

DRAFTING POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

This policy explains how to write and format material for the Board's Procedure Guide. The goal of drafting a policy is to give Board staff a clear and concise guide to Board routines. Consistency of style is important so reading one part of the manual helps the reader understand the other parts. Manuals that use a variety of formats and styles confuse the reader.

This policy covers:

- how to write policies; and
- the format and styles for standard policies.

HOW TO WRITE POLICIES

Keep several things in mind when writing a policy:

- **Simplicity:** Describe policies and procedures in a simple, straightforward way. Assume the reader is not familiar with the topic under discussion. Explain the basics first; the qualifiers can come later. Avoid jargon and unnecessarily technical terms. If you must use unfamiliar terms, explain them first.
- **Keep on topic:** The procedures guide already has a Table of Contents. It divides topics into "bite-sized" pieces. Avoid cluttering up a policy by repeating procedures explained elsewhere. Decide what you want to explain and stick to that subject, laying it out in a logical order.
- **Introduce your subject:** It helps the reader if you begin with a brief sentence or two describing what follows. If you divide the subject into topics, perhaps using headings, set these out at the start. This helps the reader find a specific point without reading unnecessary text.
- **Use cross references:** Cross references to other policies or manual sections. This saves repeating often-used procedures, policy statements, documents, letters or forms. Use short explanations where the added clarity outweighs the disadvantage of repetition.
- **Case reference:** If you are referring to a reported case, use the correct form of legal citation. Use abbreviated case names like those used in the Alta.L.R.B.R. index instead of the longer names listing all the parties.
- **Use direct language:** The active voice is easier to read and understand than the passive. "The union filed a complaint" is clearer and shorter than "A complaint was filed by the union." Avoid phrases like "It is important to add that" or "In this regard it is of significance that."

- **Always edit your work:** Poor writing often masks imprecise ideas that will confuse the reader. Edit all your work to see if:
 - you can say the same thing in fewer, or clearer, words;
 - what you have said is what you mean; and
 - what you have said is worth saying.
- **Choose your format carefully:** Techniques like indenting with bullets, bolding or using quotations can add clarity to a policy. Use the styles listed below where helpful. Avoid creating other styles unless they are essential. The heading types, indenting styles etc. all come to mean something to the reader, so be consistent with the rest of the manual.
- **Use a narrative form:** This manual primarily uses the narrative form. Talk to the readers, telling them what to do and why it is done that way. Use indented paragraphs where point form descriptions are helpful, but integrate this into the overall narrative of the policy.
- **Avoid gender specific language:** Avoid writing as if all Earth's actors are male.
- **Use headings and sub-headings consistently:** The Table of Contents gives the Procedures Guide its structure. The headings and subheadings you use must fit into that scheme. Do not use extra, or different, headings unless you intend to change the Table of Contents as well. If you find the Table of Contents does not fit your subject, suggest appropriate changes.

FORMAT AND STYLES FOR STANDARD POLICIES

This section describes how to format what you have written for use in the general part of the manual. It is often best to write and edit first, adding styles later.

Format

The Board's policies have a standard look. It include:

- **Margins:** Type pages with the standard 1" margin, top and bottom.
- **Font:** The body-text typeface used for this manual is 12 point Times New Roman. Body text is justified.
- **Headers:** There are three levels of headers. Major section headers are ALL CAPS 14-Arial Bold. Secondary headers are Title Case 12-point Arial bold italic. The seldom-used tertiary headers are Title Case 12-point Arial italic.
- **Numbering:** Avoid numbering unless it is consistent with the Table of Contents or essential for explaining the point in question.
- **Bullets:** All point form lists begin with a bullet (•) and are indented 0.25". Use the "Bullet" button at the top of your screen. If there is a key word(s) following the bullet (as in this case), make them bold and end them with a colon. Use regular body text for the remainder of the bullet.
- **Indenting:** All paragraphs are separated by one carriage return. Use one carriage returns to separate the end of a paragraph and the heading of the next section.

- **Quotes:** Indent all quotes 0.25". Quotes are printed in 9.5-point Arial.
- **Practice Notes:** Practice notes are in 9-point Arial flush left. Headers are bold.
- **Cross References:** Use cross-references to other sections of the manual. Use brackets and italics in cross-referencing. Use the correct chapter number from the latest version of the [Table of Contents](#). An example is: See: [*Role of the Board Members, Chapter 7(b)*].