



**United States Department of Agriculture**  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Visual Management Handbook

# **Design Standards**

March 2008



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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

USDA is committed to making its information materials accessible to all USDA customers and employees.

# Introduction

Design standards have been established to bring consistency and readability to the Natural Resources Conservation Service's information materials, and to reduce production costs. When materials are recognizable by their consistent appearance, the identity of the Agency is enhanced. Audience accessibility is served by basing the standards on recent research into readability. Finally, establishing standard formats eliminates the time spent determining what form a publication will take every time a new message is developed. Established standards will free writers and communicators to concentrate on content.

## **About these specifications**

These specifications are meant for use in electronic page-layout applications. They are for users with a general familiarity with graphic arts industry production and terminology. Using the electronic templates provided, they can be followed to achieve the Natural Resources Conservation Service standards. A glossary of terms is included in the back.

For ease of use, the measures and specifications are shown in fractions of the U.S. customary unit, the inch, and the decimal equivalent. (See conversion chart, page 22.)

## **Typesetting specifications**

Typesetting specifications are normally written by placing the size of the typeface in points (the standard graphic arts measuring system, along with picas), over a larger number to create the space between lines known as "leading." Leading is also expressed in points. So a specification of 10/11 means that a typeface of 10 points in size is set on a base of 11 points. This would be a fairly small space between lines.

The leading is always larger than the type size, for example: 10/12, 11/14, 12/16 and so forth. Most computers automatically default to a 12 point type size set on "auto" for leading. The "auto" setting is usually 120% of the type size. So a 12 point typeface set "auto" would be 12 on 14.4.

See Appendix for more information on typography.

## NRCS identity

### NRCS Symbol

The NRCS symbol always consists of two elements: (1) a blue raindrop atop a green land contour, and (2) "NRCS" to the right of the raindrop.

In most instances, the symbol should be accompanied by the Agency name, "Natural Resources Conservation Service" spelled out; materials for a public audience should also include the Department of Agriculture (USDA) symbol and the name "United States Department of Agriculture" spelled out. The proportions and relationships of these elements and the manner of their display are fixed by design. Do not re-create them in any manner.

When the NRCS symbol appears with the name and symbol of USDA, it shall appear in a subordinate position. However, when the NRCS symbol appears with the symbols of other agencies of USDA, or with the symbols of other Departments or partners, it is displayed in a position of equality.

The NRCS symbol shall be used with all information materials for all media, including print material, exhibits, video, Internet, and news media. The symbol shall be displayed only as demonstrated here. It is to be used as supplied in electronic format and must not be altered, constructed, or redrawn in any manner. The use and display of the NRCS symbol is governed by the Legislative and Public Affairs Division.

The NRCS symbol is the exclusive identifying mark of the Agency, and was cleared by a legal copyright review conducted by USDA. Logos created independently for NRCS staffs, programs, and centers, expose the Agency to the risk of copyright violations, and are prohibited.

The NRCS symbol shall not be displayed in a manner that constitutes endorsement of private sector organizations, products, services, or endeavors, or that appears to favor one private sector organization or product over another.

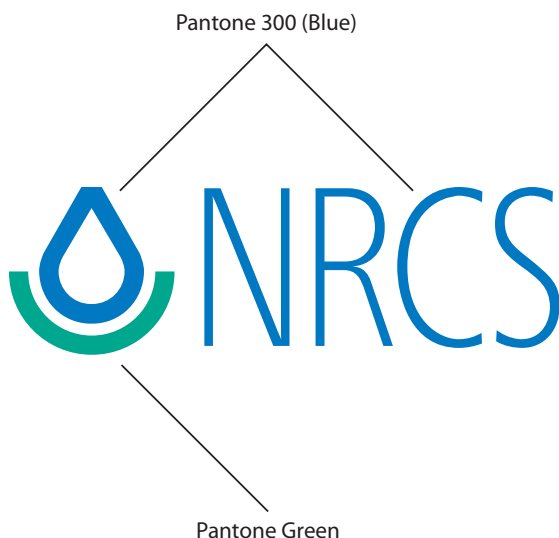
### NRCS Symbol Official Colors

The NRCS symbol often appears in one color, black or one of the Pantone Matching System colors. The preferred color is Pantone 300 (blue). The two color version is Pantone 300 (blue), and Pantone Green. When shown in two colors, the colors within the symbol shall not be mixed or displayed in any other way than as shown. All elements are Pantone 300 (blue) except the curved line graphic underneath the raindrop, which shall be Pantone Green.

When four-color process printing is used, the two Pantone colors are separated into the four printing industry process colors known as CMYK: C=Cyan, M=Magenta, Y=Yellow, K=Black.

The screen percentages of the four process colors used to obtain the NRCS colors are:

- Pantone 300 (blue) = C-100%, M-43%, Y-0%, K-0%
- Pantone Green = C-100%, M-0%, Y-65%, K-0%.



**USDA Symbol**

The USDA symbol always consists of two elements: (1) "USDA" above and (2) a green land contour below.

For NRCS information materials aimed at a public audience, the USDA symbol is used alongside the NRCS symbol. All the cautions cited above for the NRCS symbol apply to the USDA symbol, as regards the symbol's integrity, exclusivity, use and display.

**USDA Symbol Official Colors**

The USDA symbol is designated for use in one or two colors. When reproduced in one color, it shall be the color of that ink or paint. When "reversed" (dropped out) of a color, it shall be the color of the paper, or other material.

For multiple-color printing, isolate the USDA symbol in a white box so it is not in conflict with the background colors.

The official colors for the USDA symbol are specified in the Pantone Matching System (PMS). They are : PMS 288 (dark purple) for the letters USDA, and PMS 343 (dark green) for the soil graphic.

When four-color process printing is used, the two Pantone colors are separated into the four printing industry process colors known as CMYK: C=Cyan, M=Magenta, Y=Yellow, K=Black.

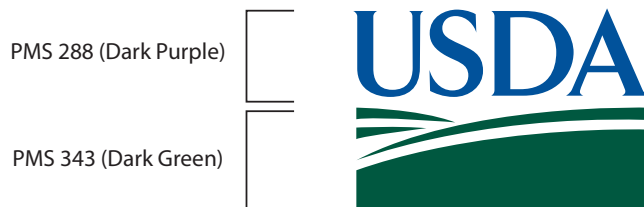
The screen percentages of the four process colors used to obtain the USDA colors are:

- PMS 288 (dark purple) = C-100%, M-65%, Y-0%, K-30%
- PMS 343 (dark green) = C-100%, M-0%, Y-69%, K-60%.

**NRCS Signatures**

The combination of the NRCS symbol and name with the USDA symbol and name is referred to as a "signature." The basic signature is available as an electronic file and the relative size and relationship of the elements should not be altered.

The signature is set flush left, ragged right (FLRR). On the first line is the USDA symbol, and on the same line, a little to the right, is the NRCS symbol. The names of the USDA and NRCS are spelled out on two lines below the symbols. The official font for use with signatures is Myriad Pro. The name "United States Department of Agriculture" is set in Myriad Pro Bold 10/12 and on the line below, "Natural Resources Conservation Service" is set in Myriad Pro Regular 10/12. These point sizes are for the signature as supplied in electronic format. The point sizes of the type will vary with the size of the signature, but the proportions and spatial relationships between the symbols and type remains constant.



### **Mission Statement**

NRCS has adopted the phrase “Helping People Help the Land” as its mission statement in its public communications. This mission statement supersedes all other mottoes, slogans, tag lines, and catchphrases that have been used within NRCS. In particular, the former mission statement—“The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.”—is replaced, and should no longer be used or referenced as such.

The mission statement is an integral part of the Agency identity and shall appear on Agency public information materials whenever possible as a separate element from the Agency symbol and name.

The mission statement is set in initial caps—Helping People Help the Land. While the actual typeface used may vary with the publication, this initial cap formulation should always be maintained. The mission statement is frequently set in italic, though this may vary for design reasons. The mission statement is given prominent placement, though secondary to

and separate from the Agency and Department identities (logo, acronym, and name). It frequently appears as a footer and can be used effectively on the back cover or inside front cover of books and other publications.

### **Vision Statement**

In addition to the mission statement, “Helping People Help the Land”, NRCS has adopted the Vision Statement, “Productive Lands—Healthy Environment”. While the mission statement refers to the products and services NRCS provides that enable people to be good stewards of the land, the vision statement describes a more fundamental notion of the kind of landscape that Americans want—a landscape in which a productive agricultural sector and a high-quality environment are both achieved.

The mission statement refers to the day-to-day activities of NRCS and is used with all public information materials. The vision statement is a foundational idea and is less frequently used. When it is judged appropriate to use the vision statement, it appears in the same typeface and in the same location as the mission statement, but on a separate line to itself, above the mission statement.

