

Tłcho Government Style Guide

Spelling, punctuation and grammar

Version: April 11, 2013

Purpose

This style guide should be used as a reference when writing internal and external documents on behalf of the Tłıchǫ Government. The guide provides rules and guidelines for punctuation and spelling to be used when writing emails, legal documents, briefing documents, policy documents, procedural documents, marketing or communication documents and any other documents.

The goal of this style guide is to make Tłıchǫ Government documents:

- clear in meaning to Chiefs, Assembly members, Tłıchǫ staff, Tłıchǫ citizens and those performing business with the Tłıchǫ Government
- consistent within each document
- consistent from one document to another
- reflective of the Tłıchǫ language and way of life

Tłıchǫ employees and others who work with written Tłıchǫ Government materials are responsible for knowing and following the style guide.

Style rules

1. General Guidelines

- a) Refer to the following sources for spelling and grammar guidelines: *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* and *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- b) Use Canadian rather than American spellings (“ou,” “re,” “ze” and “c”):
 - labour, neighbour
 - kilometre, centre
 - analyze
 - defence, offence
- c) Use metric measurements – e.g., *kilometres, litres, metres*
- d) Avoid using gender-specific pronouns (he or she, him or her). Reword the sentence to avoid it. If that’s not possible, use “their” even if the noun is singular. E.g., *An employee may make special arrangements with a supervisor to change their regular hours of work.*

2. Abbreviations

- a) **e.g.**, – Means “for example” (use comma after period, as shown)
- b) **i.e.**, – Means “in other words” (use comma after period, as shown)
- c) **etc.**, – Note comma
- d) **km** – Use in tables, graphics and data; spell out “kilometre” in text
- e) **&** (*ampersand*) – Avoid using the symbol. Spell out “and” unless the organization you’re naming uses an ampersand in its legal name.

3. Acronyms and initials

- f) When using acronyms such as TEO or INAC, spell out the full name when it first appears in a document or a section, followed by the acronym in brackets, (e.g., *The Tłchq Executive Officer (TEO) is responsible...*). The exception is with acronyms that are familiar to the general public, such as CBC and ATV.
- g) Don’t use periods in abbreviations and acronyms unless they are geographic or refer to a person, e.g., *B.C., U.S., Sir J.A. Macdonald.*

4. Capitalization

- a) Capitalize all titles in the Tłchq organizational chart (see Note 1).
- b) Use lower case for staff positions or roles – *e.g., supervisor, translator.*
- c) Use lower case when referring to documents and policies unless it's the complete title, *e.g., "Policy 6.1 – Employee Conduct" but "employee conduct policy."*

5. Grammar

- a) Match singular or plural pronouns (his/her/their) with the noun in a sentence, *e.g., The Chiefs Executive Council made its decision....* But when it's difficult to make them match, it may be necessary to ignore this rule in order to avoid using gender-specific pronouns, *e.g., At the start of an employee's employment, they will be assigned a user profile.*

6. Lists

Lists can be approached in different ways, depending on the content and use. (See Note 2 for examples.)

There are some general rules for lists:

- a) Word provides built-in sequences for numbering and indentation. Use the same sequence throughout a document. *E.g., I. a) i)*
- b) Each numbering level should be indented further than the preceding one. Ensure the levels are indented the same amount within a document.
- c) All items in a list should be "parallel," i.e., if one line is a full sentence, all lines should be; if one line uses "you," all should.
- d) Use end punctuation only if each line is a full sentence.
- e) Only capitalize each line when it's a full sentence.
- f) Use numbering only when it serves a purpose, such as making it easier to refer to items or indicating the order in which something should be done.
- g) If a list is written as a sentence, even if it's formatted vertically, it should be punctuated as a sentence. (Note 8(e) in this guide for semi-colon use.)
- h) It is optional to use a conjunction ("and" or "or") before the last item on a list, but be consistent in similar lists, especially when they're in the same document or section.
- i) Don't use a comma before "and" or "or" in a list, unless it's needed to make the meaning clear.
- j) Use semi-colons at the end of each item only if one or more of the items has a comma within it.

7. Numbers

- a) Spell out numbers nine and under. Use numerals for 10 and over. (Numerals under 10 can be used in tables, graphics, financial reports or statistical work.)

