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Please note: In most instances, NWCPHP communications follow the conventions given in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th Edition. When appropriate, exceptions to this practice are noted below.

Abbreviations

In running text, spell out the names of states, territories, and possessions as space permits. (Exception: “DC.”) Where space is limited, use the two-letter postal code. Consistent with this rule, do not abbreviate “United States,” unless space considerations require it. When abbreviated, “United States” becomes “US.” Use “US” when an adjective form is needed: US dollars, US policy.

- Where space is limited, use the following month abbreviations. Where space is not limited, use the full name of the month.

Jan	Apr	Jul	Oct
Feb	May	Aug	Nov
Mar	Jun	Sep	Dec

- Where space is limited, use the following day of the week abbreviations. Where space is not limited, use the full name of the day of the week.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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- To express time of day, use a.m. and p.m.

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Acronyms

- Spell out what the acronym refers to in first reference within article or web page.
- Exception: may use NWCPHP for first reference on web page.
- Avoid the construction “NWCPHP’s”
- Acronym for Public Health - Seattle & King County is PHSKC.

Capitalization

- Capitalize when “State” follows state name (Washington State). Don’t capitalize in other situations (state of Washington, the state).
- eastern Washington, western Washington
- Use title case for titles of website news items.
 - Job titles: we deviate from Chicago as we capitalize job titles before and after a name. (Director, Susan Allan and Susan Allan, Director). We also capitalize “School” when referring to the School of Public Health. Titles of address such as “Mr.” or “Dr.” are not used.
- Don't capitalize the following words in titles. (Exception: first and last words are always capped, no matter what they are, and prepositions that are inseparable parts of a verb are also capped, for example, *turn on*, *find out*.)

<i>Articles</i>	a	an	the				
<i>Coordinate conjunctions</i>	and	but	for	nor	or		
<i>All prepositions</i>							

- Used generically: website, the web, web page, webmaster, but the World Wide Web.
- Internet protocol (IP), the Internet, the net, an intranet

Grammar

- That/which: Use *that* with restrictive clauses (clauses that are necessary to the meaning of the sentence) and *which* with nonrestrictive clauses (clauses that are not necessary to the meaning of the sentence): I have a garden that has a wooden fence. My garden, which has a wooden fence, is full of weeds.
- Limit use of the passive voice.

Hyphenation

- Most words starting with *non* or *pre* are not hyphenated: nonprofit, prequalified.
- mid-1980s, but midcentury
- well-being
- statewide
- coworker, coinvestigator—only hyphenate when same vowel: co-op
- Decision making: two words as a noun; hyphenate as an adjective.
- 911

- Public Health - Seattle & King County

Lists

- List items generally don't end with punctuation, unless one of the items is a complete sentence. In that case, all the items end with periods. If no list item is a complete sentence, even the final item ends without a period. (And generally all the list items start with a capital letter.)

- It is best to introduce a vertical list using a complete grammatical sentence followed by a colon: *Writers submitting articles must also include the following documents:*

Miscellaneous

- Don't use http:// unless the URL is ambiguous without it. For example, when it is in text and there is no www.
- There is/are: Avoid starting sentences with *There is* or *There are*.
- September 11, 2001 or 9/11.

Northwest Center for Public Health Practice

- Do not use "the" as an article for NWCPHP
- Avoid referencing it as "Northwest Center" or "the Center."

Numbers

- Spell out 0–9; use figures for 10 and higher. (Exception: "2-3 days" or equivalent—meant to add clarity to marketing content such as training descriptions.)
- Spell out percent except where space restrictions require the symbol to be used.
- Use commas to separate 1000s in all cases: 1,234 or 12,345 and so on.

Plain Language

Whenever possible, write NWCPHP documents in plain language. This is defined as clear, straightforward expression, using only as many words as are necessary. It is language that avoids obscurity, inflated vocabulary, and convoluted sentence construction. The focus is on making sure the audience easily understands the message.

Avoid clichés, described as "a metaphor characterized by its overuse." Here is a test to see if a phrase is a cliché or not. Read the first half of the sentence, then ask yourself, "Do I know (because everyone knows) how the sentence ends?" If you do, it's probably a cliché.

Punctuation

- Use serial commas (red, white, and blue)
- Use anchored dashes (no space between dash and word) with the exception of Public Health - Seattle & King County

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- Dashes: en dash for number ranges (6–8); em dash between clauses, similar to how a semicolon would be used, or for a “parenthetical” (“All of these are calls to action—reminders of public health triumphs...” and “leaders from Idaho, Oregon, and Washington suggest ways that our nation—and our profession—might better integrate...”)
- No periods after academic degrees, but place a comma between name and academic degree: John Smith, MD, MPH.
- Use periods when URLs end the sentence but make sure that the punctuation is not included when making link.
- Omit slash at end of URL
- Period and comma go inside the quote marks, e.g. “flu season.”
- Single quotation marks are *only* used to signal quotes within quotes.
- From Chicago 5.82 (regarding adjectives): "If a full month-day-year date is used, then a comma is considered necessary both before and after the year (the May 18, 2002, commencement ceremonies). But this construction is awkward, and is best avoided (commencement ceremonies on May 18, 2002). Also, Chicago 6.17: "Whenever a comma is used to set off an element (such as "1928" or "Minnesota" in the two examples below), a second comma is required if the phrase or sentence continues beyond the element being set off." "June 5, 1928, lives on in the memorials of only a handful of us." "Sledding in Duluth, Minnesota, is facilitated by that city's hills and frigid winters."

