

Common Correspondence Errors

Type of Error	Correction/Example
Letterhead	Computer-generated letterhead stationery is not authorized for SecDef, DepSecDef, or ExecSec signature items. Letterhead must match the desired signator.
Classification marking	Use 12-point bold font on both top and bottom classification markings; ensure portion markings are shown before the Subject and each paragraph.
Multi-Addressed Memos	Current order for a multi-addressed memo was updated on May 24, 2011; ensure order is correct.
Memo for White House	Memo addressed to Deputy Assistant to the President and Director, White House Military Office should follow guidance for addressing one position (not two different positions).
Subject line	If subject line requires a second line, place the first letter of the word of the second line under the first letter of the word in the first line.
Font	Use 12-point font, Times New Roman.
Margins	Use a 2-inch top margin and 1-inch side and bottom margins.
Spacing	Double space in a memo between Memorandum For and the Subject. Double space in a letter after the State/zipcode and before the salutation.
Spacing for 1 paragraph	Double space between lines in letters of one paragraph when it consists of 8 lines or less.
Comma placement	Include a comma after year: On May 10, 2011, the country...
United States Code citation	Preference by the front office is: title 10, U.S.C., section 1234.
TABs	TAB A is reserved for the signature item, TAB B for incoming correspondence, TAB C for background material, TAB D or last TAB is coordination unless the package requires an acronym listing.
Complimentary close	Use Sincerely for SecDef letters and no complimentary close on DepSecDef letters. When used, align at center of page. There is no complimentary close on memos.
Using enclosure or attachment	Use Enclosure for letters and Attachment for memos when attaching material.
Courtesy copy	Use cc: on a line by itself with the organization on the next line, flushed with the left margin.
Coordinations	The level of coordination must be at the Principal/Deputy Principal level.
Page number	Use a page number on second and subsequent pages. You may either place the number 1-inch from the top of the page at the right margin, with the text continuing a triple space below the page number line or at the bottom center of the page at least a double space below the last line of text and 1-inch from the bottom of the page.
DoD-initiated report	Include a cost summary on the front page of report in accordance with CAPE's established guidance.
Acronym use	Written material more than two pages prepared for the SecDef or DepSecDef will include a comprehensive alphabetized glossary as the last tab of the package.
Hyperlink	Do not use a hyperlink in written correspondence.
Dates	Use civilian format: June 2, 2011.
Dual signatures	If DoD is originating the letter/memo, the DoD signature block begins at the center; otherwise it would be to the left. If DoD is originating letter/memo, get other agency signature first. Print on plain bond paper; no letterhead is used.
Clips	Attach items in a package with a 2-inch paper clip-no staples or clam clips.

References: DoDM 5110-04-M-V1, DoD Manual for Written Material: Correspondence Management
http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/511004m_v1.pdf
 DoDM 5110-04-M-V2, DoD Manual for Written Material: Examples and Reference Material
http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/511004m_v2.pdf

Please contact the Executive Support Branch, 703-693-7965, for additional questions or guidance.