

**ESTA's Brief Manual of Style**

**for**

**Drafting Standards**

# 1 Scope

This brief manual of style is designed to help working group members prepare documents intended to become American National Standards. This brief manual of style contains a subset of the most important requirements that were explained in a 76-page book once published by ANSI, the *Style manual for preparation of proposed American National Standards*. ANSI no longer requires adherence to such a detailed style manual, and now offers fewer recommendations in a two-page *ANSI Style Guide-sheet – 2003*, which can be found on the ANSI website in one of the ANSI Public Document Library folders.

This brief manual of style can be used as a template for writing standards that conform to it. Simply replace the text with the appropriate text for the standard, and change the clause and subclause headings as appropriate.

This document is not a consensus document. It is the work of the Technical Standards Manager and is his attempt to offer guidance to working group members in the writing of standards.

# 2 Software and file formats

## 2.1 Word-processing software

Microsoft Word and OpenOffice Writer are the preferred word-processing programs for creating standards documents. Avoid using special features such as automated fields other than tables of contents, as these may lead to unexpected results, such as a "creation date" that is later than the final acceptance of the standard.

It is important to remember that the final page-layout of a standard is done by staff in the ESTA office. Task groups and working groups should concentrate on making sure that documents are accurate and easy to understand, and spend as little effort as possible on page layout.

## 2.2 Non-ASCII characters

Non-ASCII characters do not translate reliably across platforms, and should be avoided if possible. For example, "50-ohm cable" will read properly with any word-processing or page-layout program on any CP/M, DOS, Windows, or Mac machine, but "50  cable" will not. Some use of non-ASCII characters is unavoidable, but minimizing their use will minimize the chance of errors appearing in the final document.

## 2.3 Graphics

Images may be embedded in the text, but also should be kept as separate files. Computer graphics files are preferred, but camera ready art printed at 300DPI or better is acceptable. JPEG, GIF, and BMP files work well, as do EPS and TIFF files. DXF files are very difficult to incorporate into printed documents. DXF files have to be converted to another graphic file format, and are not recommended

Please contact the ESTA office if you need to use other graphic file formats and have questions about compatibility.

## 2.4 Embedded spreadsheets

DON'T EMBED SPREADSHEETS!

If you need a table in a document, put in a table. Excel and Calc spreadsheets are crude ways to make tables, they are extremely difficult to position and make fit on the page, and they make for immensely bloated document files.

# 3 Content

## 3.1 Summary of a standard's elements

The following elements shall be included in the final drafts of proposed American National Standards:

– cover;

– title page;

– abstract (optional);

– copyright page;

– table of contents;

– foreword and committee list;

– main text, including:

– introduction (optional);

– scope, purpose, and application;

– normative references;

– definitions (optional);

– requirements;

– tables, if any;

– figures, if any;

– annexes (normative and informative), if any;

– index, if applicable.

## 3.2 Notes on specific elements

### 3.2.1 Title page

The title page shows the standard's alphanumeric designation, title, accredited standards developer (ESTA), and approval date. Note that the alphanumeric designation does not have "ANSI" as a prefix until the document is finally approved by ANSI. If it's a draft American National Standard, the prefix meaning "This is a draft" is "BSR."

Titles should have one, two, or three tiers. The first tier is the name of the general field of interest, and should correspond to an index listing (if any) used in the most recent *Catalog of American National Standards*. The second tier gives the specific project or subject. The third tier defines the specific information covered. An example of a three tiered title might be: "American National Standard for Entertainment Rigging Systems — Wire Rope Ladders — Safety Requirements for Construction and Use." Em-dashes are used to separate the parts of the title, and on draft documents can indicated by simply typing two hyphens (--).

### 3.2.2 Main text

#### 3.2.2.1 No requirements in informative or defining clauses

There shall be no requirements in the foreword, introduction, scope, terms and definitions, informative annexes, notes, examples, footnotes to text, notes to figures, and notes to tables.

#### 3.2.2.2 Clauses and subclauses

Clauses shall be numbered with Arabic numerals and shall not be followed by a period. Subclauses are numbered by adding a period and a sequential number to the clause number. If a clause or subclause is subdivided, there should be no fewer than two subdivisions, and there should be no more than five levels of subdivision total. For example, "3.2.3.1.1.1," six numbers, would be the maximum depth of subdivision allowed. If further subdivision is needed, the standard should be reorganized.

It is recommended that you use a style sheet for formating the clauses and subclauses. This document is done using a style sheet. The heading for this clause, for example, is formatted as "Heading 4." That style has as part of its attributes the font, keep with next paragraph, and outline level 4. The use of headings with outline level attributes makes it possible to generate a bookmarked PDF easily, to automatically generate a table of contents, and to see the structure of the document by viewing the "Document Map" or "Navigator." The main text for this document is simply in the "Normal" style. That style for this document sets the default font as 10-point Arial, and turns on widow/orphan control for the paragraphs.

#### 3.2.2.3 Running heads

Running heads are repeated elements on each page. American National Standards have the standard designation in the running head of each page (i.e. ANSI E1.305-1997). ESTA's *Policies and Procedures* requires that each page of a document going for first public review be marked "draft." The running head is a good place for this notice.

#### 3.2.2.4 Definitions

Each definition should be treated as a subclause with the term being defined serving as the title of the subclause. Unlike other subclause titles, however, the terms do not float above the text, but run into the text of the definition, and are separated by a colon. The terms are not capitalized unless they contain a proper name. Both the term and the colon on American National Standards are set in boldface. Terms should be arranged in alphabetical or some other logical order. For example:

**3.2.2.4.1 go:** The command given by a stage manager to initiate the execution of a  
cue.

**3.2.2.4.2 gobo:**  A metal or glass pattern inserted in the gate of an ellipsoidal reflector   
spotlight. Also called a "template."

