

# Disaster Public Affairs



# Style Guide



# Disaster Public Affairs Style Guide

## Preface

Correct, consistent punctuation and style contribute to the professionalism of American Red Cross communications. On the other hand, inattention to these details may distort the meaning and may also lead readers to question the care with which a communication was developed.

In general, the Red Cross bases its decisions on editing style on *The Chicago Manual of Style* (The University of Chicago Press) and *Words Into Type* (Prentice-Hall, Inc.). Spelling follows *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*. (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* is good as a desk reference and for checking word division.) In some cases, communicators may base other style decisions on Associated Press or American Medical Association styles. In any case, a consistent pattern of style decisions within a Red Cross publication is essential.

The Red Cross expects all communicators to have full command of the commonly accepted rules of grammar, punctuation and language and to avoid the use of sexist, racist or other forms of insensitive language. The following style points summarize some major rules, including many which are peculiar to the Red Cross.

If you have questions or need specific advice or assistance with Red Cross style, please call Terrence Feheley, manager, Print Publications, Creative Services, at (202) 639-3244; e-mail [feheleyt@usa.redcross.org](mailto:feheleyt@usa.redcross.org).

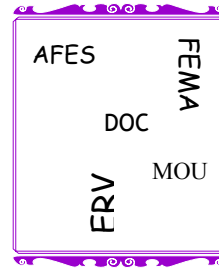
This booklet has been prepared as an aid for disaster communicators in New York State. Comments or suggestions regarding its content should be directed to Charles Zurenko at [Zurenkoc@usa.redcross.org](mailto:Zurenkoc@usa.redcross.org). For additional information or technical support contact your Zone PA Lead. A directory of Zone PA Leads in New York State can be found at the end of this guide.



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## ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

Use the full, proper name of an organization, company, agency, etc. followed by the acronym or abbreviation in parenthesis **ONLY** if you refer to the organization again. If you mention Armed Forces Emergency Services once, for example, you do not need to put (AFES) after the name. Once the name is spelled out in the first occurrence, all future references must use the acronym/abbreviation. Do not switch back and forth between the initials and the full name in subsequent references.



Limit the number of acronyms/abbreviations you use in any one sentence.

*Incorrect:* The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) have joined together to issue Public Service Announcements (PSAs). You might, instead, use a generic term for Public Service Announcement, such as “a promotional campaign” in the first sentence, and then introduce the specific vehicle – the PSA – in the next sentence.

*Correct:* The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) have joined together to produce a promotional campaign. The Public Service Announcements (PSAs) will be distributed to all major networks and their affiliates.

Some organizations and government agencies are now widely recognized by their initials and the full name is not necessary even on the first reference. CIA and FBI are two examples, per AP style.

Use the AP style for state abbreviations. Do NOT use the two-letter Post Office standard unless the address is accompanied by a ZIP code. *See States for complete list of AP state abbreviations.*

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## **ACCEPT vs. EXCEPT**

Accept means to receive, except means to exclude.

## **ADDRESSES**

- Use abbreviations (Ave., Blvd., St.) only with numbered addresses, otherwise spell them out (i.e., He lives on Gatehouse Road. He lives at 8111 Gatehouse Rd.).
- Spell out and capitalize “First” through “Ninth” when used as street names, use the number for 10<sup>th</sup> and above.
- Abbreviate compass points used to indicate directional ends of a street or city quadrant without periods (431 18<sup>th</sup> St. NW).

## **ALTOGETHER vs. ALL TOGETHER**

Altogether means totally or wholly. All together means everybody together or at the same time.

## **AMERICAN RED CROSS**

- Refer to the organization as “the American Red Cross” on first reference, and “the Red Cross” thereafter.
- Do NOT use the acronym “ARC” to represent the organization except in unusual circumstances where space is at a premium, such as in graphs and charts. Use it only as part of a publication number i.e., ARC 30-3038.
- The legal name of the corporation is The American National Red Cross. (Note that the word “The” is capitalized.) Use the legal name only in the copyright line, in legally binding documents and in publications committing the Red Cross to the expenditure of funds.

