



U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Passenger Systems Program Directorate

PSPD

Documentation

Style Guide

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PSPD Documentation Style Guide

1. Introduction

This document contains the preferred style and terminology guidance for use with documents prepared for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Office of Information Technology's (OIT) Passenger Systems Program Directorate (PSPD).

- Section 1 provides documentation formatting guidelines.
- Section 3 focuses on topics related to style and use.
- Section 4 presents an evolving word list, showing the preferred spelling, use, and capitalization conventions for words commonly used in PSPD documents.

Unless otherwise noted, instructions in this document apply to print content. Special instructions for web content are noted where applicable.

1.1 Purpose

The *PSPD Documentation Style Guide* provides consistent documentation guidelines for:

- All PSPD staff responsible for managing changes to PSPD projects and documentation
- PSPD Technical Integration Division (TID) Process Management Team (PMT) staff responsible for the creation and maintenance of program directorate documentation

1.2 References

This document is based on guidelines contained in the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS), Sixteenth Edition, August 2010. For further direction, consult the CMS for items not covered in this document.

2. Overview of Document Format

2.1 Cover Page

The cover page includes the DHS seal and PSPD logo in the top-left corner. The document title appears under the seal (Arial Black, 36 pt, bold). In the bottom-right corner, include the date of the last update (Arial Black, 26 pt), and the document number (Arial Black, 18 pt.). Both the date and the document number are bookmarked for use in the document header. Include *For Official Use Only* footer on the cover page (without page number or *OIT-PSPD*). The cover page of this document serves as an example of a PSPD document cover page.

2.2 Headings, Headers and Footers

Table 1. Heading Styles

Heading Level	Style
Heading 1	Arial Black 16 pt., Tab .75, 12 pt. above, 12 pt. below
Heading 2	Arial Black 14 pt., Tab .75, 6 pt. above, 6 pt. below
Heading 3	Arial Black 12 pt., Tab .75, 6 pt. above, 6 pt. below
Heading 4	Arial 12 pt., bold, Tab .75, 6 pt. above, 6 pt. below

If the entire document is longer than 10 pages, new chapters or sections begin on a new page.

2.2.1 Header/Footer

Page headers contain the following:

- Document short name on the left
- Shortened version of the document name in the center (tab 3.25)
- Publication date on the right (tab 3.25) in the following format: January 1, 2016

Footers contain the following:

- *OIT-PSPD* aligned with the left margin
- *Official Use Only* in the center
- Page number aligned with the right margin

Header and footer tabs are set at 3.25" and 6.5" for portrait, and 5" and 9" for landscape.

Header and footer font type is Times New Roman. Font size for header and footer is 10 pt. Italic.

2.2.2 Body Text

Body text is Times New Roman. Font size is 12 pt. Serif fonts such as Times New Roman allow for maximum readability in printed documentation.

For web content, use a sans serif font such as **Arial** or **Verdana**; Verdana is designed for web-based media.

3. Style

3.1.1 Abbreviations and Acronyms

This style guide considers the terms *abbreviations* and *acronyms* interchangeably. Throughout this document the term *abbreviations* is used. Abbreviations are a form of shorthand used in technical and business writing to avoid cumbersome repetition of long terms and phrases. They are particularly useful in lists, tables, charts, graphs, and text.

Always spell out the substituted term by an abbreviation when it first occurs in the main body of the document. If the term will be used again in the main body of the document, include the abbreviation within parentheses next to the first occurrence of the term. For example:

- The Passenger Systems Program Directorate (PSPD) will direct the efforts of the Technical Integration Division (TID). The TID Process Management Team (PMT) Lead will in turn direct the project documentation efforts of the PMT technical writers.

However, if the term is only used once in the main body of the document, do not introduce the abbreviation.

After spelling out the abbreviation once, continue to use the abbreviation. Do not spell out the term again unless:

- It is part of a title (including headings, figure captions, and table titles).
- It appears in a graphic.
- It appears in text copied verbatim from another source. (Do not edit quoted or copied materials.)

Form the plural of an abbreviation with an *s*. Do not use an apostrophe to form the plural.

