



JAY INSLEE
GOVERNOR

Executive & General Correspondence Guidelines

Introduction

Welcome to the Executive and General Correspondence Guidelines. Historically there have been two sets of guidelines. One set was authored by the Executive Assistants Group (EAG) and one by the Office of the Governor (GOV). In an effort to be more streamlined, efficient, and to simplify your work product, the EAG and GOV have collaborated and combined the guidelines.

- **SECTION 1** contains information about correspondence format, addresses and salutations, and mailing and writing tips.
- **SECTION 2** provides references for style, grammar, and usage.

In addition to these guidelines, you can find helpful information in the *Gregg Reference Manual* and the Governor's [Plain Talk](http://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/efficient-government/plain-talk) webpage: <http://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/efficient-government/plain-talk>. We follow the *Gregg Reference Manual*, Tenth Edition. If there is a reference in these guidelines that deviates from *Gregg*, it will be clearly noted.

We hope you will find this document useful. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact the Executive Assistants Group at eag@executiveassistantsgroup.org or Krista Gobeille at krista.gobeille@gov.wa.gov.

Thank you for all of the good work you do for the citizens of the state of Washington.

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SECTION 1

Correspondence Formats and Tips

Letter Format



AGENCY LETTERHEAD

February 7, 2015 **4 Returns**

¶
¶
¶

The Honorable John Doe
U.S. House of Representatives
1234 Wisdom Street
Anytown, DC 99546 **2 Returns**

¶

Re: Anytown **2 Returns**

¶

Dear Congressman Doe: **2 Returns**

¶

Thank you for contacting my office. I appreciate hearing from you. **2 Returns**

¶

Views and comments such as yours frequently give my staff and me valuable insights into the important issues facing people in communities throughout our state. We rely on the calls and letters we receive to help us determine what is working and what isn't, and where we need to concentrate our efforts. **2 Returns**

¶

Again, thank you for contacting me about this matter. We will certainly consider your message, and look forward to hearing from you if you have further questions or comments. **2 Returns**

¶

Sincerely, **4 Returns**

¶

¶

¶

Joe Director (Do not type name in all caps)

Title **2 returns**

¶

Enclosures (2) **2 returns**

¶

cc: Jane Doe, President, DOE Enterprises

- Full-block style (See *Gregg, Tenth Edition, 1302(3)*).
- First page top margin: 2.25 inches.
- Bottom, left, right margins: 1 inch.
- Right margin not justified.
- Single space.
- Font: 12 point.
- For letters to be signed by the Governor, use Times New Roman.
- For letters to be signed by the Governor use two spaces after punctuation.
- The Washington-shaped logo is only used by the Governor's Office correspondence.

- For letters to be signed by the Governor, he prefers:
Very truly yours,
- For signature use:
Jay Inslee
Governor
- A letter to be signed by the Governor should not contain the initials of the person who typed it.

- Enclosure is used for letters.
- Attachment is used for memos.
- In *Gregg*, the *re:* line is below the salutation - we show it above the salutation, which is the common practice.

Continuation Pages

The Honorable John Doe
February 7, 2013 (Make sure date is before the page number)
Page 2 (Page number should be in numeric format) **2 returns**

- Use plain paper (not letterhead).
- Top margin: 1 inch.

(In *Gregg*, the positions of the date and page number are reversed. Our example shows the common practice.)

Memo Format

Depending on the degree of formality, letters and memos may be used interchangeably within Washington State government agencies. Memos should not be sent outside Washington State government agencies.



AGENCY LETTERHEAD

February 7, 2015 **4 Returns**

TO: State Agency Directors **2 Returns**

FROM: Joe Director, Title **2 Returns**

SUBJECT: 2013 Washington State Employee Appreciation **3 Returns**

- First page top margin: 2.25 inches.
- Bottom, left, right margins: 1 inch.
- Right margin not justified.
- Single space.
- Font: 12 point.
- For Governor's correspondence, use Times New Roman.
- For Governor's correspondence use two spaces after punctuation.
- Washington-shaped logo on letterhead is only for Governor's Office correspondence.

Thank you for contacting my office. I appreciate hearing from you. **2 Returns**

Views and comments such as yours frequently give my staff and me valuable insights into the important issues facing people in communities throughout our state. We rely on the calls and letters we receive to help us determine what is working and what isn't, and where we need to concentrate our efforts. **2 Returns**

Again, thank you for contacting me about this matter. We will certainly consider your message, and look forward to hearing from you if you have further questions or comments. **4 Returns**

Attachments (3) **2 Returns**

- Enclosure is used for letters.
- Attachment is used for memos.

cc: Jane Doe

Address/Salutation Formats

Do not abbreviate a person's title – use Chief Executive Officer instead of CEO; Corporal Jack Jones, not CPL Jack Jones, etc.

