



## PHILIPPINE NAVY

# Staff Writing Hand Guide

Philippine Navy  
Staff Writing Hand Guide

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Office of the Chief of Naval Staff



**FLAG OFFICER IN COMMAND  
PHILIPPINE NAVY**

Naval Station Jose Andrada  
2335 Roxas Boulevard, Manila

# Message

The crafting of the *PN Staff Writing Hand Guide* supports the aim of the Philippine Navy to be a world-class navy that our maritime nation can be proud of. More than our thrusts for operational and strategic excellence, we also endeavor for a holistic advancement, which includes the quality of our naval documents.

Through this hand guide, we take another step forward in terms of professionalizing our navy and its systems. We cultivate and further improve our written documents as a reflection of our excellence and professionalism. Just like our processes and strategies, our written documents must also be improved in a way that will make our jobs easier and our service better.

With the few but important points presented in this hand guide, we must aim to take the standards of the navy writing to a higher level. Therefore, everyone is encouraged to follow the writing guidelines contained in this hand guide.

**RONALD JOSEPH S. MERCADO**  
Vice Admiral, AFP



**VICE COMMANDER  
PHILIPPINE NAVY**

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# Message

The Philippine Navy (PN) uses written communication in its official and daily correspondence, both within and outside our institution. We put everything in writing to have permanency of records and effective communication that leads to efficient operations.

To achieve clear and concise naval documents, this *PN Staff Writing Hand Guide* prescribes the use of plain writing that will allow readers to easily comprehend what is written. It does not only supplement the *PN Staff Writing Manual*, but it also introduces resolutions to the common issues observed in the different written communication. With this hand guide, all officers, enlisted personnel and civilian employees are then expected to write simpler, but better naval communication.

As a key element to our tasks and responsibilities as a naval institution, effective writing should be given weight and constantly pursued. With the *PN Staff Writing Manual* and this additional *PN Staff Writing Hand Guide*, we are assured that we have ready references to achieve effective naval communication.



**RAFAEL G MARIANO**  
Rear Admiral, AFP



**CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF  
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# Foreword

As part of its main functions, the Office of the Chief of Naval Staff (OCNS) processes daily all forms of written naval communication prior to submission to the Flag Officer In Command, Philippine Navy (FOIC, PN). The processing of communication involves receiving, editing and monitoring written correspondence to and from concerned individuals/groups inside or outside the PN. With such crucial tasking, the OCNS recognizes the value of well written communication which makes the job of processing naval communication, especially editing, easier.

Good writing is an indispensable medium of effective naval communication. Well written communication is simple, clear and concise. It effectively relays the intended message to the reader in a single reading. Hence, effective writing is a requirement to speed up the paper trail and, ultimately, decision making in the Navy. Such requirement can only be achieved through proper use of the elements of the English language including grammar, tone and style, among others.

Although grammatically correct and error-free writing should always be the objective of staff writers in the Navy, the OCNS still comes across unacceptable written documents which significantly slow down communication processing. Consequently, the OCNS published this handbook to significantly cut down the editing time by helping Navy staff writers write better. This hand guide combines guidelines from PN and other credible writing manuals and the rules of standard English language. The goal is not only to achieve faster processing of communication but also to establish the means to have clear and straightforward correspondence within and outside the PN, most

especially with stakeholders and partner organizations.

This hand guide is published at a high point in our Navy's modernization efforts. To keep up with the times, we intend to fully transform our organization, including the quality of our communication. The implementation of this handbook brings us one step closer to being a truly modernized Navy.



**GAUDENCIO C COLLADO JR**  
Rear Admiral, AFP

# Preface

The specific vision of the OCNS to have clear and well-written naval documents is the main inspiration behind the creation of the *PN Staff Writing Hand Guide*. Such vision corresponds to faster processing and approval of all forms of written communication which will benefit all writers, editors, approving authority and the Philippine Navy (PN). The output expected is naval communication that can be understood by the reader in one rapid reading and is free of errors in substance, format and style.

This hand guide endorses the use of plain writing to have clearer and easily understandable naval communication. As one business writing book, *Plain English at Work* claims, many US organizations including the US military are recommending the use of plain English because it “is far easier to write and to be understood by readers” (Bailey, 1996). Correspondingly, Senator Grace Poe introduced the *Plain Writing in Philippine Public Service Act* to the Senate to encourage the use of plain writing system in government agencies for faster transaction and simpler administrative procedures.