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- Do NOT use “Red Cross” without the word “the” preceding it, except as a unit modifier (Examples: Red Cross programs or the Red Cross has many programs.
- Avoid using the possessive form of the Red Cross. If you can’t recast the sentence, use “the Red Cross’s” (Preferred: “The mission of the Red Cross” instead of “the Red Cross’s mission.”)

## AMPERSAND ( & )

Use only when part of a company’s formal name (Baltimore & Ohio Railroad). The ampersand should not be substituted for the word “and.”



## a.m. / p.m.

Use a.m. and p.m. as lower case with periods. Do not use uppercase and do not be repetitive with “at 10 a.m. in the morning” or “at 12 noon.”

## APOSTROPHES

The apostrophe indicates possession (“the kit’s contents”) or a contraction (“it’s a file.”) It is not used to form the plural of a noun.

*Correct:* 1990s, ERVs, TVs.

*Incorrect:* 1990’s,

An apostrophe can also indicate that something is left out, as in: He lived in the ‘80s.

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## ASSURE, ENSURE, INSURE

- **Assure** means to give confidence or to reassure.
- **Ensure** means to guarantee or make safe.
- **Insure** means to buy or issue insurance.

## ATTRIBUTION

All quotations must have attribution attached to it. Use only one attribution per quote.

*Correct:*            “This is an excellent opportunity for disaster education,” Lopes said. “The Red Cross is looking forward to working with this community to help them prepare for the next hurricane.”

*Incorrect:*        Rocky Lopes spoke at the meeting. “This is an excellent opportunity for disaster education. The Red Cross is looking forward to working with this community to help them prepare for the next hurricane.” **(No attribution)**

*Incorrect:*        “This is an excellent opportunity for disaster education,” Lopes said. “The Red Cross is looking forward to working with this community to help them prepare for the next hurricane,” he said. **(The second “he said” is incorrect.)**

## BETWEEN vs. AMONG

Between is used when referring to two people or entities (the partnership between the Red Cross and the Southern Baptists). Among refers to three or more people or entities (the Greater Rochester Chapter was selected from among four chapters nominated for the award).

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## **BULLET RULES**

- Capitalize the first word of a bullet;
- Make sure the structure is consistent (start with either a verb or a noun, but all should be the same); and
- End each bullet (unless it is a complete sentence) with a semicolon, except the last bullet, which takes a period.

## **BULLET USE**

Use bullets when you want to:

- Introduce a set of steps or the sections of a document;
- Highlight important components that will help clarify the discussion; or
- Break up dense text.

## **CAPITALIZATION**

These words are not capitalized when they stand alone and are not part of a formal name: agency, chapter, department, federal, government, nation, national, region, regional, state. Even if you are using the word “agency” or “organization” to refer to the Red Cross, it is lower case when standing alone.

Titles are capitalized when used before a name and lower case when used after. *See “Titles” for examples and more information.*

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## **CAPTIONING PHOTOS**

Red Cross captions should be written in present tense and should be as descriptive as possible within two or three sentences. Identifications are necessary when there are three or fewer identifiable individuals.

Captions should also include the city and state where the photo was taken, the date and name of the photographer.

## **CITY/STATE PUNCTUATION**

The correct punctuation for a city/state combination is: The meeting will be held in Chicago, Ill., on Thursday. Note the comma after the state. This is often erroneously omitted.

## **COMMAS**

A comma is used to make the sentence meaning clearer and to help the reader understand relationships within the sentence. Commas are used to divide compound sentences, to set off nonrestrictive phrases, to enclose parenthetical phrases, to set off adverbial clauses at the beginning of a sentence and in many other instances.

Although not a classic rule of grammar, one of the best rules of thumb for positioning a comma is this: If you read your sentence aloud, where do you naturally pause? These pauses are generally good places for commas. *See also Serial Commas.*

## **COURTESY TITLES**

When writing press releases, do not use courtesy titles, including Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Dr. In most instances, an individual's full name is used on a first reference and then the last name is used in subsequent references.