Envelopes should be printed in the same font as the letter, directly on the envelope.

City

The Honorable John Doe, Mayor
City of Olympia

Dear Mayor Doe:

The Honorable Mary Doe
Olympia City Council

Dear Councilman/woman Doe:

Chief John S. Doe
Olympia Police Department

Dear Chief Doe:

County

The Honorable John Doe
Thurston County Commissioner

Dear Commissioner Doe:

The Honorable John Doe
King County Executive

Dear Executive Doe:

Sheriff Jane Smith
Thurston County Sheriff's Office

Dear Sheriff Smith:

State

The Honorable Suzie Smith
House of Representative

Dear Representative Smith:

The Honorable John Doe
State Senate

Dear Senator Doe:

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Governor of Washington

Dear Governor Inslee:

The Honorable Kim Wyman
Secretary of State

Dear Secretary Wyman:

Federal

The Honorable Patty Murray
U.S. Senate

Dear Senator Murray:

The Honorable John Doe
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Congressman/woman Doe:

Tribal

The Honorable John Doe
Quinault Nation

Dear Chairman/woman Doe:

Tips for Mailing

Envelopes

- Envelopes should be printed in the same font as the letter, directly on the envelope.
- The United States Postal Services provides these guidelines:
 - All capital letters
 - No punctuation
 - At least 10-point type
 - One space between city and state
 - Two spaces between state and ZIP Code
- Consolidated Mail Services provides these guidelines:
 - The individual's name: MR JOHN SMITH
 - The division or work unit: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
 - The department: DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 - The PO Box number: PO BOX 42565
 - The city, state, and ZIP+4: OLYMPIA WA 98504-2565

OR

The individual's name: MR JOHN SMITH
 The division or work unit: ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
 The department: DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 The street address: 123 ANY STREET
 The PO Box number: PO BOX 42565
 The city, state, and ZIP+4: OLYMPIA WA 98504-2565

Do not show a person's title and office on the same line.

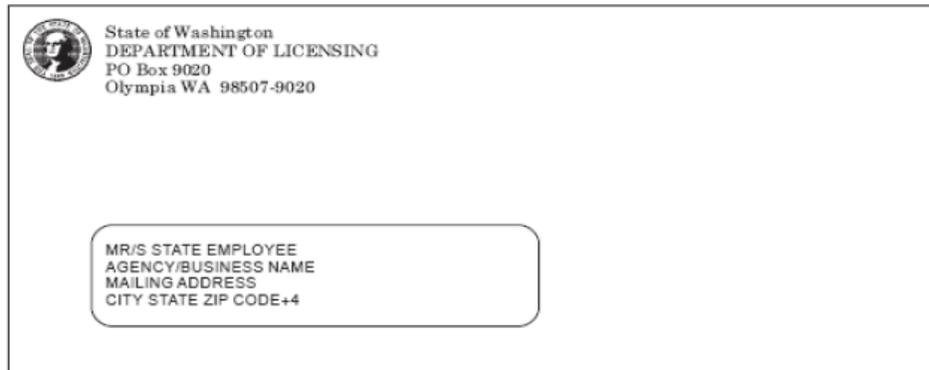
Do	Don't
John Doe Chief of Staff Office of the Governor OR John Doe, Chief of Staff Office of the Governor	John Doe Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor

- For District of Columbia, use DC (USPS, Appendix B).
- In order to determine whether to use No. or the pound sign (#), see *Gregg*, 455 and 1369(g). If using the pound sign there should be one space between the symbol and the number.
618 OHIO AVENUE # 513
- Spell out numbers 1 through 10
177 SECOND AVENUE

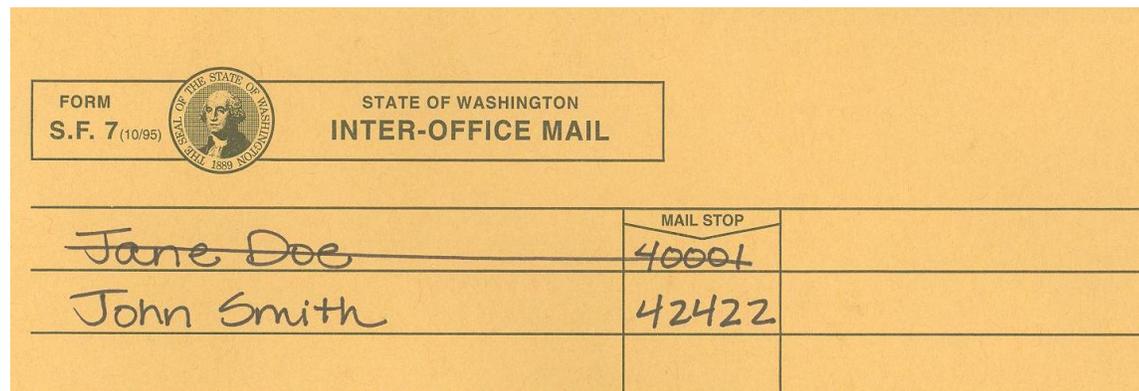
- Use figures for numbers over 10
144 65th STREET
- If an address contains a string of numbers, do not put a dash between them (*Gregg* p. 385; USPS 222):
12345 14th AVENUE

Window Envelopes

Leave a clear space of at least 1/8 inch between the address and all edges of the window of an envelope.



