



City of Winnipeg Writing Style Guide

April 2019

Vision

To be a vibrant and healthy city which places its highest priority in quality of life for all its citizens.

Corporate mission

Working together to achieve affordable, responsive and innovative public service.



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Introduction

The *City of Winnipeg Writing Style Guide* is a resource for City of Winnipeg (City) employees when drafting written materials. The guide defines and explains the writing guidelines for all internal and public-facing materials to ensure consistency across the organization. The original guide was developed by the Water and Waste Department's Communication Services team and subsequently updated for use organization-wide.

Spelling & grammar

It is important to ensure that spelling and grammar are correct and consistent in all materials. This section will outline common spelling errors and how to properly use punctuation.

Common spelling errors

Avoid making common spelling errors by double-checking your document for any mistakes and using the spell check tool in Microsoft Word and Microsoft Outlook, set to English (Canada).

Commonly misused words & phrases

There are many words and phrases that are commonly used incorrectly. Ensure you are using the correct term in written materials.

Misused word	Explanation	Example
License & licence	<i>Licence</i> is a noun, while <i>license</i> is a verb. In the United States, the spelling “license” is also used as a noun, which is why you may see it used this way. In Canada, the noun and verb have two different spellings.	License: I am now <u>licensed</u> to drive. Licence: I carry my driver’s <u>licence</u> in my wallet.
By-law & bylaw	Use <i>by-law</i> (hyphen) when referring to a specific legal document. Use <i>bylaw</i> (no hyphen) when referring to rules and regulations.	By-law: The Community Liveability <u>By-law</u> passed first reading. Bylaw: The <u>bylaw</u> states that a dwelling must be provided with a heating system.
Councillor, Councilor & Counsellor	Use <i>Councillor</i> when referring to a member of Council. In the United States, it is spelled with one “l.” <i>Counsellor</i> refers to an attorney.	Correct: <u>Councillor</u> Brian Mayes, St. Vital, welcomed residents as they arrived to pick up their free compost. Incorrect: <u>Councilor</u> Brian Mayes, St. Vital, welcomed residents as they arrived to pick up their free compost. <u>Counsellor</u> Brian Mayes welcomed residents as they arrived to pick up their free compost.
Practice & practise	<i>Practice</i> is a noun, while <i>practise</i> is a verb.	Practice: I am dropping Jimmy off at his soccer <u>practice</u> at 6 p.m. Practise: I watched Jimmy <u>practise</u> his passing skills today.
There, their & they’re	<i>There</i> can be used as an adverb, pronoun, noun, or adjective. It is often used when indicating a place or position. <i>Their</i> is used when you want to show ownership of something. <i>They’re</i> is the conjunction for “they are.”	There: <u>There</u> is a meeting about the project this afternoon. Their: <u>Their</u> project is going to be amazing. They’re: <u>They’re</u> going to Tim Hortons for lunch. Using all three: <u>They’re</u> going to eat <u>their</u> lunches over <u>there</u> .

Misused word	Explanation	Example
Principal & principle	<p><i>Principal</i> is used when referencing a person in a leadership role or to describe the importance of something.</p> <p><i>Principle</i> is used when referring to a standard, rule, or guideline.</p>	<p>Principal: Mr. Smith is the <u>principal</u> of the elementary school.</p> <p>Principle: The fundamental <u>principle</u> of organic lawn care is that a properly maintained lawn should not need chemical inputs to thrive.</p>
Who's & whose	<p><i>Who's</i> is a contraction of "who is" or "who has."</p> <p><i>Whose</i> is a possessive pronoun used when describing whom something belongs to.</p>	<p>Who's: Kelly is the person <u>who's</u> in charge of updating the website.</p> <p>Whose: Customers <u>whose</u> pipes were thawed on the property owner's portion of the water pipe are responsible to pay the full amount of the water and sewer charges.</p>
Regardless & Irregardless	<p><i>Irregardless</i> is often mistakenly used instead of <i>regardless</i>. By adding the prefix "ir" to <i>regardless</i>, you create a double negative, changing the meaning to "without without regard."</p>	<p>Correct: We will make sure the job is done right, <u>regardless</u> of any obstacles we encounter.</p> <p>Incorrect: We will make sure the job is done right, <u>irregardless</u> of any obstacles we encounter.</p>
Would have & would of	<p>Never use "<i>would of</i>"; rather, use "<i>would have</i>."</p>	<p>We <u>would have</u> gone with that contractor, but they did not have the experience necessary.</p>
Your & you're	<p><i>Your</i> is used for possessives.</p> <p><i>You're</i> is a contraction meaning "you are."</p>	<p>Your: When is <u>your</u> collection day?</p> <p>You're: If <u>you're</u> moving into a newly constructed home, into an existing home, or out of your current home, you should know this about your garbage and recycling carts.</p>
Its & it's	<p><i>Its</i> is used for possessives.</p> <p><i>It's</i> is a contraction meaning "it is."</p>	<p>Its: The recycling depot moved to <u>its</u> new location in 2012.</p> <p>It's: <u>It's</u> important to protect your home from basement flooding because no matter where you live in Winnipeg, your home is at risk of basement flooding.</p>

Capitalization

What should be capitalized:

- Proper names / nouns
- Public Service and department names
- Council and committee names
- The first word in a sentence
- Job / occupation titles
- Acronyms

What should not be capitalized:

- Common nouns
- Conjunctions and prepositions

See below for select examples of what and what not to capitalize.