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Other publications may use courtesy titles only when the surname appears alone. Use a married woman's given name with her last name unless she has requested the use of Mrs. and her husband's given name.

*Examples:* Eileen Hughes  
Mrs. George Hughes (if she has requested)

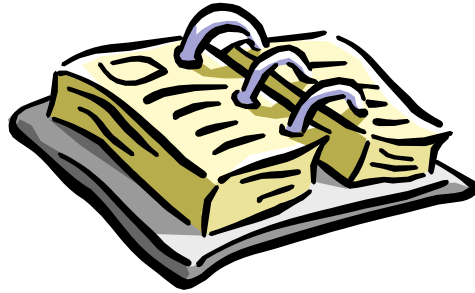
## DATELINES

Datelines on stories should contain a city name, entirely in capital letters, followed in most cases by the state, county or territory where the city is located. Exceptions to the above can be found in the AP Stylebook and include the following cities:

ATLANTA, BALTIMORE, BOSTON, CHICAGO, CINCINNATI, CLEVELAND, DALLAS, DENVER, DETROIT, HONOLULU, HOUSTON, INDIANAPOLIS, LAS VEGAS, LOS ANGELES, MIAMI, MILWAUKEE, MINNEAPOLIS, NEW ORLEANS, NEW YORK, OKLAHOMA CITY, PILADELPHIA, PHOENIX, PITTSBURGH, ST. LOUIS, SALT LAKE CITY, SAN ANTONIO, SAN DIEGO, SAN FRANCISCO, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.

## DATES

Abbreviate the month when used with a specific date, such as: Sept. 11, 2001. Spell out the month when it used alone with a year. There is no comma between the month and year, as in September 2001.



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## DOCTORAL DEGREES

Identify a specific doctoral degree following the name (Deborah Hull, Ph.D.) On subsequent references, use Dr. preceding the surname (Dr. Hull.) Note that courtesy titles are NOT used in news releases. *See Courtesy Titles.*



## DOLLAR FIGURES

Specific dollar figures should use the dollar sign and not the word “dollar.”

*Incorrect:* 12 million dollars

*Correct:* \$12 million

Dollar figures should also be rounded to the nearest whole number unless there is a reason the exact figure is necessary. Figures in the millions should only have two figures to the right of the decimal.

*Incorrect:* The Red Cross spent \$25,823.36

*Correct:* The Red Cross spent \$25,900  
or the Red Cross spent \$26,000

*Incorrect:* The relief operation’s budget was \$345,987,123.00

*Correct:* The relief operation’s budget was \$345.98 million

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## **EFFECT vs. AFFECT**

Both words can be used as either nouns or verbs. These broad definitions show the basic differences in usage:

1. **Effect** (verb) To bring about, cause to happen, accomplish (The meeting effected a compromise between the two parties).
2. **Effect** (noun) A result, influence, or action (The drug had a calming effect on the patient).
3. **Affect** (verb) To have an effect on, to influence, to move or stir the emotions of (The music affected them profoundly).
4. **Affect** (noun) Feeling or emotion, especially as manifested by facial expression or body language: (The soldiers seen on television had been carefully chosen for blandness of affect.)

Usages 2 and 3 are most common; 1 and 4 are used infrequently.

## **e.g. vs. i.e.**

If you want to say “for example,” use e.g., (The colors of the American flag are symbolic, e.g., blue represents loyalty.)

If you want to say “that is,” use i.e., (The colors of the American flag – i.e., red, white, and blue – are symbolic.)

Always place a comma after e.g. and i.e. when used in a sentence.



## **E-MAIL**

The correct usage is e-mail, not E-mail and not email.

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## **FARTHER vs. FURTHER**

Use farther for distance and further to mean additional or continued.

