ICT-IDOT Report Style Guide

Adhere to the guidelines of these resources in the following order:
1. Federal Highway Administration
2. Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition
3. Merriam Webster

For example, if guidance from the Federal Highway Administration conflicts with the Chicago Manual of Style, then FHWA’s guidance takes precedence.

Abbreviations
- Limit abbreviations to terms used five times or more within an article or chapter (CMS 10.3).
- Spell out abbreviations upon first occurrence (CMS 10.3).
- Capitalize spelled-out words of an abbreviation only if they are proper nouns (CMS 10.6).
- Spell out the full names of US states in running text (CMS 10.27).

Citations
- Use any consistent citation style. (ICT prefers APA or Chicago’s author-date system.)
- Cite all in-text citations in the reference list, and vice versa.
- Include DOIs in the reference list when possible. Format DOIs as a hyperlink (https://doi.org/).

Equations
- Encourage authors to use Math ML—rather than LaTeX—to generate equations, as it is screen reader friendly.

Hyphenation
- Consult CMOS’s hyphenation guide for advice on hyphenation (CMS 7.89).
- Hyphenate words that could be misread (e.g., re-creation/recreation) or phrases where ambiguity may occur (CMS 7.84).

Miscellaneous
- Change non-US spellings to US spellings, including units of measurement (CMS 8.152).
- Use either the long or short name for US highways, as long as it is consistent throughout the document (e.g., Interstate 90 versus I-90) (CMS 9.50).
- List the report title in title case—not all caps—on the title and technical documentation pages.
- Capitalize keywords and separate them by a comma.
- Lowercase the names of laws, theories, chemical elements etc., except for proper nouns (CMS 8.148, 8.149).
- Use “United States” rather than “America.”
- Use US not U.S.
- Use a comma and no periods in running text when using Washington, DC (CMS FAQ).

Numbers
- Use Chicago’s alternative number rule: only spell out numbers under nine or those at the beginning of a sentence (CMS 9.3).
- Express large or complex fractions as numeric decimal fractions (e.g., a mean of 0.73) (CMS 9.19).
- Set fractions in text with a slash (CMS 12.45), even simple fractions (a departure from CMS 9.14).
• Omit periods in technical abbreviations (e.g., 5 ft) except for inches (CMS 10.64).
• Do not change the technical abbreviation to plural (e.g., 5 yds) (CMS 10.65).
• Encourage authors to provide SI (metric) measurements with equivalent US measurements in parentheses.

Punctuation
• Use the oxford comma (CMS 6.19)
• Follow Chicago’s usage of the hyphen (-), en dash (–), and em dash (—) (CMS 6.75).

Section 508
• Use the term “presents” rather than “shows” when referring to tables or figures. For example, Figure 1 presents…
• Avoid red and green color combinations in figures, instead use orange and blue or red and blue.
• Refer to Penn State’s guidelines for creating accessible equations.
• Follow WebAim’s guidelines for writing alternative text per Section 508’s recommendation.

Symbols
• Use the minus sign (−) (U+2212) when making a negative sign for negative numbers.
• Use the % symbol with a number, not “percent” (CMS 9.18)
• Repeat the abbreviation or symbol if it is closed up to the number but not if it is separated (e.g., 25%–50%) (CMS 9.17).
• Use the prime and double prime symbols rather than a single or double quotation mark (e.g., 3′6″ not 3′6”).
• Do not add a space between numbers and symbols such as the degree symbol and percent sign (CMS 10.58).
• Use a dollar sign only when it is clear that the author is referring to US dollars. Add International Organization for Standardization’s three-letter currency codes when “$” may refer to non-US currencies (e.g., USD, CAD) (CMS 9.21).
ICT-IDOT Report Terminology

Terminology

- a RAP [not "an RAP"]
- air-blast cleaning
- back-calculation
- baghouse fines
- Bailey method
- base course mix
- binder-grade bumping
- bulk specific gravity
- decision-making [noun and adjective forms hyphenated]
- direct-shear testing device
- glassy (or glass) transition temperature
- ground-penetrating radar
- hot-mix asphalt (HMA)
- ICT not the ICT
- in situ + noun [unhyphenated, see CMS 7.89, non-English phrases]
- life cycle + noun [unhyphenated, recognized as open compound in Merriam Webster]
- life cycle cost analysis [unhyphenated, recognized as open compound in Merriam Webster]
- McLeod’s limiting stiffness criteria
- nonpolymer-modified HMA
- PG 58-22 [note spacing and hyphen]
- Portland cement
- reclaimed asphalt pavement (RAP)
- recycled asphalt shingles (RAS)
- shrinkage-reducing admixture
- small cell + noun [hyphenated to prevent ambiguity]
- stand-alone [when used as an adjective]
- state of the art [unhyphenated unless used as a phrasal adjective]
- state of the practice [unhyphenated unless used as a phrasal adjective]
- SuperPave
- SuperPave Gyratory Compactor
- warm-mix asphalt (WMA)
- Waveform
- wearing course mix
- wearing-surface layer
- wheel-tracking test [or, if author prefers, it's okay to use wheel-track test]