While this hand guide emphasizes the use of plain writing, it follows already published guidelines in naval writing. In fact, it draws from the principles of plain writing discussed in Section 1-2 (Principles of Good Writing) of the *PN Staff Writing Manual*. However, further discussion on plain writing techniques is provided in this hand guide. It also incorporates suggestions to address the common writing issues observed in actual communication processed by the Office of the Chief of Naval Staff. Such issues which include verbosity, voice, ambiguity, tone and modals are emphasized in this handbook.

This hand guide serves as a ready reference designed to be handy and concise in order to aid writers in drafting written communication. The pointers provided are presented as simply as possible for easy comprehension; the examples were drawn from actual naval documents to provide more relevant guidelines. Overall, this handbook aims to help staff write better communication, which will in turn aid in effective communication and decision-making in the PN.

  
LCDR MARIE ANGELICA DC SISICAN PN

  
Ms. Grizelle Q. Cereno

# Table of Contents

- I. Foreword
- II. Preface/Rationale
- III. Table of Contents
- IV. Plain Writing
- V. Common Writing Issues
  - a. Verbosity
  - b. Voice
  - c. Ambiguity
  - d. Tone
  - e. Other Issues
    - i. Using Modals
    - ii. Using Prepositions (In, On, At)
    - iii. Writing Tables
    - iv. Numbers
    - v. Archaic/Legalese Terms
    - vi. Emphasizing Words/Statements
    - vii. Plagiarism
  - f. Techniques in Writing Standard Correspondence

Annex: Standard Formats of Common Naval Correspondence

# Plain Writing

## What is plain writing?

Plain writing is defined as “writing and preparations thereof that are clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or field and intended audience or constituents.” (Senate Bill 1092, 2013).

In 2013, an Act proposing the use of plain writing was introduced in the Senate of the Philippines. The bill “calls for the use of simple, concise, easily understandable words and phrases in all government documents. The intention is to avoid jargon, redundancy, ambiguity and obscurity, and help citizens in availing [themselves of] government services.”

## The need for plain writing in naval communication

Recognizing the intentions of Senate Bill 1092, and the need to be more efficient in providing services within and outside the organization, the Philippine Navy (PN) highly encourages the use of plain writing. Written communication serves as the starting point for the Navy’s execution of most of its functions and tasks. Hence, it is important that from the beginning, everything put into writing is clear, straightforward and made simple.

Sailors and marines across all ranks including the Navy’s stakeholders will easily understand instructions, procedures, letters, doctrines and other forms of communication written in plain language over those written in a lengthy, verbose, ambiguous, legalese and archaic manner. Naval communication prepared in plain writing will allow faster comprehension, processing of requirements, decision-making and implementation of tasks, and probably even save lives in extreme scenarios.

## How to achieve plain writing quality in naval communication

Plain writing quality can be achieved by resolving the common writing issues navy staff writers encounter in preparing communication, specifically *verbosity*, *voice* and *ambiguity*. With the use of plain writing, staff writers will be able to send the message clearly and expect a faster response or delivery of output.

# VERBOSITY

## What is verbosity?

“Verbosity is using too many words than needed.”(Wydick, 2005). It generally involves wordy sentences which convey unclear messages. As a consequence, the reader receives too much information that creates confusion.

Oftentimes, naval staff writers present their ideas by exhausting all information on the subject of their written document. Although this practice is understandable, it usually results to verbosity. The *US Army Writing Style Guide* suggests using the “standard English sentence order, subject-verb-object” for easily understandable communication (2013, p. 6).

## Plain writing vs. verbosity

Plain writing avoids irrelevant details and lengthy sentences. As argued by the International Association promoting Plain Legal Language (2014), “Whatever is not pertinent must be excluded, no matter how interesting or correct it may be in itself.” (p. 11). Adopting this principle in writing naval communication will undoubtedly cut down the length of documents and produce clearer messages.

## How to avoid verbosity

- Remove unnecessary words without losing the meaning (Wydick, 2005); “Use short words, keep sentences short (average of 15 words)” (US Army, 2013).

VERBOSE	CONCISE
In view of the foregoing provisions of the Law1, the Law 2, the Law 3 and the decisions of the board, the undersigned respectfully submits that the Accountant is indeed required to sign government contracts.	Based on Law 1, Law 2, Law 3 and the decision of the board, this Command recommends that the accountant should sign government contracts.