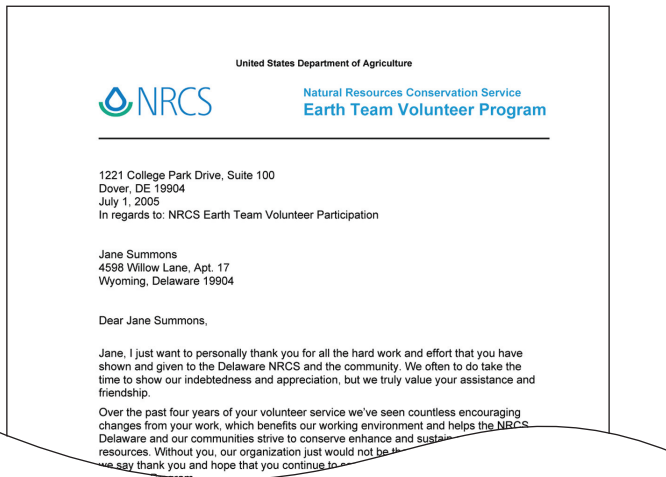


## Identity/ Staffs, centers and programs

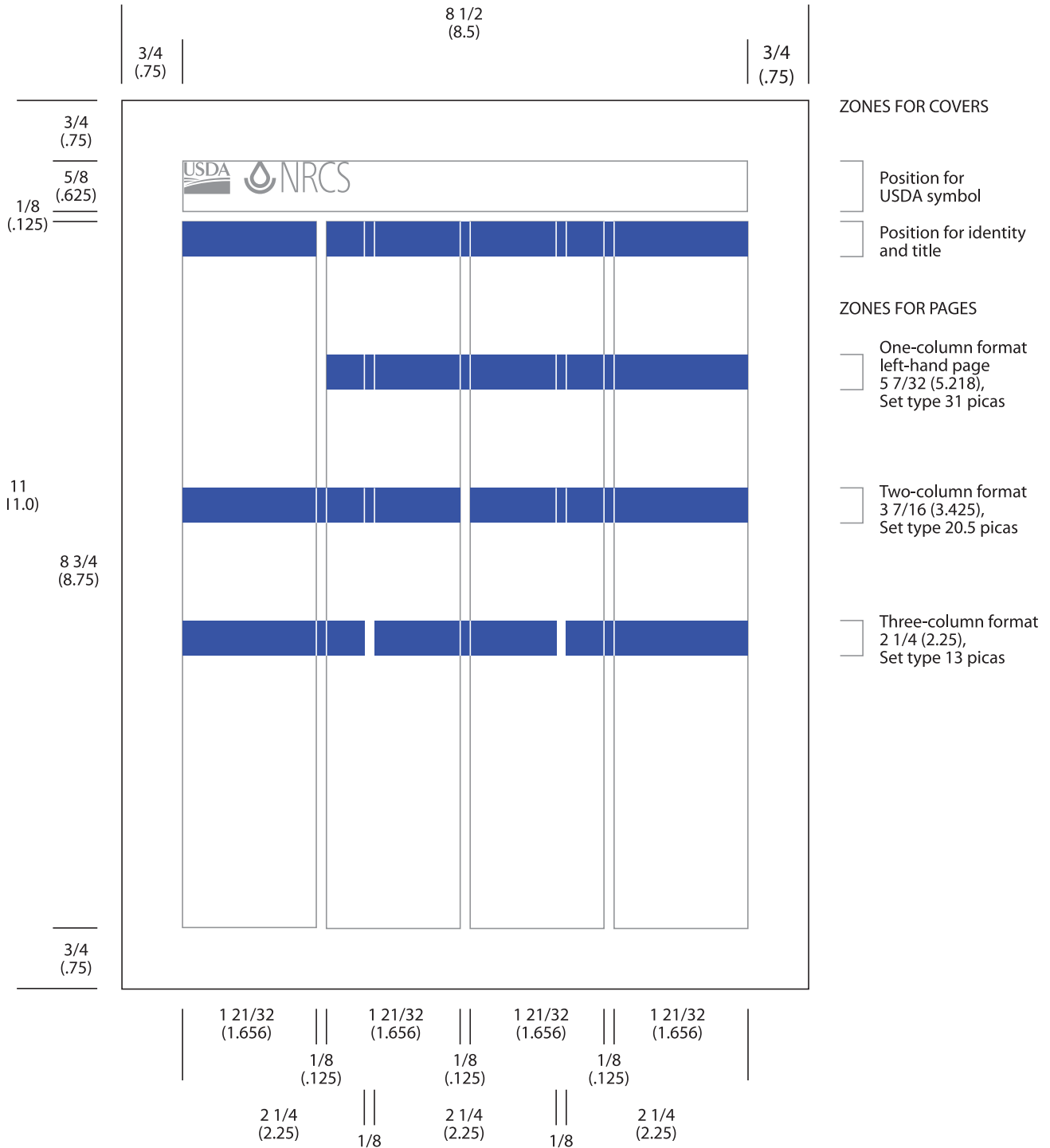
Staffs, centers and programs may not create their own logos (see page 2). The examples on this page show how a program can have an identity without creating a new logo.

The requirement to use the full Agency signature for public materials remains in place. However, for internal materials, such as the Earth Team stationery below, the Agency symbol may be used alone, with the Agency name and program name. For external correspondence, the Agency letter-head template is used (see page 17).

For public items, such the exhibit and banner stand below, the full Agency signature is used. The signature is kept distinct from the program name. While Earth Team has incorporated the Agency symbol with its name, a line separates the two and the full signature is also present in its prescribed location.



# Print, 8.5 x 11/ Specifications



# Fact sheet, 8.5 x 11/ Two column

**Fact Sheet**—two-column format  
8.5" x 11" page

**Margins.** Maintain 3/4" (.75) all  
around.

**Typography.** All type in Myriad Pro.  
Title—set 30/30 bold, FLRR, initial  
caps. Subtitle—set 20/20 bold, FLRR,  
initial caps

**Symbols.** Place the Agency signature  
as shown in the specification sheet  
and examples.

**Two Column Format.** Main head  
Myriad Pro bold, 12/15, FLRR. Text  
10/15 Myraid Pro regular, FLRR by 20.5  
picas. Set heads in bold.



**Wildlife Habitat**

USDA NRCS  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

People rely on wildlife to fulfill everyday needs, from food to medicine to recreation; however, natural habitat loss and degradation is an increasing threat to the survival of wildlife. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) helps to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitats that support wildlife populations of national, State, tribal, and local significance. NRCS works to enhance:

- Upland habitats including grasslands, shrub/scrub, and forests.
- Wetland habitats such as flooded crop fields, tidal flushing areas, salt marshes, wetland hardwood hammocks, mangrove forests, and wild-rice beds.
- Riparian and instream aquatic habitat along streams, rivers, lakes, sloughs, and coastal areas.

NRCS installs many conservation practices to create and improve fish and wildlife habitat, emphasizing practices that benefit threatened and endangered species. These include:

- Restoring gravel spawning beds and removing barriers to fish passages
- Seeding and plantings
- Fencing to manage livestock
- Creating alternative watering facilities for livestock
- Employing prescribed burning
- Plantings Trees
- Installing culverts or water control structures
- Controlling invasive plants

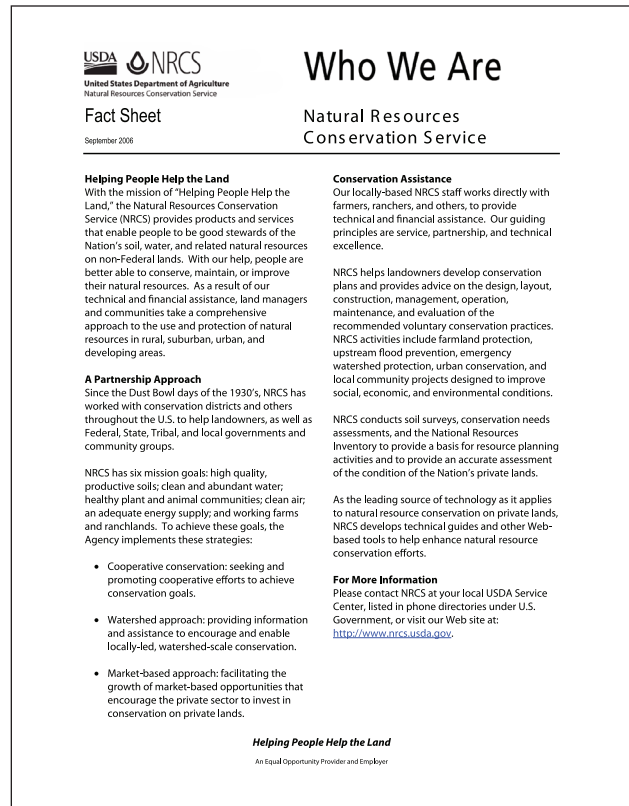
Creating forest openings  
Stabilizing streambanks  
Installing buffers  
Establishing instream structures  
Managing brush

Anyone interested in NRCS assistance should contact their local USDA Service Center or NRCS office. NRCS staff will work with landowners to develop wildlife habitat development plans. Technical and financial assistance is available from NRCS. Voluntary programs offer cost share for many practices. NRCS programs that offer financial assistance for wildlife habitat conservation include:

- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
- Conservation Security Program
- Wetlands Reserve Program
- Grassland Reserve Program
- Conservation Technical Assistance
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program

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August 2005

*Helping People Help the Land*



USDA NRCS  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

**Who We Are**

Natural Resources Conservation Service

September 2006

**Helping People Help the Land**  
With the mission of "Helping People Help the Land," the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides products and services that enable people to be good stewards of the Nation's soil, water, and related natural resources on non-Federal lands. With our help, people are better able to conserve, maintain, or improve their natural resources. As a result of our technical and financial assistance, land managers and communities take a comprehensive approach to the use and protection of natural resources in rural, suburban, urban, and developing areas.

**A Partnership Approach**  
Since the Dust Bowl days of the 1930's, NRCS has worked with conservation districts and others throughout the U.S. to help landowners, as well as Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments and community groups.

NRCS has six mission goals: high quality, productive soils; clean and abundant water; healthy plant and animal communities; clean air; an adequate energy supply; and working farms and ranchlands. To achieve these goals, the Agency implements these strategies:

- Cooperative conservation: seeking and promoting cooperative efforts to achieve conservation goals.
- Watershed approach: providing information and assistance to encourage and enable locally-led, watershed-scale conservation.
- Market-based approach: facilitating the growth of market-based opportunities that encourage the private sector to invest in conservation on private lands.

**Conservation Assistance**  
Our locally-based NRCS staff works directly with farmers, ranchers, and others, to provide technical and financial assistance. Our guiding principles are service, partnership, and technical excellence.

NRCS helps landowners develop conservation plans and provides advice on the design, layout, construction, management, operation, maintenance, and evaluation of the recommended voluntary conservation practices. NRCS activities include farmland protection, upstream flood prevention, emergency watershed protection, urban conservation, and local community projects designed to improve social, economic, and environmental conditions.

NRCS conducts soil surveys, conservation needs assessments, and the National Resources Inventory to provide a basis for resource planning activities and to provide an accurate assessment of the condition of the Nation's private lands.

As the leading source of technology as it applies to natural resource conservation on private lands, NRCS develops technical guides and other Web-based tools to help enhance natural resource conservation efforts.

**For More Information**  
Please contact NRCS at your local USDA Service Center, listed in phone directories under U.S. Government, or visit our Web site at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>.

