

PART C: STYLE GUIDE

Introduction

This part of the handbook primarily addresses style that is specific to administrative rules in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin and Iowa Administrative Code and is not intended as a comprehensive grammar and usage book. If the style guidelines that follow do not answer a question of style or usage, refer to the most recent edition of the [Gregg Reference Manual](#) or direct your question to an editor in the Publications Editing Office.

Additionally, an agency’s rules likely contain exceptions to many of the suggestions in this part of the handbook. However, most new rules can be written in keeping with the suggestions contained in this part of the handbook. Many of the guidelines that follow are based on the *Gregg Reference Manual* and the *LSA Style Guide*.

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Abbreviations

If an abbreviation is used, it should be defined or introduced and then used consistently throughout the remainder of the rule or rule-making document. It may be defined in the “Definitions” portion of the rules (preferred), or it may be defined the first time it appears in each chapter in which it is used.

Example: “EPA” means the Environmental Protection Agency.

or

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

The use of an abbreviation at the beginning of a sentence is discouraged but is at the discretion of the writer. Likewise, the use of an article preceding an abbreviation is within the writer’s discretion but use should be consistent throughout a rule or document.

Example: “EPA” or “the EPA”

An abbreviation may be an initialism (pronounced letter by letter, such as “IRC” for Internal Revenue Code or “FBI” for Federal Bureau of Investigation) or an acronym (pronounced as a word, such as “IPERS”). Whether to use *a* or *an* before an abbreviation depends on the *sound* of the abbreviation when it is pronounced.

- Use the article *a* before all consonant sounds, including *h* in abbreviations like HUD, long *u* as in UFO, and *o* when it sounds like a *w* as in *one*. Example: “a FICA tax increase” or “a CPA”
- Use *an* before all vowel sounds, except long *u*, and before a silent *h*. Example: “an IRC chapter,” “an FBI informant,” and “an IPERS account”

Even though an entity, such as the IRS, may be commonly known by its abbreviation, it is still appropriate to write out the full term with the abbreviation in parentheses.

Example: Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

Do not repeat a word already represented in the abbreviation.

Example: “ATM” (not “ATM machine”)

Following are abbreviations frequently used in rules and rule-making documents:

- CFR (Code of Federal Regulations)
- U.S.C. (United States Code)
- FR (Federal Register)
- IAB (Iowa Administrative Bulletin)
- IAC (Iowa Administrative Code)

Alphabetization

Definitions are listed in alphabetical order in the Iowa Administrative Code. The following two style guidelines apply to alphabetized lists.

Numbers

Numbers precede letters in alphabetized lists.

Example:

“40 CFR Part 78,” or any cited provision therein, shall mean 40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 78, or the cited provision therein, as amended through August 8, 2011.

“Acid rain permit” means the legally binding written document, or portion of such document, issued by the department (following an opportunity for appeal as set forth in 561—Chapter 7, as adopted by reference at 567—Chapter 7), including any permit revisions, specifying the acid rain program requirements applicable to an affected source, to each affected unit at an affected source, and to the owner and operators and the designated representative of the affected source or the affected unit.

In the above example, the defined term “40 CFR Part 78” precedes the defined term “acid rain permit” because numbers precede letters.

Spaces

Alphabetized lists are ordered letter-by-letter, disregarding spaces between words.

Example:

“Educational program” includes all school curricular programs and activities both on and off school grounds.

“Education team” may include the individual, the individual’s parent, administrator, teacher, licensed health personnel, and others involved in the individual’s educational program. The education team may be the team required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 if the child is eligible under either of those statutes.

In the above example, the term “educational program” precedes the term “education team” in the alphabetical list because the “a” following “education” in the phrase “educational program” precedes the “t” following “education” in “education team.”

Bold

In the Iowa Administrative Code and Iowa Administrative Bulletin, bold formatting is used for rule numbers, subrule numbers, and rule catchwords.

Example: **123—4.5(678) Contract administration.**

4.5(1) The department shall prepare a contract for each grant approved by the board.

4.5(2) The contract shall include all terms and conditions of the grant.

If the rule or rule part immediately below the [item statement](#) is not bold, bold formatting is used in the item statement so that the individual items in the rule-making document will stand out.

The word “new” in an item statement is always bold and underscored to indicate that the text that follows the item statement is entirely new and to remove the need for underscoring.

NOTE: Applying bold formatting in a rule-making document is not required. However, for convenience, bold formatting is included in the item statements and sample rule frameworks in the Rule-Drafting Template. If a rule-making document does not include bold formatting, the Publications Editing Office editors will apply the bold formatting during the editing process.