Correct	Incorrect
IDs	ID's

Use correct capitalization when spelling out an abbreviation. As a rule, all abbreviations are spelled out using initial caps for consistency. There are, however, some exceptions to this rule. For example:

- Database Management System (DBMS)
- Department of State (DoS)

There are instances where a term is lower case but the abbreviation is capitalized. For example:

- port of entry (POE)
- date of birth (DOB)
- local area network (LAN)

3.1.2 Active/Passive Voice

Avoid using passive voice. Wording should be concise and to the point. For editing purposes, we suggest adjusting your Word document settings to highlight passive voice. Instructions for how to change the settings are included in Appendix A.

Correct	Incorrect
The Engineering Architecture Review Board (EARB) modified the plan.	Modifications were made to the plan by the Engineering Architecture Review Board (EARB).

3.1.3 Capitalization

Capitalize the following:

- A common noun or adjective forming an essential part of a proper name. For example:
 - Privacy Act of 1974
 - We crossed at the Eagle Pass Border Station.
- *The* when it is used as an essential part of a proper name. For example:
 - He visited The British Virgin Islands.
- A descriptive term used to denote a definite region or locality. For example:
 - the Mid-Atlantic Region
- Civil, religious, military, and professional titles and titles of nobility immediately preceding a name. However, standalone titles are not capitalized. Note: Always capitalize President when it refers to the President or Presidents of the United States.

Correct	Incorrect
That man is President Washington.	He is the President of the association.

- A title in the second person, e.g., in salutations. For example:
 - Mr. Secretary
- The first letter of all items in lists. For example:
 - The following areas of support:
 - Organization
 - Staffing and skill sets
 - Policies and procedures

Do *not* capitalize the first letter of common nouns—that is, those nouns that are general or generic. Avoid capitalizing *state*, *nation*, *government*, and *federal* when used as a common noun. Note: To determine whether a noun is common, ask if *a* or *an* does or can precede it in context. If *a* or *an* makes sense before the noun, then the noun is common. For example:

- Common nouns (precedes with a or an): life, man, eye, etc.

Do *not* capitalize common nouns used with a date, number, or letter to denote time or sequence, or for the purpose of reference, record, or temporary convenience that do not form a proper name. For example:

- title IV, article 1

Capitalize a term when it is part of the actual title. For example:

- Title 2: General Provisions
- Article 5: Uniform Code of Military Justice
- APIS Increment 1, Release 2

Capitalize captions within a document (figure and table titles). For example:

- Figure 1
- Table 3

Do *not* capitalize to add formality or importance to words that are not proper nouns. For example:

Correct	Incorrect
We will accomplish those tasks in the next increment.	We will accomplish those Tasks in the next Increment.

3.1.4 Emphasis

3.1.4.1 Italics

Italicize text to highlight key words and phrases, and indicate emphasis. Also use italics within the text for references to all document titles and document headers; however, do not italicize the titles or headers themselves.

3.1.4.2 Caps

Use ALL CAPS only for acronyms and special terms, *do not* use for emphasis.

3.1.4.3 Bold

Use boldface type only when the published version requires bold letters. Do not use for emphasis. Instead, use italics.

3.1.4.4 Underlining

Do not use underlining to indicate emphasis or to delineate book titles, etc., as its use inhibits readability, particularly within electronic documentation. Do not underline bolded text, italicized text, or any capital letters.

3.1.4.5 Quotations

Only use quotations for quoted text.

3.1.5 Lists and Outlines

Use numbered lists for items involving sequence (e.g., steps, events, processes). Use bulleted lists for non-sequential or discrete items.

Do not mix numbers and bullets in the same section.

3.1.5.1 Numbered Lists

Numbered lists, including those used for outlines, appear as follows:

1. This is the first level.
 - a. This is the second level.
 - i. This is the third level.
 1. This is the fourth level.

3.1.5.2 Bulleted Lists

- This is the first level.
 - This is the second level.
 - This is the third level.
 - This is the fourth level.

The lead sentence for a list contains a colon. For example:

- The following items must be included:
 - Peer review form
 - List of CBP approvers
 - Date of approval
 - Signature of approving official

Do not use definite and indefinite articles (a, an, the) at the beginning of a bulleted list. For example:

- Correct: document name on the left
- Incorrect: the document name on the left

3.1.6 Punctuation in Lists

Do not place punctuation after list items unless the item is a complete sentence.

