

Company
Logo

STYLE GUIDE

For Creating Internal Documents

Revision 2

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COMPANY

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Style Guide for Creating Internal Documents

Introduction

Every technical writing document should be crafted with the goal of making it easy for the audience (the reader) to use and follow. Technical writers can focus on the reader by incorporating **clarity**, **conciseness**, and **usefulness** into documents.

When creating a document, the technical writer should be guided by the following questions:

- If someone has not performed this process before, what will they need to know?
- What tools or equipment are needed to accomplish the described process?
- What steps need photos, screenshots, or other images to help prevent confusion?
- Are the described steps clear or could they be improved?
- What changes could be made to increase legibility?

Writing style **consistency** is pivotal, as it helps the reader follow the document without distractions.

Blank Space

Blank space should be used to help the reader be able to quickly absorb material. Avoid leaving large sections of text in a paragraph, as this makes the document hard to read.

- Every detailed process should have at least 1.5 blank lines in-between each line.
- Every photo or image should have at least 1.5 blank lines above, and the same distance between the caption and the next sentence.
- Leaving blank space not only increases **legibility** but allows for areas where the user can add hand-written notes (when necessary).

Capitalization

Capitalization should mostly follow grammar rules. Some examples of exceptions (are capitalized):

- Equipment parts with a capitalized label displayed on the part.
- Reference to another area of the document, such as “Figure”, “Section”, or “Step”.

Figure or Table Numbers with Captions

Figure or table numbers with captions should be bold and have a font size of 10 – 12.

Font Color

Use black ink, unless there is a specific reason to use another color – like to create a connection between two items. Keep in mind that some ink colors may not transfer well to print, or some readers may not be able to distinguish between certain colors.

Font Size Range

Font size range 10 – 16 is best, although size 10 may be too small for some readers.

Font Type

Font type should be easily legible. Typically, sans serif fonts (typefaces with vertical, not slanted) letters are best for readability. Examples:

- Arial
- Calibri
- Times New Roman

Images with Added Shapes

Images with added shapes (arrows, circles, rectangles, etc.) should have contrasting color, for better visibility.

Sectional Headings

Sectional headings should be added to documents that have 10+ pages. Microsoft Word's headings should be modified for each level, as shown in the following table.

Heading	Size	Description
1	16	Main Topic: <u>Bold and Underlined</u>
2	14	Section Topic: Bold
3	14	Subsection Topic: <i>Bold and Italicized</i>

Table 1. Heading sizes for various topics.

These headings help the reader quickly locate specific information. They also help when creating a Table of Contents for the document.

Steps

Steps should be kept brief but clear, and directly under relevant headings. Each new section of the procedure should start with step number 1.

The first action in a step should be made **bold**, to help draw the reader's attention.

Images or figures connected to a step should be placed immediately after the step.

Steps should explain expected results, as well as what will happen if cautions are not heeded.

Bulleted lists may be used to show which further steps to take - for example:

1. **Action.** Expected results.

- If condition _____ occurs, perform _____ action. Or,
- If (different) condition _____ occurs, perform _____ (different) action.

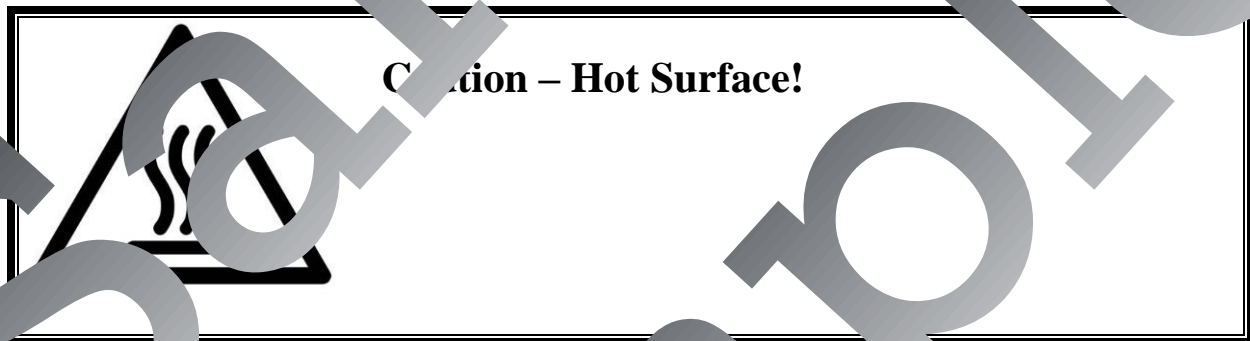
Warning Labels

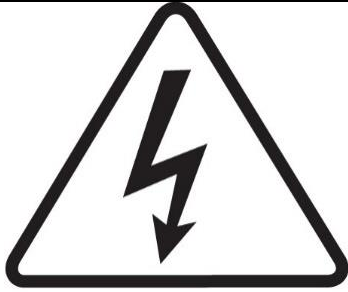
Warning labels should include icons with descriptions, and used to emphasize hazard information. These labels should be in boxes placed just before the procedure step which requires caution, or at the beginning of the document.

The warning label boxes can be created in MS Word with the table feature, with the border (under "Borders and Shading") changed to a thicker line style. The left column should have the warning symbol, while the right column has the description.

Words in the warning label description – such as "Caution", "Danger", or "Warning" – may be highlighted or have the ink changed to red, in order to draw more attention. Keep the description sentences concise but clear, and limit the number of sentences to five or less (if possible).

The following are examples of warning labels.





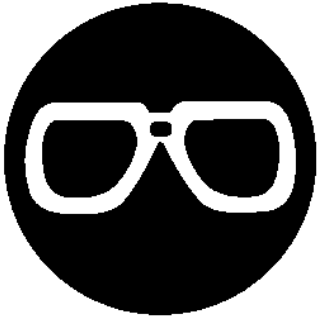
Caution – Risk of Electrical Shock!



Caution – Unplug Equipment Before Continuing!



**Electrical Hazard
Lock-out / Tag-Out Before Service**



Caution – Eye Protection Required.
Specify impact resistant or chemical resistant type.



Caution – Gloves Required!
Specify Latex, Viton, or heat-resistant type.



Caution – Mask Required.
Specify particulate or air-purifying respirator type.



Caution – Lab Coat Required!



Caution – Closed-Toe and Slip-Resistant Shoes Required!



Important Note about Specific Tool.