

CHAPTER 7 — NUMERICAL INFORMATION

7.1 NUMERALS VS. WORDS

1. Use numerals for measurements, sizes, and critical or precise quantities.

*Example:*

Correct	Incorrect
a depth of 5 meters	a depth of five meters
at least 10 days	at least ten days
wrapped 1½ turns	wrapped one and one-half turns

2. Use numerals when cross-referencing sections and other parts of the specifications or similar sources.

*Example:*

Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Title 48, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 15

3. Use words for quantities or values equal to or less than ten that do not modify measurements, sizes, or other critical or precise quantities.

*Examples:*

A divided highway has two or more roadways.

Where there are more than five thicknesses...

4. Use numerals for values greater than ten.
5. Use words for numbers at the beginning of a sentence; if a number greater than ten appears at the beginning of a sentence, reorder the sentence if possible.

*Examples:*

Eight hours of labor constitutes a full day of work.

Thirty minutes before installation, begin preparing the material.

*Or:*

Begin preparing the material 30 minutes before installation.

6. When quantity and size are expressed together, always use words for the quantity and numerals for the size.

*Example:*

Prepare ten 150-millimeter by 300-millimeter concrete cylinders...

7. Be consistent. Within the same context, treat similarly all numbers that refer to the same category of things.

*Example:*

Thirty minutes before starting, and again sixty minutes later ...

## 7.2 TIME AND DATE

1. Use the words *noon* and *midnight* to indicate twelve o'clock. Do not use the numeral 12 followed by a word or abbreviation.

*Example:*

**Day** — Each and every day shown on the calendar, beginning and ending at midnight.

2. Use numerals for clock times. Keep zeros when describing times “on the hour.” Use the standard 12-hour system, with all numerals accompanied by the appropriate a.m. or p.m. designation (using lower-case letters, followed by periods); leave a space between the numeral and abbreviation but no spaces inside the abbreviation. Do not use the abbreviation *o'clock*.

*Examples:*

9:00 a.m., 10:30 p.m

3. Use words (written in full) for the names of months and numerals for days of the month and years. Do not use ordinal designators (for example, *th* and *rd*) in dates.

*Examples:*

on June 15

from May 1 to September 30

4. Use numerals with an ordinal designator to specify a fixed number of days from an event or starting point.

*Examples:*

on the 15<sup>th</sup> day following receipt

the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the month

## 7.3 MONEY

Use numerals for monetary amounts. Use commas according to Subsection 7.8. Do not include the decimal and zeros for cents when amounts are in whole dollars; do not leave a space between the dollar sign (\$) and the numeric value.

*Examples:*

The Government's share will not exceed \$5,000.

No progress payment will be made in a month in which the work accomplished results in a net payment of less than \$1,000.

#### 7.4 DECIMALS

- Express decimals in numerals, not words.

*Example:*

Correct	Incorrect
0.1	one-tenth

- A decimal should always have numerals on both sides.

*Example:*

Correct	Incorrect
0.1	.1

- Use decimals, not fractions, in metric expressions.

*Example:*

Correct	Incorrect
8.5 kg	8½ kg

#### 7.5 FRACTIONS

- Use numerals for mixed numbers; do not leave a space between the whole number and fraction.

*Example:*

Over 1 to 1½

Some fractions are available through word processing software. Format other fractions by using the superscript/subscript commands and the fraction slash..

*Examples:*

$\frac{7}{11}$ ,  $\frac{13}{22}$ ,  $\frac{11}{33}$

- Use words for simple fractions that do not describe a measurement or a precise quantity, for fractions that stand alone, and for fractions that come before the words *of a* or *of an*. Connect the numerator and denominator with a hyphen.

*Examples:*

Replace the pile cushion if it is compressed more than one-half of its original thickness or it begins to burn.

Do not remove mortar beyond one-third the diameter of the coarse aggregate.

**7.6 DECIMALS VS. FRACTIONS**

1. Use decimals, not fractions, in metric expressions.
2. Follow industry convention to choose between decimals or fractions in U.S. customary units.

*Example:*

<b>Correct</b>	<b>Incorrect</b>
Leave the cut end at least $\frac{1}{8}$ inch above the base.	Leave the cut end at least 0.125 inch above the base.

**7.7 HYPHENS AND UNIT MODIFIERS**

When a numeral and measurement unit work together to describe something else (usually an object or material, like a pipe, bolt, or board), they are acting as a single word, or adjective, called a *unit modifier*.

*Examples:*

Scarify to a 6-inch depth.

Use a 10-foot metal straight edge...

Use the same structure in more complex unit modifiers (that is, in phrasings with multiple adjectives working together to describe a single object).

*Examples:*

25-millimeter-diameter rod

2-meter-long plank

**7.8 COMMAS VS. SPACES**

In dollar figures, use commas in expressions with four or more digits (that is, amounts greater than \$999).

*Examples:*

\$800; \$1,000; \$10,000; \$2,000,000.

In measurements, use commas in numeric values with five or more digits (that is, quantities greater than 9999).

*Examples:*

temperature of 2000 °F

10,000 pounds per square inch

1000-volt megger