Use parallel grammatical structure (consistent tenses) for all list items.

Correct	Incorrect
Adapting to the environment	We need to adapt to the environment
Training new employees	We need to train new employees.
Creating job descriptions	Create job descriptions.

Exceptions:

- If one item is a complete sentence or contains multiple sentences, place a period after every item.
- If the bullet completes the introductory phrase, place a period after the bulleted item.

3.2 Numbers

3.2.1 Numbers in Figures and Tables

When importing numbers from one program to another (e.g., from Excel to Word), should the numbers not add correctly (due to the rounding algorithm used in the source file), annotate the figure or table to explain what happened.

When making comparisons use *more than* and *less than* rather than *over* and *under*.

3.2.2 Percentages

Do not use the percent sign (%) in body text; spell it out (percent). Use the percent sign in figures and tables. For example:

- The executive vice president of accounting reported that sales figures were up ten percent.

3.2.3 Spelling out Numbers

Spell out numbers below 10. For the numbers 10 or higher, use figures or numerals. When there are several numbers in the sentence, use numerals if one of the numbers is 10 or more. Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence. For example:

- PSPD teams maintain five environments: DVL, SAT, QAX, EDU, and PROD.
- The director reported that 14 new developers were hired.
- The division director needs to post 2 new job openings for 4 technical writers who will work on 17 projects.
- Eleven CBP officers attended the meeting.

Reword sentences to avoid lengthy spelling out of numbers.

Correct	Incorrect
The year 2008 looks promising.	Two thousand and eight looks promising.

Spell out fractions. For example:

Correct	Incorrect
According to polls, two-thirds of the population agree on this issue.	According to polls, 2/3 of the population agree on this issue.

Always use numerals to express units of measure and time (e.g., lengths, volumes, and degrees) and abbreviations. For example:

Correct	Incorrect
It was 6 miles to the airport.	It was six miles to the airport.
There will be a 3-day delay in shipping.	There will be a three-day delay in shipping.

When two or more numbers in the same general category appear in a sentence, be consistent. For example:

Correct	Incorrect
That release includes 3 sections and 12 tables.	That release includes three sections and 12 tables.
The OIT Agile Governance has 9 stages with 11 documents that must be updated.	The OIT Agile Governance has nine stages with 11 documents that must be updated.

3.2.3.1 Military/Civilian Time

To convert military time to civilian time and civilian time to military time, follow these rules.

Military time to 12-hour clock conversion

If the number of hours (two first digits) is between 0 and 12 (e.g. 0000, 0920, 1210), the hour will be the same in both notations with the exception that 0 will be 12 a.m. (midnight) and 12 will be 12 p.m. (noon).

If the number of hours is greater than 12 (e.g., 1330, 1535, 2305), subtract 12 from to get p.m. time. For example:

- 0012 is 12:12 a.m. because 0 is converted to 12 a.m.
- 0930 is 09:30 a.m. because 9 is less than 12.
- 1230 is 12:30 p.m. because 12 is converted to 12 p.m.
- 2130 is 9:30 p.m. because 21 is greater than 12 and 21 minus 12 equals 9.

12-hour clock to military time conversion

If time is a.m., keep the hour the same with the exception of 12 a.m., which will be 00. If time is p.m., add 12 to the hour with the exception of 12 p.m., which will be 12 (neither a.m. nor p.m.). For example:

- 12:15 a.m. is 0015 because 12 a.m. converts to 0 hours.
- 07:35 a.m. is 0735 because 7 is less than 12.
- 12:35 p.m. is 1235 because 12 p.m. converts to 12 hours.
- 05:45 p.m. is 1745 because 5 plus 12 equals 17.

3.2.3.2 Measurements

Correct	Incorrect
9 inch	9" or 9 in
6 feet tall	6 ft.
5-yard penalty	5 yd. penalty

3.2.3.3 Dates

Correct	Incorrect
June 1999	June, 1999
March 3, 2001	March, 3, 2001

Do not use 06/07 or 3-3-07 in the body of the text; however, using these forms is permissible in figures and tables.

3.3 Punctuation

3.3.1 Apostrophe

Use the apostrophe to show possession.

Add *s* for all cases except when the word ends with an *s*. In that case, add only the apostrophe. For example:

- Strauss' (meaning of Strauss)
- Jones' (meaning of Jones)
- Joneses' (meaning of the Joneses)

Do *not* use contractions in formal CBP correspondence.