Capitalization

Although proper nouns and titles of officials, programs, and agencies are capitalized in the preamble of a rule-making document, capitalization is used more sparingly in the text of rules.

In the text of rules, capitalize:

- Iowa Administrative Code
- Iowa Administrative Bulletin
- Iowa Code
- Iowa Acts
- Act
- Proper nouns, including the plural form, such as Missouri and Mississippi Rivers or Polk and Dallas Counties. See exceptions below.
- Names of publications
- Addresses
- Federal acts
- House File and Senate File
- Chapter when referring to a specific chapter in the Iowa Administrative Code
- Chapter, Section, and Part when referring to a federal law, rule, or regulation
- Class, Grade, and Form when used with a letter, number or name

In the text of rules, do not capitalize:

- The names of state agencies, programs, or entities
- State or local appointed officials’ titles
- Chapter or section in a reference to the Iowa Code or Iowa Acts (chapter or section also not capitalized in the preamble of rule-making documents)

If a hyphenated term is capitalized, both words of the term should be capitalized.

Example: Eighty-Ninth General Assembly

The words “State of Iowa” or “State” are capitalized in the preamble of a rule-making document if the words are intended to mean Iowa’s state government. The words should be lowercase if they are referring to the state in general. To avoid confusion, it is preferable to use “Iowa” or “this state” when referring to the state in general.

Citations

In General

When citing rules and Iowa Code sections and chapters, a more precise citation is generally better. For example, a reference to “Iowa Code chapter 17A” is more helpful to the reader than a reference to “the Iowa Administrative Procedure Act” (the title of Iowa Code chapter 17A).

However, when citing subsections of the Iowa Code, keep in mind that subsections may be renumbered in the future and would require updating of the citation in the rule.

Rules

In the Iowa Administrative Bulletin (IAB) and Iowa Administrative Code (IAC): See the [Administrative Rule Cross-Reference Guide](#) for citing rules within the IAB and IAC.

In external publications and documents: The Iowa Administration Code and Iowa Administrative Bulletin are typically cited in accordance with Iowa Code section 2B.17.

Examples:

Iowa Administrative Code:

441 IAC 79	(Chapter)
441 IAC 79.1	(Rule)
441 IAC 79.1(1)	(Subrule)
441 IAC 79.1(1)“a”	(Paragraph)
441 IAC 79.1(1)“a”(1)	(Subparagraph)
441 IAC 79.1(1)“a”(1)“1”	(Numbered paragraph)

Iowa Administrative Bulletin, including ARC number:

IAB Vol. XLIV, No. 3 (8/11/21) p. 452, ARC 5823C

Iowa Code

For simplicity and to avoid confusion with Iowa Administrative Code paragraphs, use only the terms “chapter” and “section” in references to the Iowa Code. Avoid the use of the terms “subsection” and “paragraph” in reference to the Iowa Code.

As with lettered paragraphs in Iowa Administrative Code cross-references, the letter of an Iowa Code citation is italicized and enclosed in quotation marks with a comma or period inside the closing quotation mark. (Semicolons go outside the quotation mark.)

Examples: Iowa Code section 17A.2(11)“a.”
Iowa Code section 17A.2(11)“a”;

Iowa Acts

Each regular session of the General Assembly is designated by the year in which it convenes followed by the words “Iowa Acts.”

Example: Laws enacted in the 2021 regular session should be cited as:

2021 Iowa Acts, House File or Senate File or chapter _____, section _____ (inserting the appropriate numbers)

Reference to either a House File or Senate File or to an Iowa Acts chapter is acceptable. A mix of both types of references should be avoided in rules, and citing both together should be avoided except in the preamble if the agency has included a reference to both a House File or Senate File and an Iowa Acts chapter.

If a House File or Senate File cited was enacted during the current year, use the present tense to describe the House or Senate File in the preamble of a rule-making document (e.g., 2019 Iowa Acts, House File 123, creates a new program that...).

See also the section on “Not-Yet-Codified Legislation” below.

NOTE: The Administrative Rules Review Committee asks that at least one Iowa Acts citation in the preamble of a rule-making document refer to the House File or Senate File (not the Iowa Acts chapter) since House File and Senate File numbers are more recognizable to the Committee.

Executive Orders

The citation of an executive order should be written as Executive Order No. ____ (mm/dd/yy).

Federal Laws and Regulations

Federal citations should be in accordance with *A Uniform System of Citation, Thirteenth Edition*, published by The Harvard Law Review Association (also known as the Bluebook). Unless a more specific citation is needed, it is also acceptable to cite a federal law by its popular name, such as “the federal Social Security Act.”

