

Town of Greenwich Website Style Guide



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This document provides a guide to style for content produced for the Town of Greenwich website and standards for the use of modules. Like any style guide, this document will evolve over time. If you would like to suggest any additions or changes to this guide, please contact Cameron Martin at cameron.martin@greenwichct.org.

ADA

- All website content must be ADA-compliant, including alternative text for all photographs. The alternative text – a short description that summarizes the visual content – is recognized by screen readers, which are software programs that allow blind or visually impaired users to read the text that is displayed on the computer screen with a speech synthesizer or braille display.
- Tables should only be used to display data, not for formatting or to organize photos; captions must be provided for all live audio content; and labels and instructions must be provided when the content requires user input.
- PDFs must be searchable by text and should not be uploaded as images to the website.
- PDF file names matter because it's the file name that appears in search results. The PDF file name becomes part of the web address "URL," so the file name should also complement the document title.

With a few exceptions, we use the Associated Press Stylebook as the primary source for style guidelines below.

addresses – Follow Associated Press style, which says to use the abbreviations *Ave.*, *Blvd.*, and *St.* only with a numbered address: *210 Greenwich Ave.* Spell out and capitalize those words when they're part of a formal street name without a number: *The store is on Greenwich Avenue.* Spell out and capitalize all similar words (*Alley*, *Drive*, *Road*, etc.) in addresses.

- Always use figures for an address number: *1 Greenwich Avenue.*
- Spell out and capitalize *First* through *Ninth* when used as street names; use figures with two letters for *10th* and above: *7 Fifth Ave.*, *100 21st St.*

Agenda & Minutes module

Every agenda for every public meeting should be added to the Agenda & Minutes module. A PowerPoint deck posted to the Information Technology department's Web Resources page provides a step-by-step tutorial for using this module.

bulleted lists – Each item in a bulleted list should begin with a capital letter. If none of the items in the list is a complete sentence, do not use periods. If at least one of the items is a complete sentence, use periods for all of them for the sake of consistency.

Example:

Rhonda's three favorite places are:

- *The beach*

- *The pool*
- *The bar*

Or:

I learned three things on my European vacation:

- *It's good to keep your local currency separate from your money from home.*

Calendar module

All meetings should be added to the department's calendar at the beginning of the year. Agendas should be attached to the calendars.

compound modifiers – When two or more words that express a single concept precede a noun, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound except *very* and all adverbs that end in *-ly*. Example: *He had a very good time during the first-quarter earnings announcement.*

cybersecurity – Not *cyber security*.

dashes – Dashes should be set off by spaces on either side.

dates – When referring to specific dates (a month plus the day of the month), follow Associated Press style, which calls for abbreviating January (*Jan.*), February (*Feb.*), August (*Aug.*), September (*Sept.*), October (*Oct.*), November (*Nov.*) and December (*Dec.*). Spell out March, April, May, June and July. Always use figures for days of the month when they follow the name of the month: *The season runs from April 1 to Aug. 30.*

Also, use only numbers to refer to the day of the month: *Dec. 12* not *Dec. 12th*.

departments and groups – Lowercase words such as *group*, *department*, *team*, *program*, *unit* and *project* – unless they are part of official names: *Pat McIlheny works in the Human Resources group.*

Document Center module

All documents must be added as searchable PDFs and not as images.

Naming Convention:

Alpha Name, Year, Month, Day

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email – Not *e-mail*. (This is consistent with current Associated Press style.)

FAQs

Every department should check its FAQs at the beginning of every season – at the very least – to make sure the information is up-to-date, relevant and targeted. Are you getting a lot of questions about a particular topic? If so, update your FAQs.

Forms module

Every department should check its Forms at the beginning of every season – at the very least – to make sure the information is up-to-date and that all the proper recipients are included in the Form.

full time, full-time – Hyphenate when used as a compound modifier. *He works full time. She has a full-time job.*

headlines and subheads – Capitalize only the first word, along with any proper nouns, in headlines and subheads:

Town announces new budget

Internet – Capitalize the word in all uses

months – Specify the month. Say “December” instead of “this month,” “last month,” etc.

names of individuals – In the first mention of an individual, give the person's first and last name, without a middle initial unless the initial is necessary to distinguish the person from others with the same first and last name. In subsequent references, use the individual's last name alone (without *Mr.*, *Mrs.* or *Ms.*).

News Flash module

An item in News Flash should not simply link to a PDF. The information should be copied from the PDF and pasted into News Flash. This makes it easier for residents to read and search for items. Also, downloading a PDF on a phone is not a good user experience.

numbers – In general, spell out numbers one through nine and use numerals for numbers 10 and up: *The firm led three of the 10 largest U.S. initial public offerings last year.*

Exceptions:

Always use numerals for sums of money, even for numbers of less than 10: *He owes me 2 cents* or *The deal was worth \$4 billion.*

Always use numerals when expressing percentages: *The group's goal is to achieve 7 percent annual growth.* Spell out *percent* in text and use the symbol % in charts.

Always use numerals for numbers indicating pages, chapters, tables, charts and so forth: *See the chart on page 4 of section 2.*

Use numerals for all quantities expressed in charts, graphs and other numerically dense exhibits used to illustrate running text.

It's best to avoid starting a sentence with a year or large number, but when you do, spell out the number or year: *Two thousand eleven marked the fourth consecutive year of growth exceeding 4 percent.*

With numbers larger than 999,999, use *million*, *billion* and *trillion* instead of the extra zeros: *There are 1.5 million customers using the new service.* Spell out *million*, *billion* and *trillion* and avoid abbreviations such as *mm* even in tables and charts unless the narrowness of a column makes it impossible to fit the full words.

online – One word, not hyphenated, in all cases for the computer connection term.

Oxford comma – see *serial comma*.

photo captions/cutlines – They should be written as full sentences. Generally describe photos' contents from front to back, and from left to right. Use commas rather than parentheses to set off the directions. Example: *Standing in line are, from left, Tom Nickel, Chris White and Chuck Silva* and not *Standing in line are (from left) Tom Nickel ...*

premier, premiere – *Premier* means best, *premiere* means first.

serial comma – When listing items, do not use a comma after the second-to-last item. *The four main ingredients in beer are water, malt, hops and yeast.* Exceptions are if an integral element of the series requires a conjunction (*I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast*) or before the concluding conjunction in a complex series of phrases (*The main points to consider are whether the athletes are skillful enough to compete, whether they have the stamina to endure the training, and whether they have the proper mental attitude*).

telephone numbers – For U.S. numbers, the area code should not be in parentheses: *203-555-0123*. Do not put a *1* before long-distance numbers, including toll-free numbers: *888-575-5762*.

time of day – Always use figures and, for times on the hour, omit the colon and zeros: *You may reach a customer service representative between 8 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.*

Town of Greenwich – Also, the Town, uppercase.

voice mail – Two words, unlike email.

Web – Short form of World Wide Web it is a service, or set of standards, that enables the publishing of multimedia documents on the Internet. The Web is not the same as the Internet, but is a subset; other applications, such as email, exist on the Internet. As a short form and in terms with separate words, *the Web*, *Web page* and *Web feed*.

website – One word, lowercase. Also, *webcam*, *webinar* and *webcast*.