Correct	Incorrect
It cannot.	It can't.

Do *not* use apostrophes to form plurals of abbreviations, numbers, etc.

Correct	Incorrect
PGAs and 3s	PGA's and 3's

3.3.2 Brackets

Always use brackets in pairs. In sentences in which parentheses () occur, use brackets [] for parenthetical material inside the parentheses. For example:

- The entire program (Automated Passenger Information System [APIS]) is reviewed by the director.

3.3.3 Colon

Use a colon to follow a formal salutation. For example:

- Dear Mr. Smith:

Use a colon to introduce a short list or series. Leave one space after a colon when it is used in a sentence. For example:

- The processes apply to three types of users: CBP, Other Government Agencies (OGA), and the public.

Use a colon in reference to specific times. Do not insert a space after a colon in time references. For example:

- 2:43 a.m.

3.3.4 Comma

Use a comma before a conjunction between two equal clauses in a sentence. In short sentences, the comma can be omitted. For example:

- He wrote her a letter concerning the actual text of the document, and she replied that she disagreed.
- He wrote a letter to her and she replied.

Use a comma to separate items in a series. Do not omit the comma just before the word *and* or its equivalent in such a series. For example:

- Release 1, Release 2, and Release 3

Use a comma after longer introductory phrases or clauses. For example:

- Having finally reached the river, he waded across.

Use commas to set off nonrestrictive clauses or phrases. For example:

- The officer, who happened to be from Chicago, disagreed with the mayor regarding the new legislation.
- A common language, English in the case of the United States, helps bind a country together.

If a dependent clause is restrictive, e.g., if it cannot be omitted without altering the meaning of the main clause, do not set off by commas. For example:

- Additional biometrics are being captured at ports of entry where iris scanning devices are installed.
- The illustration that describes these scenarios is not complete.

A dependent clause that precedes the main clause is set off by a comma whether it is restrictive or nonrestrictive. For example:

- If you accept our conditions, we shall agree to the contract.

Use commas to separate parts of place names or addresses. Do not use a comma between state and ZIP code. For example:

- 8560 Cinderbed Road, Lorton, Virginia 22079, U.S.A.

Use a comma in a date that appears in the month-day-year style. Do not use a comma in a date that appears in the month-day or month-year style. For example:

- January 1, 2004
- January 2004

Use commas to set off transitional adverbs or interjections when, as in the following example,

they interrupt the flow of the sentence. For example:

- Moreover, we must move now.
- When, as in the example, they...

But do not use a comma when the sentence flow is not interrupted. For example:

- Only then could he call himself a man.

When a parenthetical phrase occurs in the middle of a sentence, remember to include *both* commas (all too often one is left out). For example:

- The man, who happened to be from Chicago, disagreed...

Use a comma after words and phrases such as: *that is*, *e.g.*, *i.e.*, and *namely*. These terms must also have a punctuation mark before them, frequently a comma. For example:

- A large city, e.g., New York City, often has an unusual degree of autonomy.

Use commas to separate two or more adjectives from the noun they modify. For example:

- It was a large, well-situated, shaded house.

Omit the comma when the first adjective modifies the idea expressed by the combination of the second adjective and the noun. For example:

- It was that dilapidated brick house on the corner.

For commas within quotations, refer to Section 3.3.12

3.3.5 Ellipsis

Ellipses consist of three periods and are used to indicate an omission of text within a sentence, especially from a quotation. For example:

- Give me...death (left out: "liberty or give me").

If the omission is at the end of a sentence, it would have an ellipsis and a period. For example:

- "Give me liberty or..."

3.3.6 Em Dash

Use the *em* (—) dash to mark a sudden break in thought or to set off an important idea. Do *not* use a space before or after the em dash. For example:

Correct	Incorrect
He was running hard—suddenly he stopped—he had heard a noise.	He was running hard-suddenly he stopped-he had heard a noise.

Do not use the em dash immediately after a comma, colon, or semicolon.

Correct	Incorrect
No:	No:—

3.3.7 En Dash

The *en* (–) dash is used to connect continuing or inclusive numbers, time, or reference numbers. Do *not* use a space before or after the en dash. For example:

Correct	Incorrect
May–June 2007	from May–June 2007 (from May to June 2007)

Use hyphens not en dashes between numbers that are not inclusive (to see example, refer to section 3.3.9).