Double-check citations to federal law and citations other than those to the Iowa Code, since it is generally not practical for the Publications Editing Office editors to find these and check their accuracy.

Not-Yet-Codified Legislation

Background:

Before a House File or Senate File is [codified](#) in a volume of the Iowa Acts or the Iowa Code, agencies and editors cite the House File (HF) or Senate File (SF) in the preamble of rule-making documents and in administrative rules because the public can find the referenced information only in the HF or SF.

After the legislative session ends, the HFs and SFs enacted during session are codified as chapters in an Iowa Acts volume and may be cited alternatively as Iowa Acts chapters. In late fall of each year, when alerted that a new Iowa Code containing the codified legislation will soon be published online, agencies and editors may cite the Iowa Code, rather than the HF, SF, or Iowa Acts chapter, and may convert existing HF, SF, and Iowa Acts chapter citations in rule-making documents to Iowa Code citations.

The guidance below describes best practices for handling citations to noncodified legislation. Deviations may be appropriate in some circumstances, such as when rules have numerous citations that may need to be converted later to Iowa Code citations.

Examples of preferred styles for Iowa Acts citations:

- 2020 Iowa Acts, House File 2389, (Note: Add a comma after the House File or Senate File number unless the citation is at the end of a sentence.)
- 2020 Iowa Acts, House File 2389, section 5, (One or more sections of the HF or SF are sometimes specified. The word “section” should be lowercase.)
- 2020 Iowa Acts, chapter 1090, section 5, (The word “chapter” should be lowercase.)

CH. 1090

2

Sec. 5. Section 17A.6, Code 2020, is amended by adding the following new subsection:
NEW SUBSECTION. 3. In lieu of the procedures established in subsection 2, an agency may establish alternative procedures providing for public access to an electronic or printed copy of a publication containing standards adopted by reference if the publication is proprietary or contains proprietary information.

- Citation of a specific section of legislation, such as the one in the example screenshot above:
 - 2020 Iowa Acts, House File 2389 [or chapter 1090], section 5,
 - Iowa Code section 17A.6(3) as enacted by 2020 Iowa Acts, House File 2389 [or chapter 1090], section 5
- Citation of an Iowa Code section that must include a reference to an amendment in legislation to be complete:
 - Iowa Code section 17A.6 as amended by 2020 Iowa Acts, House File 2389 [or chapter 1090] section 5

Converting Acts Citations to Iowa Code Citations

When a new Iowa Code containing the codified legislation is published online, Iowa Acts citations in a rule or amendment may be converted to Iowa Code citations. Iowa Acts citations in the preamble of a rule making may also be converted. If an Iowa Acts citation, especially in the preamble’s Purpose and Summary, helps to explain the reason for the rule making, do not convert it to an Iowa Code citation.

When converting an Iowa Acts citation to an Iowa Code citation:

- Because statutory language is not always codified in the Iowa Code at the exact place indicated in the legislation, agencies may want to check the [Disposition of Acts to Code Table](#) published on the Iowa Legislature website (shown below) to see whether the legislation was codified at the location specified or at a different location in the Iowa Code.

Tables and Indexes

A complete volume document and extracted individual documents are provided below. Please refer to the Preface (page iii) in the volume document for detailed descriptions of the tables and indexes presented.

General Assembly: 88 Session: 2 (01/13/2020 - 01/10/2021) ▼

Document	Description
2021 Iowa Code Tables and Indexes (complete volume)	Compiled volume of tables and indexes published with the 2021 Iowa Code.
Conversion Tables of Senate and House Files — 2021 Iowa Code	Lists Senate and House files and joint resolutions and their corresponding Acts chapter numbers — 2020 regular session.
→ Disposition of Acts to Code Table — 2021 Iowa Code	Shows the disposition in the 2021 Iowa Code of all sections of the 2020 Iowa Acts and prior years' Iowa Acts which had effective dates delayed for publication in the Code.
Code Sections Altered Table — Code 2020 to Code 2021	Lists all Code sections that have been altered from the 2020 Iowa Code to the 2021 Iowa Code which include sections that are new or have been amended, transferred, or repealed.
Corresponding Sections Table — Code 2020 to Code 2021	Traces the movement or documents the elimination of subject matter from the 2020 Iowa Code to the 2021 Iowa Code.
Iowa Constitution Index (2021)	Lists in alphabetical order standardized terms describing subject matters and law concepts and the locations of these subject matters and law concepts in the codified version of the Constitution of the State of Iowa.
General Index — 2021 Iowa Code	Lists in alphabetical order standardized terms describing subject matters and law concepts and the locations of these subject matters and law concepts in the 2021 Iowa Code.
Skeleton Index — 2021 Iowa Code	Lists a small number of broad subject matters and law concepts and the locations of these subject matters and law concepts in the 2021 Iowa Code.