Campus Mail



Foreign Mail

Include the name of the country on all mail sent outside the United States. Separate it from other mail because it will require additional postage. Mark the pink slip as “International” and address the envelope using either of the following formats:

Foreign Country

**MR/S CUSTOMER
123 JONES STREET
BOTUCATU SAO PAULO
BRAZIL**

Canada

**MR/S CUSTOMER
123 JONES STREET
VICTORIA Z4C 286
CANADA**

Courtesy Copy Notations

- Type *cc* at the left margin, followed by a colon. Your word processing program may automatically change it to a *Cc*. Make sure you use two lowercase letters.
- If you are sending a copy to only one person, insert 2 spaces between the colon and the person's name.

cc: John Doe

- If you are sending copies to multiple people, insert a tab after the colon in order to start all the names at the same point.

**cc: John Doe
 Jane Doe**

Followed by name, title, and agency (title isn't always necessary, but the rest are). An example of a correct notation is:

cc: Joby Shimomura, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor

- Courtesy copy notations should be listed in this order:
 - U.S. Senators & Representatives
 - Governors
 - State Senators
 - State Representatives
 - Other Elected Officials
 - Agency Directors (secretaries or commissioners)
 - Private Citizens
 - Governor's Staff
- "In care of" notations should contain a lowercase c, slash, and lowercase o (*Gregg*, 1325). (Word processing programs will incorrectly auto-capitalize the c.)

**Professor James Smith
c/o Mr. Henry Jones**

Tips for Letter-Writing

General Guidelines

- State the purpose of the letter in the first paragraph.
- Double check spelling of names and addresses.
- Be conservative in the use of acronyms.
- Keep letters to one page if at all possible. The Governor prefers Times New Roman 12 font, side and bottom margins of 1 inch, and a top margin of 2.25 inches. However, you can revert to 11.5 font, side margins of .75, a top margin of 2, and a bottom margin of .5 in order to fit a letter on one page.
- Plurals Agreement: Your dedication to children, families, and your community **is** greatly appreciated. Your energy and dedication to your community **are** greatly appreciated.
- Double check subject-verb agreement.
- Redundancies: Do not repeat the same word or phrase several times in the same sentence, paragraph, or letter, if at all possible.

- Use the active voice. Avoid the passive voice.

Active: **I believe . . .**
Passive: **It is believed . . .**

Preparing a Letter for the Governor's Signature

- The Governor prefers certain openings and closings to a letter:

Examples of preferred openings include:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding . . .
 I respectfully request your consideration of . . .
 I support Washington State's application for . . .

Examples of preferred closings include:

Again, thank you for contacting me about . . .
 Thank you for your consideration.

- Avoid the phrases "I feel" and "I think." The Governor prefers "I believe" and "I am confident."
- Watch out for the collective "we." Letters should sound as if the Governor wrote them himself. In general, "I" is preferred. Also, "I understand" should be used when an agency has provided the Governor with certain information or statistics.
- Passive/Weak Voice

PASSIVE: Tomorrow, I will be announcing a revolutionary new program.

PREFERRED: Tomorrow, I will announce a revolutionary new program.

PASSIVE: I am hoping to visit Spokane next week.

PREFERRED: I hope to visit Spokane next week.

WEAK: I wanted to tell you that our meeting has been canceled.

PREFERRED: I regret to inform you that our meeting has been canceled. **OR** Our meeting has been canceled.

WEAK: I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your many valuable contributions.

PREFERRED: I am pleased to have this opportunity to thank you for your many valuable contributions. **OR** Thank you for your many valuable contributions.

- When including a phone or fax number, use parentheses to separate the area code from the phone or fax number. Example: (360) 123-4567. *Gregg* recommends use of hyphens (*Gregg*, 454(c)).

SECTION 2

References

Introduction

This section contains references for common questions regarding style, grammar, and usage. For more references, see:

- *The Gregg Reference Manual*
- *The Bluebook, a Uniform System of Citation*
- Governor's Plain Talk Website: <http://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/efficient-government/plain-talk>

Word Usage

See *Gregg*, Tenth Edition, 1101 for more examples.