Word/Category	Rule	Example
Department names	Capitalize	Water and Waste Department Public Works Department Animal Services Agency
Division names	Capitalize	Water Services Division Solid Waste Services Division Wastewater Services Division
Public Service	Capitalize	The <u>Public Service</u> recommends that the sale of the property be approved.
Job / occupation titles	Capitalize Note: <i>Lowercase plural use of job / occupation titles.</i>	Correct: The <u>Chief Administrative Officer</u> has delegated authority in this matter. John Smith, <u>Manager of Human Resource Services</u> , attended the meeting. The meeting was attended by <u>councillors</u> Mayes and Orlikow. Incorrect: The meeting was attended by <u>Councillors</u> Mayes and Orlikow.
Formal titles	Capitalize	Councillor Brian Mayes, <u>St. Vital</u> , welcomed residents as they arrived to pick up their free compost. Brian Mayes, <u>Councillor for St. Vital</u> , welcomed residents as they arrived to pick up their free compost.

Word/Category	Rule	Example
The <i>City</i>	<p>Yes, when referring to the organization known as the City of Winnipeg</p> <p>Note: <i>Spell it out fully on the first use and include the short form in brackets to introduce the abbreviation. Once you've used the abbreviation, use it consistently throughout thereafter.</i></p>	<p>Correct: The <u>City of Winnipeg (City)</u> will break ground on a new project today. The <u>City</u> says the project will cost \$1 million.</p> <p>Incorrect: The <u>City of Winnipeg (City)</u> will break ground on a new project today. The <u>city</u> says the project will cost \$1 million.</p> <p>Correct: From January to date, the <u>City</u> fixed 12 potholes.</p> <p>Incorrect: From January to date, <u>The City</u> fixed 12 potholes.</p>
City	No, unless referring to the organization known as the City of Winnipeg	<p>Garbage collection is delayed throughout the <u>city</u>.</p> <p>The City of Winnipeg advised that garbage collection is delayed throughout the <u>city</u>.</p>
Council & committees of Council	<p>Always capitalize <i>Council</i> or <i>City Council</i></p> <p>Capitalize proper committee names only</p>	<p>Correct: The matter was referred to <u>Council</u>.</p> <p>Members of the <u>Executive Policy Committee</u> had questions about the administrative report.</p> <p>Incorrect: The <u>Community Committee</u> meeting ran late.</p> <p>The <u>Standing Policy Committee</u> meeting is scheduled to occur next Thursday.</p>

Aa

Punctuation

Commas

Use	Example
To separate three or more items in a list Note: <i>Use of the Oxford comma is encouraged.</i>	City employees regularly clean, inspect, and paint hydrants to ensure they're in working order.
Before clauses introduced by the conjunctions	Problems are not expected, yet residents may experience discoloured water.
To separate different ideas within a sentence	If there are no complications, we can usually repair a water main within a day.
To separate adjectives before a noun when the commas represent the word 'and'	Storm retention ponds are efficient, cost-effective land drainage systems.
To separate geographical elements Note: <i>Do not omit the second comma.</i>	Correct: We consulted with experts from Toronto, Ontario, during the project. Incorrect: We consulted with experts from Toronto, Ontario during the project.

Use	Example
To set off the year from the month plus day	On March 12, 2017, there was a water main break at Main Street and Portage Avenue.
To set off thousands, but not in years, street addresses, page numbers, phone numbers, or serial numbers	<p>Correct: \$1,600</p> <p>Incorrect: 1,356 Fifth Ave.</p>
Inside closing quotation marks	“The vision of having a sustainable community has taken a huge leap forward today for the residents of east Winnipeg,” said Shawn Nason, Councillor for Transcona.
Outside of brackets	The North End Sewage Treatment Plant, otherwise known as the North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC), is the City of Winnipeg's oldest and largest sewage treatment plant.

When using commas, remember:

- When there are only two items in a list, do not use a comma to separate the items
- Use a comma or a dash, but not both



Colons

Use	Example
When introducing lists, texts, and tables	Manitoba Conservation also requires a licence for our biosolids operation: <i>Manitoba Environment Act Licence No. 1089ERR (under review)</i>
In question-and-answer formats	Q: What are water mains? A: Water mains are underground pipes that carry water from the pumping stations to your street.
To separate hours and minutes	The presentation will begin at 7:30 p.m.
After a formal salutation	Madam Speaker:
To separate titles and subtitles, unless the author's form differs	Water conservation: Residential water saving tips
When referring to a website link or email address in an imperative statement Note: Do not use punctuation following the link or email address in an imperative statement.	Learn more: winnipeg.ca/betterarlington For more information, contact: arlington@winnipeg.ca



Semicolons

Use	Example
To separate statements too closely related to stand as separate sentences	Two bids were received from Ward & Burke; the bid under the conditions set out in the documents was \$12 million.
To separate phrases that contain commas	The winners of the school challenge were Johnny Smith, grade six; Jane Brown, grade four; and Jimmy Anderson, grade two.
Preceding explanatory phrases when using a comma seems too weak	There is no charge to turn on water after repairs; however, there is a charge to turn on water after it was turned off for non-payment.



Quotation marks

In general, always use double quotation marks except for headlines and quotes within a quote.

Use	Example
To enclose direct quotations	“Winnipeggers can feel confident in our water system,” said Mayor Brian Bowman.
To begin and end each part of an interrupted quotation	“Two sets of negative test results confirm that Winnipeg’s water is safe,” said Moira Geer, Director of Water and Waste. “Our water meets all health and safety water quality regulations and guidelines.”
To alternate double and single marks in quotes within quotes	Mr. Smith told me, “My Councillor said, ‘This is a great idea.’”
Periods and commas inside closing quote marks	"It is heartwarming for us that this young boy draws so much pleasure and is so enthusiastic about garbage trucks and the important work that garbage collectors do," said Moira Geer, Director of Water and Waste.

When using quotation marks, remember:

- Do not use quotation marks around single letters
- Do not use colons or semicolons inside quotation marks



Dashes

When using dashes, an em dash (—) is preferred, but should not be overused. To create an em dash in Microsoft Word automatically as you are drafting, type two hyphens without spaces between the words surrounding the dash then insert the spaces manually.