- Agencies may revise the citation to a section of legislation in several ways depending on how the citation is drafted. The list below provides examples of how the following section of legislation may be revised after the legislation has been codified.

CH. 1090

2

Sec. 5. **Section 17A.6, Code 2020, is amended by adding the following new subsection: NEW SUBSECTION. 3.** In lieu of the procedures established in subsection 2, an agency may establish alternative procedures providing for public access to an electronic or printed copy of a publication containing standards adopted by reference if the publication is proprietary or contains proprietary information.

- After the board files the report as required by ~~2020 Iowa Acts, House File 2389, section 5 Iowa Code section 17A.6(3)~~, the board may...
- After the board files the report as required by Iowa Code section 17A.6(3) ~~as enacted by 2020 Iowa Acts, House File 2389, section 5~~, the board may...
- After the board files the report as required by Iowa Code section 17A.6 ~~as amended by 2020 Iowa Acts, House File 2389, section 5~~, the board may...

NOTE: If the Disposition of Acts to Code Table were to indicate that new subsection (3) cited above was codified as subsection (4), the first two examples above would instead read:

- After the board files the report as required by ~~2020 Iowa Acts, House File 2389, section 5 Iowa Code section 17A.6(4)~~, the board may...
- After the board files the report required by Iowa Code section ~~17A.6(3) as enacted by 2020 Iowa Acts, House File 2389, section 5~~ 17A.6(4), the board may...

- In the examples above, the comma after the section number is retained. This is because the comma not only sets off the phrase “section” but also sets off the prepositional phrase beginning with “After.” When converting an Iowa Acts citation, consider whether the comma setting off the reference serves another purpose in the sentence. If it does, retain the comma.
- If the Iowa Acts reference converted to an Iowa Code reference is in a rule or amendment in an Adopted and Filed rule making, treat the change as a [change from the Notice](#) that must be described in the preamble of the rule making. Below are some examples of how the change could be described in the preamble:
 - When the document includes other changes from the Notice:
 - In addition, references to 2018 Iowa Acts, Senate File 481, were replaced with references to the upcoming 2019 Iowa Code.
 - In addition to the change described above, the implementation sentences of rules 441—77.22(249A) and 441—77.26(249A) have been revised to remove references to 2020 Iowa Acts since the amendments in the Acts are codified in the 2021 Iowa Code.
 - Also, references to 2020 Iowa Acts have been replaced with references to the Iowa Code.
 - When the change is the only change from the Notice:
 - One change from the Notice has been made. Since publication of the Notice, 2020 Iowa Acts, House File 426, has been codified. References in the rule making to House File 426 have been removed accordingly.
 - One change from the Notice has been made. A reference to 2020 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2415, has been removed from the implementation sentence of Chapter 26 since the amendments in the Senate File have been codified in the 2021 Iowa Code.
 - When the update is made to Iowa Code citations that include “as amended by [year] Iowa Acts”:
 - References to 2020 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2298, have been removed since the amendments in the Senate File have been codified in the 2021 Iowa Code. No other changes from the Notice have been made.
 - References to 2020 Iowa Acts, House File 529, have been removed because the legislation has been codified in Iowa Code chapter 88.

Dates

In General

Indicate the day of the month using only a number; do not use “th,” “st,” or “nd.”

Use the format FY 20XX or FY 20XX-20XX when referring to a fiscal year.

Spell out all months of the year.

Example: November 1, 2021

Do not use a comma when citing just the month and year.

Example: November 2021

When including a date as part of a sentence, there are two commas in a full specific date: one between the date and the year and one after the year.

Example: The program is in effective from November 1, 2021, through November 1, 2022.

The date in a short-form reference to another rule-making document published in the Bulletin is formatted with slashes and follows the abbreviation “IAB.”

Example: **ARC 5789C**, IAB 9/8/21.

Effective Dates

Use “[effective date of these amendments]” as a placeholder in a Notice of Intended Action for the citation of an effective date in rule. The word “amendment,” “rule” or “rules” may be substituted for “amendments” in the placeholder to fit the context. When the rule making is adopted, substitute the actual effective date for the bracketed placeholder. This substitution is not considered a change from the Notice and does not need to be described in the Preamble.

