



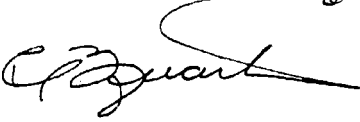
United States Department of the Interior

MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE
Washington, DC 20240

AUG -3 1998

Memorandum

To: Associate Director for Royalty Management
Associate Director for Offshore Minerals Management
Associate Director for Policy and Management Improvement
Associate Director for Administration and Budget

From: Cynthia Quarterman 
Director

Subject: Plain Language in Government Writing

President Clinton issued an Executive Memorandum on June 1 directing the Executive Departments and Agencies to write in plain language. The Department's Chief of Staff, Anne Shields, followed this upon June 10 with a memorandum to the Department's offices and bureaus in which she wholeheartedly supported the President's position, encouraged us all to join in this initiative, and accelerated the dates. (I'm attaching both these documents for your convenience.)

We must:

- ▶ **Effective immediately**, prepare all **regulations** in plain language, following the guidelines in the revised Department Manual Chapter on rulemaking. [See the Internet address: <http://elips.doi.gov>]
- ▶ By **October 1**, write all **new documents** in plain language.
- ▶ By **January 1, 2002**, rewrite all documents created before **October 1, 1998**, and still in force.

As you know, MMS has been in the forefront of this movement in its regulatory writing. Now we need to extend our achievements in the regulatory writing arena to all the writing we do in MMS, including external reports, notices, letters, and internal memoranda. To meet the October 1 date, **effective immediately**, my office will use plain language as one of the criteria in reviewing correspondence and all other documents for my approval. I request that you have the same standards for the documents you sign.

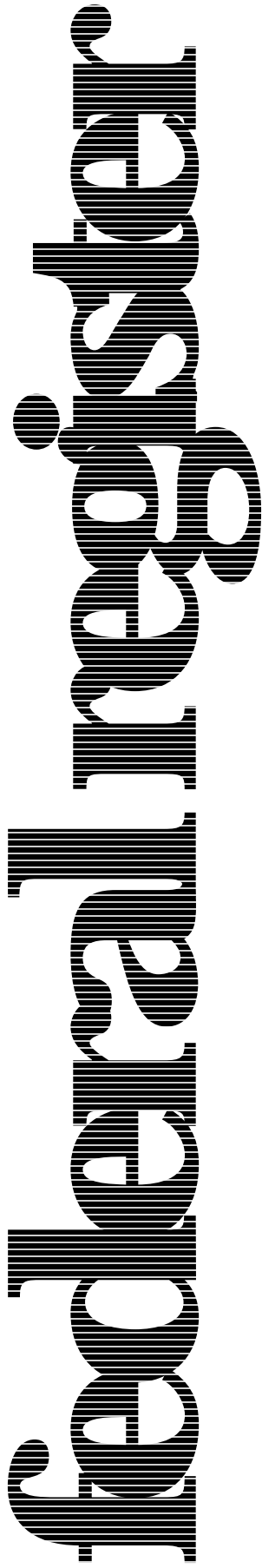
I urge you to train your staffs to use plain language. This will give them the critical organizational techniques and other helpful features that will enable them to produce clear, organized, and easy-to-read documents. PMI has offered to be a clearing-house for information on available training.

Another source of help is at the Internet address: <http://plainlanguage.gov>. We will establish a link to this address from the MMS Pipeline.

The Vice President's office gave us the Hammer Award on March 12, 1996, for our success in the area of plain language. Many positive comments from the public prove that we're succeeding in clarifying complex subjects through clearer writing. The Vice President is now offering a new plain language, or "No Gobbledygook," monthly award for documents created following the President's guidance in his June 1 Memorandum. We should actively pursue this award.

We pride ourselves on being an innovative bureau and have already shown our leadership in this arena. Let's rise to the President's challenge and prove we can remain leaders in his plain language initiative.

Attachments



Wednesday
June 10, 1998

Part VII

The President

Memorandum of June 1, 1998—Plain
Language in Government Writing

Presidential Documents

Title 3—**Memorandum of June 1, 1998****The President****Plain Language in Government Writing****Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies**

The Vice President and I have made reinventing the Federal Government a top priority of my Administration. We are determined to make the Government more responsive, accessible, and understandable in its communications with the public.

The Federal Government's writing must be in plain language. By using plain language, we send a clear message about what the Government is doing, what it requires, and what services it offers. Plain language saves the Government and the private sector time, effort, and money.

Plain language requirements vary from one document to another, depending on the intended audience. Plain language documents have logical organization, easy-to-read design features, and use:

- common, everyday words, except for necessary technical terms;
- “you” and other pronouns;
- the active voice; and
- short sentences.

To ensure the use of plain language, I direct you to do the following:

- By October 1, 1998, use plain language in all new documents, other than regulations, that explain how to obtain a benefit or service or how to comply with a requirement you administer or enforce. For example, these documents may include letters, forms, notices, and instructions. By January 1, 2002, all such documents created prior to October 1, 1998, must also be in plain language.
- By January 1, 1999, use plain language in all proposed and final rule-making documents published in the **Federal Register**, unless you proposed the rule before that date. You should consider rewriting existing regulations in plain language when you have the opportunity and resources to do so.

The National Partnership for Reinventing Government will issue guidance to help you comply with these directives and to explain more fully the elements of plain language. You should also use customer feedback and common sense to guide your plain language efforts.

I ask the independent agencies to comply with these directives.

This memorandum does not confer any right or benefit enforceable by law against the United States or its representatives. The Director of the Office

of Management and Budget will publish this memorandum in the **Federal Register**.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William D. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "W" and "C".

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, June 1, 1998.

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Filed 6-9-98; 10:56 am]
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United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

Memorandum

JUN 10 1998

To: Solicitor
Assistant Secretaries
Heads of Bureaus and Offices

From: Chief of Staff *Anne Shivers*

Subject: Executive Memorandum on Plain Language in Government Writing

On June 1, 1998, President Clinton issued an Executive Memorandum directing Executive Departments and Agencies to use plain language in all Government writing. For your convenience, I have attached a copy of this memorandum.

The memorandum recognizes that plain language essentials will vary according to the audience, but notes that all plain language documents have logical organization, easy-to-read design features, and use:

- common, everyday words, except for necessary technical terms;
- "you" and other personal pronouns;
- the active voice; and
- short sentences.

The memorandum directs the following:

- By October 1, 1998, agencies must use plain language in all new documents, other than regulations, that explain how members of the public can obtain a benefit or service or how to comply with agency requirements. By January 1, 2002, all documents created prior to October 1, 1998, and still in force must be written in plain language as well.
- By January 1, 1999, agencies must use plain language in all proposed and final rulemaking documents published in the Federal Register.

As you know, the Department has been in the forefront of the plain English/plain language initiative since its inception. After extensive consultations with the bureaus, we recently revised and issued our Departmental Manual instructions on rulemaking documents (318 DM 1-9, Federal

Register Documents, Release Nos. 3205-3213, effective May 14, 1998); Julie Falkner will provide your regulatory contacts with a copy of this manual as soon as it becomes available. As a result of our discussions with the bureaus, 318 DM now requires the use of plain English in all rulemaking documents. While the President's memorandum provides an exception from the plain language requirement for rules proposed prior to January 1, 1999, we will not use that exception and drafters of rules should follow the guidance on plain English in 318 DM 4.2. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the Office of Regulatory Affairs at 208-3181.

We thank you for your assistance in advancing this important initiative.

Attachment