Use	Example
To set off mid-sentence lists or explanations	The project team will discuss common problems — discoloured water, frozen pipes, water main breaks — before making its final decision.
When using commas (preferred) would cause confusion	The treatment plants — SEWPCC and NEWPCC — are under construction.
To attribute a quotation	Engineers like to solve problems. If there are no problems handily available, they will create their own problems. — Scott Adams

When using dashes, remember:

- Do not confuse hyphens and dashes
- Dashes should not be used in the same sentence as colons, semicolons, or commas
- To avoid overusing dashes, break long sentences into two shorter ones



Hyphens

Use	Example
To break a word over two lines	Residents in south Winnipeg may experience delays in collection today.
To join compound words	The fire hydrant was damaged by a hit-and-run driver.
To indicate joint titles	She was the writer-editor of the report.
To avoid doubling a vowel, tripling a consonant, or duplicating a pre-fix	The problem re-emerged after the repair was completed.
To join prefixes to proper names	The protestors at the rally were holding anti-Marxist signs.
To write fractions	We have cleaned approximately two-thirds of water mains in the city over the past two years.
To connect dates, except when preceded by from or between	Correct: The project was completed during the 2017-18 tax year. Incorrect: The project was completed between 2016-18.
For the minus sign in temperatures	The water main break was likely related to the -40 degree weather we experienced this week.
To write phone numbers	204-986-6000

When using hyphens, remember:

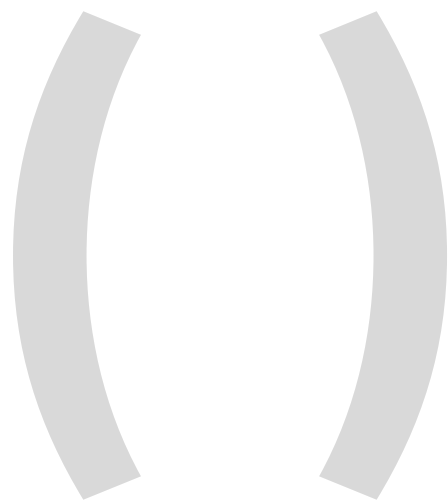
- Do not confuse hyphens and dashes
- Adverbs ending in -ly are not followed by a hyphen



Brackets (parentheses)

In general, brackets should be used sparingly and other punctuation should be used when possible. If a punctuation mark applies to the whole sentence, put the mark after the closing bracket.

Use	Example
To give further details in proper names, direction quotations, etc.	The article was published in the Moose Jaw (Sask.) Times Herald.
When numbering or lettering a series within a sentence	Once crews are on site, they a) inspect b) test and c) repair the water main.
To introduce an abbreviation or acronym	The City of Winnipeg (City) will share project details at an announcement today.



Exclamation points

Generally, do not use exclamation points in written materials. When writing specifically for advertisements and social media, exclamation points should only be used sparingly.



Periods

All sentences must end with a period. The only exception is sentences that contain a question and need a question mark.



Writing style

Voice

Rule	Example
Always use the active voice (use verbs, action words)	Correct: The committee decided that the project should proceed as planned. Incorrect: It was the decision of the committee that the project should proceed as planned.

Sentence structure

To be as clear as possible and ensure that what you are saying is easy to understand in written materials, follow these guidelines:

- Write short sentences using plain language
- Avoid run-on sentences and sentences with long lists whenever possible
- Use bullet lists when listing multiple items in a sentence

Plain language

Use commonly used, or everyday words, as much as possible to ensure most readers can understand. Avoid using technical or industry jargon and terminology, especially in public-facing materials. Public-facing materials should be written to a maximum of a grade 8 reading level.

Acronyms & abbreviations

An acronym is a word formed from the initial letters, or groups of letters, of words in a set phrase or series of words and pronounced as a separate word. For example, *automated meter reading's* acronym is *AMR*. Use as few acronyms as possible, and especially avoid using acronyms that are not well known.

When using acronyms and abbreviations, the following rules apply:

- Be consistent
- Make sure that you clearly define what the abbreviation or acronyms stands for at the earliest opportunity within the document by spelling it out fully on the first use, and include the abbreviation or acronym in brackets beside it
 - Example: Winnipeg Police Service (WPS)
- Ensure you use it often enough throughout the document that it makes sense to use it

Numbers

Numbers under 10 should be spelled out, while numbers 10 and over should be displayed numerically. When a sentence starts with a number, always spell it out. Use commas to set off thousands, but not in years, addresses, page numbers, phone numbers, or serial numbers.

Number	Example
9 and lower	Your payment may take three to five business days to process.
10 and higher	Your payment may take five to 10 business days to process.
1-9 at the beginning of a sentence	Two pieces of identification are required to apply for the program.
10 and higher at the beginning of a sentence	Fifty-five volunteers are needed to help sandbag along Kingston Row and Kingston Crescent.

Fractions

Fractions should be kept to two decimal points, unless further precision is essential.

These types of fractions are written using numbers:

- Numbers larger than one with fractions
- Decimal fractions
- Uncommon fractions

Common fractions are written using words, not numerically.

Type of fraction	Example
Numbers larger than one with fractions	After the upgrades, NEWPCC will remove 2.5 times more phosphorous.
Decimal fractions	A gauge located on the Red River at James Avenue is 727.57 feet geodetic.
Uncommon fractions	The diversion fees will increase by 0.15 of a percentage point next year.
Common fractions	By 2020, we aim to reduce the amount of combined sewer overflows by one-third.