## **FONTS**

From the hundreds of typefaces available, five families have been selected for use in Red Cross communications. Use these families or their equivalents to ensure consistency throughout all materials:

- Futura                      Headlines, captions, ads or posters
- Garamond                Text
- Helvetica                Audiovisual use
- Times New Roman      Text
- Univers                    Forms



## **FOREIGN PHRASES**

Foreign terms, primarily Latin ones that are commonly used in modern English, need not be italicized. Examples include: per se, ad hoc, e.g., i.e., in situ, in vitro, per diem.

## **FUND RAISING vs. FUND-RAISING**

Use fundraiser and fund raising, but hyphenate fund raising when used as a unit modifier.

*Examples:*            The subject of the conference is fund raising.  
                              I am going to a fund-raising conference.  
                              The chapter held a successful fundraiser.

## GRAPHIC STANDARDS

The red cross is one of the most recognized symbols in the world. It is a universal symbol that clearly conveys – without words – that the Red Cross is on the job, helping. Because of the humanitarian work it represents, instant recognition is of prime importance. Therefore, the red cross must be graphically “clean” and unaltered. The information in this guide is designed as a quick reference for communicators in the field. Additional information can be found in Corporate Identification Standards (ARC 4718).

### ➤ Signature

The American Red Cross signature consists of two parts: the symbol and the logotype.



- The symbol of the American Red Cross is a red Greek cross on a white background
- The logotype consists of the words “American Red Cross.”

### ➤ The Symbol

The American Red Cross symbol is the red Greek cross (i.e., a cross formed of five equal squares) on a field of white. The origin of the design is a reversal of the color relationship (white cross on a red ground) found on the national flag of Switzerland, home of the International Red Cross Movement. The flag honors the birth of the Red Cross Movement and is not intended to have any religious connotations.



- The symbol of the American Red Cross is a Greek cross in a specified shade of red on a field of “pure” bright white.
- Off-white, cream, ivory or any other color are not acceptable backgrounds for the red cross.
- Designs should never be used on or within the red cross.

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- The red used for reproducing the cross is called “Red Cross Red.” This can be achieved in two ways, both of which should be understood by your vendor:
  - Specify red ink as shown below.
  - When printing in full “process” color, specify 100 percent (solid) process yellow and 100 percent (solid) process magenta.

In lieu of Red Cross Red, you may use PANTONE® 485, the standard for which is as shown in the current edition of the PANTONE® Color Formula Guide.

The color shown here is not intended to match the PANTONE® Color Standard.

PANTONE® is a registered trademark of Pantone, Inc.

- Red is always the preferred color for the cross, but a solid black cross may be used for:
  - Internal audiences;
  - When the use of both red and black is cost-prohibitive;
  - When format (such as black and white ads and faxes) prohibits its use.
- Under no circumstances should the cross be printed in a screen of black or reversed out of a color background.



**American Red Cross**

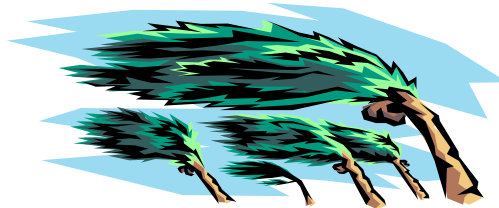
## ➤ The Logotype

The logotype consists of the words “American Red Cross” in the *Alexidenz Grotesk* typeface.

# American Red Cross

- To allow flexibility for a variety of uses, there are two acceptable configurations for the logotype:
  - A single line;
  - Two lines stacked.
- The logotype should never be altered, hand-lettered or modified in any other way. Use the repro sheets and disks in kits instead of trying to recreate the logotype or signature.

## HURRICANE / TROPICAL STORM



When using the official name of a hurricane or tropical storm, the term preceding the name is capitalized.

*Correct:* Hurricane Andrew or Tropical Storm Dean

However, when used alone, without a proper name, hurricane and tropical storm are lowercase. When referring to more than one tropical storm or hurricane, the term preceding the name is also lowercase.

*Correct:* Both hurricanes Fran and Floyd hit North Carolina.