- b) Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence (or reword the sentence to avoid) – *e.g., Forty-seven citizens attended the meeting.*
- c) Dates: Use January 14, 2012, for full dates or January 2012 for month and year only. (Note the comma after the year in the first example.)
- d) Fractions – Use hyphens, *e.g., one-half, two-thirds.*
- e) Measurements – Use metric, *e.g., kilometres not miles, litres not gallons* (Imperial measurements can be put in brackets after the metric, if needed.) **Exception:** It is OK to use square footage for property, if that’s the norm.
- f) Per cent – Spell out (two words) in the text of documents, followed by the numeral and symbol in brackets, *e.g., seven per cent (7%).* **Exception:** Number and symbol alone can be used in tables, graphics, summaries or financial reports.
- g) Number ranges – Use hyphens, *i.e., 2004-08*
- h) Time – *e.g., 8 a.m., 7:30 p.m.*

8. Punctuation

- a) Commas – Don’t use a comma before “and” or “or” in a list, unless it’s needed to make the meaning clear – *e.g., “Tłchq lands, waters and resources.”*
- b) Colons – Use a colon to introduce a vertical list.
- c) Dashes and hyphens – There are two kinds of dashes, which are generally used to separate words, whereas the hyphen is used to connect words or numbers.
 - **Em dash** is the long dash (—). Use it with no spaces on either side to set apart a portion of a sentence, whether to indicate a break in thought or to help information stand out from a sentence.
 - **En dash** is the shorter dash (–). It’s often used in titles or headings to separate numbers and words, *e.g., Policy 3.2 – Travel and Expenses.*
 - **Hyphens** (-) are used to join two words when they modify another (*e.g., part-time job, work-related purposes, long-distance charges*).
- d) Quotation marks
 - Put punctuation inside quotation marks at the end of sentences.
 - Always use double quotation marks (“ ”) except for a quotation within a quotation. In that case, use single quotation marks (‘ ’).

- e) Semi-colons should be avoided. If they are used, there are two correct uses:
- to separate two complete sentences that are related (there must be a verb in each) or
 - in a list following a colon when the sentences in the list have commas within them.
- f) Slashes between words don't have spaces on either side – *e.g.*,
“*contractor/vendor.*”
- g) Spaces – Use single spaces between sentences.

Capitalization and spelling guide

ABC

Aboriginal People(s)

Agreement – capitalize when it means Tłıchǰ Agreement

and – *always spell it out (don't use “&” unless an entity uses it in its legal name)*

Annual Gathering

Asıı ts'ągoèt'ǰ hǰı ha nele

Assembly – *capitalize when it means Tłıchǰ Assembly*

Assembly members

behaviour

Behchokǰ (*Rae-Edzo*)

biweekly

budget authority

cellphone

chat rooms

Chief – *capitalize when it's the Tłıchǰ Chief, with or without a name attached*

Chiefs Executive Council (*no apostrophe*)

child care, child-care centre

citizens – *lower case, even when referring to Tłıchǰ citizens*

code of conduct

communities – *say “four Tłıchǰ communities” or “Tłıchǰ communities” to be clear. (See Note 3)*

Constitution – *use Tłıchǰ Constitution in all cases to distinguish from the Canadian Constitution*

DEF

Dıı deh nııı

Dıı ndè nągoèǰ-le nıǰè

Dıı sah nàét'ą

director – *use lower case unless referring to a title on organizational chart (See Note 1)*

drive-time

e.g., – *note comma*

Elders

email

Ezǰdzıı

federal Treasury Board rates

Finance Law

full-time job *but* working full time

GHIJKL

Gamètı (Rae Lakes)

Government – *capitalize when it means Tłıchǰ Government, but it's best to use full name to avoid confusion*

Grand Chief

health care, health worker *but* health-care worker, health-care system (*note the hyphen if it's modifying another word*)
honorarium (*singular*), honoraria (*plural*)
honour, honourable, honorary
Human Resources Law
Internet
kilometre – *spell out in text, but it's OK to use "km" in tables or graphics*
layoff
licence (*noun, as in a driver's licence*)
license (*verb, as in the government licenses all vendors*)

MNO

Monfwɪ
Mɔ̃whì Gogha Dè Nɔ̃tɔ̃'èe
Nation – *capitalize when it means Tɔ̃chɔ̃ Nation*
offence
online

PQR

part-time job *but* working part time
paycheque
per cent – *spell out as two words then use numeral and symbol in brackets, i.e., seven per cent (7%)*
policy – *lower case "policy" when not using full title*
Policy 3.2 – Travel and Expenses (*capitalize "Policy" when using the full name; lower case otherwise*)
Policy Working Group

STU

sign-out sheet
smartphones
Speaker
staff – *use employees in most cases (see Note 4)*
supervisor – *use lower case*
Tɔ̃chɔ̃ terms (*note capitalization*):
 Tɔ̃chɔ̃ administration
 Tɔ̃chɔ̃ Agreement
 Tɔ̃chɔ̃ Assembly
 Tɔ̃chɔ̃ Assembly member
 Tɔ̃chɔ̃ communities
 Tɔ̃chɔ̃ citizens
 Tɔ̃chɔ̃ Constitution
 Tɔ̃chɔ̃ Executive Officer
 Tɔ̃chɔ̃ Gathering

Tłchq Government
Tłchq Government administration
Tłchq laws
Tłchq Nation

TEO – use *Tłchq Executive Officer* in first reference in each policy or section of a document.