Measurements

Rule	Example										
<p>Spell out terms such as kilogram, metre, milligram, litre, and minute when not used with figures (don't abbreviate)</p>	<p>The proposed rate will be a per kilogram charge.</p>										
<p>Abbreviate common terms such as km/h and mm when used with figures</p>	<p>The crew closed the 2,550 mm combined sewer relief outfall gate at approximately 9:25 a.m. to prevent further discharge to the river.</p>										
<p>Terms may be abbreviated when used repeatedly in tables and graphics</p>	<p>Summary table</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="695 611 1404 783"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="695 611 1182 642">Statistic</th> <th data-bbox="1182 611 1404 642">2016</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="695 642 1182 674">Authorized consumption ¹</td> <td data-bbox="1182 642 1404 674">59440 ml</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="695 674 1182 705">Average day water consumed ²</td> <td data-bbox="1182 674 1404 705">162.4 ml/d</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="695 705 1182 737">Per capita water consumed ³</td> <td data-bbox="1182 705 1404 737">221 l/c/d</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="695 737 1182 783">Revenue water ⁴</td> <td data-bbox="1182 737 1404 783">58577 ml</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p data-bbox="695 793 1271 821">ml - megalitres ml/d - megalitres per day l/c/d - litres per capita per day</p>	Statistic	2016	Authorized consumption ¹	59440 ml	Average day water consumed ²	162.4 ml/d	Per capita water consumed ³	221 l/c/d	Revenue water ⁴	58577 ml
Statistic	2016										
Authorized consumption ¹	59440 ml										
Average day water consumed ²	162.4 ml/d										
Per capita water consumed ³	221 l/c/d										
Revenue water ⁴	58577 ml										
<p>Abbreviations must follow Canadian Press style guidelines:</p> <ul data-bbox="240 940 646 1077" style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperial: in., ft., yd., mi.; oz., lb., cwt.; sq. ft. • Metric: mm, cm, m, KB, km, kg, g, t, ml, l, ha, kPa 	<p>Currently the Red River is at 7.5 feet James Avenue datum. Within five days, the Red River should return to its normal summer level of 6.5 ft. James.</p> <p>With total rainfall across the city varying between 100 mm and 130 mm from the storms on Friday and Saturday, the majority of the stormwater retention ponds within the city were at or above their design high water level.</p>										

Percentages

Rule	Example
<p>Use the percent sign (%) only in financial listings, graphs and charts</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Total phosphorus sources for Lake Winnipeg - 2002 report data</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Public meetings September 14-15, 2015 Data from a preliminary estimate of total nitrogen and total phosphorus loading to streams in Manitoba, Canada</p>
<p>Spell out the words “percent” in text</p>	<p>Correct: Since 2010, we have reduced the number of combined sewer overflows by <u>25 percent</u>.</p> <p>Incorrect: Since 2010, we have reduced the number of combined sewer overflows by <u>25%</u>.</p>

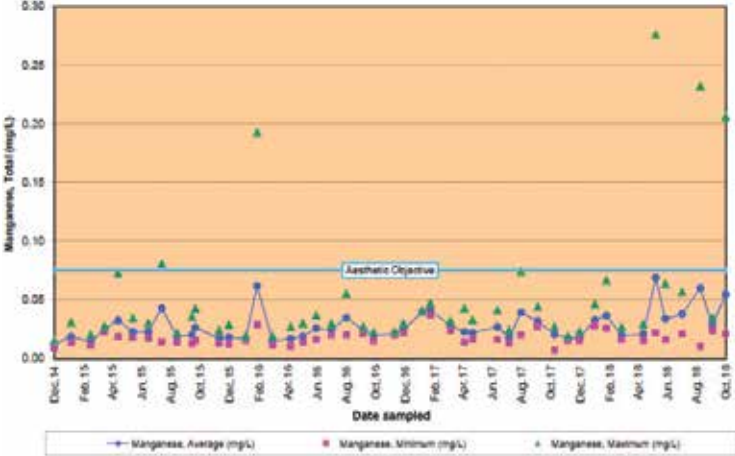
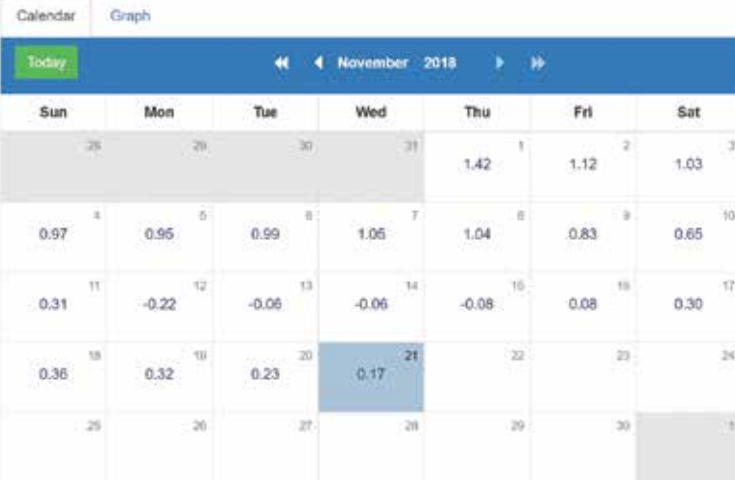
Monetary values

Rule	Example
<p>Always use a monetary symbol</p>	<p>The \$2 billion investment will help reduce the amount of combined sewer overflows that occur each year.</p>
<p>Use commas to set off thousands</p>	<p>The project will cost approximately \$165,000 to complete.</p>
<p>For round numbers, the decimal is not required</p>	<p>Correct: \$165,000</p> <p>Incorrect: \$165,000.00</p>

Phone numbers

Rule	Example
<p>Use dashes only</p>	<p>Correct: 204-986-6000</p> <p>Incorrect: (204) 986-6000</p> <p>204.986.6000</p>

Dates

Rule	Example
Write out numbers in dates, even if it is at the beginning of a sentence	2005 was the year we started building the water treatment plant, and construction finished several years later.
Spell out days of the week and months in text, do not abbreviate	<p>Correct: The Brady 4R Depot opened in February 2013.</p> <p>Incorrect: The Brady 4R Depot opened in Feb. 2013.</p>
When using dates in tables or graphics, abbreviate the months without periods: Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec	
When using days of the week in tables or graphics, abbreviate without periods: Sun, Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat	