**Helping People Help the Land**  
An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

# Fact sheet, 8.5 x 11/ Three column


**Fact Sheet**—three-column format  
8.5" x 11" page

**Margins.** Maintain 3/4" (.75) all  
around.

**Covers.** All type in Myriad Pro.  
Title—set 30/30 bold, FLRR, initial  
caps. Subtitle—set 20/20 bold, FLRR,  
initial caps

**Symbols.** Place the agency signature  
as shown in the specification sheet  
and examples.

**Three Column Format.** Main head  
Myriad Pro bold, 12/15, FLRR. Text  
10/15 Myraid Pro regular, FLRR by 20.5  
picas. Set heads in bold.

 **Conservation Resource Brief**  
**Chesapeake Bay and Agriculture**  
October 2006 Number 0609

**Key Points:**

- The Chesapeake Bay is the largest, most productive estuary in North America. Because of the high land to water ratio, every conservation action in the watershed benefits the Bay.
- The Chesapeake Bay Program is a regional partnership of local, state, and federal agencies along with non-governmental organizations that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983.
- About 25 percent of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed is in crop and pasture uses, non-federal forest land accounts for 47 percent, while developed land has risen to 12 percent (2003 National Resources Inventory).
- Major environmental challenges in the Chesapeake Bay region include landscape change (development and ecosystem fragmentation), excess nutrients, sediments, toxic chemical contaminants, and air pollution.


**Contact:**  
NRCS Web site at [www.nrcs.gov](http://www.nrcs.gov)  
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**Helping People Help the Land**

**Overview**

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in North America, home to more than 3,600 species of plants, fish and animals. Nearly 16 million people live in the bay watershed.

The basin that drains into the Bay covers nearly 44.5 million acres over six states and the District of Columbia. The Chesapeake Bay has the highest land to water ratio of any estuary in the U.S. land-based activities heavily influence the condition of the Bay.



Major environmental challenges in the Chesapeake Bay region include landscape change, excess nutrients, sediments, toxic chemical contaminants, and air pollution (Chesapeake Bay Program, 2006).

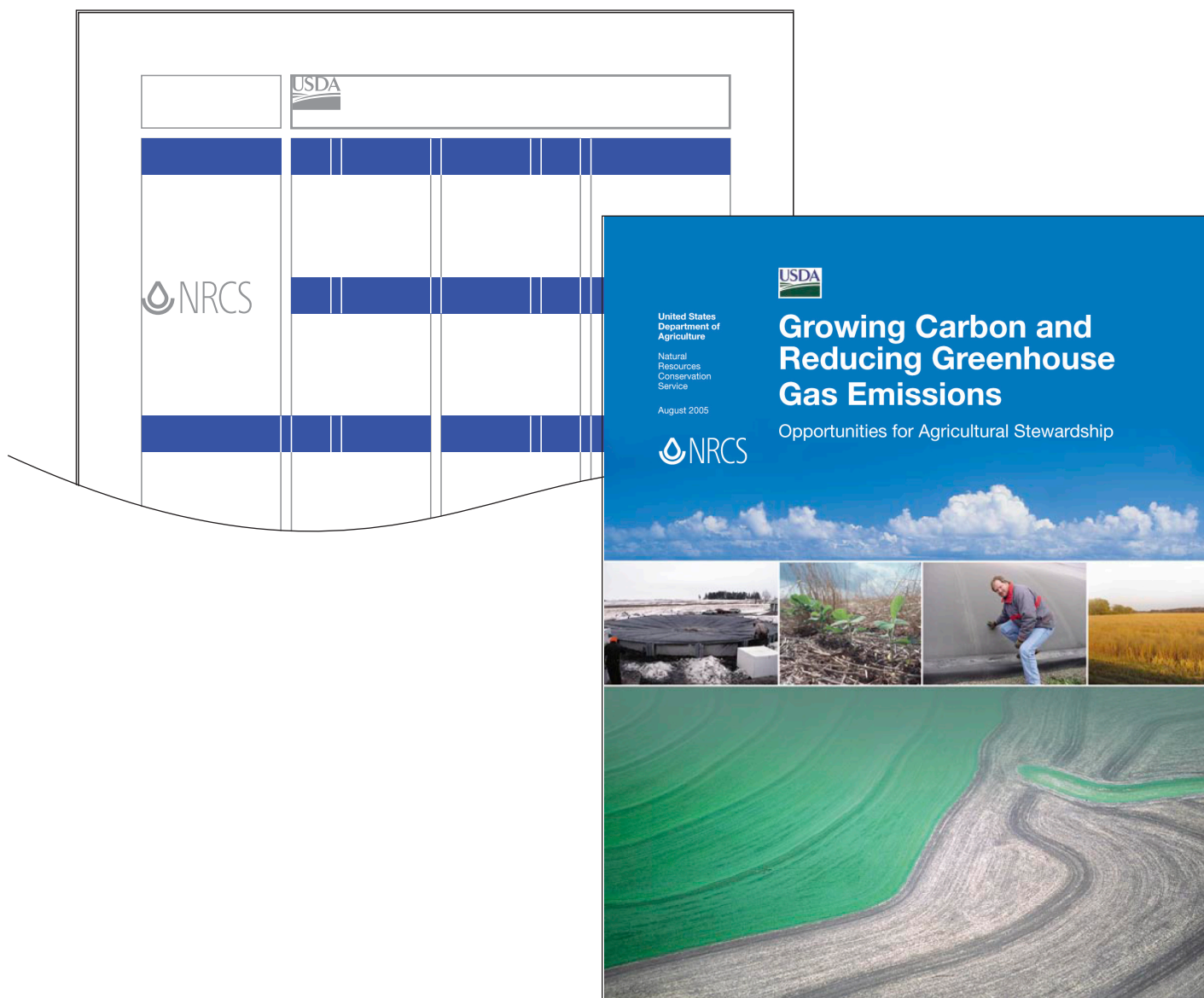
Conversion of land from agricultural to other uses creates a complex interaction among resource concerns, including increased runoff. Urban and suburban areas deliver the highest pollutant loads on a per acre basis and occupy over 5 million acres of the watershed. Agriculture is identified as another top contributor of non-point source pollutants because it occupies such a large share of the non-forested portion of the watershed, approximately 10 million acres.

Conservation Resource Brief Chesapeake Bay and Agriculture 1

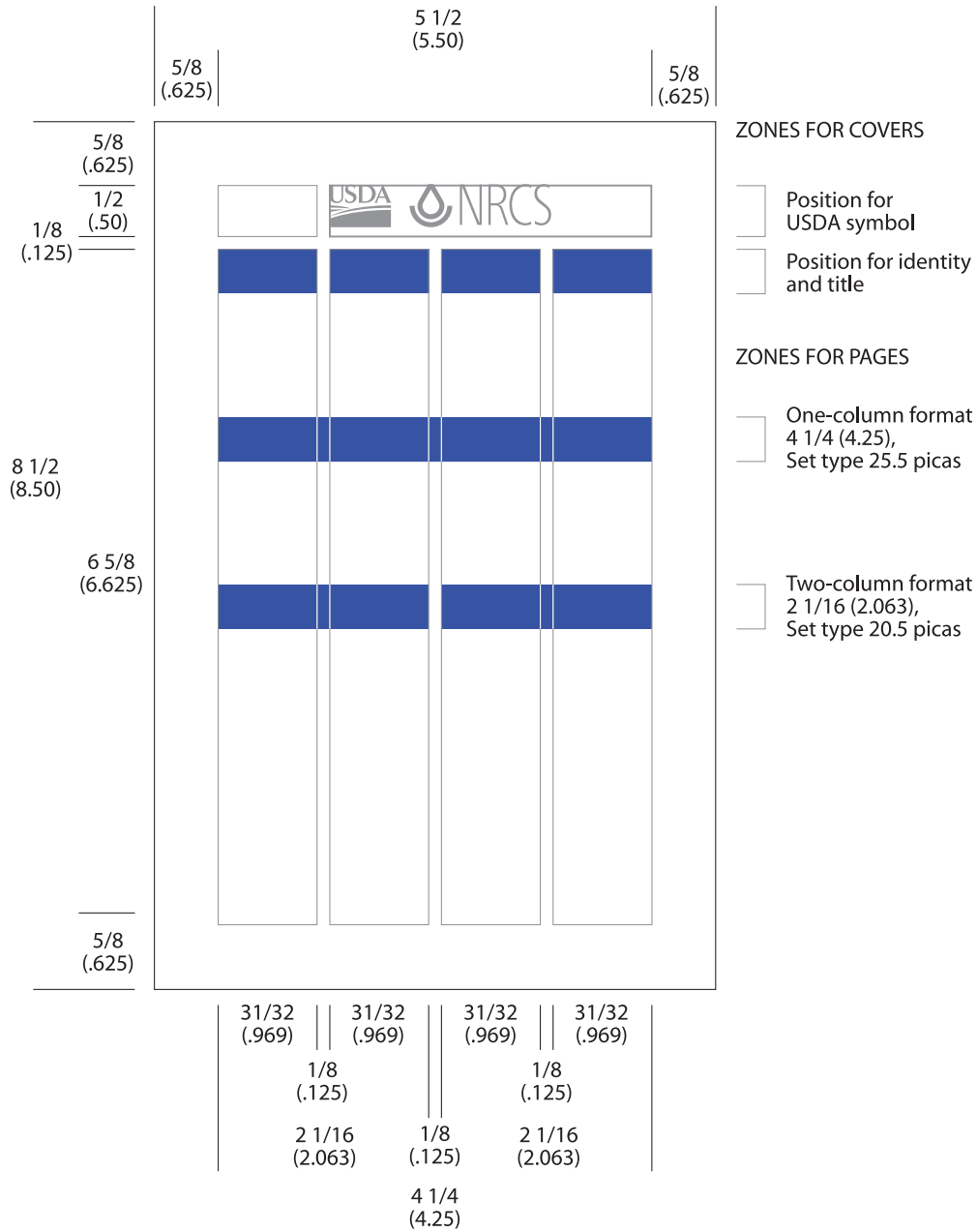
## Print, 8.5 x 11/ Alternate cover

**Specifications.** As given for 8.5" x 11" format on page 5.

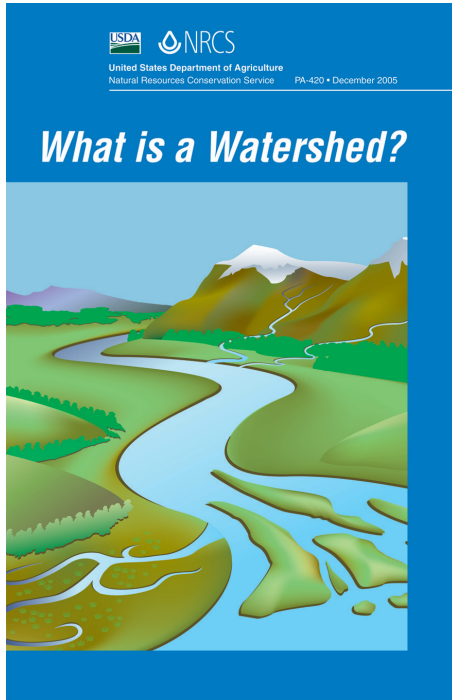
**Symbols.** The USDA and NRCS symbols are placed as shown in the examples below.