3.3.8 Exclamation Point

The exclamation point is used to express surprise, disbelief, or other strong emotion. It should not be used in business or technical writing.

3.3.9 Hyphen

Use the hyphen (-) to:

- Connect parts of certain words. For example:
 - Mother-in-law
 - Self-control
 - President-elect
- Clarify adjectival phrases, but not in adverbial phrases. For example:
 - Well-built house
 - Matter-of-fact attitude
- Spell out fractions. For example:
 - Two-thirds

- Accompany *all*. For example:
 - All-encompassing
 - All-inclusive
 - All-powerful
- Do not use hyphens with adverbs. For example:
 - The practically new table was falling apart.
- Hyphenate compound words when they precede the noun they modify. For example:
 - Up-to-date
 - Twenty-one pages
 - Cross-referenced material
 - Full-length or full-scale process
 - Long-standing rule
 - Decision-making procedures
 - Time-delay switch
- Use the hyphen between numbers that are not inclusive. For example:
 - 1-965-386-1110

Avoid using hyphens after such prefixes as *pre*, *post*, *pro*, *anti*, *intra*, and *under* (e.g., *postoperative*, *antitrust*).

Hyphenate words that might be misleading or difficult to read (e.g., *co-edition*, *pre-arrival*, *intra-agency*). Refer to the Section 4 on Terminology for additional examples.

Words spelled with hyphens often have different meanings from words that are spelled similarly but without hyphens. Be sure to use the correct word. For example, *recreate* means *to take recreation* and *re-create* means *to create again*.

3.3.10 Parentheses

Use parentheses to enclose words, numbers, phrases, or clauses that provide examples, explanations, or supplementary material that does not essentially alter the meaning of the sentence.

Enclose abbreviations that follow the spelled out form. For example:

- The Passenger Systems Program Directorate (PSPD) is part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Set off an item, often an explanation, more strongly than just by using commas. For example:

- Three old systems (now obsolete) will be retired.

Enclose references, examples, ideas, and citations that are not part of the main thought of a sentence. For example:

- The analysis (refer to figure 7) illustrates how a single item can contribute to a system malfunction.

3.3.11 Period

Use the period:

- To end a statement or declarative sentence or *indirect* question. For example:
 - He went out to eat.
 - I asked myself what could be wrong.
- After letters and numbers, in outlines (e.g., I.A.1.)

By convention, some abbreviations require periods. For example:

- a.m. and p.m.
- e.g. and i.e.

If an abbreviation falls at the end of a sentence, the period remains: “Will the run be completed by 2:00 a.m.?” and “The run will be completed by 2:00 a.m.” There is only one period (not two) at the end of the declarative sentence; the last period closes the abbreviation and terminates the sentence.

Scientific notation often dispenses the period in measurement abbreviations. For example:

- 200 KB
- 250 kbps

Insert *one space* after a period, colon used within a sentence, or other sentence-ending punctuation.

3.3.12 Quotation Marks

Use quotation marks:

- Around direct quotations (double quotes). For example:
 - He said, “I have to go.”
 - “I have to go,” he said.

When using a period or comma, place it before the close quote. Insert question marks and exclamation marks inside or outside the close quote, depending on the meaning; if they belong with the quotation or with the complete sentence, place them outside the punctuation. For example:

- He finally declared, “I’ve had enough.”

- Did he really say, “I do not want to go”?

Put colons and semicolons outside the close quote, not inside.

For quotations of more than one paragraph, use an open double quotation mark at the beginning of each of paragraph; the sole close quote appears at the end of the whole quotation.

For quotations within a quotation, put double quotes around the full quotation and single quotes around the internal quotation. For example:

- “He said, ‘I’ll be back,’ and left the room hurriedly.”

Use double quotes around titles of chapters of books, short stories in a larger book, headlines in newspapers, the names of sections in a document, etc. The names of complete books and newspapers are *italicized*. For example:

- *The Increment 1, Release 2 Product Plan* includes the section “Project Organization Structure and Responsibilities”.

