

CHAPTER 8 — CAPITALIZATION AND PUNCTUATION

8.1 CAPITALIZATION

Capitalize the following words or categories of specific names and things:

1. ACRONYMS (see Section 6.1);
2. Titles of documents and forms;

Examples:

Inspector's Daily Record of Construction Operations (Form FHWA 1413)
OSHA Form 300

3. Laws and legislative acts;

Example:

Clean Air Act

4. References to divisions, sections, subsections, tables, and figures in the Standard Specifications;

Examples:

... as provided in Subsection 106.07
... as shown in Tables 401-1 and 703-12

5. Proper nouns; and the
6. Common nouns identified below:
 - Contractor;
 - Government;
 - Contracting Officer or CO; and
 - Division, Section, Subsection (when referring to a numbered portion of the Standard Specifications).

Do not capitalize the following terms unless required by sentence structure or formatting conventions (for example, the first word in a sentence, first item in a list, subsection header):

- contract;
- inspector;
- state;
- agency;
- fabricator; and
- manufacturer.

8.2 PUNCTUATION

Serial Commas

In a series of three or more elements, separate the elements with a comma. Use a comma before the conjunction (*and* or *or*) joining the last two elements of the series.

Examples:

Shoring, bracing, and cofferdams will be evaluated under Subsections 106.02 and 106.04.

This work consists of processing and incorporating lime, lime/fly ash, or hydraulic cement into the upper layer of a subgrade.

Closing Quotation Marks

Place periods and commas required by a sentence *inside* closing quotation marks, regardless of whether the period or comma is part of the quoted matter.

Examples:

Use strands having similar properties, from the same source, and having the same “twist” or “lay.”

Carefully pack and adequately ventilate plants to prevent “sweating.”

The measured torque at a tension “P,” after exceeding the turn test tension required in.....

Letters as Shapes

Type letters used as shapes in regular Times New Roman font. Do not use quotes around the letter. Link the letter and following word with a non-breaking hyphen.

Examples:

H-pile, O-ring, U-bolts, U-shaped staples

Parentheses

Use parentheses to insert and set off additional information relevant to the sentence.

Examples:

Any material misstatement by the surety, overstatement of assets (either as to ownership or value) or understatement of liabilities is cause for rejection of the surety.

A lot containing an unsatisfactory percentage of non-specification material (less than 1.00 pay factor) is accepted provided the lowest single pay factor has not fallen into the reject portion of Table 106-2.

Parentheses can be particularly useful to show related information in long or complicated sentences, or in sentences with many commas or other punctuation.

Example:

Drawings include, but are not limited to, layouts that show the relative position (vertical and horizontal as appropriate) of work to be performed, fabrication details for manufactured items and assemblies, installation and erection procedures...

Place commas, semicolons, periods, or other punctuation that the main sentence might need *after* the closing parenthesis mark. Do not use brackets — [] — or french brackets — { } — in place of parentheses; reserve brackets for mathematical formulas and equations.

Hyphens and Dashes

Although they appear relatively similar, the following are four distinct typographic characters, each with its own uses:

hyphen: - en dash: – em dash: — minus sign: −

Hyphen

The shortest of the four characters is the hyphen, which is produced directly from the keyboard. Use the hyphen to hyphenate two words in a compound adjective or words with a hyphenated prefix. Do not use a hyphen to indicate a numeric range, to connect a measurement symbol with a numeral, or as a minus sign.

Examples:

two-way

pneumatic-tired rollers

12-inch layer

En Dash

Use the en dash in tables to indicate a numeric range (in MSWord select Insert, Symbol, Special Characters).

Em Dash

Use the em dash in section headers, in definitions, and in tables to designate empty cells (in MSWord select Insert, Symbol, Special Characters).

Examples:

Section 101. — TERMS, FORMAT, AND DEFINITIONS

Award — The written acceptance of a bid by the CO.

Minus Sign

Use the minus sign in mathematical formulas and with numerals to show negative values.