# Print, 5.5 x 8.5/ Specifications



# Print, 5.5 x 8.5/ Example



## What is a watershed?

A watershed is the land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream, river, or lake.

## How do watersheds work?

The landscape is made up of many interconnected basins, or watersheds. Within each watershed, all water runs to the lowest point—a stream, river, or lake. On its way, water travels over the surface and across the farm fields, forest land, suburban lawns, and city streets, or it seeps into the soil and travels as ground water. Large watersheds like the ones for the Mississippi River, Columbia River, and Chesapeake Bay are made up of many smaller watersheds across several states.

## Are all watersheds the same?

Not at all. Watersheds come in many different shapes and sizes and have many different features. Watersheds can have hills or mountains or be nearly flat. They can have farmland, rangeland, small towns, and big cities. Parts of your watershed may be so rough, rocky, or marshy that they're suited only for certain trees, plants, and wildlife.

## Your watershed community.

Everyone lives in a watershed. You and everyone in your watershed are part of the watershed community. The animals, birds, and fish are, too. You influence what happens in your watershed, good or bad, by how you treat the natural resources—the soil, water, air, plants, and animals. What happens in your small watershed also affects the larger watershed downstream.

There are many things you and your community can do to keep your watershed healthy and productive. To learn what you can do to take care of your watershed, call 1-888-LAND-CARE or your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office. It's listed in the telephone book under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture. Visit us online at [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov).

## On the farm

Keep plant residue on the surface of sloping cropland. This reduces runoff and prevents sediment, fertilizers, and pesticides from entering streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds.

## At home

Landscape your yard with plants that need a minimum of water and fertilizer. Use only the amount of fertilizers and pesticides that plants need.

## In your community

Protect wetlands that serve as natural buffers against pollution, soil erosion, and flooding.

## We all live in a watershed.

Everything we do in our watershed affects the soil, water, air, plants, and animals.

Let's work together to keep our watersheds healthy. Here are some things you can do.



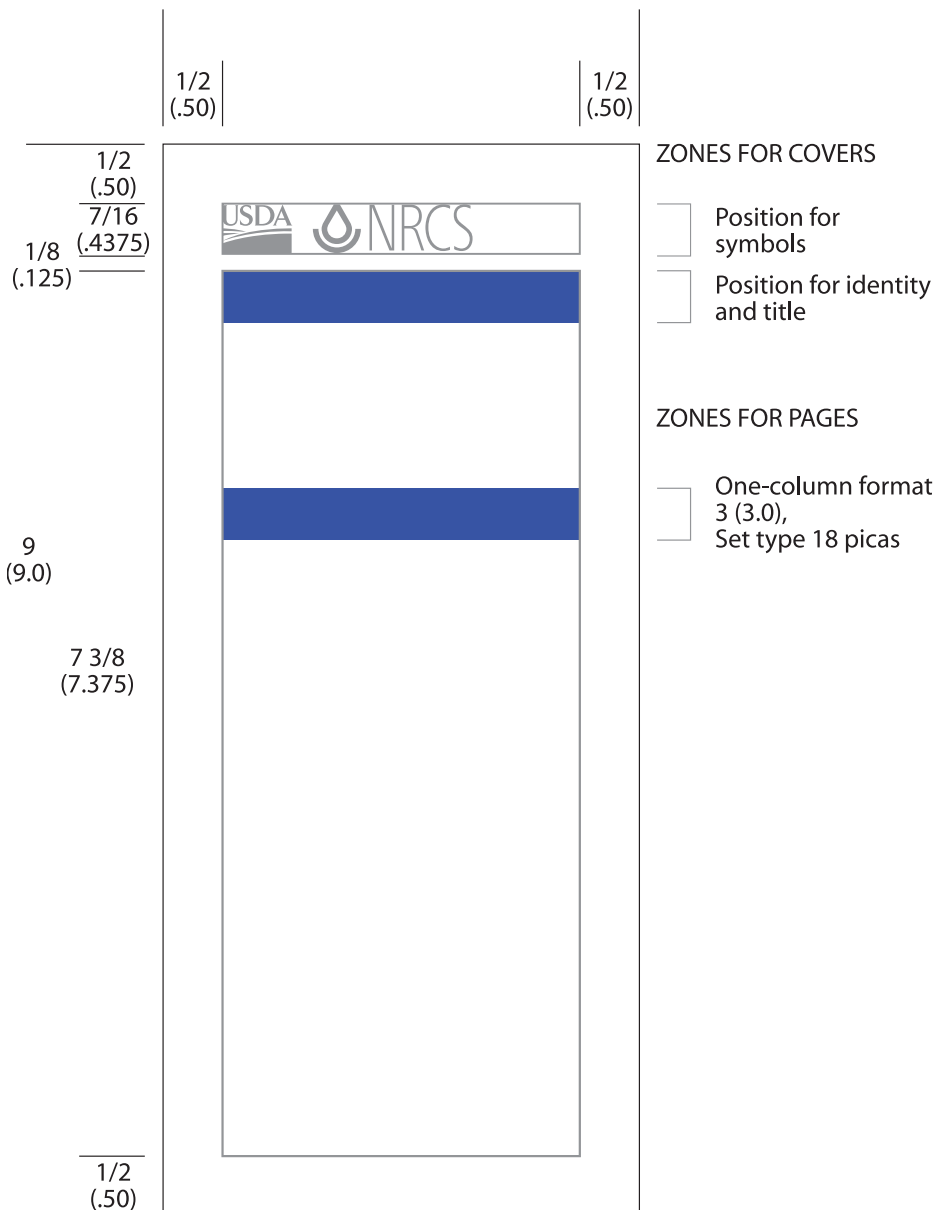
# Print, 4 x 9/ Specifications

**Brochure**—4" x 9" format.

**Margins.** Maintain 1/2" (.50) all around.

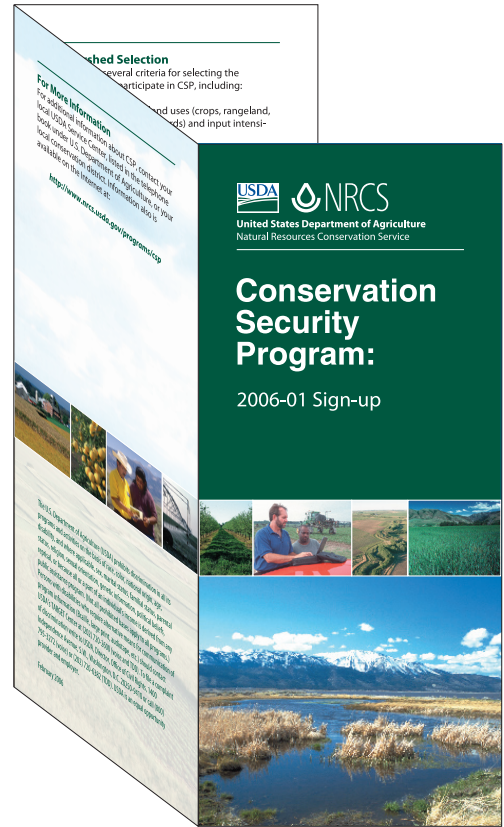
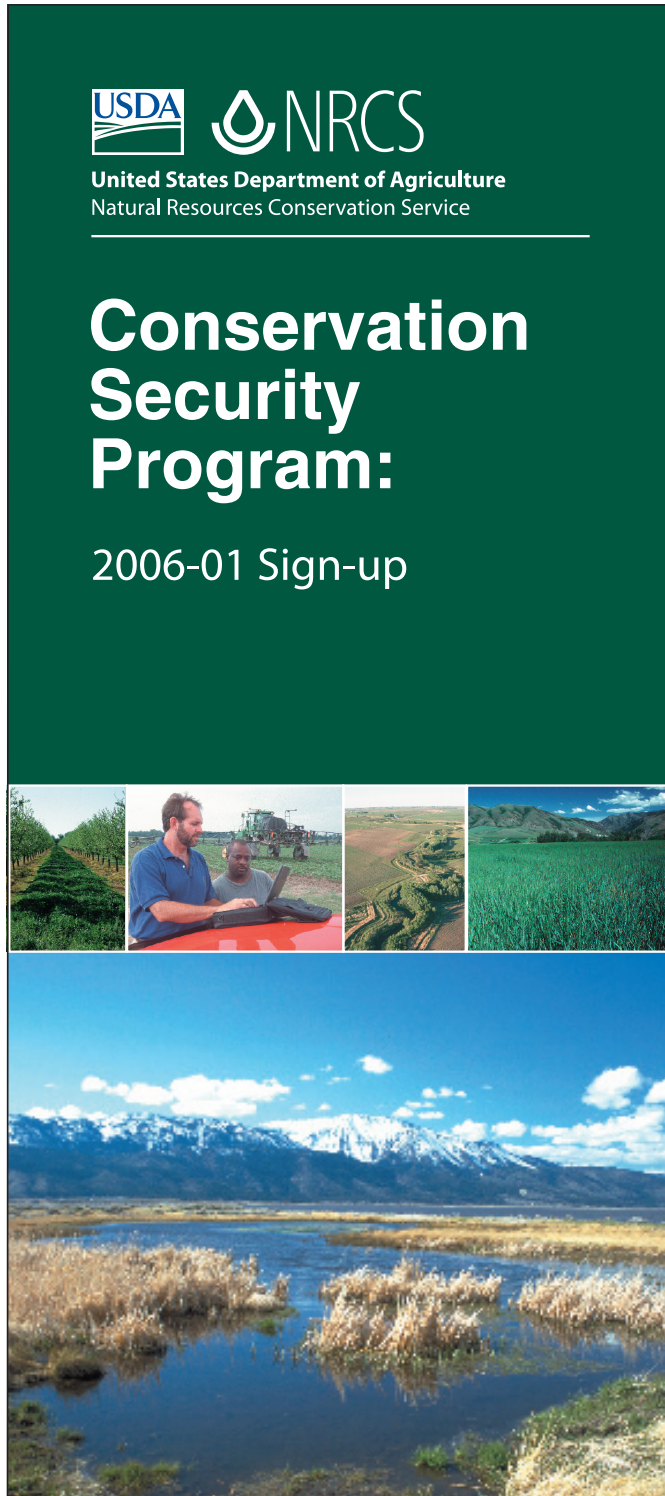
**Covers.** All type in Myriad Pro.

