directorate in 2010.

UHP – Universal Hiring Program.

USCM – U.S. Council of Mayors

VBI – Value Based Initiative



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U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
Two Constitution Square
145 N Street, N.E.
Washington, DC 20530



To obtain details on COPS programs, call the
COPS Office Response Center at 800.421.6770

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