*Correct:* The community was hit by a tropical storm.

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## **HYPHENS**

Hyphens are used to make the text easier to read and understand. Generally speaking, hyphens are not used with adverbs that end in *-ly* (e.g., federally approved landfill, fully accredited university) or with proper nouns (e.g., Virginia Commonwealth laws). Hyphens also are not used with temporary noun compounds formed by a noun and a gerund (e.g., decision making, problem solving).

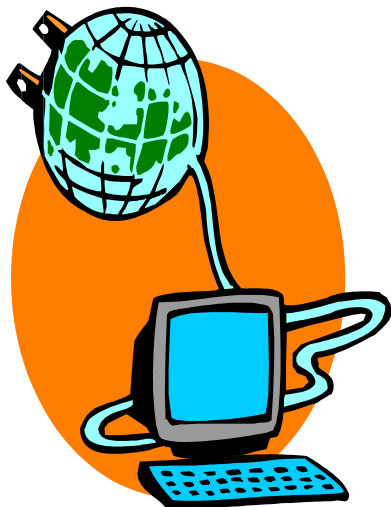
Hyphens are used with compounds beginning with *all*, *self*, *half* or *low*, such as *low-level* contamination, and with the adverbs *will*, *ill*, *better*, *best*, *little*, *lesser*, and *least* placed before the noun, such as in a *well-prepared* document or *better-qualified* candidate. Hyphens also are used with an adjective or noun plus the past participle (*-ed*) or the present participle (*-ing*), in such words as *Red Cross-approved* program or *grass-eating* species.

Remember, though, when used in a sentence where it is not directly modifying the noun, the hyphen is **NOT** used, e.g., the program was *Red Cross approved* or the species was *grass eating*.

Hyphens are also used with a cardinal number plus a unit of measure placed before the noun [e.g., *100-acre* site] and with phrases as adjectives (e.g., *day-to-day* activities, *camera-ready* copy, *user-friendly* system).

Hyphens are **NOT** used with permanent compound words such as *statewide* or *multicolored*. When in doubt, consult a dictionary.

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### INTERNET

Use “Internet” on the first reference. In later references, “the Net” is acceptable.

Internet addresses include e-mail addresses and Web site designations. Follow the spelling and capitalization of the Web site owner. If an Internet address falls at the end of a sentence, use a period. If an address breaks between lines, split it directly before a slash or a dot that is part of the address, without an inserted hyphen.

- The correct usage is: on the Internet, on the Net, or [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).
- Do NOT add `http://`. (*Note that this differs from AP style.*)

### IRREGARDLESS vs. REGARDLESS

Regardless means in spite of or anyway; or as an adverb heedless or unmindful. Irregardless is a word that many mistakenly believe to be correct usage in formal style, when in fact it is used chiefly in nonstandard speech or casual writing. Coined in the United States in the early 20th century, it has met with a blizzard of condemnation for being an improper yoking of *irrespective* and *regardless* and for the logical absurdity of combining the negative *ir-* prefix and *-less* suffix in a single term. Although one might reasonably argue that it is no different from words with redundant affixes like *debone* and *unravel*, it has been considered a blunder for decades and will probably continue to be so.

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## **IRRESPECTIVE vs. RESPECTIVE**

Respective means relating to two or more persons or things regarded individually; particular. Irrespective is an archaic term that should be avoided. It means characterized by disregard; heedless.

## **ITS vs. IT'S**

Remember, “it’s” is a contraction for “it is” and “its” is a possessive meaning something belonging to “it.”

## **ITS vs. THEIRS**

Agencies and states are singular and the possessive “its” should be used rather than “theirs.” You can avoid this by substituting a plural noun, such as “state officials” for the singular noun.

*Incorrect:* The state is trying to ensure their residents are prepared.

*Correct:* The state is trying to ensure its residents are prepared.

*Correct:* State officials are trying to ensure their residents are prepared.

## **“-IZE” WORDS**

Choose less bureaucratic alternatives.