VERBOSE	CONCISE
<p>In the absence of a clear and detailed plan from the higher headquarters on the PN CEIS support, particularly on the interoperability of communications equipment, there is a need to come up with a general directive that shall serve as an initiating directive in order for the PN units to plan their respective CEIS support to their tasked units.</p>	<p>As there is no clear and detailed plan on PN CEIS support from higher headquarters, particularly on the interoperability of communications equipment, a general directive should be issued to PN units.</p>

- Shorten clauses into phrases and, if possible, phrases into base words.

Some phrases with three to five words may be replaced with one or two words. Clauses starting with *who*, *which*, *that*, *it is*, or *there are* can be shortened into phrases (Wydick, 2005).

LENGTHY	CONCISE
<p>The personnel <i>who</i> is in charge of the activity will shoulder the cost <i>that will</i> cover all the requirements.</p>	<p>The personnel in charge of the activity will shoulder the cost of all requirements.</p>
<p>The said classification <i>allows for</i> the above companies to <i>charge higher for their services</i>, which should not be the case since Naval Station A, Camp B and Naval Base C are PN installations <i>that</i> were established to mainly support the Command Headquarters, and are mostly situated with housing units <i>for PN officers and personnel</i>.</p>	<p>The classification allows the above companies to charge higher for services. This should not be the case since Naval Station A, Camp B and Naval Base C were established mainly to support Command Headquarters and are mostly situated with housing units.</p>

- Use base verbs instead of nominalizations (Wydick, 2005)

A verb that is changed into a noun (i.e., act into action, assume into assumption, and conclude into draw conclusions) is called a nominalization (Henning, 2010). Sentences that use nominalization to replace verbs commonly add excess words. Use base verbs to have concise sentences.

NOMINALIZATION	BASE VERBS
The PN representative gave a <i>presentation</i> on the proposed Standing Operating Procedures (SOP).	The PN representative <i>presented</i> the proposed Standing Operating Procedures (SOP).
The personnel <i>provided assistance</i> during the conduct of the PN anniversary celebration.	The personnel <i>assisted</i> during the PN anniversary celebration.
The PN Jazz Ensemble will <i>render entertainment</i> to the guests after the remarks of the Keynote Speaker.	The PN Jazz Ensemble will <i>entertain</i> the guests after the remarks of the Keynote Speaker.

## VOICE

### What is voice?

“Voice refers to whether or not the subject is the actor in the sentence.” (Bailey, 1996). Sentences can be written in the active or passive voice. In the active voice, the subject is the actor or ‘doer’ of the verb in the sentence. In the passive voice, the subject is not the actor or ‘doer’ but the one being acted upon by the verb.

## Plain writing vs. passive voice

Instead of the passive voice that can make a sentence wordy, use the active voice. Remove unnecessary strain and confusion on your reader (Bailey, 1996). Use active verbs instead of passive verbs since the latter only promotes using wasted words. Not only do passive verbs add length, but they also redirect attention from the beginning of the sentence where the reader initially looks for the actor and the action.

In the book *Concise is Nice*, the author suggests that, one way to correct passive verbs use is to ask: “Who is doing what to whom in this sentence?” then rewrite the sentence focusing on three key elements: *the actor*, *the action*, and *the object of the action*” (Henning, 2010). However, the passive voice is used if the receiver, event, or result is more important than the person who is doing the action. The following examples show that sentences in the passive voice become simpler when written in the active voice.

PASSIVE VOICE	ACTIVE VOICE
Exercise Y will be participated by nine different countries with a total of 13 ships participating in different events.	Thirteen ships from nine countries will participate in the different events of Exercise Y.
A number of procedures for optimum performance of the precision-guided munitions, including maintenance, will be prepared by the PN.	The PN will prepare procedures for optimum performance of the precision-guided munitions including maintenance.
The costs to be incurred for this activity will be borne by the Command amounting to Zero Pesos (PhP00.00).	The Command will shoulder the costs of the activity amounting to Zero Pesos (PhP00.00).

# AMBIGUITY

## What is ambiguity?

Writing that can be interpreted in various ways is ambiguous (Wydick, 2005). Ambiguous sentences jeopardize the clarity of naval communication. Clarity can be achieved by the proper placement of subordinate clauses, the use of the active voice, or the use of parallel construction (Purdue Online Writing Lab “Sentence Clarity”, 2013). Make sentences clear by dividing long sentences into shorter ones.

