
Federal Register Document Drafting Handbook

October 1998 Revision

Introduction

A. What is the Document Drafting Handbook (DDH)?

The DDH provides Federal agencies with guidance and examples for complying with the Office of the Federal Register's format and editorial requirements for Federal Register documents.

All the information you need to prepare a particular type of document (proposed rule, rule, or notice) is in one place. For example, to write a proposed rule, refer to "Chapter 1: How do I write a document for the proposed rules category?"

To download this handbook or refer to it on-line, from <http://www.nara.gov/fedreg>, select "Document Drafting Resources," and then "Document Drafting Handbook." Because we distribute this book as PDF (Portable Document Format) files, you need Acrobat Reader, published by Adobe Systems Inc., to read or print it. You can download Acrobat Reader from <http://www.adobe.com>.

To help you comply with the President's Memorandum of June 1, 1998 -- Plain Language in Government Writing, see Part II of the DDH, "Making Regulations Readable." In addition, the National Partnership for Reinventing Government (NPR), Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (Office of Management and Budget), the OFR, and other agencies developed expanded guidance, "Writing User-Friendly Documents," available at <http://www.plainlanguage.gov>.

This edition of the Document Drafting Handbook was prepared by Laurice Clark, Vince Greenwald, Sandra Jablonski, Ernie Sowada, and Barbara Suhre.

It is issued under the Federal Register Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 15) and the rules of the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register (1 CFR chapter I).

B. How do I know what is required versus recommended?

Whenever we present requirements from the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register's regulations in 1 CFR, we use "must" instead of "shall" because "must" imposes a legal obligation. We use "may" instead of "should" to indicate discretion to act. We use "should" to indicate when we strongly recommend that you comply with a procedure that is optional.

C. How Does this October 1998 Revision Differ from the April 1997 Revision?

In this edition, we have expanded our coverage of several topics, and provided more detailed examples of how to format certain types of documents.

We rewrote many sections in plain language, using active voice and personal pronouns, and phrasing titles as questions.

For a complete list of changes, see Appendix D.

D. How Do I Provide Feedback, Comments, and Suggestions?

We want to provide a useful tool for persons who prepare documents for the *Federal Register*. To achieve this goal, we need to know how well this publication meets your needs.

Send comments and suggestions to info@fedreg.nara.gov, or to

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
700 PENNSYLVANIA AVE NW
WASHINGTON DC 20408-0001

E. What is the Federal Register/Code of Federal Regulations publication system?

The Federal Register system is composed of two major publications, the annually revised Code of Federal Regulations and the daily *Federal Register*. Together, the two publications provide a current version of each Federal agency's regulations.

The Code of Federal Regulations. The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) is the foundation of the Federal Register publication system. The CFR is an annual codification of the rules of each Federal agency.

The Federal Register. The daily *Federal Register* (FR) contains four categories of documents: regulations (rules), proposed rules, notices, and Presidential documents. Rules published in the *Federal Register* keep the CFR current. Proposed rules solicit public comment on an agency's rules and encourage public participation in the rulemaking process. Notices provide information of interest to the public.