Title—set 30/30 bold, FLRR, initial caps. Subtitle—set 20/20 bold, FLRR, initial caps








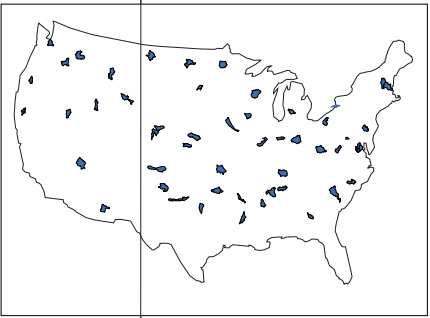
# Print, 4 x 9/ Example



**Brochure**—example of front and reverse panels

9"x12" (9.0"x12.0") unfolded.

<p>Watersheds also were evaluated from a national perspective regarding regional resource issues that would enhance CSP's overall environmental goals. Preference was given where improving resources would assist the recovery of threatened and endangered species or add measurably to critical resource recovery efforts and extensive watershed-wide measures already in place.</p> <p>Other watersheds will be selected each year until landowners in every watershed have had a chance to participate. Every agricultural operation is in a watershed.</p> <p><b>How To Participate</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Access the CSP self-assessment workbook either online at the address below, or by getting a hard copy at the local USDA Service Centers within the watersheds.</li> <li>2. Using the workbook, producers (1) determine whether they meet basic eligibility requirements, (2) document their stewardship work to date, and (3) prepare a benchmark inventory documenting conservation they have undertaken so far.</li> <li>3. Submit the completed self-assessment workbook to the local NRCS office during the sign-up period.</li> <li>4. Meet with NRCS personnel to go over any additional needed documentation.</li> <li>5. NRCS determines the enrollment category for which the producer qualifies.</li> <li>6. Finally, NRCS will select the categories to be funded for CSP contracts.</li> </ol> <p>All CSP applications that meet sign-up criteria will be placed in an enrollment category regardless of available funding. In addition to legal contract requirements, the categories will consider the applicants' current stewardship (soil condition, tillage intensity, existing practices, and activities) and will sort producers based on these factors. Categories also will examine producers' willingness to perform additional conservation activities during their CSP contract.</p>	<p><b>For More Information</b> For additional information about CSP, contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information also is available on the Internet at:</p> <p><a href="http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp">http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp</a></p>  <p>The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 726-6960 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 726-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.</p> <p>February 2006</p>	 <p>United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service</p> <h2>Conservation Security Program:</h2> <h3>2006-01 Sign-up</h3> 
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<p><b>Conservation Security Program: 2006-01 Sign-up</b></p> <p>The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private, working agricultural lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. CSP identifies and rewards those farmers and ranchers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations.</p> <p>In addition, CSP creates powerful incentives for other producers to meet those same standards of conservation performance. In short, CSP rewards the best and motivates the rest. Through these rewards and incentives, CSP builds a foundation of natural resource conservation that will provide benefits to the public for generations to come.</p> <p><b>Watershed Approach</b> The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is using watersheds as a basis to determine CSP participation. This makes sense economically, practically, and administratively.</p> <p>Watersheds are nature's boundaries and are the best science-based way to group together producers working on similar environmental issues.</p> <p>The budget for CSP in fiscal year 2006 is \$259 million. Focusing on selected watersheds reduces the administrative burden on applicants and reduces the costs of processing a large number of applications that cannot be funded. The law requires that NRCS not incur more than 15 percent technical assistance costs associated with CSP.</p>	<p><b>2006 Watersheds</b> In fiscal year 2006, CSP will touch 60 watersheds (one or more in every State, the Caribbean area and Guam), 380 counties, and about 380 local conservation districts. Combined, these watersheds include more than 62 million acres, an area about the size of Oregon. More than 75,000 farms and ranches are within these watershed boundaries and they cover more than 25 million acres, an area about the size of Kentucky. About half of this working agricultural land is cropland and half is grazing land.</p> <p>A map showing the locations of the watersheds is online at:</p> <p><a href="http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/">http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/</a></p>	<p><b>Watershed Selection</b> NRCS used several criteria for selecting the watersheds to participate in CSP, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contain a variety of land uses (crops, rangeland, pasture, vineyards/orchards) and input intensities.</li> <li>• Have high-priority resource issues to be addressed, including issues that meet State priorities.</li> <li>• Have a history of good land stewardship on the part of landowners.</li> <li>• Have the technical tools necessary, such as digitized soils information to streamline program implementation.</li> <li>• State-level input was provided by NRCS State Conservationists to integrate State resource priorities into the watershed selection process.</li> </ul> <p><b>CSP Watersheds: 2006-01 Sign-up February 13 to March 31, 2006</b></p> 
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## News release

**News Release**—one-column format  
8.5" x 11" page

**Margins.** Maintain 3/4" (.75) around  
sides, 1/2" (.50) top and bottom.

**Availability.** Format is provided as  
downloadable MS Word file on NRCS  
Public Affairs sharepoint site.

 **NEWS RELEASE**

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service • P.O. Box 2890  
Washington, DC 20013 • Phone: (202) 720-3210 • Web: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>

Helping People Help the Land  
An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

## Stationery, etc.

**Business Card**—3 1/2"x2")  
(3.50"x2.00")

**Availability.** May be ordered by NRCS employees through Light House for the Blind. Follow link on NRCS Public Affairs sharepoint site or NRCS Web site.

Note: The top of the logo →  
should align with the words:  
"United States Department  
of Agriculture".



Optional Card—Mission Statement



# Natural Resources Conservation Service

## Design Standards

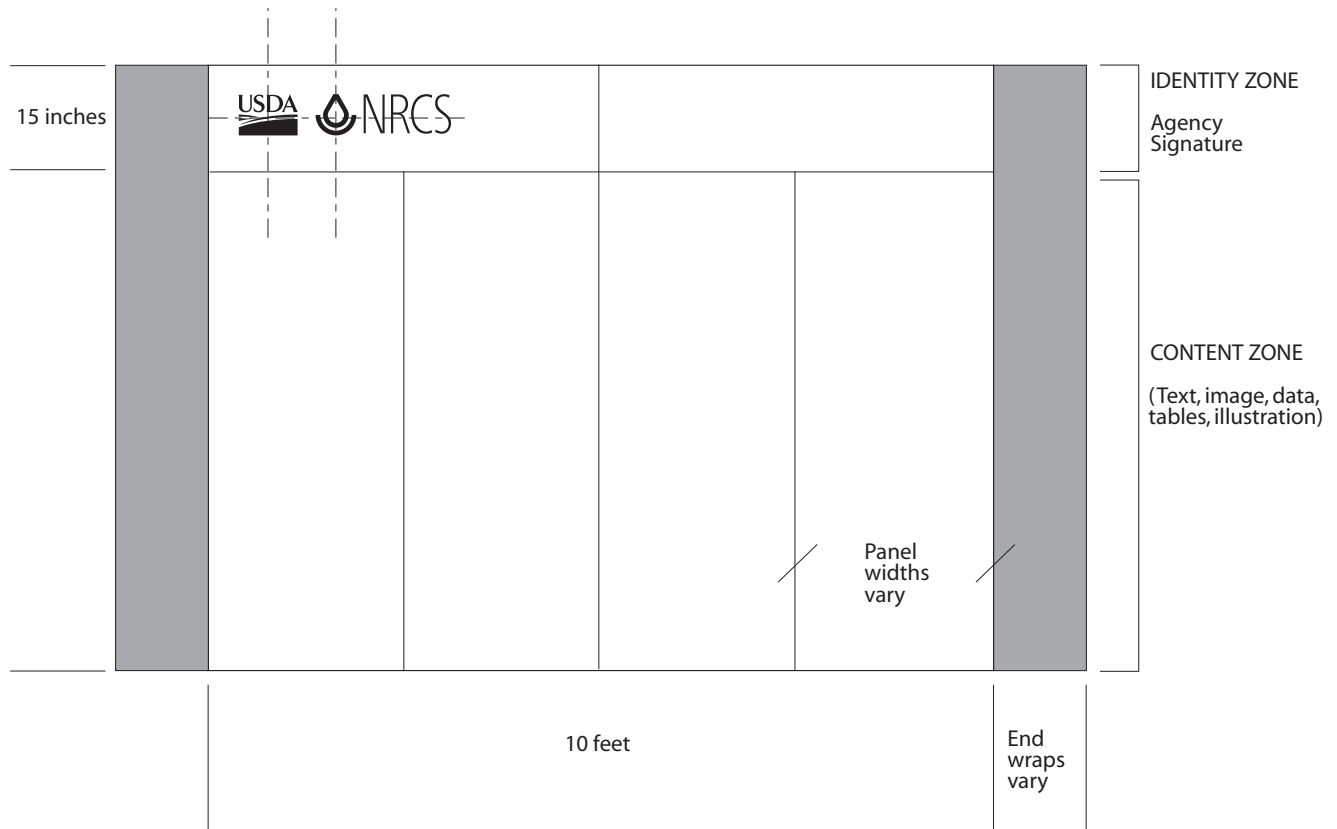
**Letterhead**—8 1/2"x11"  
(8.50"x11.00")

**Availability.** Format is provided as downloadable MS Word file on NRCS Public Affairs sharepoint site or NRCS Web site.