3.3.13 Semicolon

Use the semicolon to separate independent clauses not joined by a conjunction, or joined by a conjunctive adverb such as *hence, therefore, however*. For example:

- I arrive; he leaves.
- I think; therefore, I am.

Use a semicolon in an A, B, and C series where an individual item already contains a comma. For example:

- A woman; a child; and a man, the child’s father, joined the group.

Semicolons can also be used to accomplish parallelism for stylistic reasons. For example:

- Eisenhower was elected President; Nixon won the vice presidency.

3.3.14 Slash

The slash commonly signifies alternatives. It can be used to mean *and, or, both, per*. For example:

- Inside/outside
- Free trade/protectionism
- Northern Border/Southern Border

The slash can be used to indicate when a time period or season goes beyond a single year. For example:

- Fiscal year 2008/2009
- Winter of 2007/2008

A slash can replace *per*. For example:

- Yards/mile
- Feet/second
- DHS/CBP/OIT/PSPD

A slash can be used in to indicate *and/or* when the meaning clearly includes both options. For example:

- He requested a modification to and/or explanation of the diagram.
- The officer will ask the traveler to present a travel document and/or proof of residence.

3.4 References

All references within the document are spelled out in full.

Correct	Incorrect
Figure x, Section xx	Fig. x, Sect. xx

The ability to cross-reference sections, figures, tables, etc., is available through Microsoft Word. Using the cross-reference tool automatically updates references based on document changes.

3.5 Tables and Figures

Position table titles before the table and figure captions after the figure. Table heading rows repeat across multiple pages and are shaded with gray at 20 percent. Tables are be justified at the left and right margins. Table text spacing is 3 pts. before and after. A table header is Times New Roman 12 and the table body text is Times New Roman 11.

Table 2. Table Example

Shade 20%		



Figure 1. Figure Example

Notice that the word *Figure* is capitalized and spelled out completely when it refers to a specific figure. It is advisable to include a call-out reference (a brief description of what is conveyed in the table or figure) below the heading but above the figure. For example:

- The process is illustrated in Figure 1.

Avoid using terminology such as *above*, *below*, or *see* when referring to figure/table location. For example:

- Refer to Figure 1 for details of...
- Table X shows, list, contains, etc.

Avoid using the caption title when referring to the figure/table. For example:

Correct	Incorrect
Refer to Figure 1 for details of the proposed system architecture	Figure 1. System Architecture shows the proposed system architecture

4. Terminology

Table 3. Table of Terms and Descriptions describes common terms used at PSPD. For a more comprehensive list of abbreviations and acronyms, please refer to the TAD at <https://tad.cbp.dhs.gov/TAD/>.

Table 3. Table of Terms and Descriptions

Term	Description
A	
a.m.	ante meridian (before noon)
a–an [including use before abbreviations]	<p>In choosing <i>a</i> or <i>an</i>, consider the sound (not the spelling) of the following word. Use the article <i>a</i> before all consonant sounds, including sounded <i>h</i>, long <i>u</i>, and <i>o</i> with the sound of <i>w</i> (as in one).</p> <p>a day / a year / a unit / a data center / a document / a POE / a 60-day notice / a TECS external source / a requirement / a Use Case</p> <p>Use <i>an</i> before all vowel sounds except long <i>u</i> and before words beginning with silent <i>h</i>.</p> <p>an asset / an equipment purchase / an 8-hour day / an 11 A.M. meeting / an APIS plan / an emergency / an MRZ / an AAA deliverable / an MCL / an NFL team / an SLC requirement / an XML schema</p>
above/below	Avoid using terminology such as <i>above</i> or <i>below</i> when referring to figure/table location.
ad hoc	Preferred spelling, not Ad-Hoc
as per	Avoid. Use: as agreed...; according to...; in accordance with...; or in response to...
assure/ensure/insure	<p>Assure means <i>to reinforce the likelihood that something is attained</i> or <i>to state convincingly</i>.</p> <p>Ensure means <i>to make certain</i>.</p> <p>Insure means <i>to guarantee monetary replacement in case of loss</i>.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>The use of a laser level assured the contractor of a high degree of accuracy.</p> <p>The technician must ensure that the containment area is always sealed.</p> <p>The telescope was insured for \$2,000.</p>
B	
back out	back out (intransitive v) not backout