Time

Rule	Example
Use the twelve hour clock	Residents are invited to join us for an information session on Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.
Capitalize time zones	The webinar will broadcast live at 2 p.m. EST (1 p.m. CST).
Separate the letters that indicate morning or afternoon with periods (a.m. / p.m.) Note: Always use lowercase letters.	Correct: The curb lane on westbound McPhillips Street will be closed from <u>6 a.m. until 4 p.m.</u> on Monday. Incorrect: The curb lane on westbound McPhillips Street will be closed from <u>6 am until 4 pm</u> on Monday.
If the time is at an even hour, do not include a colon and two zeros	Correct: The Panet 4R Depot closes at <u>4 p.m.</u> on Saturdays. Incorrect: The Panet 4R Depot closes at <u>4:00 p.m.</u> on Saturdays.
Use 'noon' or 'midnight', not 12 p.m. or 12 a.m.	Correct: The event takes place today at <u>noon</u> . Incorrect: The event takes place today at <u>12 noon</u> .
Always use figures for times, do not spell out numbers unless the time you are indicating is at the beginning of a sentence	Six o'clock is when the doors open. The presentation will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Ampersands

The use of ampersands is permitted in titles and headings.



Naming conventions

Elected officials

Job titles

When referring to a member of Council or Chairperson in written materials, capitalization rules apply (see page 8).

Rule	Example
Do not add the word “ward” when referring to a Council ward	Correct: Brian Mayes, <u>Councillor for St. Vital</u> , welcomed residents as they picked up their free compost. Incorrect: Brian Mayes, <u>Councillor for the St. Vital ward</u> , welcomed residents as they picked up their free compost.
Do not use “City” when referring to a Councillor’s job title	Correct: <u>Councillor</u> Brian Mayes, St. Vital, welcomed residents as they picked up their free compost. Incorrect: <u>City Councillor</u> Brian Mayes, St. Vital, welcomed residents as they picked up their free compost.
Heads of committees are known as chairpersons	Scott Gillingham, <u>Chairperson of the Standing Policy Committee on Finance</u> , spoke to reporters following the committee meeting. <u>Chairperson Scott Gillingham, SPC-Finance</u> , spoke to reporters following the committee meeting.
The “Chairperson” title supersedes Council ward title when referring to committee business – do not use both	Correct: <u>Chairperson of the Standing Policy Committee on Finance Scott Gillingham</u> spoke to reporters following the committee meeting. Incorrect: <u>Chairperson of the Standing Policy Committee on Finance, St. James Councillor Scott Gillingham</u> , spoke to reporters following the committee meeting.
Use the “Chairperson” title only if referring to committee matters; use the ward title if referring to non-committee matters	Correct: <u>Cindy Gilroy, Councillor for Daniel McIntyre</u> , welcomed residents attending a park dedication event in her ward. Incorrect: <u>Cindy Gilroy, Chairperson of the Standing Policy Committee on Innovation</u> , welcomed residents attending a park dedication event in her ward.

Council wards

Correct spelling (English)	Correct spelling (French)
Charleswood – Tuxedo – Westwood	Charleswood–Tuxedo–Westwood
Daniel McIntyre	Daniel-McIntyre
Elmwood – East Kildonan	Elmwood–Kildonan-Est
Fort Rouge – East Fort Garry	Fort Rouge–Fort Garry-Est
Mynarski	Mynarski
North Kildonan	Kildonan-Nord
Old Kildonan	Old Kildonan
Point Douglas	Point Douglas
River Heights – Fort Garry	River Heights–Fort Garry
St. Boniface	Saint-Boniface
St. James	St. James
St. Norbert – Seine River	Saint-Norbert–Rivière-Seine
St. Vital	Saint-Vital
Transcona	Transcona
Waverley West	Waverley-Ouest

Committees of Council

Correct spelling	Correct abbreviations
Executive Policy Committee	EPC
Standing Policy Committee on Finance	SPC-FIN
Standing Policy Committee on Infrastructure Renewal and Public Works	SPC-IRPW
Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks	SPC-PCS
Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development	SPC-PD
Standing Policy Committee on Water and Waste, Riverbank Management and the Environment	SPC-WW
Standing Policy Committee on Innovation	SPC-Innovation

Community committees

Correct spelling
Assiniboia Community Committee
City Centre Community Committee
East Kildonan – Transcona Community Committee
Lord Selkirk – West Kildonan Community Committee
Riel Community Committee

Public Service

When to use Public Service versus City of Winnipeg

Generally, when communicating with members of the public, use City of Winnipeg rather than the department or division, unless asking residents to contact a specific civic branch.

Rule	Example
Use <i>Public Service</i> when referring to employees of the City of Winnipeg making recommendations to committees of Council or Council	The <u>Public Service</u> recommends that the departmental business plan be received as information.
Use <i>City of Winnipeg</i> when communicating initiatives or projects to members of the public	<p>Correct: The <u>City of Winnipeg</u> is consulting with residents and gathering feedback on the installation of a bike path in the Windsor Park neighbourhood.</p> <p>Incorrect: The <u>Public Service</u> is consulting with residents and gathering feedback on the installation of a bike path in the Windsor Park neighbourhood.</p>

Departments, divisions, offices & special operating agencies

Correct spelling of departments, divisions & offices (English)	Correct spelling of departments, divisions & offices (French)
Assessment and Taxation Department or Assessment and Taxation	Service de l'évaluation et des taxes or Évaluation et taxes
Audit Department or Audit	Service de l'audit or Audit
CAO's Office or Chief Administrative Office	Bureau de la direction municipale or Direction municipale
City Clerk's Department or City Clerk's	Bureau du greffier or Greffier
Community Services Department or Community Services	Services communautaires
Corporate Finance Department or Corporate Finance	Service des finances générales or Finances générales
Customer Service & Communications Department or Customer Service & Communications or CSC	Service à la clientèle et communications
Film & Special Events Office or Film & Special Events	Bureau du film et des événements spéciaux or Film et événements spéciaux
Human Resource Services	Services aux ressources humaines or Ressources humaines

