



CITY OF
DURHAM

Glossary of Terms

A

Abbreviations:

Abbreviations of capitalized words should also be capitalized. Examples: Aug. (August), Mon. (Monday), St. (Street). Such abbreviations should be followed by a period. See also “acronyms,” “dates,” and “FAQs.”

Acronyms:

Use the two-letter United States Postal Service abbreviations without periods, e.g. NC, VA, DC, in business correspondence. Use all caps, but no periods, in longer abbreviations when the individual letters are pronounced, e.g. ABC, CIA, FBI, IRS.

Academic degrees:

Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree, a master's, etc. There is no possessive in Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science. Use abbreviations as B.A., M.A., LL.D., and Ph.D. only when the need to identify many individuals by degree on first reference. Examples: Charles Smith earned a bachelor's degree from Duke University. The Mayor graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in political science. Linda Evans earned a master's degree in public policy.

A.M. and P.M.:

Use a.m. and p.m. with periods. Always include a space between the hour and the time, e.g. 7 a.m. When the time is on the hour, use the number by itself, e.g. 6 p.m., not 6:00 p.m. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes,

e.g. 3:30 p.m. Always use figures except for noon and midnight. Avoid redundancies such as 10 a.m. this morning or 10 p.m. tonight.

And:

If space allows use the word and in most titles rather than the ampersand (&). Do not capitalize in titles or headlines.

Articles, Conjunctions, Prepositions:

In headlines or titles, write articles, conjunctions, and short prepositions in lowercase (a, an, and, at, for, in, of, on, or, the, to). Exception: capitalize conjunctions with four or more letters, except for from or with.

B

Bulleted lists:

Do not use periods at the end of bulleted text, unless the bulleted items are complete sentences.

C

Chair/Chairman/Chairwoman/Chairperson:

Unless a personal preference has been indicated, use chairman or chairwoman if the gender is known. For a neutral reference, use chair.

Citizen(s):

Use resident(s). See “resident vs. citizen.”

City:

Always capitalize when referring to the City of Durham organization. Example: “The City expects to increase police patrols in downtown Durham.”

City Council:

Always capitalize when referring to the Durham City Council.

Citywide:

One word. Do not hyphenate.

Commas:

Use commas to punctuate a series of three or more words, phrases, or thoughts and include a comma BEFORE the “and” or “or.” Example: Jeff was interested in the electronic, printed, and TV versions of Durham Television Network.

D

Dates:

Whenever possible, spell out the month when writing a date, e.g. January 1, 2018. If space does not permit, abbreviate the month with a period after the abbreviation, e.g. Jan. 1, 2018. Do not use st, nd, rd, or th. When typing a date in which the apostrophe represents a century, e.g. Class of '99, be sure to use a right single quote (not Class of '99). An easy way to do this is to type two apostrophes, then delete the first one.

E

Email:

No hyphen and no capitalization, unless it begins a sentence or is used in a headline. Use lowercase and hyphen for e-government and e-commerce. Do not underline email addresses in printed publications.

F

Facebook:

One word with the first letter capitalized.

FAQs:

Most people familiar with the Internet know that this means “Frequently Asked Questions.” Therefore, it is acceptable to use the abbreviation. Do not spell it out.

Fax:

Fax may be used as a noun, adjective, and verb. Do not write FAX in all caps.

H

Homepage:

Write as one word.

I

i.e.:

Means “that is.” If no other mark precedes the abbreviation, place a comma before it. No comma is necessary after the abbreviation. (The City of Durham collects all

refuse, i.e. bulk items, household trash, and hazardous materials. [OR] The City of Durham collects all refuse (i.e. bulk items, household trash, and hazardous materials.)

In-house:
Hyphenate.

Instagram:
Always capitalize.

Internet:
Do not capitalize unless at the start of a sentence or in a headline.

Intranet:
Do not capitalize unless at the start of a sentence or in a headline.

It's:
Do not use the contraction it's in publications or on the Web. Instead, spell out "it is." In general, avoid contractions.
(Note: Use its for the possessive of it. Example: A flower is known for its beauty.)

K
Kilobytes:
Abbreviate with the capital letter K. When listing the number of kilobytes, do not add space between the number and the K, e.g. 300K.

L
LinkedIn:
One word with a capital L and I.

Links (on the web only):
When linking to an email address or another webpage on the City's website, do not display the URL in the text. Examples: 1) Email the Department Manager for more information. 2) For more information, visit the City of Durham website. Links should be displayed in all other forms of correspondence, such as letters, email, etc.

Lists:
See "bulleted lists."