**Text.** In accordance with Department rules, text for official correspondence is set in Times Roman, 12 point.

	1" (1.000)		1" (1.000)	
Department identity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>United States Department of Agriculture</b>		1/2" (.500)
Agency identity and address	<input type="checkbox"/>	 Natural Resources Conservation Service P.O. Box 2890 Washington, DC 20013		1 line space 1 line space
Body of letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	Text insertion point.		2 line space
Mission Statement, EEO statement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Helping People Help the Land</i> <small>An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer</small>		1 line space 3 line space 2 line space 2 line space
Recycle logo	<input type="checkbox"/>			3/8" (.375")

# Exhibit media/ Specifications



Specifications are for a typical four-panel magnetic hold, "pop-up" 10' trade show style exhibit. Configurations and dimensions vary from one exhibit manufacturer to another so measurements are approximate. Layout principles remain in effect.

## Exhibit media/ Example

**Measures**—Maintain an identity zone that is approximately 1/6 of the exhibit height.

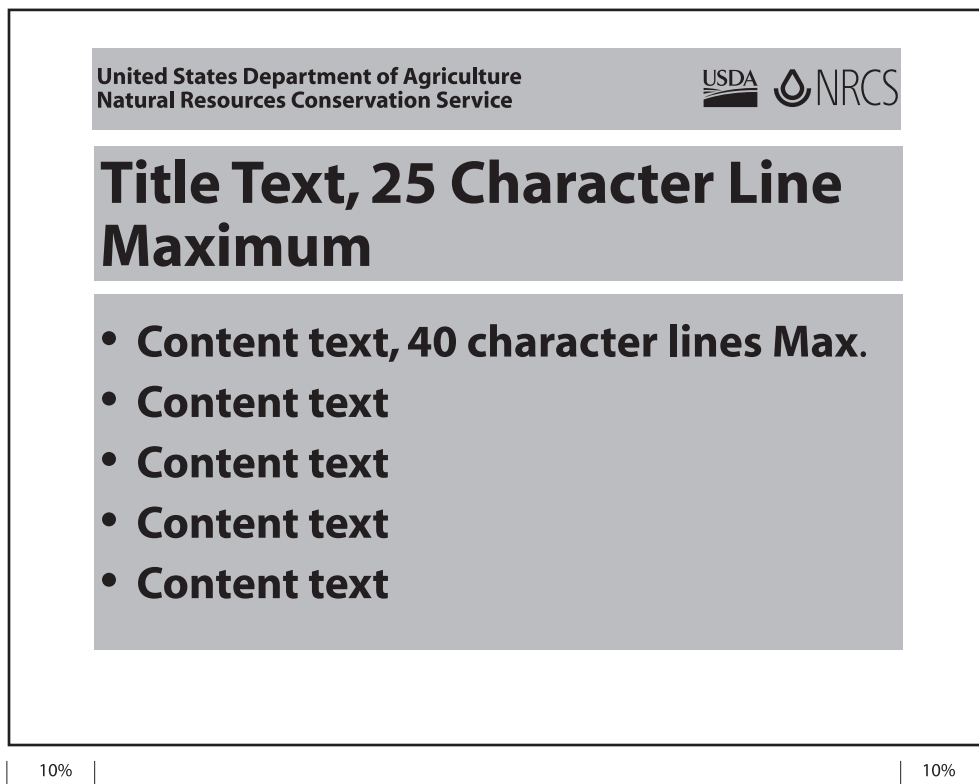
**Symbol.** Place the Agency signature on the left side of the identity zone, about one symbol width from the edge.

**Typography.** Set title in Myriad or equivalent, write a 1-line title. For a 10' trade show exhibit, the capital letters in the title should be 4" to 5" tall.

**Content.** Maintain the most important information in the top 1/3 of the exhibit space, the optimum viewing area.



# Presentation materials/ Specifications

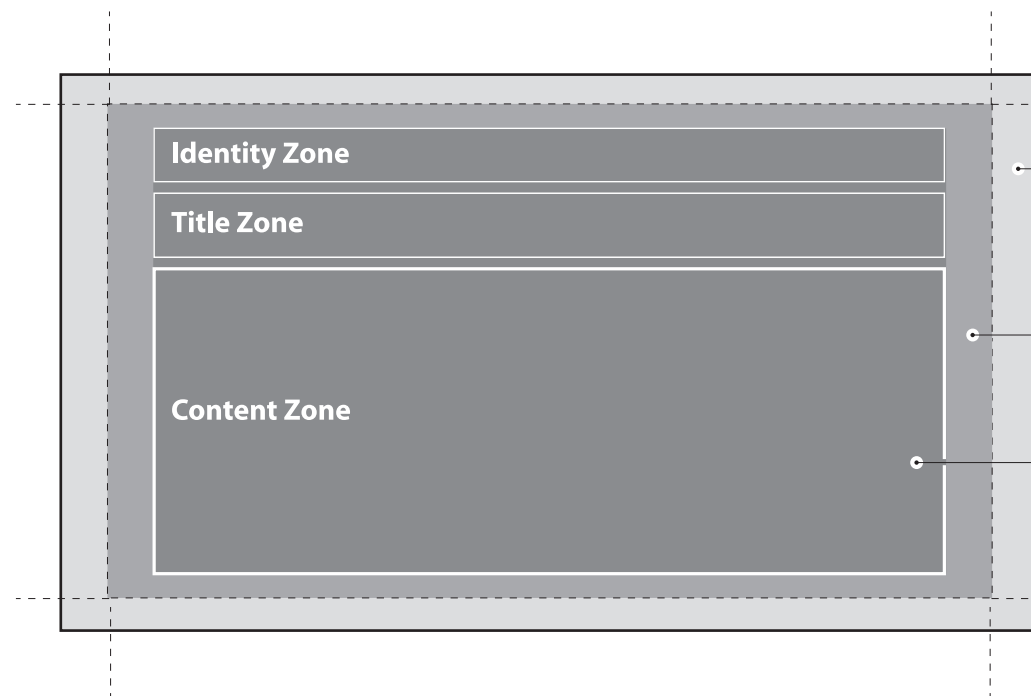


## PowerPoint Slide

IDENTITY ZONE  
Department and Agency  
names and symbols

TITLE ZONE

CONTENT ZONE  
Text, image, charts,  
tables, illustrations



## Wide Plasma Screen Display Areas

**Bleed Area for  
Video Cutoff**  
The background color must  
extend this far to allow for  
differences in video display  
cutoff points.

**Visible Image Area**  
(90% of Bleed Area)  
This will be the viewable area  
of most display devices.

**Type Safe Area**  
(90% of Visible Image Area)  
Text or charts can safely be  
placed in this area and not be  
trimmed by the display device



## Presentation materials/ Example

**Presentation Materials**—This guidance covers digital presentation media, including presentations using *PowerPoint*, *PDF* files and HTML web browsers. More sophisticated software (e.g., Adobe *Flash* and *Dreamweaver*) are used for animated presentations.

*PowerPoint* presentations have a typical page set-up of 10" wide by 7.5" high, and this is the size used for our template. However projections vary in size and proportion depending on the output device. Wide-screen plasma dimensions are much different than more traditional CRT monitors. This makes consistent specification of font size and margins very difficult. Therefore, percentages or ratios will be used instead of actual numeric dimensions.

**Margins.** Allow about 10% of the image area for margins. This is equivalent to about a 1" margin on a typical page. If the presentation is being shown over broadcast media, increase the margins to 15% to allow for cutoff variations from screen to screen.

**Symbol.** The Agency Signature is placed flush right and centered vertically in the identity zone as shown on the specification sheet.

**Color and Contrast.** Unlike print material, text on projected images is easier to read if it is light on a dark background.

**Identity Text.** Set type in Helvetica, upper and lower case (avoid using all caps) at about half the size of the

body text. Align the identity text with the Agency Signature in the identity zone as shown in the example.

**Title.** Set in Helvetica Bold, upper and lower case, with about a 25 character line length.

**Content Text.** Avoid using all caps. Set in Helvetica Regular with about a 40 character line length. Keep the amount of text to a minimum and avoid extraneous words. For good readability and audience focus, bulleted terms are better than narrative text. Maintain a maximum of 7 bulleted items per presentation image.

PowerPoint slide





















# Conversion chart

U.S. Customary System

Pica System

**Lines (rules) and Boxes.**

Measures are shown in the Pica System (points) and the U.S. Customary System in decimals of an inch.

A	B	C	D	E	
Fraction of an inch	Decimal equivalent of an inch	Points	Picas	Decimal equivalent of an inch	
1/16	.062	3	0.25	.041	0.5 point (.007) 
1/8	.125	6	0.50	.083	1.0 point (.014) 
3/16	.187	9	0.75	.124	2.0 points (.028) 
1/4	.250	12	1.00	.166	3.0 points (.041) 
5/16	.312	15	1.25	.207	4.0 points (.055) 
3/8	.375	18	1.50	.248	5.0 points (.069) 
7/16	.437	21	1.75	.290	6.0 points (.083) 
1/2	.500	24	2.00	.331	7.0 points (.097) 
9/16	.562	27	2.25	.373	8.0 points (.110) 
5/8	.625	30	2.50	.414	9.0 points (.124) 
11/16	.687	33	2.75	.455	10.0 points (.138) 
3/4	.750	36	3.00	.497	11.0 points (.152) 
13/16	.812	39	3.25	.538	12.0 point/1 pica (.166) 
7/8	.875	42	3.50	.579	24 points/2 picas (.331) 
15/16	.937	45	3.75	.621	36 points/3 picas (.497) 
16/16	1.000	48	4.00	.662	48 points/4 picas (.662) 
		51	4.25	.704	60 points/5 picas (.828) 
		54	4.50	.745	72 points/6 picas (.994) 
		57	4.75	.787	
		60	5.00	.828	
		63	5.25	.870	
		66	5.50	.910	
		69	5.75	.952	
		72	6.00	.994	

## Appendix/ Typography and layout

This appendix offers layout suggestions particularly for those without an academic background or experience in design who may be called upon to produce publication layouts. It discusses typography and introduces the grid system, a basic tool of design that makes organizing material for publication easier. Used in conjunction with the electronic templates and stylesheet, these suggestions will make possible consistent production of professional looking publications. These suggestions are tools to aid work at a basic level. More advanced designers may frequently violate one or more of these rules, but they do so knowingly.