Correct spelling of departments, divisions & offices (English)	Correct spelling of departments, divisions & offices (French)
Indigenous Relations Division or Indigenous Relations Division or IRD	Division des relations avec les Autochtones or Relations avec les Autochtones
Infrastructure Planning Office or Infrastructure Planning	Bureau de la planification en matière d'infrastructure or Planification en matière d'infrastructure
Innovation, Transformation & Technology Department or Innovation, Transformation & Technology	Service de l'innovation, de la transformation et de la technologie or Innovation, transformation et technologie
Legal Services Department or Legal Services	Services juridiques
Office of Sustainability or Sustainability	Bureau du développement durable or Développement durable
Planning, Property & Development Department or Planning, Property & Development or PP&D	Service de l'urbanisme, des biens et de l'aménagement or Urbanisme, biens et aménagement
Public Works Department or Public Works or PW	Service des travaux publics or Travaux publics
Water and Waste Department or Water and Waste or W&W	Service des eaux et des déchets or Eaux et déchets
Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service or Fire Paramedic Service or WFPS	Service d'incendie et de soins paramédicaux de Winnipeg or Incendie et soins paramédicaux
Winnipeg Police Service or Police or WPS	Service de police de Winnipeg or Police
Winnipeg Transit or Transit	Régie des transports de Winnipeg or Transports

Correct spelling of special operating agencies (English)	Correct spelling of special operating agencies (French)
Animal Services Agency or Animal Services	Agence de services aux animaux or Services aux animaux
Fleet Management Agency or Fleet	Agence de gestion des véhicules or Gestion des véhicules
Golf Services	Organisme de gestion des terrains de golf or Gestion des terrains de golf
Winnipeg Parking Authority or WPA	Direction du stationnement de Winnipeg or Stationnement

Employee or staff

When referring to persons employed by the City of Winnipeg, use employee(s) not staff.

Correct	Incorrect
City of Winnipeg <u>employees</u> will contact affected property owners regarding the project.	City of Winnipeg <u>staff</u> will answer questions at the information session.

Resident or citizen

When referring to Winnipeggers in written materials, use resident rather than citizen. An individual can be a resident of Winnipeg without being a citizen.

The exception to this rule is in matters related specifically to citizenship, such as elections. For instance, you must be a Canadian citizen to vote in the municipal election. In these instances, use citizen rather than resident.

Programs, initiatives & events

When referring to programs, initiatives, and events, it's important to be consistent with naming conventions to ensure clarity. Choose one name and make sure you use it consistently at all times throughout all written materials.

Correct	Incorrect
The <u>Water Protection Project</u> launched its public engagement campaign today.	The <u>Water Protection Project</u> launched its public engagement campaign today.
Residents are being encouraged to submit their ideas for the <u>Water Protection Project</u> before December 31, 2017.	Residents are being encouraged to submit their ideas for the <u>project to protect water</u> before December 31, 2017.
Learn more about the <u>Water Protection Project</u> at winnipeg.ca/waterprotection	Learn more about the <u>City of Winnipeg Project for Water Protection</u> at winnipeg.ca/waterprotection .

If you opt to use an abbreviation or acronym for a program, initiative, or project, see page 19 for guidelines.

Standardized capital project terminology

The Customer Service & Communications Department and the Infrastructure Planning Office are collaboratively working on standardized capital project terminology to be used organization-wide to improve clarity and consistency when communicating capital project information to residents, stakeholders, and within the organization. It's anticipated that this undertaking will conclude in the second quarter of 2019. Subsequent updates to this guide will include the standardized capital project terminology.

Formatting style

Sentence spacing

When drafting written materials, do not leave two spaces after the punctuation at the end of a sentence. Only one space between the punctuation mark and the first letter of the following word is required.

Bulleted lists

All bulleted lists should start with an introductory sentence that ends with a colon. Always start each bullet point with an uppercase letter for the first word and do not use punctuation at the end of each one.

Correct	Incorrect
Registering for a MyUtilityBill account gives you access to your utility account details and allows you to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit meter readings online without registering for an account• Sign-up for a pre-authorized payment plan to avoid late fees• Track your household water consumption history and monitor for any costly leaks	Registering for a MyUtilityBill account gives you access to your utility account details and allows you to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit meter readings online without registering for an account.• Sign-up for a pre-authorized payment plan to avoid late fees.• Track your household water consumption history and monitor for any costly leaks.

Website & email addresses

Please note that you are not required to add either *https://* or *www.* at the beginning of a website address.

Correct	Incorrect
winnipeg.ca/clerks/election/election2018/default.stm	https://winnipeg.ca/clerks/election/election2018/default.stm

Whenever possible, use a vanity link in written materials, especially when the page link exceeds three words. A vanity link is a unique website address used to help users remember and find a specific page more easily. It should be easy to remember, use, and share.

Regular link	Vanity link
winnipeg.ca/clerks/election/election2018/default.stm	winnipeg.ca/election2018

To request a vanity link, please contact the Corporate Web team or IS Service Desk.

Website and email addresses must always be spelled out using lowercase letters only.

Correct	Incorrect
winnipeg.ca/election2018	winnipeg.ca/Election2018
janesmith@winnipeg.ca	JaneSmith@Winnipeg.ca Janesmith@Winnipeg.ca janesmith@Winnipeg.ca

When referring to a website or email address in an imperative statement, use a colon preceding the link and no punctuation following it.