Term	Description
backup	backup (noun, modifier) back up (verb) back-up (modifier/adjective)
bar code/barcode	Write as two words when used as a noun. Use bar-code when used as an adjective. Do not use bar code as a verb.
C	
CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
check-in	check-in (noun/modifier) check in (intransitive verb)
communication	What people do when they talk: “The process required better communication.”
communications	What computers do when they talk: “We added communications protocols.”
comprise/compose	Comprise means <i>is made up of</i> or <i>consists of</i> . Compose means <i>to put together</i> or <i>make</i> . Note the difference: “The plan comprises four parts” and “The plan is composed of two parts.”
D	
data	Plural of datum, always takes plural verbs and pronouns. The data are, not the data <i>is</i> . Also use data set for singular case.
data mart	Preferred spelling
data warehouse	Preferred spelling
DVL	Preferred spelling for abbreviation
download	Use as a noun or verb, use down-load as an adjective
drop-down	Preferred spelling
E	
EDME	Enterprise Data Management & Engineering Division
email	e is a modifier for electronic mail (not E-mail unless at beginning of a sentence) but eAPIS and iAPIS
end user	end user (noun), end-user (adjective)
ENTS	Enterprise Networks & Technology Operations Division
F	
fiscal year	Preferred spelling but FY09
follow-up	Preferred spelling
G	
government	Abbreviation: gov or govt

Term	Description
Gb	Gigabit
GB	Gigabyte
H	
hand-held	Preferred spelling
hardcode	Hardcode (noun) Hard-code (modifier) Hard code (verb)
hard drive	Preferred spelling
high-risk	Preferred spelling
homeland security	Use lowercase, per the Executive Order creating the Office of Homeland Security and the Homeland Security Act of 2002, creating the Department of Homeland Security.
I	
increment	Do not capitalize unless identifying a specific increment: <i>ACE Increment 1, Release 2. but the next increment includes two releases.</i>
Internet	Always capitalize
interoperability	Preferred spelling
intranet	Do not capitalize
its/it's	its is possessive. it's is a contraction for <i>it is</i>
J	
job-related	Preferred spelling
L	
Land Border	Preferred spelling
lead time	Preferred spelling
life cycle	CBP does not hyphenate
M	
meta data	Preferred spelling (Note: meta data are; not is)
mid-April	Write <i>mid-month</i> with a hyphen as shown
modernized, modernization	Use lowercase letters except when referring to a specific act or title (e.g., the Customs Modernization Program or the Modernization approach...)
N	
NLT	Do not use. Use no later than.

Term	Description
noncompliant	Not <i>non-compliant</i> .
nonenrolled	Preferred spelling
non-deliverable	Preferred spelling
nonoperational	Preferred spelling
nonproduction, nonproductive	Preferred spelling
nonsequential	Preferred spelling
no one	Preferred spelling
O	
officer	An officer will be available, but the CBP Officer or Officer Jones (by direction of the Executive Director)
off site	Preferred spelling
offset	Preferred spelling
ongoing	Preferred spelling, not hyphenated
online	Preferred spelling, not <i>on-line</i>
over	Use more than
P	
pick list	Preferred spelling
please	Avoid using please in technical writing
plurals	Data is the plural of datum and always take a plural verb or pronoun. Refer to Chicago Style Chapter 6 and/or GPO pages 68-69, 118
p.m.	post meridian (after noon)
pre	One word: Preempt, preoccupied, preexisting,
pre	Hyphenated: Pre-engineered, pre-enrolled, pre-judicial, pre-owned
predefined	Not <i>pre-defined</i> .
preexisting	Do not hyphenate.
proactive	Preferred spelling
R	
readjudicate	Preferred spelling
real time	Preferred spelling
re-compute	Preferred spelling
re-create	Preferred spelling