*Examples:* “use” or “employ” for utilize;  
“set priorities” or “rank” for prioritize

Consult a thesaurus for help.

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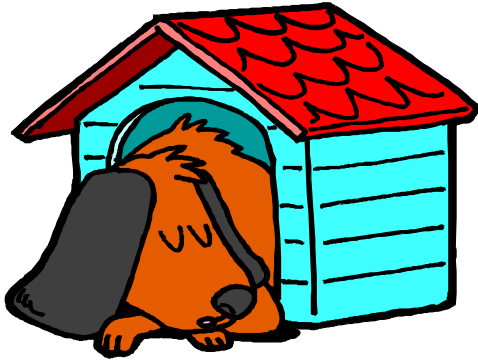
## LAY/LIE

Use lay when referring to something being put down or placed. Its use requires a direct object. Hens lay eggs and librarians lay books on a table. Other tenses for lay are: laid and laying.



Lie means to recline or be in a location. It doesn't need an object. The devastated community lies north of the city. Sleeping dogs lie. Other tenses for lie are: lying, lain, and lay (which creates much confusion).

When in doubt, consult your dictionary.



## MORE THAN vs. OVER

The phrase “more than” is more specific than and preferred to the word “over.” Over implies a physical space rather than a number. Likewise, “fewer than” and “less than” are preferred to “under.” Under implies a physical place rather than a number.

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Avoid using NHQ as an acronym or “national” as a shortened form for national headquarters, which should not normally be capitalized in formal documents. In electronic documents or when space is at a premium, spell out national headquarters in the first reference, then NHQ is acceptable in subsequent references in informal documents.

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## NEWS RELEASES

- News releases should be written in AP style.
- Double space releases and leave 1 ½” margins on each side.
- Build links into your release to the appropriate section on [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) to graphics, pictures and more information.
- For national news releases, "WASHINGTON" is the dateline, not "Washington" or "Washington, D.C."
- Headlines should be **14-Point BOLD CAPS**. Following a full-space return, sub-heads should be in **12-point bold, italicized Title Case**.
- For additional pages: "**AMERICAN RED CROSS - Add One**" at the top of the page.
- Use "**- more -**" and "**- End -**" ... no other variations.

## NUMBERS

Numbers one through nine are words;  
10 and above are numerals.



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## PARALLEL CONSTRUCTION

Words and phrases that do the same kind of work are easier to read if they are similar (parallel) in grammatical construction. Make sure items in a list, especially verbs, have the same structure.

*Incorrect:* Dana is responsible for editing and handles production.

*Correct:* Dana is responsible for editing and handling production.

## PERCENT

Spell out percent. Do NOT use the “%” symbol. Do NOT make it two words.

## PUNCTUATION IN QUOTATIONS

Punctuation goes *inside* quotation marks.

## QUOTATIONS

Quotes generally should sound conversational (not bureaucratic or filled with jargon) and should not be more than four sentences total (Three is ideal, with the first sentence coming before the attribution and the second and third coming after.) If longer than four sentences, the quote should be broken into two quotes or trimmed.

Quotes should not convey general information.

*Incorrect:* “We will be holding a press conference at 3 p.m. tomorrow,” Red Cross spokesperson Darren Irby said.

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Generally, quotes should start their own paragraph and should not be preceded by a lead-in phrase.

*Incorrect:* When asked how he thought families could protect themselves, Bill Daly, disaster director, said, “We believe the best way families can reduce disaster damage is by learning to identify their community’s specific risks.”

*Correct:* “We believe the best way families can reduce disaster damage is by learning to identify their community’s specific risks,” said Bill Daly, disaster director.

Try to avoid “bumping” quotes, in other words, having one quote follow another without an intervening paragraph.

*Example:* “This is an excellent opportunity for disaster education,” American Red Cross President Elizabeth Dole said. Florida’s governor agreed. (**← intervening paragraph**) “We are looking forward to working with the Red Cross now and in the future,” Gov. Jim Smith said. “This is a great partnership.”