# Typography

## 00. Title

### 00a. Subtitle

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#### 1. Subhead Level One with Rule

#### 1a. Subhead Level One without Rule

#### 2. Subhead Level Two

#### 3. Subhead Level Three

#### 4. Subhead Level Four

#### 0. Flush Text with space after

##### 0a. Flush Text with no space

##### 0b. Indented text

- 0c. Bullett text

- 1. 0d. Numbered text

#### 5. Caption and notes

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#### 6. EEO Statement

### Standard Typefaces

All type in the NRCS templates used for titles, heads, and identity is specified in the typeface Myriad, or near equivalent. The typeface equivalents to Myriad on PC and Macintosh platforms are named Helvetica, Arial and Helvetica Neue. While the template type for text material is Garamond, many other typefaces are suitable for mainstream text. In general, the typeface should be clean and legible with few embellishments. Good examples with excellent readability are Helvetica, Caslon and Frutiger.

### Serif/Sans Serif

Letterforms are divided into Serif (those with end strokes, like the font you are reading now) and Sans-Serif (those without, as in the other text in this column). Traditionally, it was held that Serif faces were easier to read because of greater distinction among the letterforms. Therefore, Serif fonts were recommended for body text, and Sans-Serif reserved for titles and heads. More recent research suggests that differences between specific typefaces have more to do with readability issues than with the Serif issue. In fact, a Sans-serif typeface is preferred by people with low-vision and

recommended for use in Large Print format documents meant to accommodate such individuals. Suggested typefaces for mainstream NRCS publications are Myriad (Sans-serif) and Garamond (Serif).

### Alignment/ Which is more readable?

Flush left is the easiest to read. The eye knows where to go next. Justified Type is not as readable because of excess spacing and hyphenation. Flush Right is hard to read because you must search for the beginnings of lines. Centered Type is hardest to read because you have trouble adjusting to constant change.

### Upper Case/Lower Case

Upper and lower case, as seen in the subhead above, is sometimes called initial caps, and is best used for titles and heads.

Initial cap and lower case, as in this sentence, is best for body text and some lower level headers.

All caps is best never used, except for acronyms.

Above: A table showing the stylesheet provided in the NRCS page layout templates. The program used is InDesign.

# Typography

## Type Nomenclature: Font, Face and Family

- **Family**—All sizes, styles, and weights of a given name, i.e., all “Garamond” or all “Myriad” fonts.
- **Face**—Historically, a single weight and style of a family, i.e. “Adobe Garamond Bold Italic” or “Myriad Pro Black”.
- **Font**—Historically, a single size of a single weight of a particular face, i.e. “24pt Adobe Garamond Bold Italic” or “18pt Myriad Black”.

Today, many people use these terms interchangeably, which can cause confusion.

## Line Length

If lines are too short there are choppy breaks and reading slows. When lines are too long, you tend to read the same line twice or skip a line by accident and reading is again slowed. So what is just right? The best combination is about 45 characters per line. When longer lines are necessary, more leading should be added.

## Leading

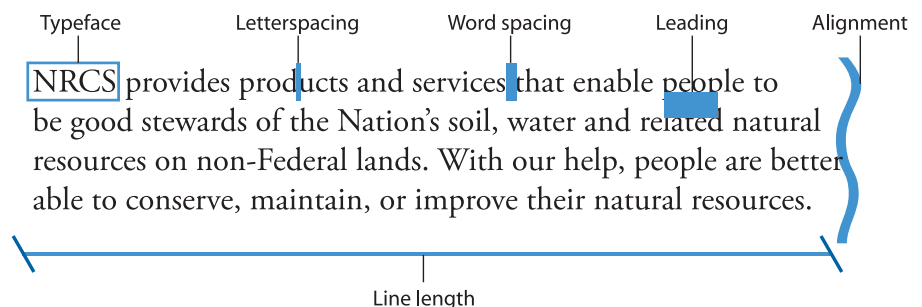
Leading is the space between lines. For larger type and shorter lines, less leading is needed. Smaller type and longer line lengths call for more leading. Typically, two points of lead are added to lines of body type. This type is set in 11point Garamond with 2 points of lead (11/13), for instance. Headlines may not need any lead at all and lines above 70 characters need 3 or more points of lead between the lines. Captions may only require one point.

## Letterspacing

Letterspacing, sometimes called tracking, can be adjusted so that all letters are closer or farther apart. Larger type needs less space between letters than smaller type.

## Kerning

Kerning only adjusts the space between adjacent pairs of letters. Kerning is usually only used in heads, where it will be noticeable. Adjusting the space between certain letter pairs can make the letterspacing seem more natural.



# Publication layout/ Grids

## What is a grid?

The NASA standards manual defined the grid as a predetermined under-structure that the designer employs to give a publication cohesive style and character. It is a great organizer of material and can save countless hours in execution.

## Do grids restrict designers?

No, in fact they are an aid to the creative process. The various grids assist the designer in organizing the publication material in the most effective way.

## Text Flow

When setting type, it is useful to remember that for readers of Western alphabets, reading follows a top-to-bottom and left-to-right order. This should inform all page layouts.

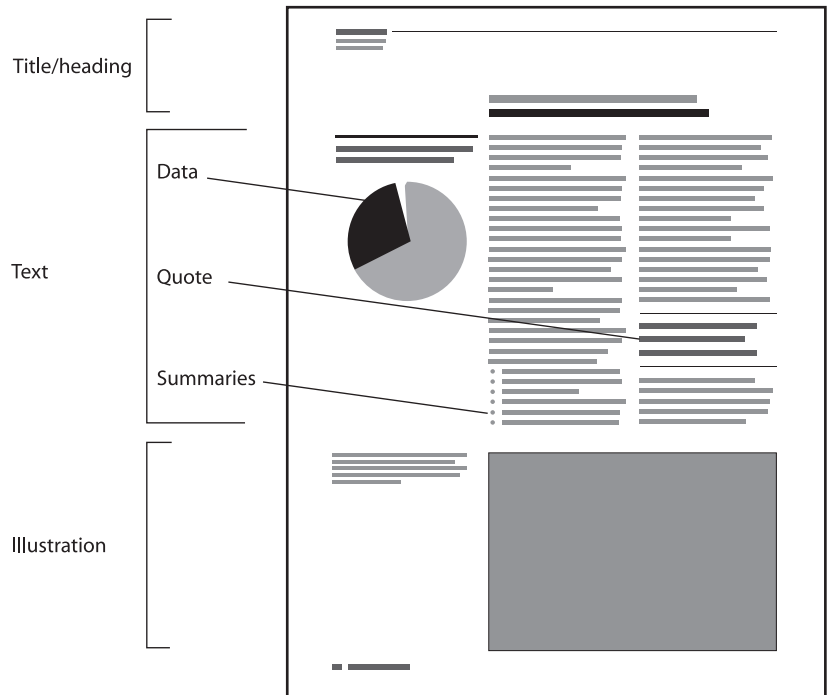
## White Space

The page should achieve an appropriate balance of white space to text, images and data. The more white space there is on a page, the greater the opportunity for seeing and perceiving the information elements. Studies have established that the optimum ratio is 60% for the text/image/data area and 40% dedicated to white space.

## Infozones

Zoned pages were developed for use in reference books, manuals and catalogs, where quick retrieval of information is important. In an increasingly competitive communication environment, it is advisable to organize your page efficiently using infozones, i.e., information ordered into zones. Organizing your material this way will make the most of your reader's time. Using the grid system, you establish a hierarchy for the elements on your page. The zones are prioritized by content, with title/header at the top, text in the middle, and illustrations at the bottom.

### Zones



## Grids/ Type only

The left hand page shows horizontal parallel design. The right hand page depicts vertical uses of 3 column type format.



Two and four column formats from the same grid.



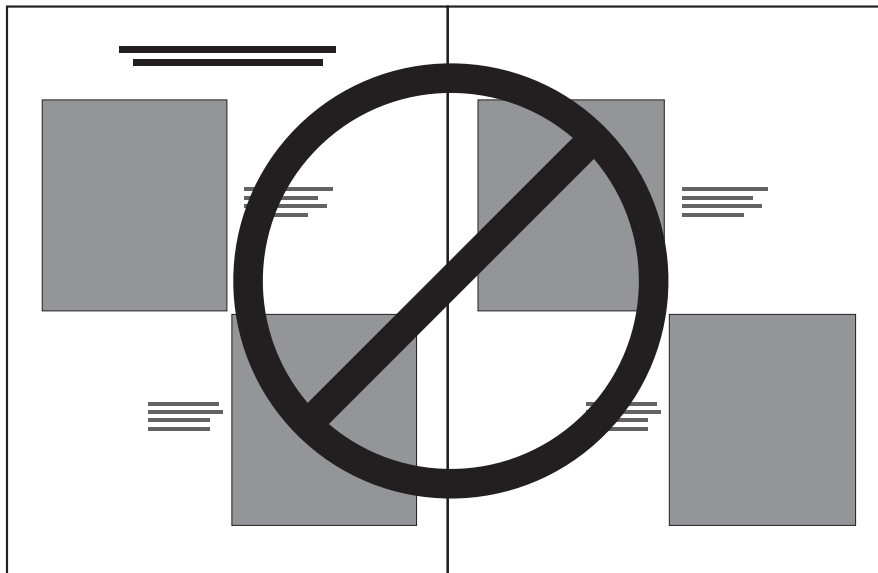
One column and alternate two column formats.