Term	Description
re-creation/recreation	A re-creation is something that has been created again. Recreation refers to refreshment of strength after work or it can be a means of refreshment or diversion. The ship <i>Stavos II</i> was a re-creation of the original vessel of the same name. The family enjoyed camping as a means of recreation.
reengineer	Preferred but re-engineer is acceptable.
reenter	Preferred spelling
reinitialize	Preferred spelling
re-redirect	Preferred spelling Do not use <i>redirect again</i>
re-sent / re-send	Preferred spelling
re-test	Preferred spelling
retraining	Do not hyphenate.
right-click	Preferred spelling
re-use/reuse	Distinguish as follows: <i>We implemented re-use techniques and we reused code.</i>
rewrite	Preferred spelling
S	
SAS	Serial Attached SCSI
SBU	Sensitive-But-Unclassified
SCSI	Small Computer System Interface
set up	setup (noun) set up (verb)
SELC	Systems Engineering Life Cycle
sign on	Signon (noun) Sign-on (modifier) Sign on (verb)
Sign off	Signoff (noun) Sign-off (modifier) Sign off (verb)
standalone	Standalone (noun) Stand-alone (adjective) – e.g., <i>stand-alone</i> processor
state-of-the-art	Preferred spelling
subagency	Preferred spelling

Term	Description
submenu	Preferred spelling
subsystem	Preferred spelling
system-generated	Preferred spelling
T	
time frame	Preferred spelling (Webster's)
time zones	Greenwich: GMT; Eastern Standard Time: EST; Daylight Savings Time: DST
touch screen	Preferred spelling (Webster's and GPO)
towards	Do not use. Use toward.
U	
under	Use less than
uninterruptible	Preferred spelling (Note: ible) e.g., uninterruptible power supply
user ID	Not user id or Id
U.S.	Use this modifier for United State not US (e.g., <i>U.S. borders</i>)
USCG	United States Coast Guard
use	Use instead of 'utilize' or 'utilization' in most cases
V	
vet / vetted / vetting	Evaluate: to subject to expert appraisal or correction
W	
walkthrough	Preferred spelling
Watch List	Preferred spelling
work flow	Preferred spelling
work force	Preferred spelling
work load	Preferred spelling
Web	Proper noun so use the initial cap.
Web site / Web server	Two words

Appendix A. MS Word Settings

Program your MS Word 2013 as follows to adhere to PSPD writing standards.

- Open a new document in Word.
- Click *FILE*.
- Click *Options*.
- Click *Proofing*.
- Within the *When correcting and grammar in Word* section, select the following next to Writing Style:
 - *Grammar & Style*
 - *Settings*
 - Comma required before last list item: *always*
 - Punctuation required with quotes: *inside*
 - Spaces required between sentences: *1*

While you are writing, if you break a grammar or style rule, Word will place a blue mark under the area of concern. Rewrite this section to remove the blue mark.

Appendix B. Words and Phrases to Avoid

Table 3 describes phrasing commonly misused in technical documents. Note the alternatives preferred are typically shorter or more concise.

Table 3. Words and Phrases to Avoid

Bureaucratic or clichéd	Simple and specific
accordingly	so
afford an opportunity	allow
a number of	many, several, a few
additionally	also, in addition
approximately	about
as to whether	whether
at the present time; at this point in	now
at the time that	when
by means of with	in, by
capability	ability, can
close proximity	nearby, near
come to an agreement on	agree
consequently	so
currently	now
demonstrate a preference for	prefer
due to the fact that	because
during the course of	during
endeavor to	try to
equally as	equally
equivalent	equal
facilitate help	help
finalize	finish
For most part	mostly
for the purpose of for	to
furthermore	also, in addition
give approval for	approve
impacted by	affected by
in accordance with	by, following, under

Bureaucratic or clichéd	Simple and specific
including, but not limited to	Including
initial	first
in order to	to
in order to eliminate	to eliminate
in spite of the fact that	although
in the event that	if
in the near future	soon
in the vicinity of	near
in violation of	violates
is able to	can
it is felt that	(omit)
limited number	few
majority of	most
make a choice	choose
make a decision	decide
no later than	by
not strong	weak
not well suited	unfit, poorly suited
numerous	many
of the opinion that	think
on a monthly basis	monthly
on or before December 2	December 2
on the basis of	based on
on the part of	by
presents a summary of	summarizes
prior to	before
regarding	about, of, on
subsequent	next
terminate	end, stop
the question as to whether	whether
therefore	so
the reason why is that	because

Bureaucratic or clichéd	Simple and specific
the table is a list of	the table shows
to perform an analysis	to analyze
since the time when	since
sufficient	enough
until such time as	until
utilize	use
whether or not	whether
with regard to	about
with the exception of	except
would appear that	appears