Logo:
Reference the logo standards: here

M
Mayor:
The word Mayor is always capitalized when it is placed before the name as an official title. (Mayor John Doe). It is not capitalized when used in a sentence and not as a formal title. ("Today, the mayor was quoted....")

Mobile Phone:
Spelled with two words and not capitalized unless at the beginning of a sentence. Mobile can also be used.

N
News Releases:
Reference the downloadable news release: here

Numerals:
Numbers from one to nine should be spelled out as a word (one,

two, three...). Any number larger than nine should be written as a number, e.g. 10, 374, 28, except at the start of a sentence. (Example: Twentieth century art hangs on the walls.) Use commas to separate thousands in number amounts, e.g. 1,000 or \$15,335). When using numbers in budget or finance documents, it is appropriate to show cents (Example: \$15,335.23). Also see "places."

O
Online:
Do not hyphenate. Use initial capital when appropriate.

P
Percent:
One word, spelled out in regular text. Example: Only 45 percent of the electorate voted. The symbol (%) is only used in scientific and statistical text.

Personal Names:
Omit the commas before and after Jr. and Sr. and after Roman numerals.
Examples: Charles Williams Jr. is the court's nominee. Charles Williams III is the court's nominee.

Phone Numbers:
The standard format is (area code) XXX-XXX. If there is an extension, insert a space after the phone number and use ext. before the extension number. Emergency and non-emergency numbers should be used without dashes, e.g. 911

and 311. Parenthesis should be used around the area code and dashes should be used to separate the numbers. The only exception is the stylized use of "dots" in the pre-printed official letterhead.

Places:
Spell out places (first, second, third) unless they refer to a street number.
Example: The City of Durham won first, second, and third place in the website contest.

Plural or Collective Nouns:
Many words (including faculty, committee, board, youth, staff, team, class, public, group, and data) can be both singular and plural. The choice of a singular or plural verb depends on whether the intent is to refer to the group as a whole or to the members of the group. For clarity, it helps to add members of before the reference.

Examples: Our department's faculty is highly respected in international professional circles. Members of our faculty are highly respected.

Podcast:
One word. Use initial capital when appropriate.

Position Titles:
When referring to a specific City employee, board member, or other representative, capitalize the title if it precedes the name. Lowercase the title if it comes after the person's name. Generic titles should be lowercase.

Exceptions: the Mayor, Councilmember

Q

Quotation Marks: Unless providing a direct quote, use quotation marks sparingly, opting instead for italics or an alternate sentence construction to call attention to a word or phrase. Place periods and commas inside quotation marks; place colons and semicolons outside quotation marks. Place periods, commas, colons, and semicolons outside parentheses unless the text within parentheses is a complete sentence.

Example: "I want to place even more emphasis on a proactive role for the City," said Deputy City Manager Jane Doe. The City Manager's vision for the City encourages a "proactive role"; his goals include strong economic development and comprehensive planning.

R

Resident vs. Citizen:

Use resident(s). Never use the word citizen(s) unless specifically referring to one group, as in "Only U.S. citizens are able to vote in a presidential election." See "citizen(s)."

S

Seasons:

Do not capitalize unless part of a proper name or title. Use the season and the year. Examples: She was elected in fall 2007. Visit our website to view the Fall Schedule of Activities.

Sentence Spacing:

Use a single space between sentences.

Spacing:

Letters should be single-spaced with double spaces between paragraphs. Use only one space at the end of a sentence (tap the spacebar once).

Staff:

See "plural or collective nouns."

State Abbreviations:

Use the two-letter United States Postal Service abbreviations without periods, e.g. NC, VA, DC, in business correspondence. Use the state abbreviations listed in the Associated Press Style Guide when preparing materials for dissemination to the news media since these abbreviations differ from the postal codes.

T

Temperature:

When referring to temperature in degrees, spell out the word degree (Example: It is 75 degrees today).

Time:

See "a.m. and p.m."

Twitter:

Always capitalize.

U

URL:

Do not underline web addresses or email addresses in printed (hard copy) publications. The underline may hide underscore marks and make it difficult for readers to see the full link. It is acceptable to underline web addresses in all electronic communications, including but not limited to, emails, website links, etc.

V

Videocast:

One word. Use initial capital when appropriate.

Voicemail:

Write as one word. Do not hyphenate.

W

Website:

One word with the first letter lowercased unless it begins a sentence.

Webfeed/Webpage/Webcast/Webmaster/Web:

These are one word with no capitalization.

Wiki:

One word. Only capitalize the "w" when it begins a sentence.

Wi-Fi:

Hyphenate and use capital W and F.

YouTube:

One word and use capital Y and T.