### RED CROSS LOGO AND SIGNATURE

The name and emblem of The American National Red Cross are federally protected symbols (Title 18, United States Code, Section 706). Only authorized Red Cross units may display or use these symbols. Use by any other persons, entities, corporations or organizations is not permitted. The use of Red Cross symbols in materials issuing from non-Red Cross units does not constitute authorization. Under the USC, other organizations that were using the words, “Red Cross” or the symbol of a red cross for a lawful purpose on January 5, 1905, are not prohibited from continuing such use. Some of the grandfathered companies include:

Red Cross Shoes, Johnson & Johnson, Red Cross Macaroni, Red Cross Salt, Red Cross Nurse Spray, and Red Cross Toothache Medication.

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Questions concerning the permitted use by other organizations or entities should be referred to the Office of the General Counsel at national headquarters.

Since even the slightest distortions will mar the integrity of the signature configurations, the following design considerations apply whether publishing on the Web or in print.

- **Color:** The cross in the signature should match PMS 485 (100% Magenta, 100% Yellow if 4/C Process). If color is not available the cross may appear in black. The signature with the cross must always appear on a field of white. If a field of white is not available (such as printing on color stock), then the logotype alone must be used.
- **Aspect Ratio:** The American Red Cross signature configurations have been designed with precise width-to-height proportions. Be sure to maintain aspect ratios. When you need to resize an image, constrain its proportions.
- **Element Relationships:** On all signature configurations, the size and placement relationships of the cross, logotype, and other elements specifically designed to "lock up" with each other always remain constant. Do not try to create a lockup or a signature. Use an image from LogoNet that best suits your needs.
- **White Space:** An adequate amount of white space must be preserved around each of the signatures and the various lockups. The measure of white space is equivalent in depth to one of the bars of the cross. Never put the cross on any background other than pure white.

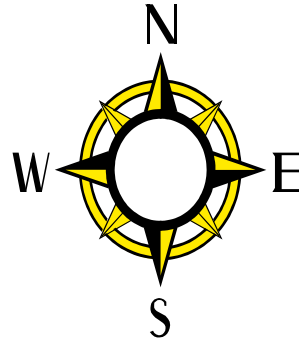
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## REDUNDANT STATEMENTS

Take care to avoid redundant statements such as: absolute necessity, close proximity, end result, plan in advance, follow after, any and all, new innovation, unless and until, few in number, estimated at about, untimely death, pre-plan, etc.

## REGIONAL AREAS

Uppercase the names of recognized regions, such as Northern California or New England. Lowercase when the referenced area does not refer to a recognized region, such as northern Ohio. Always lowercase when using north, south, east or west in a directional context, i.e., He went north when the flooding began.



## SAID

Use “said” in quote attributions. Avoid using stated, announced, reiterated, etc. simply as alternatives to “said.” In nearly all circumstances, “said” works just fine. Do not use “says” in attribution.

## SEMICOLONS

A semicolon indicates a more definitive break in thought than a comma and is used wherever a comma would not be distinctive enough. Semicolons are used to join two clauses that are closely related. The two clauses need not be complete sentences, but many times they are. Semicolons should also be used to separate a list of items that have been punctuated internally with commas.

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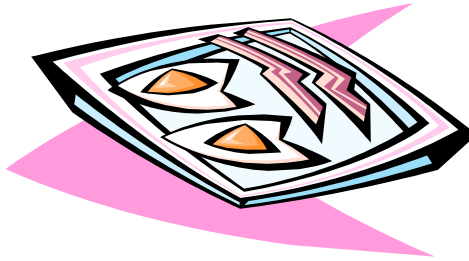
## SERIAL COMMAS

Generally speaking, don't use a comma before the "and" in a simple list of three or more items.

*Example:* Three pioneers of the American Red Cross were Clara Barton, Mabel Boardman and Wilbert E. Longfellow.

The exception to this is when the list is complex.

*Example:* The breakfast choices included coffee and danish, pancakes and syrup, or bacon and eggs.