TEO can be used in following cases if it's put it in brackets beside the first reference – i.e.,

Tłchq Executive Officer (TEO)

time in lieu (*not lieu time*)

time sheet

translator (*lower case*)

travelling

VWXYZ

versus *not* vs.

Wekweèti (Snare Lake)

| **Whati** (Lac La Martre)

web, webcam, webmaster, web page, web server, website

work day

workplace

World Wide Web – use “Internet” in most cases. (*see Note 5*)

Notes

Note 1

Capitalize both words in titles that appear on the Tłıchǫ Government organizational chart, as listed below.

Alphabetical List of Capitalized Government Titles

Accounts Payable Clerk
Accounts Receivable Clerk
Administrative Assistant
Assistant to the TEO
[*budget authority* is lower case]
Chiefs Executive Council
Communications Advisor
Community Director(s)
Community Wildlife Co-ordinator
Controller
[*department director* is lower case]
Finance Clerk
Finance Director
Genealogy Researcher
GIS Technician
Human Resources Director
Implementation and Policy Advisor
Implementation Facilitator
Land Use Planner/Lands Regulator
Lands Administration Officer
Lands and Resources Co-ordinator
Lands Protection Director
Language, Culture and Communication Director
PAS Co-ordinator
Payroll Clerk
Programs and Services Coordinator
Receptionist/File Clerk
Senior Community Director
Senior Director of Administration
Traditional Knowledge Researcher
Traditional Knowledge Researcher Assistant
Tłıchǫ Executive Officer
Wildlife/Special Projects Advisor

Note 2

Lists can be approached in different ways, depending on the content and use. The following information is based on the *Chicago Manual of Style Online*, 16th Edition, with some changes specific to this guide.

1. Lists of simple, short phrases can be embedded in the text, with or without numbering, *e.g.*, *All purchase orders must include: (1) the item and quantity being purchased, (2) where the item is to be purchased, (3) the cost of the item...and (6) budget codes/account class.*

If each item in a list consists of a sentence or more, use a vertical format.

2. A vertical list can be used if it helps users find and reference items, if each item is a long phrase or sentence, or if the list has several “levels” of numbering.

- a. A point-form list can use bullets or numbers or neither. It usually consists of single words or short phrases on each line. It generally doesn't use punctuation.

It is introduced with a colon.

- i. *E.g., The following days are designated as paid holidays:*

Aboriginal Day

New Year's Day

Good Friday

Easter Monday...

- b. Try to introduce a vertical list with a full sentence that ends with a period or a colon.

Example:

j) Only employees on pay levels 1-5 are eligible to earn time in lieu. Where such an employee works overtime, the following conditions apply.

- i. All overtime must be pre-approved in writing by the employee's supervisor.
 - ii. All overtime will be accumulated as hours in lieu at a rate of 1.5 hours for every hour worked.
 - iii. All unused time in lieu will be paid out on March 31 of each fiscal year.
- Etc.

BUT

- c. A vertical list can be written like a sentence arranged vertically; in these cases, it should be punctuated like a list in a sentence.

Example

- a) The Tłıchǵ Government will support, develop and implement conservation measures in our operations and programs by:
 - iv. managing the resources of the Tłıchǵ area in a manner that is effective, efficient and environmentally responsible;
 - v. reaffirming the responsibility of individual employees for the conservation of resources;
 - vi. implementing programming that informs the Tłıchǵ communities about environmental concerns and develops a personal sense of responsibility; and purchasing materials that are recycled, can be reused or, in the case of chemicals and cleaners, are environmentally safe.

Note 3

The four Tłıchǫ communities are Behchokò (Rae-Edzo), Whatì (Lac La Martre), Gamètì (Rae Lakes) and Wekweètì (Snare Lake).

Note 4

In general, “employees” are paid to perform duties in-house. “Staff” is a more general term and can include volunteers or contractors.

Note 5

The Internet is a system of networks that allow computers to connect with each other. The World Wide Web is just one of various systems used to access the Internet and does not include email or instant messaging, for example.