Element	Correct	Incorrect
Website address	For more information, see: winnipeg.ca/betterarlington Learn more: winnipeg.ca/betterarlington	For more information, see winnipeg.ca/betterarlington. Learn more winnipeg.ca/betterarlington.
Email address	For more information, contact: arlington@winnipeg.ca	For more information, contact arlington@winnipeg.ca.

However, when referring to a website or email address in a sentence, do not use a colon preceding the link. If it's at the end of the sentence, add appropriate punctuation.

Element	Correct	Incorrect
Website address	For more information about the project and its implications, we suggest you refer to the project website at winnipeg.ca/betterarlington.	For more information about the project and its implications, we suggest you refer to the project website at: winnipeg.ca/betterarlington
Email address	For those who require alternate formats or interpretation in order to participate, please contact the project team no later than February 5, 2018 by email at arlington@winnipeg.ca.	For those who require alternate formats or interpretation in order to participate, please contact the project team no later than February 5, 2018 by email at: arlington@winnipeg.ca

References

When referring to a City document, bylaw, or any specific legislation in communications materials, italicize its proper name.

Correct	Incorrect
According to the <i>Neighbourhood Liveability By-Law</i> a roadway is the portion of a street that is improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular traffic and includes a back lane but does not include a multi-use path or a sidewalk.	According to the <u>Neighbourhood Liveability By-Law</u> a roadway is the portion of a street that is improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular traffic and includes a back lane but does not include a multi-use path or a sidewalk.

Street names & addresses

Spell out street names fully, including roadway type, and capitalize them both.

Correct	Incorrect
Fermor Avenue	Fermor Ave, Fermor Av., Fermor ave.
Sterling Lyon Parkway	Sterling Lyon Pkwy, Sterling Lyon pkwy.
Orchard Hill Drive	Orchard Hill Dr, Orchard hill dr.
Kingston Crescent	Kingston Cres, Kingston crescent, Kingston Cres.
Bishop Grandin Boulevard	Bishop grandin boulevard, Bishop Grandin Blvd
Carpathia Road	Carpathia Rd, Carpathia road

However, when referring to a specific address, you must abbreviate the roadway type.

Correct	Incorrect
The fire occurred at 12 First Ave.	The fire occurred at 12 First Avenue.
The fire occurred at 15 Second St. W.	The fire occurred at 15 Second Street West. The fire occurred at 15 Second St. West.

Roadway abbreviations

Roadway type	Abbreviation
Avenue	Ave.
Boulevard	Bld.
Circle	Cir.
Crescent	Cres.
Drive	Dr.
Highway	Hwy.
Parkway	Pky.
Road	Rd.
Route	Rte.
Street	St.
Terrace	Ter.

When using roadway abbreviations, remember:

- The abbreviation is always followed by a period

Directions

Directions, such as north, east, south, and west should not be capitalized unless they are part of a proper name.

Correct	Incorrect
Residents in <u>north Winnipeg</u> may experience delays in garbage and recycling collection on Tuesday.	Residents in <u>North Winnipeg</u> may experience delays in garbage and recycling collection on Tuesday.
The curb lane on <u>westbound Fermor Avenue</u> is closed between St. Anne's Road and St. Mary's Road as crews are conducting sewer repairs.	The curb lane on <u>Westbound Fermor Avenue</u> is closed between St. Anne's Road and St. Mary's Road as crews are conducting sewer repairs.

Events

When providing event details, be it online, in invitations, news releases or the like, use the following format as follows:

[Insert title] details

Date:

Time:

Location:

Format:

When possible, add a hyperlink to the event location using Google Maps.

Element	Use	Example
Date	Day of the week, month with specific date, followed by year	Monday, November 26, 2018
Time	Use the twelve hour clock and indicate the start and end times, separated by a dash Note: You can indicate more than one time, separated by a semicolon.	7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. 7 p.m. doors open; 7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. presentation
Location	Hyperlink address to Google Maps	52 Second St. N.
Format	If known, indicate the event format	Come and go

More information / 311

In many communications materials, the City advises residents to contact 311 for more information.

For items posted online, use the following format:

- For more information, contact 311

Note: Add hyperlink to the "Contact 311" web page on winnipeg.ca

For print materials, use the following format:

- For more information:
Call 311 or email 311@winnipeg.ca

Writing for Web

People read differently when reading on screens. They are reading the light emitted from a screen rather than reading a printed page, so their reading styles differ. Long lines of text across a page are difficult to scan. Usability studies recommend lines of 55 to 100 characters long depending on the size and type of font style.

When writing longer texts, it is recommended to use page chunking, a process that splits information into page-long chunks with each page focusing on a single topic or theme.

"Webitorial" is text or editorial copy that is adapted for the Internet. Repurposed editorial copy published on the Web exactly the way it appears in print must be in a document format such as Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc).

Remember to always follow the guidelines outlined in this guide when writing or repurposing editorial content for the Web.

Improve scanability

The vast majority of users do not read text on screen word-by-word. Approximately 80 percent of people simply scan the materials.

When writing for the Web, remember:

- Use headings and subheadings, and make them meaningful
- Keep paragraphs short
- Use one topic per paragraph
- Opening sentence should be the topic sentence
- Use short, simple sentence structures
- Choose a shorter word over a longer one
- Use bulleted lists

Written materials review checklist

It is imperative to follow the guidelines as outlined in this guide when drafting and reviewing all written materials, including administrative reports, public engagement materials, website materials, advertisements, etc.