## SEXIST LANGUAGE

Most sexist language is inadvertent. Be vigilant about avoiding gender stereotyping and other subtle sexist language. Use gender neutral terms such as chair instead of chairman or police officer instead of policeman. Also, avoid making assumptions about gender in professions that are often viewed as traditionally male or female. Nurses are not always women and doctors are not always men. When necessary, avoid the awkwardness of using his/her by making nouns plural.

*Incorrect:* This is a matter between a doctor and his patient.  
This is a matter between a doctor and his/her patient.

*Correct:* This is a matter between doctors and patients.

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## SPACING AFTER PERIODS

There is only ONE space after a period in all circumstances. The double space after the period is NOT correct style.

## STAFF

When referring to volunteers and employees of the Red Cross collectively, use the phrase “employees and volunteers,” and NOT “paid and volunteer staff.” The staff of the Red Cross comprises volunteers and employees alike.



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## STATE ABBREVIATIONS

Use the Associated Press state abbreviations not the Post Office state abbreviations. Note that some states are spelled out.

Alabama	Ala.	Nebraska	Neb.
Alaska		Nevada	Nev.
Arizona	Ariz.	New Hampshire	N.H.
Arkansas	Ark.	New Jersey	N.J.
California	Calif.	New Mexico	N.M.
Colorado	Colo.	New York	N.Y.
Connecticut	Conn.	North Carolina	N.C.
Delaware	Del.	North Dakota	N.D.
Florida	Fla.	Ohio	
Georgia	Ga.	Oklahoma	Okla.
Hawaii		Oregon	Ore.
Idaho		Pennsylvania	Pa.
Illinois	Ill.	Puerto Rico	
Iowa		Rhode Island	R.I.
Indiana	Ind.	South Carolina	S.C.
Kansas	Kan.	South Dakota	S.D.
Kentucky	Ky.	Tennessee	Tenn.
Louisiana	La.	Texas	
Maine		Utah	
Maryland	Md.	Vermont	Vt.
Massachusetts	Mass.	Virginia	Va.
Michigan	Mich.	Washington	Wash.
Minnesota	Minn.	Wash., D.C.	D.C.
Mississippi	Miss.	West Virginia	W.Va.
Missouri	Mo.	Wisconsin	Wis.
Montana	Mont.	Wyoming	Wyo.

Use parentheses when inserting the name of the state with the proper name of a Red Cross chapter.

*Examples:*

- the Nuckolls County (Nebraska) Chapter [proper name]
- the Nuckolls County Red Cross chapter [not proper name]
- the Mile High Chapter (Colorado) [when the chapter name does not represent a political or geographical unit]

# Disaster Public Affairs Style Guide

## TEMBLOR vs. TREMBLOR

Temblor is another name for an earthquake.  
Tremblor is NOT a word.



## TENSES

Make sure they agree, both within a sentence and throughout a document.

## THAT vs. WHICH

Writers tend to overuse “which” and under use “that.” “That” is the defining pronoun, “which” is the nondefining. “Which” phrases are usually set off with commas; they have a more parenthetical feel than “that” phrases.

*Examples:* I’m taking the bike that is in the garage. (defines a particular bike: that one in the garage)

I’m taking the bike, which is in the garage. (adds a fact about the bike)

## TITLES

- Job titles are only capitalized before a person’s name: Chapter Chair Bill Jones. They are lowercase after: Bill Jones, chair of the Cedar County Chapter. Generally speaking, put long titles after the name, not before.
- Titles of newspapers, books and other publications should be set in italics.
- Titles of movies, television shows and plays should be placed in quotation marks.

# Disaster Public Affairs Style Guide

## WEB SITE

Use the AP style regarding Web site. The term is two words, with Web capitalized. Also, the correct usage is World Wide Web, on the Web, or [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).



- Note the exception to AP style when specifying a URL. The Red Cross does not precede the URL with http://.
- Note the capitalization in Web page, Web site and the Web. Lower case when used in webcast or webmaster.

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