Hyphenation

Refer to the *Gregg Reference Manual* for a comprehensive guide on hyphenation. In general:

- A prefix such as “non,” “post,” or “anti” is not hyphenated at the beginning of a word.
- A suffix such as “wide,” “like,” or “less” is not hyphenated at the end of a word.
- When a prefix is added to a hyphenated or spaced compound word, a hyphen is used.

Examples: non-interest-bearing loans
ex-attorney general

Italics

Italics are used in the Iowa Administrative Code for the following purposes:

- Catchwords for subrules if all subrules within the rule have catchwords, and catchwords for paragraphs if all paragraphs within the subrule have catchwords.

Example:

701—7.13(17A,421) Expedited hearings and demands to waive informal proceedings. Taxpayers that desire to demand a contested case prior to the conclusion of informal proceedings have two options described in detail below.

7.13(1) Expedited cases. If an appeal is filed that is not of precedential value and the parties desire a prompt resolution of the dispute, the department and the taxpayer may agree to have the case designated as an expedited case. A request for expedited proceedings may be made at any time prior to the commencement of a contested case.

a. Agreement. The department and the taxpayer shall execute an agreement to have the case treated as an expedited case. In this expedited case, discovery is waived.

b. Procedures. Upon execution of the expedited case agreement, the department shall file its answer to the appeal with the clerk within 14 days. Within 30 days of the filing of the answer, the clerk shall transfer the appeal file, including a copy of the agreement for expedited proceedings, to the division of administrative hearings. The case shall be docketed for hearing as promptly as the presiding officer can reasonably hear the matter.

7.13(2) Waiver of informal proceedings. Pursuant to Iowa Code section 421.60(2)“g,” a taxpayer may make a written demand for a contested case proceeding after a period of six months from the filing of a proper appeal. Upon receipt of a timely written demand, the department shall file its answer within 30 days after receipt of the demand. If the department fails to file its answer within this 30-day period, interest shall be applied as described in rule 701—7.14(17A).

- Paragraph lettering in a subrule.

Example: *b.* The date of application.

- A lettered paragraph in quotations in a rule or Iowa Code citation.

Example: 12.3(4)“*b*”

- The first reference to a defined term and the quotation marks surrounding the term in a definition.

Example: “*State-defined payment period*” means one of six payment terms and corresponding deadlines as defined by the commission.

- Some Latin terms, but not for common terms such as *de minimis*, *et al.*, or *et seq.*

NOTE: Applying italics formatting in a rule-making document is not required. However, for convenience, italics formatting is included in the sample rule frameworks in the Rule-Drafting Template. If a rule-making document does not include italics formatting, the Publications Editing Office editors will apply italics where appropriate during the editing process.

Item Statements

Click [here](#) for a comprehensive list of the item statements used in the body of rule-making documents to introduce proposed or adopted amendments or rules. When using the Rule-Drafting Template to draft the rules and amendments for the body of a rule-making document, you can choose the correctly worded and formatted item statements from the template’s dropdown menus rather than having to draft the item statements yourself.

Lists

It is often helpful to list items or requirements in separate paragraphs. Lists should be preceded by introductory language stating the general principle, followed by a colon. Each item or requirement should be followed by a period (preferred for ease of future amending) or a semicolon. If a semicolon is used, the next to last item in the enumeration may be followed by a conjunction.

Examples: This rule does not apply to any of the following entities:

1. Investment companies.

2. Securities brokers and dealers.
3. Insurance companies.
4. Licensed attorneys.

This rule does not apply to:

1. Investment companies;
2. Securities brokers and dealers;
3. Insurance companies; or
4. Licensed attorneys.

Modifiers

Be careful that a phrase cannot be construed to modify something other than what is intended. Confusion can generally be avoided by moving the phrase within the sentence or by making the phrase into a separate sentence.

Misplaced modifiers may result in a sentence having more than one meaning or an ambiguous meaning.

Example: The director shall notify the applicant of the board's decision to deny the request *within 30 days*.

Example with modifier moved for clarity: The director shall, *within 30 days*, notify the applicant of the board's decision to deny the request.

Numbers

Figures or Spelled

Use figures for numbers that have technical significance or need to stand out for quick comprehension, e.g., percentages, money, ratios, clock time, dates, measurement, and numbers in tables and charts.

In all other contexts, spell out numbers from one through ten; use figures for numbers above ten.

If a sentence or paragraph contains related numbers (i.e., numbers of the same category or type) both above *and* below ten, put *all* numbers in figures, including ten and below.

Example: A first-aid kit shall contain 4 small gauze pads, 1 tube of antibacterial cream, 12 small bandages, and 4 large bandages.