Example:

temperature range of from –40 to 74 °C

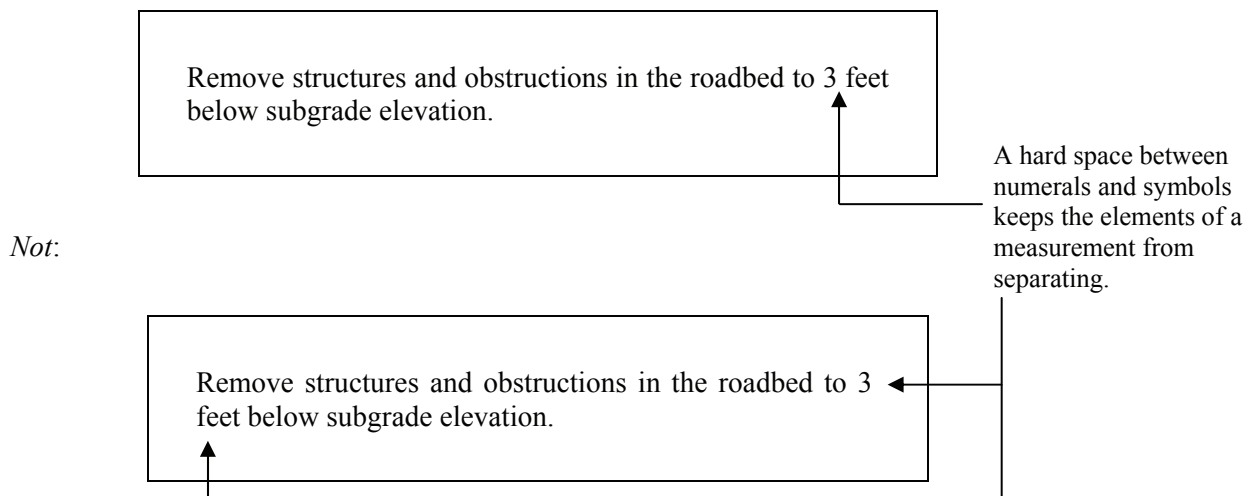
Hard Spaces

Use a nonbreaking (hard) space to hold together parts of a measurement, dimension, or phrase that could cause confusion if allowed to separate at a line break (in MSWord select Insert, Symbol, Special Characters).

Use a hard space:

- between a numeral and an accompanying word (for example, July 4);
- between numerals and units (for example, 5 meters);
- between numerals and the word *percent* (for example, 90 percent)
- between the words *Section* and *Subsection* and an accompanying number (for example, Section 201); and
- between the letter and the number of an ASTM and similar specifications (for example, ASTM C 595).

Example:



8.3 ITALICS

Use italics (characters set in type that slants to the right *like this*) as opposed to roman type in the following circumstances:

1. Use italics to denote certain hierarchal levels in specifications as identified in Table 3-1.
2. Use italics to cite complete titles of books, forms, standards, and similar documents as discussed in Section 4.6. Note that italics do not include punctuation marks (end marks or parentheses, for instance) next to the words being italicized unless those punctuation marks are meant to be considered as part of what is being italicized.
3. Use italics, as opposed to quotation marks, to refer to words that are being talked about.

Example:

Wherever *directed, required, prescribed,* or other similar words are used, the *direction, requirement, or order* of the CO is intended.

4. Use italics to identify mathematical symbols used in equations.

Example:

Calculate the upper quality index (Q_U): $Q_U = \frac{USL - \bar{X}}{s}$

where: USL = upper specification limit

5. Although not a common application of italics in specifications, italics may also be used for emphasis or contrast, that is, to distinguish certain words from others within the text.

Example:

Wherever "*directed,*" "*required,*" "*prescribed,*" or other similar words are used, the "*direction,*" "*requirement,*" or "*order*" of the Contracting Officer is intended. Similarly, wherever "*approved,*" "*acceptable,*" "*suitable,*" "*satisfactory,*" or similar words are used, the words mean "*approved by,*" "*acceptable to,*" or "*satisfactory to*" the Contracting Officer.