#### 3.2.2.5 Figures and tables

Figures and tables should be numbered consecutively in order of their reference in the text. The words "figure" and "table" should be lower case in the text.

### 3.2.3 Annexes

Annexes in American National Standards are identified by letters and a heading. For example:

Annex A

(normative)

Procedure for labeling color filters

Annex B

(informative)

Method of washing gel

Clauses and subclauses in annexes should be numbered as described in 3.2.3.1, but the clause or subclause number is prefaced with the letter of the annex and a period (e.g. B.3.1 Selection of soap). When annexes are referred to in the text, the word "annex" is lower case.

# 4 General Content and Style

## 4.1 Units and numbers

### 4.1.1 Metric

Units of the International System of Units (SI) are the preferred units of measurement in American National Standards, and are the principal units used in standards drafted in ESTA's Technical Standards Program. Customary units, such as units in the inch/pound system (often called the "English system," but now only used widely in the United States), may be used when necessary. When customary units must be used, the SI equivalent shall also be given. IEEE/ASTM SI 10-1997 offers guidance on using SI units and converting from customary measures to SI.

### 4.1.2 Letter symbols as units

Letter symbols are preferred to abbreviations for expressing the units measured. For example, "20 A" is preferred to "20 amp." Note the space between the symbol and the number of units.

### 4.1.3 Numbers

Large numbers should be divided into groups of three by non-breaking spaces, not commas. Six-hundred thousand, one-hundred twenty-five should be written "600 125" rather than "600,125."

Numbers less than one should be preceded with a zero (e.g., 0.15, not .15).

## 4.2 Word usage

### 4.2.1 "Shall" and "should"

"Shall" denotes a mandatory requirement. "Should" denotes a recommendation.

### 4.2.2 "That" and "which"

"That" is a defining pronoun; "which" is non-defining. "The ladder that is broken is in the truck," suggests that there might be many ladders, but the broken one is in the truck. Its being broken is what makes it special, the ladder distinguished from all possible ladders and the one that this sentence is about. "The ladder, which is broken, is in the truck," says the ladder is in the truck, and it happens to be broken. Its being broken is not a fact that distinguishes it from other ladders. This detail about the condition of the ladder could be ignored and the gist of the sentence would be the same. Note that commas are used to set off the non-defining phrase from the rest of the sentence.

### 4.2.3 "Use" and "utilize"

"Use" is preferred to "utilize." "Utilize" has the same meaning as "use," but it is more difficult to read and understand.

### 4.2.4 "And/or"

The term "and/or" should be avoided. "Corner blocks shall be secured with clout nails or screws, or a combination of both," is preferred to "Corner blocks shall be secured with clout nails and/or screws."

### 4.2.5 "Competent" and "qualified" persons

The following definitions for "competent person" and "qualified person" have been adopted by the Rigging Working Group on 10 July 1998 as standard definitions to be used in its documents. They are useful models that can be adapted as needed by other groups.

**Competent person:** a person who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the workplace, and who is authorized to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate hazards.

**Qualified person:** a person who by possession of a recognized degree or certificate of professional standing, or who by extensive knowledge, training, and experience, has successfully demonstrated the ability to solve or resolve problems relating to the subject matter and work.

## 4.3 Boldface, italics, and quotation marks

### 4.3.1 Boldface

Boldface is used in American National Standards in the following cases only:

– titles of clauses and subclauses;

– titles of figures and tables;

– certain mathematical symbols (vectors) or command words in algorithms (usually in computer language standards);

– introductory terms such as "**DANGER –**" and "**WARNING –**" used in cautionary statements.

Boldface is not to be used for emphasis in American National Standards.

### 4.3.2 Italics

Italics are used in American National Standards in the following cases only:

– variables (i.e., *n* bits, *n-1* bits);

– headings in lists, when needed;

– titles of standards, books, and journals;

– italics may be used sparingly to emphasize an extremely important requirement or safeguard.

### 4.3.3 Quotation marks

Quotation marks should not be used for emphasis or to indicate that words have special meanings. If the meaning of a word might be misunderstood, it is better to use a different word or to rewrite the sentence.

**4.4 Citations**

### 4.4.1 American National Standards

American National Standards are referenced by the alphanumeric designation, including the year and the title.

### 4.4.2 Other standards

The full title of the document, its designation, and the date of issue should be listed. The name and address of the organization issuing the standard should be provided in a footnote. The date of issue is important to avoid ambiguity and is absolutely essential if specific clauses are cited in the standard.

### 4.4.3 Articles in journals

References to journal articles should give the following information in order:

– last name of author, followed by first name and middle name or initials;

– title of the article;

– title of the journal in full (no abbreviations);

– volume number;

– issue number;

– first and last pages of the article;

– date of publication.

An example would be: Dunlap, Connie R. Cataloging in Publication. *Library Journal* 99(18): 2573-2578; 1974 October 15. As an alternative, the date can follow the title of the journal.

### 4.4.4 Books

References to books should give the following information in order:

– last name of author, followed by first name and middle name or initials;

– title of book;

– city of publication;

– publisher;

– year of publication;

– number of pages (optional).

An example would be: Heilbrun, James. *Urban Economics and Public Policy*. New York: St. Martin's Press; 1974. 380 p.

# 5 General references

The following references are recommended as guides for editorial style and word usage:

*The Chicago Manual of Style*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language (Unabridged)*. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

Strunk Jr., William and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*, third edition. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company; 1979. 92 p.