## Ambiguity vs. plain writing

Long and winding sentences create ambiguity. Plain writing suggests more simple sentences that remove ambiguity. However, in some cases, changing an ambiguous sentence into a concrete and clearer version requires a few more lines (Bailey, 1996). Plain writing does not always focus on shortening sentences, but prioritizes the clarity and simplicity for better readability.

## How to avoid ambiguous writing

- Choose and arrange words carefully; keep the subject, verb and object close together

Ambiguity can happen when too many details are sandwiched in between the three key elements of the sentence: *subject*, *verb* and *object*. A sentence that immediately presents the subject, verb and object close together is easily understood by the reader (Wydick, 2005). In some cases, the sentence has to be broken down into two shorter sentences to solve this issue.

AMBIGUOUS	CLEAR
The event will bring together, to discuss various issues in the maritime industry, the key organizations involved in the project.	The event will bring together key organizations involved in the project to discuss various issues in the maritime industry.

AMBIGUOUS	CLEAR
<p>The aforementioned activity is a rare opportunity for the PN to send its personnel especially those who were trained in the fields of Field 1 and Field 2 in order to enhance their skills and exposure in a functional and serviceable research facility owned and developed by a first world country like Country X.</p>	<p>The activity is an opportunity for the PN to send personnel trained in the fields of 1&amp;2 to enhance their skills in an advanced research facility in the U.S.</p>

- Put modifiers close to the word they are modifying

Ambiguity can also be avoided by ensuring that modifiers are placed near to what they are modifying (Wydick, 2005).

AMBIGUOUS	CLEAR
<p><i>Determine</i> events that PN personnel can participate in the exercise not only on the <i>at-sea events</i> but also in the <i>shore phase</i> such as the Command and Control of the exercise, sea rider or personnel exchange program, and Subject Matter Expert exchanges.</p>	<p><i>Determine at-sea and on-shore events</i> in the exercise where PN personnel can participate such as Command and Control, sea rider/ personnel exchange program, and Subject Matter Expert exchanges.</p>

## TONE

### What is tone?

“Tone is how your writing comes across to your reader.” (Standards New Zealand, 2007). A writer’s tone may vary depending on the genre and topic. The tone of writing can be formal, informal, subjective, objective, critical, etc.

## What should be the tone of naval communication?

Naval writing is always formal and objective. It is written in a business-like and military tone and does away with some words used in casual written or spoken forms of language. Although naval terminology can set the tone of communication within the organization, it should be used sparingly in official correspondence especially when communicating to a nonmilitary audience. Naval communication is written with a serious and authoritative tone, but should not sound pompous. It should also be gender sensitive and without political tone.

## Using the boss's tone

In most cases, staff write for their supervisors. Thus, staff writers must be flexible in adopting the way their superiors (should) think and write. Correspondence from a commander to subordinates usually bears an authoritative tone instead of having a friendly one. In all circumstances, a staff writer should determine the exact purpose in order to be sure of what the supervisor sounds like in writing. It is important to remember that the way a writer appears through the manner or tone of writing can influence how the readers receive the message.

The best guide to determine the tone of your writing is by following a writer's triangulation of *knowing your audience, your subject and yourself* (Fig. 1.1). Refer to the *PN Staff Writing Manual* for more details about a writer's triangulation.

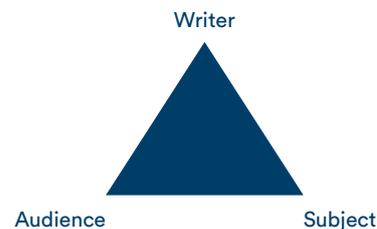


Figure 1.1 Principles of Good Writing - A Writer's Triangulation

See the following examples comparing the different writing tones:

FORMAL, MILITARY TONE	INFORMAL, MILITARY TONE
The office proposes the publication of the Navy writing hand guide that was conceptualized based on the need to expedite the processing of communication.	There really is a need for communication to be processed quickly so we are proposing the publication of the Navy writing hand guide.

An objective tone refers to an impersonal style of writing, which gives information about something but does not include information about the writer. On the other hand, a subjective tone says something about the writer, and particularly about how he or she feels.

OBJECTIVE TONE	SUBJECTIVE TONE
The hand guide contains tips on writing effective naval communication.	I liked the hand guide that has helpful tips about writing effective naval communication.

SERIOUS AND AUTHORITATIVE TONE	POMPOUS TONE
This hand guide is published for the use of all PN personnel to aid in writing effective naval communication.	This highly extensive hand guide is published for the use of all PN personnel to greatly aid them in writing truly effective naval communication.