For adjacent numbers, such as two numbers that come together to modify a noun, express one number in figures and the other in words.

Example: 6 one-room cells

Numbers in millions or higher may be expressed as a number and word. Examples: 6 million or \$4.5 million.

Numbers at the beginning of a sentence are generally spelled out. It may be preferable to revise the sentence to avoid beginning a sentence with a number.

Examples:

Twelve credit hours of continuing education must be completed by the licensee before the license will be renewed.

A licensee must complete 12 credit hours of continuing education before a license may be renewed.

Telephone Numbers

Telephone numbers are written as (xxx)xxx-xxxx in rules; there is no space after the closing parenthesis that follows the area code. Telephone numbers are automatically formatted as xxx.xxx.xxxx in the autogenerated RMS preambles.

Use of Commas in Numbers

In whole numbers of four digits, a comma after the first digit is preferred but not required. If the four-digit number is part of a column with larger numbers that have commas, the four-digit number should have a comma.

Percentages

For percentages, use figures followed by the word “percent” *unless* the percentage is the first word in the sentence. If the percentage is the first word in the sentence, spell out the word.

Examples: The tax rate is 6 percent.

Six percent disagreed.

Ranges of Numbers—Use of “To,” “Through,” or En Dash

Follow these guidelines for indicating ranges of numbers:

- In new chapters, use “through” to describe a range of numbers, consistent with the preferred style in the Iowa Code.
- For existing references in rule to a range of rule numbers or Iowa Code sections, check the surrounding rules to see which word (“to” or “through”) is used with other ranges and use the same word.
- In the preamble of a rule-making document, an en dash may be used to indicate a range of page numbers or fiscal years.

Examples: Pages 114–117

FY 2021–2022

Parenthetical Implementation

Every rule number has a parenthetical, called the “parenthetical implementation” or “parenthetical implementation statute,” that includes the number of the Iowa Code chapter (not section), legislation, or executive order the rule is intended to implement. The parenthetical implementation is considered part of every rule number and, along with the agency identification number and em dash, should be included in each rule citation.

Example: 701—7.23(17A)

The parenthetical implementation may cite more than one Iowa Code chapter by including all numbers separated by commas, no spaces.

Example: 701—5.7(17A,22,421,422)

If the rule is implementing an executive order, the parenthetical implementation cites the executive order instead of an Iowa Code chapter number.

Example: 817—1.2(ExecOrd48)

If the rule is implementing an Iowa Act that will not be codified, the parenthetical should include a reference to the legislation by the number of the legislative session and Iowa Acts House File, Senate File, or chapter number.

Examples: 261—40.1(83GA,SF2389)

261—107.1(82GA,ch122)

NOTE: If the legislation will eventually be codified in an Iowa Code chapter, the parenthetical implementation should cite the Iowa Code chapter number, not the legislation.

If the rule implements any combination of more than one Iowa Code chapter, Iowa Act, or executive order, the number of each should be included and separated by commas.

Example: 701—14.2(422,423,77GA,ch1130)

It is permissible to list the most relevant Iowa Code chapter number first even though doing so would mean the chapter numbers are not in numerical order.

Example: 701—7.1(421,17A)

Punctuation

Follow these guidelines related to punctuation:

- Do not use a comma before the phrase “as amended...”
- It is best to use a period rather than a semicolon at the end of items in a list.
- In catchwords, if an em dash is used, do not add a space before or after the em dash.
- Set off phrases in rule with commas rather than em dashes.
- If a sentence has internal commas and misreading may occur, use semicolons instead of commas.

Quotations

A direct quotation of no more than a few sentences should be placed between quotation marks, without italics or other special emphasis. Longer direct quotations should be block-indented, without quotation marks and without italics.

When the first letter in a quotation must be changed from uppercase to lowercase, or vice versa, it is not necessary to enclose it in brackets.

Spelling

Consult *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition*, or the [Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary). In most cases, any term used in rule that is also in the Iowa Code or Iowa Acts should be spelled in rule as it is in the Iowa Code or Iowa Acts.

Symbols

Symbols should not be used in rules except in special cases. Some symbols serve as commands for computer programs, and their use within rule text may cause undesired results.

Instead of a section symbol (§), it is preferred to use the word "section." However, if the section symbol must be used, follow these guidelines:

- Avoid introducing a section symbol into rules unless section symbols have already been used elsewhere and relate to a federal law or regulation.
- Do not add a space between the section symbol and the figures that follow it. (However, if existing rules consistently use the space, continue to use the space in the interest of consistency.)
- Do not use consecutive symbols (§§) to denote multiple sections.