## Grids/ Photos only

**Don't** center heads on uncentered layout.

**Don't** make checkered patterns.

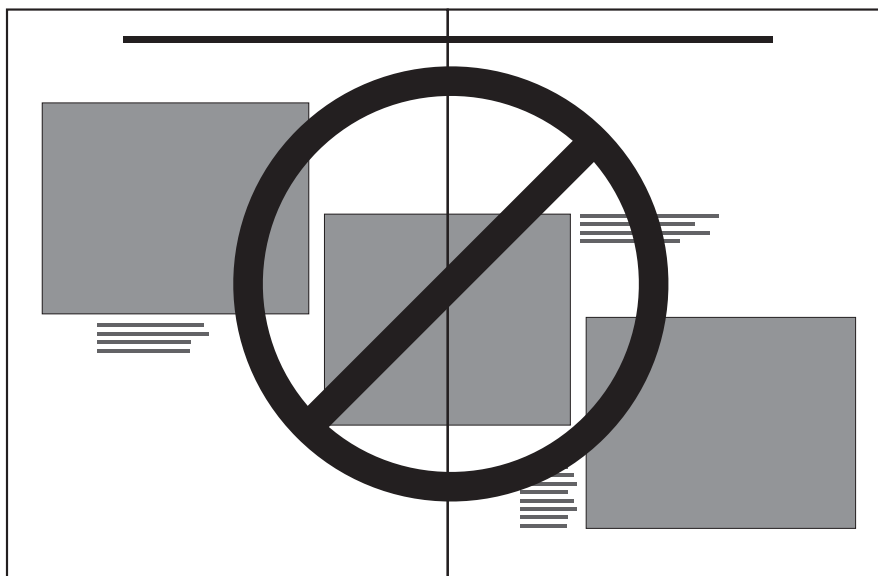


**Don't** string out heads in long lines with small type.

**Don't** emphasize the diagonal.

**Don't** needlessly vary caption treatment.

**Don't** make all photos the same size.





## Don't center

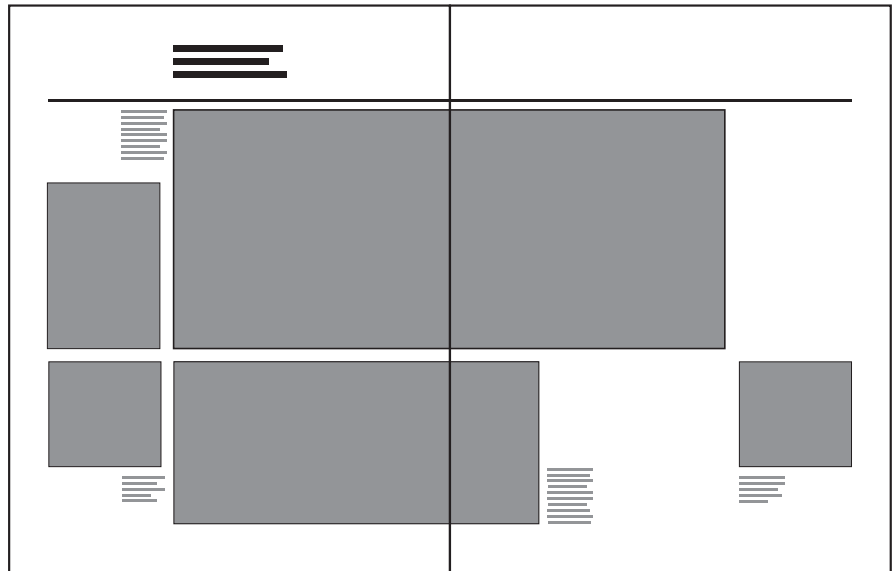


**Don't** make facing centered layouts; they fight each other too much.

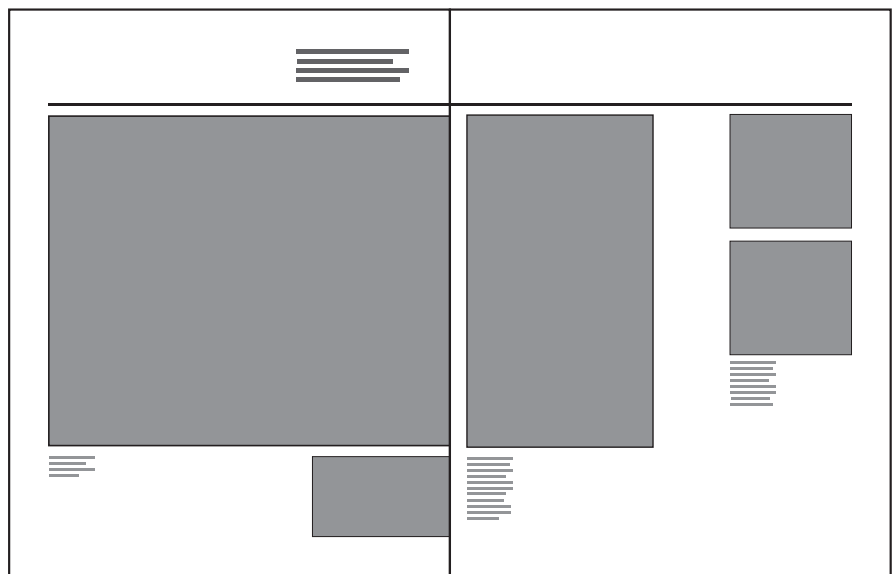
**Don't** make pyramids.

## Grids/ Type and photos

Contrasting density of photos and white space is one style (emphasis on difference is used to enhance). Even density of photos and white space is another style (good variety in shape and size).

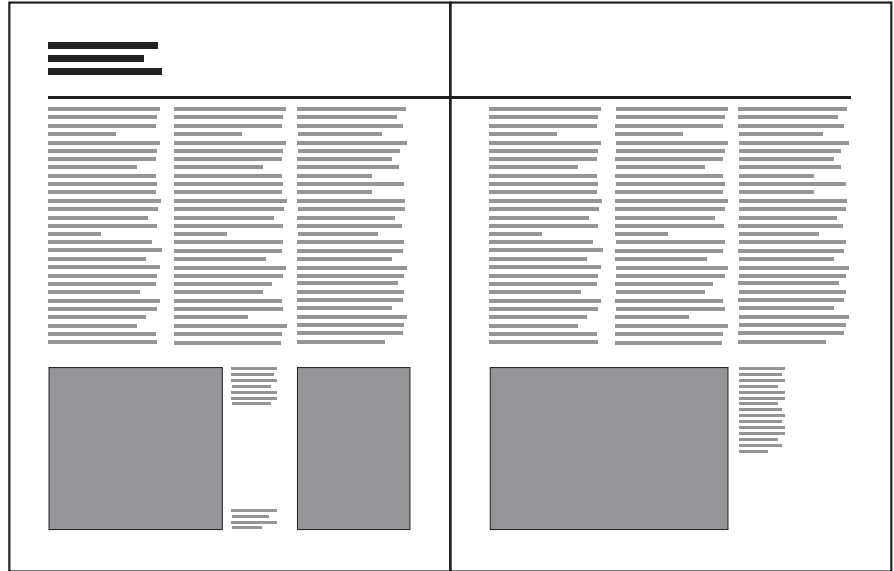


Use of alignment to make larger shapes out of smaller ones helps unify spread (bleeding across gutter not always needed).

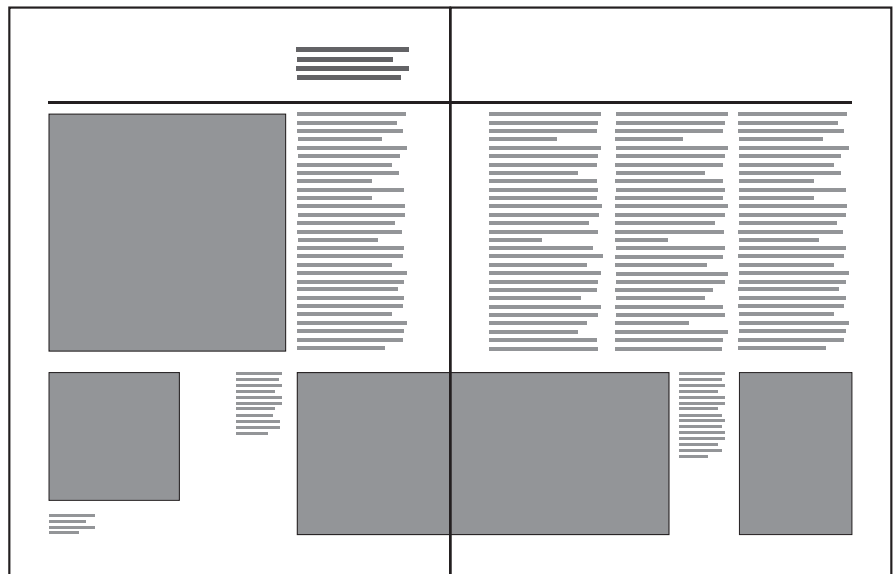


## Grids/ Type and photos

An effective use of the grid system:  
With a nearly equal ratio of text to  
photos, reading continuity has been  
maximized by segregating title, text  
and photos.



Selectively integrating a photo into  
the text area can still maintain reading  
continuity in layouts with a high ratio  
of photo to text.



## Grids/ Type and photos

The tops of the text columns are aligned at a constant level, like curtains hanging from a rod. The photos are integrated towards the bottom of the page. This minimizes the disturbance of reading continuity in a layout with a high ratio of text to photos.



Reading continuity can be destroyed completely by improper photo integration, as in this example. Most readers would lose interest very quickly.

**Avoid** excessive disturbance of copy continuity. If you have convinced your audience to start reading, don't force them to stop.



## Exhibit layout

### Layout

Maintain an identity zone in the top 1/6 of the exhibit. This zone will be occupied by the Agency and Department symbols.

The most important content should be confined to the top 1/3 of the exhibit. This is the optimum viewing

area. When possible, copy should be at eye level, 62" from the floor, starting with the Headline. Set the title and heads in Myriad or equivalent, and write a one-line title. For a 10' trade show exhibit, the capital letters should be 4" to 5" tall. Illustrations should generally be below.

### Audience and Message

Identify a specific audience. Use one simple message, and remember that less is more: *The more you say, the less people listen.*

Copy and captions should be as short as possible, and set no smaller than 24 pt. Don't be afraid to leave white space.