### Third person point-of-view vs. first person point-of-view

As naval communication is normally formal in tone, it is usually written in the third person point-of-view. The third person point-of-view refers to the use of third person pronouns: *he*, *she*, *they*, and *it*. However, the first person point-of-view may be used in some forms of social correspondence using the first-person pronouns *I* or *we* in order to establish a more cordial tone. The second person point-of-view is rarely applied since it uses the second-person pronoun *you* which sounds mostly informal.

THIRD PERSON POINT OF VIEW	FIRST PERSON POINT OF VIEW
The proponent submits the enclosed proposal for the approval of the Chief of Naval Staff.	As the proponent, I am submitting the enclosed proposal for the approval of the Chief of Naval Staff.

# OTHER ISSUES

## MODALS

### What are modals?

Modals are used to more easily describe or explain matters beyond the present time (Fintel, 2006). Modals such as *will*, *would*, *can* and *could* are often used in sentences describing or explaining circumstances. However, there are quite a few issues in the use of *shall* and *must* as “words of authority” to designate roles and responsibilities.

### Shall vs. must

“*Shall* was used as an alternative to *will*” in old English and is not often used in modern English, particularly American English (Brown & Brown, 2010). Wydick (2005) explains that the ambiguity of *shall* denoting many things, has been minimized by using it only in its command sense. On the other hand, *must* expresses duty and is used when “it will be necessary for someone to do something in the future” (Hewings, 1999).

Hence, direct commands usually contained in directives, LOI, SOP and naval letters will use *shall*; otherwise, description of duty or responsibility will use *must*. For a better understanding of the two modals, here are a few examples of the correct use of *shall* and *will*:

[context of example: STL to the CSAFP]

INCORRECT	CORRECT
The participants <i>shall</i> first undergo a required language proficiency exam before they attend the course.	The participants <i>must</i> first undergo a required language proficiency exam before they attend the course.

[context of example: memo to/naval letter; direct command]

INCORRECT	CORRECT
You <i>must</i> submit your explanation letter to this headquarters NLT 141400H February 2020.	You <i>shall</i> submit your explanation letter to this headquarters NLT 141400H February 2020.

## Other commonly used modals

- *Will* is used to say something that is already planned and is likely to happen. It is also used to express “willingness to do something (e.g. in offers, invitations, requests, and orders)” (Hewings, 2005).
- *Would* is the past tense of will and indicates less possibility (Hewings, 2005).
- *Can* and *could* both talk about ability and possibility; however, *can* indicates a stronger possibility. *Could* is the past tense of can and suggests that something is less likely to happen (Brown & Brown, 2010).
- *Should* is used when giving advice or recommendation. It is weaker than *shall* and *must* (Brown & Brown, 2010).

### EXAMPLES

INCORRECT	CORRECT
<i>Shall</i> you agree to these conditions, your personnel may contact this office at telephone number: 000-00-00 and email address: officeemail@email.com.	<i>Should</i> you agree to these conditions, your personnel may contact this office at telephone number: 000-00-00 and email address: officeemail@email.com.
The PN <i>would</i> send its representatives to the international symposium.	The PN <i>will</i> send its representatives to the international symposium.

# PREPOSITIONS (IN, ON AND AT)

## What are prepositions?

*In*, *on* and *at* are prepositions of place and time which show the relationship between two words in a sentence. Many writers encounter confusion in using these three common prepositions.

## Using prepositions of place

For places, use *in* for a larger place or area; *on* is used to describe a position above a surface; and *at* is used for a more specific place or an event (Hewings, 2005).