Time

Use figures followed by "a.m." or "p.m." (lowercase). If the time does not include minutes, omit ":00."

Example: 10 a.m.

Exception: Write 12:00 p.m. (noon) as "12 noon."

For expressions such as "before," "after," "on or before," or "on or after," ensure that the date cited agrees with the related expression. For example, write "Applications must be received *on or before* [not *before*] July 1, 2022," if the period described is intended to include July 1, 2022.

Example:

261—405.8(15) Applicability after June 30, 2021.

405.8(1) Pursuant to 2021 Iowa Acts, Senate File 619, the authority shall not initiate any new loans under the alternate energy revolving loan program after June 30, 2021.

405.8(2) To the extent allowed by other provisions of law, the rules adopted in this chapter shall continue to apply to agreements entered into on or before June 30, 2021.

Titles of Officials and Agencies

In referring to a state official or agency, use the official title of the person or agency as designated in statute.

Example: Director of Revenue

Include the word "Iowa" in reference to an agency only if "Iowa" is used in the designation of the agency in statute. It is understood that state agencies referred to in administrative rules are Iowa state agencies.

In referring to a federal official or agency, use the official title of the person or agency. For clarity, consider including either “U.S.” or “United States” before the reference.

See also the “Capitalization” section of this part of the handbook for an explanation of whether to capitalize a particular reference.

Unlettered or Unnumbered Paragraphs

Assigning each paragraph in a rule a number or letter makes the rule easier to understand, to cite, and to amend.

However, if a paragraph will not be parallel to other lettered or numbered paragraphs, leave the paragraph unlettered or unnumbered, or revise the hierarchy of the rule or part of a rule.

It is best to avoid adding unnumbered or unlettered paragraphs to the end of a rule or part of a rule if possible. The reader may not understand how a “dangling” paragraph relates to the previous parts of the rule.

Useful Shortcuts in Microsoft Word

- Use ctrl+Alt+- (minus sign on numeric keyboard) to create an em dash (the longer of the two dashes).
- Two hyphens followed by a letter or word will automatically convert to an em dash.
- Use ctrl+- (minus sign on numeric keyboard) for an en dash (the shorter of the two dashes).

Voice

Whenever possible, use the active voice rather than the passive voice.

Example: The executive director *shall appoint* a board to enforce this rule.

Not: A board *shall be appointed* to enforce this rule.

Word Choices and Special Terms

Age

Use “aged,” instead of “age,” in the following construction: a child *aged* 12.

The following constructions may also be used: a 12-year-old child, a child who is 12 years old, or a child who is 12 years of age.

Use “at the age of,” instead of “at age.” Example: An employee may retire at the age of 62.

And/Or

Do not use “and/or” in rules. Instead, determine whether “and” or “or” is correct. If all the items in an enumeration are to be taken together, join the last two items using “and.” If the items are to be taken in the alternative, use “or.” Alternatively, use “or both” or a similar phrase.

In most cases, the word “or” accurately conveys the idea of “one, or the other, or any of them.” The word “and” accurately conveys the idea of “both, or all of them.” If emphasis is needed, the use of

phrases such as “any of the following,” “all of the following,” “either of the following,” and similar modes of expression may be helpful.

Gender-Neutral Language

Gender-based distinctions are rarely appropriate, and gender-neutral language should be used when possible. Pronouns and phrases such as “he or she” are unnecessary, and gender-neutral language should be used instead.

To the extent possible, follow these guidelines to avoid gendered language:

- Repeat the word that would have been the pronoun’s antecedent reference.
Example: A person shall receive an exemption if *the person* (instead of *he*) submits the application.
- Substitute a noun for the pronoun.
Example: If *a party* (instead of *a person, he, or she*) becomes aware of evidence of bias, *the party* (instead of *he or she*) may move for disqualification.
- Omit the pronoun or the phrase that would include the pronoun if the pronoun or phrase is not essential.
Example: The director shall *hold office* (omitting possessive pronoun) until a successor is appointed.
- Use an article such as “a,” “an,” “the,” or “that” instead of the pronoun.
Example: The person shall submit *an* (instead of *his* or *her*) application.
- Rewrite the sentence in other ways to avoid the need for a pronoun.

Click [here](#) for a list of gender-neutral nouns.

General Assembly

When referring to Iowa’s legislative body, “General Assembly” is preferred but “Legislature” is acceptable.

Including But Not Limited To

When using the phrase “including but not limited to” (or similar constructions) any of the following are acceptable:

- One comma: Requirements, including but not limited to . . .
- Two commas: Requirements including, but not limited to, . . .
- No commas: Requirements including but not limited to . . .