Word Usage	Examples
Agencywide is one word, not hyphenated.	
A lot (NOT: alot) Many or much.	Thanks <i>a lot</i> for your help.
Affect-Effect <i>Affect</i> vt. To influence. <i>Effect</i> n. Result; vt. To bring about.	The storm may <i>affect</i> our schedule. It will be months before we can assess the full <i>effect</i> [result] of the new law. It is essential that we <i>effect</i> [bring about] an immediate improvement in sales.
Allot vt. To assign a portion for a particular purpose.	You will have to <i>allot</i> a portion of the budget to cover unforeseen expenses.
a.m./p.m. Always lowercase with periods.	
Assure vt. To inform confidently; to cause to feel sure. <i>Assure, ensure, and insure</i> all mean "to make certain." Only <i>assure</i> is used to refer to a person in the sense of "set the mind at rest."	I want to <i>assure</i> you that nothing will go wrong.
Ensure vt. To make certain.	I want to <i>ensure</i> that nothing can go wrong tomorrow.
Insure vt. To cover with insurance; to make certain or secure.	I want to <i>insure</i> this necklace for \$5,000.
In regards to. Substitute <i>in regard to, with regard to, regarding, or as regards</i>	I am writing <i>in regard to</i> your letter of May 1.
Its-it's. <i>Its</i> is a possessive pronoun. <i>It's</i> stands for "it is" or "it has."	The company must protect <i>its</i> assets. <i>It's</i> time to go to the meeting.
Per-a. <i>Per</i> is often used to mean "by the," as in <i>28 miles per gallon</i> . Whenever possible, substitute <i>a</i> or <i>an</i> ; for example, <i>\$8 an hour</i> .	
Percent is always spelled out as one word.	
Principal-Principle. <i>Principal</i> adj. Foremost in importance; n. One who holds of post of presiding rank; sum of money invested. <i>Principle</i> n. A basic law or rule; Moral or ethical standards	adj. My <i>principal</i> reason for quitting n. The <i>principal</i> of the school; receiving an excellent return on my <i>principal</i> A key <i>principle</i> of economics; a person of <i>principle</i>
Statewide is one word not hyphenated.	
Which-that. <i>Which</i> and <i>that</i> are used when referring to places, objects, and animals. <i>Which</i> is always used to introduce nonessential clauses, and <i>that</i> is ordinarily used to introduce essential clauses.	See <i>Gregg, Tenth Edition, 1062</i>
Who-that. <i>Who</i> and <i>that</i> are used when referring to persons.	See <i>Gregg, Tenth Edition, 1062</i>
Who's-whose. <i>Who's</i> stands for "who is" or "who has." <i>Whose</i> is the possessive form of who.	<i>Who's</i> going to the meeting? <i>Whose</i> notes are these?

Capitalization

Refrain from over-capitalization, especially in instances such as "This program has proved to be extremely valuable." Do not capitalize "program" in that sentence.

- **biennium:** capitalized only when referring to a specific biennium.
2001-03 Biennium
The funds appropriated for this biennium
- **committee, commission, board, department, director:** capitalized only when referring to a specific body already mentioned by its full name.
- **federal:** capitalized only when it is part of the official name of a federal agency.
the Federal Reserve Board
subject to federal, state, and local laws
- **Governor:** always capitalized.
- **Governor's Mansion:** always capitalized.
- **Legislature, 2010 Legislative Session, Congress, Senate, House, House of Representatives:** always capitalized.
- **legislative, legislator, legislation:** not capitalized.
- **senator, representative:** Do not capitalize unless senator and representative precede a name.
- **state: capitalize only when it follows the name of a state.**
Washington State
the state of Washington

Citations

Follow the guidelines set by the *Revised Code of Washington*, *Washington Administrative Code*, and the *Office of Reporter of Decisions*, which prepares the decisions and opinions of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals for publication.

RCW Sections

RCW 1.08.010

RCW 1.08.010(3) -- not "subsection (3) of RCW 1.08.010"

RCW 1.08.010(3)(a)(ii)

RCW 1.08.010(3) and (5)

RCW 1.08.010 and 1.08.015

RCW 1.08.010, 1.08.016, and 1.08.037

RCW 1.08.010 through 1.08.140 for an inclusive string

Americans with Disabilities Act

Under the ADA and the Governor's Executive Order on Implementing the ADA (EO 93-03), public documents must be made available in alternate format, upon request, to people with disabilities to ensure effective communication.

Types of alternate format include Braille, large print, readers, audio tape, and computer disk. When producing a brochure or other publication for distribution, include a statement with directions on who to contact, such as the agency's ADA coordinator, to obtain the information in an alternate format.

Other resources include:

Americans with Disabilities website: www.ada.gov

Washington School for the Blind, Braille Access Center: www.wssb.org