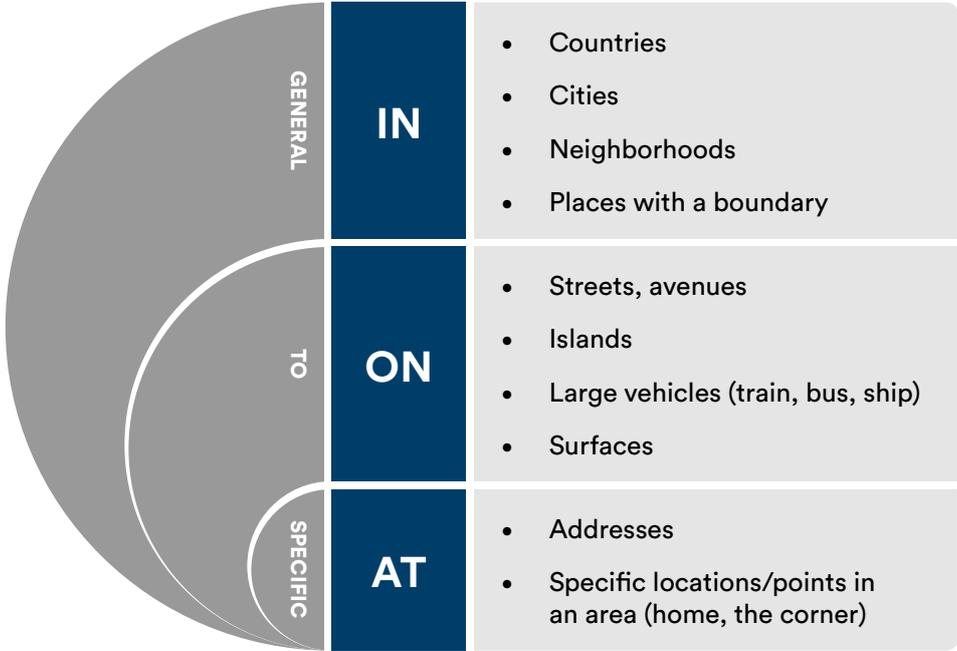


Figure 1.2 Prepositions of Place

### EXAMPLES

- The BSC Classes 235th-237th will gather *at* BNS Gym prior to the start of the ceremony.
- All newly-promoted officers will be *on* stage for the donning of ranks.
- The international conference took place *in* Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

## Using prepositions of time

For time, use *in* for longer periods of time; *on* for days and dates; and *at* is used for “exact points of time” (Hewings, 2005).

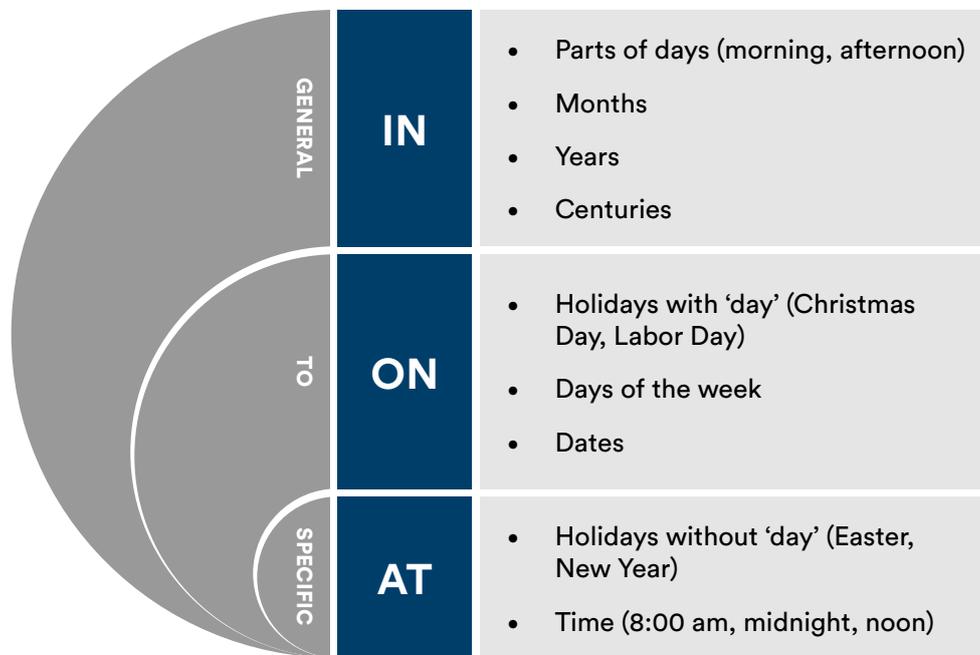


Figure 1.3 Prepositions of Time

### EXAMPLES

- We would like to invite the Secretary for the groundbreaking ceremony *on* April 24, 2020 *at* nine o'clock *in* the morning.
- The new ships are expected to arrive *in* May 2018.

# LISTS

## Writing lists

Lists are used to present a group of conditions or exceptions and enumeration of interconnected ideas (Wydick, 2005). Bailey (2008) mentioned, “organized writers use lists particularly often” (p.35). In the Navy, lists can be found in most written documents (e.g. LOI, IMPLAN and SOP) for effective presentation of information.