There is no need to revise punctuation in existing rules. However, it may be helpful to follow previous precedent to maintain a consistent punctuation style within a rule that already contains this phrase.

For new text, consider using one comma before “including” and omitting the commas around “but not limited to” to align with the preferred practice for the Iowa Code.

Must and May

Use the word “must” to state a requirement (see Iowa Code section 4.1).

Use the word “may” to confer a power (see Iowa Code section 4.1).

Do not use “must not” or “may not” to prohibit an act. Instead, use “shall not” to prohibit an act.

Example: The board of supervisors *shall not* levy a tax unless authorized by state law.

Not: The board of supervisors *may not* levy a tax unless authorized by state law.

Noun Clusters

A noun cluster can create ambiguity about the intended meaning of a term unless the term is defined. Use of a noun cluster may be avoided by using more prepositions.

Example: The board shall award loans for renewable energy systems.

Not: The board shall award renewable energy system loans.

Pronouns

A pronoun should be used only if its antecedent is unmistakable. A pronoun must be singular or plural in accordance with its antecedent. Pronouns must agree with their antecedents.

Do not use the pronoun “their,” which is plural, to refer to a singular antecedent. If necessary to avoid the use of gendered pronouns, repeat the antecedent.

Rules and Regulations

The term “rules” refers to the rules written by administrative agencies in this state. Use the term “rules” to refer to rules in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin and Iowa Administrative Code. Do not use the word “regulations” for this purpose.

The term “regulations” is often used to refer to federal regulations such as those in the Code of Federal Regulations. The word “regulations” is acceptable for this purpose.

Rule Subparts

Rules may be divided into multiple smaller parts, also called “subparts” (see Parts of a Rule document). The subparts of a rule are as follows:

- Rules may be divided into subrules.
- Subrules may be divided into paragraphs.
- Paragraphs may be divided into subparagraphs.
- Subparagraphs may be divided into numbered paragraphs.

Those descriptors should be used to describe the parts of a rule. It is recommended, but not required, that the appropriate term be used to describe a cross-reference in rule.

Examples: Subrule 4.5(6)

Paragraph 4.5(6)“a”

Subparagraph 4.5(6)“a”(7)

Numbered paragraph 4.5(6)“a”(7)“8”

Rule Making, Rule-Making, and Rulemaking

The spelling of “rule making” in the Iowa Administrative Code and Iowa Administrative Bulletin differs from that in the Iowa Code. In the Iowa Code, the term is written as one word (rulemaking) and is defined in Iowa Code section 17A.2.

In rule, including in the preamble of rule-making documents and in use of the Uniform Rules, follow these guidelines for how to spell the term:

- The term is written as two words (rule making) when used as a noun.
- The term is hyphenated (rule-making document) when used as an adjective modifying another noun.

Section

The word “section” should be used in reference to the Iowa Code, but not to rules or the Iowa Administrative Code. For simplicity, the word “section” is used in the Iowa Administrative Code for references to Iowa Code sections, subsections, and paragraphs. See “Rule Subparts” above for terms to be used in rules instead of the word “section.”

Shall and Shall Be

Use “shall” to impose a duty (see Iowa Code section 4.1).

Do not use “shall” to state a rule or a proposition in the future tense.

Example: A violation of this rule *is* a disqualifying offense.

Not: A violation of this rule *shall be* a disqualifying offense.

Use “shall” and “shall not” to require or prohibit an act.

Use “shall not,” rather than “may not,” to state a prohibition.

Singular or Plural

Use the singular form of words whenever possible. Use of words like “person or persons,” “person(s)” or even “persons” is generally unnecessary.

Using the singular form avoids the question of whether the rule applies separately to each member of a class or to the class as a whole. It also avoids the need for shifting between singular and plural words throughout a rule.

Which

Although “which” may be used in a single essential clause in a sentence, using “that” is preferred in most cases.

Example: The agency shall provide shelter *that* (not *which*) is safe and well-maintained.

When there are two parallel essential clauses in a sentence, “which” may be used to introduce both clauses. “That” may also be used in this construction.

Example: “Personally identifiable information” means information *which* identifies the individual and *which* is contained in a record system.

“Which” is always used to introduce a nonessential clause and should be preceded by a comma in this case.

RULE WRITER HANDBOOK

PART C: STYLE GUIDE

Example: Open records are made available during all customary office hours, *which* are from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except legal holidays.

For more information on this topic, see the *Gregg Reference Manual* section 1062.