Reference Style

We use initials (no period) on all authors, abbreviate journal names using Medline abbreviations, capitalize only the first word and proper names, and use the volume, issue, and page numbers. Here are some examples:

Journal Articles

Bartell SM, Neal GE, Eaton DL, Judah DJ, Verma A. The metabolism and toxicity of aflatoxins M1 and B1 in human-derived in vitro systems. *Toxicol Appl Pharmacol* 1998; 151:152-158.

Brodkin CA. Cited in: Schuchman M. Secrecy in science: The flock worker's lung investigation. *Ann Int Med* 1998; 129(4):341-344.

Books and Chapters/Proceedings

Timbury MC. Viral hepatitis. In: *Medical Virology*, 9th ed. New York: Churchill Livingstone, 1991; 125-136.

Baker SR, Wilkinson CF (eds). *The Effect of Pesticides on Human Health*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Scientific Publ. Co., 1990; 438.

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Costa LG, Manzo L (eds). Biomarkers in occupational neurotoxicology. In: Occupational Neurotoxicology. LG Costa, L Manzo, eds. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 1998; 75-100.

Newcombe R. Drug use and drug policy in Merseyside. Proceedings, First Conference of European Cities at the Centre of Illegal Trade in Drugs. Frankfurt, Germany, 1990.

Pamphlets, Monographs, or Books with No Given Author

U.S. Commission on Acquired Immune Deficiency. The Twin Epidemics of HIV and Drug Use. Washington, DC: National Commission on AIDS, 1991.

The Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, DHHS Publication No. (PHS) 88-50210, 1988.

Articles in Press or Accepted for Publication

Follow the appropriate format above, substituting the phrase "in press" for the publication date.

Internet

Author's last name and initials (if known). Full title of the work, capitalizing only the first word and any proper nouns; the title of the complete work or site (if applicable) in italics, again capitalizing only the first word and any proper nouns; date of publication; any version or file numbers, enclosed in parentheses; the path necessary to access the document; the date accessed, enclosed in parentheses.

Burka, LP. A hypertext history of multi-user dimensions. MUD history. 1993.
www.utopia.com/talent/lpb/muddex/essay (Aug. 2, 1996).

Personal Communications and Unpublished Data

This information should not be included in the reference list. Credit the source by including the person's name in the text as a lead-in to the quote or data cited, or place the information in parentheses after the cited material (date and form of communication, person's name and highest academic degree). Confirm all such communications with the sources and obtain permission to be quoted or cited.

Online Presentation

Karlson K. A day in your life with public health. An orientation to Klickitat County Health Department. Klickitat County Health Department, [n.d.].

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<http://www.doh.wa.gov/PHIP/documents/wfd/material/DayinPH.ppt>. [Accessed April 13, 2010.]

Conference Papers

Yip M, Calhoun R, Meischke H, Kwong M, Lam I, Ong BN, Feng S, Tu SP. Exploring the role of community-based organizations in helping limited English proficient populations prepare and respond to emergencies. Poster presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, Nov 7-11, 2009.

Resources

The dictionary of reference is Merriam Webster: www.merriam-webster.com

Clichéd language: www.westegg.com/cliche

Plain English: www.plainlanguage.gov

When working with PHSKC, refer to
www.kingcounty.gov/exec/styleguide/plainwriting.aspx

Chicago Manual of Style: www.chicagomanualofstyle.org

Purdue University Online Writing Lab: www.owl.english.purdue.edu

Dashes: www.alistapart.com/articles/emen

Spelling

- e-mail
- health care (two words)
- nonprofit
- online
- policy maker (two words)
- toward (no final s)
- workforce

Word Usage

- Aged: *women aged 40 and older* (means "of the age") vs. *males between ages 18 and 24*
- Ethnic designations: Prefer "African American" rather than "black," except when used in a context that also refers to white Americans, then use black. (Note that there is no hyphen.)
- Use American Indian/Alaskan Native for the tribal population within the United States.

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- Use the term Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- While: *While* refers to time. Don't use it to mean *but, and, or although*.
- Login: adjective and noun; log in verb.
- “Assurance” is a term of art in public health. Also when used in verb form. Do not replace with another term.
- When referring to people in news items give the full name and credentials. Example: *Susan Allan, MD, JD, MPH*. After this, use *Allan* to refer to her. Titles of address such as “Mr.” or “Dr.” are not used.