When reviewing draft written materials, follow this checklist before submitting for final approval:

- Spelling:** check for typos, spelling mistakes, etc.
- Grammar:** ensure all sentences have proper structure, punctuation, and are easy to understand
- Writing style:** ensure all materials are consistent with the guidelines outlined in the *City of Winnipeg Writing Style Guide*
- Visual identity:** ensure all materials are in keeping with the *City of Winnipeg Brand Manual*
- Project, initiative or event name:** ensure names are consistent throughout all materials
- Dates & times:** ensure all dates and times are accurate (including project timelines)
- Website links & contact information:** ensure website address links work and that contact information is accurate
- Message consistency:** review all project materials to ensure information and messages are consistent throughout
- Commitment:** ensure the commitment to next steps (e.g. construction) is accurate, including required approvals necessary to advance an initiative or project to the next phase (i.e. Council-approval of the project and funding required before construction can begin)
- Budget:** confirm budget information as some projects may have funds in forecasted budgets, but not confirmed (i.e. mention: “subject to Council approval of the project and budget”)
- Charts, figures & graphs:** ensure information contained therein is accurate
- Weighted criteria:** ensure weighted criteria used is clearly defined and explained to avoid confusion
- Pictures & images:** ensure pictures and images used are either official project renderings or are of Winnipeg, and not of another city, and that we have permission to use the picture or image
- Public/stakeholder feedback:** ensure all references to personal information (e.g. phone numbers or addresses), links to non-City webpages (e.g. third party sites), and profane language are removed
- Summarizing public/stakeholder feedback:** ensure percentages and key reporting metrics are used rather than unsubstantiated statements (i.e. avoid: “Most respondents were in agreement with...”; instead, use: “Seventy-five percent of respondents were in agreement with...”)

News releases & media advisories

Headline & subhead

Element	Description	Example
Headline	Attention-grabbing title, succinct, provides a brief description of the topic	City releases November 2017 financial update
Subhead	Optional, provides a summary of the key takeaway	City releases November 2017 financial update Projected year-end surplus anticipated at \$8.7 million, up from \$1.7 million in October projections

When writing a headline and subhead, remember:

- Only the first word and any proper names within a title should be capitalized

Date format

Use	Example
Day of the week, month with specific date, followed by year.	Wednesday, October 3, 2018

Inverted pyramid

When writing news releases, use the inverted pyramid style. Generally, provide the most newsworthy information in the introductory paragraph, followed by quotes (if applicable), important details, and then general information.

Attributing quotes

A person's given name is used with surname on first reference. Only use the surname thereafter. Use job titles on first reference, not thereafter.

Says variants

When quoting an individual in a news release, use said immediately following the quote. Do not use **says**.

Correct	Incorrect
"I'm pleased to announce this new funding agreement," <u>said</u> Councillor Janice Lukes, Waverley West. "I'm pleased to announce this new funding agreement," <u>said</u> Janice Lukes, Councillor for Waverley West.	"I'm pleased to announce this new funding agreement," <u>says</u> Councillor Janice Lukes, Waverley West. "I'm pleased to announce this new funding agreement," Councillor Janice Lukes, Waverley West, <u>said</u> .

Order of dignitaries

When quoting dignitaries in news releases or listing speakers attending media events and announcements, the order is as follows (as applicable):

- Prime Minister and/or federal representative
- Premier and/or provincial representative
- Mayor
- Committee Chairperson
- Ward Councillor
- Member of an organization or community member

Media advisory naming conventions

Role	Example
Prime Minister	Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
Federal minister	Jim Carr, Minister of International Trade Diversification
Federal representative	Jim Carr, MP for Winnipeg South Centre
Premier	Premier Brian Pallister
Provincial minister	Kelvin Goertzen, Minister of Education and Training
Provincial representative	Kelvin Goertzen, MLA for Steinbach
Mayor	Mayor Brian Bowman
Chairperson	Brian Mayes, Chairperson of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development
Councillor	Brian Mayes, Councillor for St. Vital
City employee	Felicia Wiltshire, Director of Customer Service & Communications
Community partner	Anthony Edward Stark, CEO of Stark Industries

Translation requirements

Public-facing materials, including brochures, pamphlets, advertisements, website content, social media, etc. must be translated into French under the following circumstances:

- If the initiative is related specifically to the Riel District (*St. Boniface, St. Vital and St. Norbert - Seine River wards, as well as portions of Transcona*)
- If the initiative has citywide implications

The translation process involves several stages. There is much more to translation than simply typing in a foreign language and using one or two translation memory tools. The professional translation service requires either a revision (or edition) and a proofreading. These are two essential stages that need to take place before a document is ready to be delivered to the client. Therefore, please allow enough time in your process when sending the final documents to Translation Services (minimum two weeks).

In many cases, there is no cost to departments for translating materials. For clarity, advice, and guidance related to translation, please contact Nicole Young, Manager of French Language Services, by email at nyoung@winnipeg.ca or by phone at 204-986-2306.

To submit requests for translation, please contact city-translation@winnipeg.ca with the following information:

- Target deadline (date and time of day)
- Contact person and phone number
- Account number if applicable

Visual identity standards

The City's brand is our residents' perception of who we are, who we represent, and what we do. It is important to present the City's brand consistently across all departments, divisions, offices, and special operating agencies to build strength and trust in the services we provide to residents.

The *City of Winnipeg Brand Manual* provides usage guidelines for the logo, colours, fonts, photography, and other brand elements. It also includes examples of different layouts and how the brand elements can be applied.

For more information on the City's brand standards and to view the *City of Winnipeg Brand Manual*, please see [citynet/brandstandards](#).

For clarity, advice and guidance related to visual identity standards, please contact Kristen McLure, Manager of Marketing & Branding, by email at kristenmclure@winnipeg.ca or by phone at 204-986-7104.

Accessibility standards

All public-facing materials created by the City must meet accessibility standards. This includes website and social media content, signage, notices, and more. For more information, please consult the *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service* on Citynet at [citynet/accessibilitystandards](#) as well as [citynet/webstandards](#) for Web standards.



More information

For clarity, advice, and guidance related to the guidelines contained within this style guide, please contact David Driedger, Manager of Corporate Communications, by email at ddriedger@winnipeg.ca or by phone at 204-986-6976.

Photo credits

Courtesy of Tourism Winnipeg:

Aaron Cohen
INSIDE COVER

