

Red Cross Style

Correct, consistent punctuation and style contribute to the professionalism of American Red Cross communications. On the other hand, inattention to these details may distort the meaning and may also lead readers to question the care with which a communication was developed.

In general, the Red Cross bases its decisions on editing style on *The Chicago Manual of Style* (The University of Chicago Press) and *Words Into Type* (Prentice-Hall, Inc.). Spelling follows *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*. (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* is good as a desk reference and for checking word division.) In some cases, communicators may base other style decisions on Associated Press or American Medical Association styles. In any case, a consistent pattern of style decisions within a Red Cross publication is essential.

The Red Cross expects all communicators to have full command of the commonly accepted rules of grammar, punctuation and language and to avoid the use of sexist, racist or other forms of insensitive language. The following style points summarize some major rules peculiar to the organization.

Selected Points of Red Cross Style

1. Refer to the organization as the American Red Cross on first reference, and the Red Cross thereafter. Don't use the acronym ARC to represent the organization except in unusual circumstances where space is at a premium, such as in graphs and charts. Use it only as part of a publication number (Example: ARC 3068). The legal name of the corporation is The American National Red Cross. (Note that the word The is capitalized.) Use the legal name only in the copyright line, in legally binding documents and in publications committing the Red Cross to the expenditure of funds.
2. Don't use Red Cross without the word the preceding it, except as a unit modifier (Examples: "Red Cross programs..." but "The Red Cross has many programs.").
3. Avoid using the possessive form of the Red Cross. If you can't recast the sentence, use *the Red Cross's* (Example: "The mission of the Red Cross").
4. Avoid using NHQ as an acronym or national as a shortened form for national headquarters, which should not normally be capitalized in formal documents. In electronic documents or when space is at a premium, spell out national headquarters in the first reference, then NHQ is acceptable in subsequent references in informal documents.
5. When referring to volunteers and employees of the Red Cross collectively, do use the phrase employees and volunteers, not paid and volunteer staff. The staff of the Red Cross comprises volunteers and employees alike.
6. Don't use the term blood region to mean Blood Services region. Use the term blood center only when referring to the facility in which the Blood Services region is housed or to activities that emanate from the facility (Examples: American Red Cross Blood Services, Southwest Region; the Southwest Region; the Blood Services region).
7. Don't use a title such as Mr., Miss, Mrs., or Dr. before a proper name unless the surname appears alone (Examples: Elizabeth Smith, Mrs. Smith).
8. Identify a specific doctoral degree following the name (Example: Deborah Hull, Ph.D. not Dr. Deborah Hull). On subsequent references, Dr. may be used with the surname.

9. Use the given name of a married woman with her last name, unless she has requested the use of Mrs. and her husband's given name (Example: Eileen Hughes, not Mrs. George Hughes, unless she has so requested).

10. Use traditional state abbreviations when they are called for in text. Use the two-letter postal abbreviation only as part of an address and when accompanied by the ZIP code. (See *The Chicago Manual of Style*, "Abbreviations," 14.17.)

Ala., AL	Ky., KY	Okla., OK
Alaska, AK	La., LA	Oreg. (Ore.), OR
Ariz., AZ	Maine (Me.), ME	Pa. (Penn., Penna.), PA
Ark., AR	Md., MD	P.R., PR
Calif. (Cal.), CA	Mass., MA	R.I., RI
C. Z. (Canal Zone)	Mich., MI	Samoa
Colo., CO	Minn., MN	S.C., SC
Conn., CT	Miss., MS	S. Dak. (S.D.), SD
Del., DE	Mo., MO	Tenn., TN
D.C. DC	Mont., MT	Tex., TX
Fla., FL	Nebr. (Neb.), NE	Utah, UT
Ga., GA	Nev., NV	VT., VT
Guam, GU	N. H., NH	Va., VA
Hawaii, HI	N. J., NJ	V.I., VI
Idaho (Ida.), ID	N. Mex. (N.M.), NM	Wash., WA
Ill., IL	N.Y., NY	W. Va., WV
Ind., IN	N.C., NC	Wis. (Wisc.), WI
Iowa (Ia.), IA	N. Dak. (N.D.), ND	Wyo., WY
Kans. (Kan.), KS	Ohio, OH	

11. Use parentheses when inserting the name of the state within the proper name of a Red Cross chapter. Examples: the Nuckolls County (Nebraska) Chapter; the Nuckolls County Red Cross chapter (not the proper name); the Mile High Chapter (Colorado), when the chapter name does not represent a political or geographical unit.

12. Don't capitalize most American Red Cross titles (e.g., senior vice president), unless they appear directly before the name of the person holding the position (Examples: Chapter Chairman James McDonald just resigned. James McDonald was chairman of the Cedar County Chapter.).

13. Spell out the word "and" in sentences and unit names; do not use an ampersand (&) except in unusual circumstances where space is at a premium, such as in graphs and charts.

14. Do not use a comma before and or or when it connects the last two elements in a series. Example: Three pioneers of the American Red Cross were Clara Barton, Mabel Boardman and Wilbert E. Longfellow.

15. Put titles of newspapers, books and other publications in italics. Set titles of movies, television shows and plays in quotation marks.

16. Use World Wide Web, the Web and Web site.

17. Use *fundraiser* and *fund raising*, but hyphenate *fund raising* when used as a unit modifier. (Examples: The subject of the conference is fund raising; I am going to a fund-raising conference. The chapter had a successful fundraiser.)

18. Use the following style for dates: the March 2001 meeting (no comma); the

March 17, 2001, meeting (commas after the day and year; no “th” after the day).

19. Use the following style for telephone numbers: (202) 555-5555.

If you have questions or need specific advice or assistance with Red Cross style, please contact:

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