## How to make proper lists?

In making lists, two main things must be given attention: *parallelism* and *punctuation* (Wydick, 2005). Parallelism ensures that all items are written in the same manner: all sentences or all phrases. Traditional list punctuations treat the list as part of a paragraph; hence, use commas, semicolons, the word ‘and’ and period at the end of each line (Bailey, 1996).

INCORRECT	CORRECT
<p>1) <u>Secretary Naval Staff:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Attend the conference on 03 April 2020 at HPN Ward Room</li><li>b) Protocol matters</li><li>c) Appropriate number of support personnel.</li></ul>	<p>1) <u>Secretary Naval Staff:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Attend the conference on 03 April 2020 at HPN Ward Room;</li><li>b) Give advice on protocol matters; and</li><li>c) Provide appropriate number of support personnel.</li></ul>
<p>b. <b>Tasks:</b></p> <p>1) <u>Commander, Unit:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Provide the following requirements:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Three multi-media projector and screen</li><li>(2) Two laptops for presentation</li><li>(3) Flat screen TV</li><li>(4) Supervision over the Unit’s participants during the activity</li></ul></li></ul>	<p>b. <b>Tasks:</b></p> <p>1) <u>Commander, Unit:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Supervise Unit’s participants during the activity; and</li><li>b) Provide the following requirements:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Three multi-media projector and screen;</li><li>(2) Two laptops for presentation; and</li><li>(3) Flat screen TV.</li></ul></li></ul>

# TABLES

## Writing tables

Tables are used to clearly present data with figures and lists with corresponding description.

## How to make proper tables

Here are some pointers to ensure that tables are effectively and clearly presented.

- Write headings/titles in bold letters and in some cases, all caps.
- Ensure that the two sides of the table reach the left and right margins, except when tables are too narrow.
- Briefly explain the table in the preceding paragraph.
- When tables are split into two or more tables and placed on another page, the new table/s must contain headings/titles found on the original table.
- Do not leave table cells blank or without any data (words/amount). Indicate N/A, if data is not applicable; and NIL, 0, 0.00 or “-” for zero or no amount in figures.

EXAMPLE [context: breakdown of travel budget]

Particulars	USD*	PhP
Roundtrip Airfare	00.00	00.00
Daily Subsistence Allowance	00.00	00.00
Travel Insurance	-	00.00
Pre-departure Expenses	-	00.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>00.00</b>	

\*Note: (1USD= PhP50.37 as of April 2017)

[context: list of principal and alternate attendees for foreign events, travels, courses, etc]

Name/Rank	Designation
<b>Principal Attendees</b>	
CAPT JUAN DELA CRUZ O-1111 PN(GSC)	Commander, Unit
COL JUAN DELA CRUZ O-22222 PN(M)(GSC)	Deputy Commander, Unit
<b>Alternate Attendees</b>	
CAPT JOSE FILIPINO O-3333 PN(GSC)	Deputy Commander, Unit
CAPT JOSE FILIPINO O-44444 PN(GSC)	Director, Unit

## NUMBERS

### Writing numerals in words

Writing numbers in naval documents has already been set in Chapter 1 (Principles) of the *PN Staff Writing Manual*. The manual explicitly states, “Spell out numbers for nine and under, use numerals for 10 and up” (p.7). This is a general numeral rule followed in naval writing, but this does not strictly apply when it comes to writing amounts. Presenting amounts in naval correspondence is important, particularly those seeking budget approval from the higher headquarters. Ease of reading must always be considered, given that the figures often correspond to an essential requirement of the PN.

### How numerals are written in words

Amounts must be spelled in words before enclosing in parentheses the equivalent digits/figures. The amount in words must be properly spelled out in all caps and in bold letters; and decimals/centavos are written in fractions. In cases where a document mentions many amounts, only the main/most important amount will be written in words and in bold letters.

INCORRECT	CORRECT
<p>The PN will shoulder the airfare, amounting to PhP166,670.43.</p>	<p>The PN will shoulder the airfare, amounting to <b>ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-SIX THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED SEVENTY AND 43/100 PESOS (PhP166,670.43).</b></p>
<p>The facility repair will entail an amount of <b>ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (PhP100,000.00)</b> while the various additional equipment cost <b>TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND FIFTY PESOS (PhP250,000.00)</b>. Thus, this Command requests for the release of funds amounting to <b>THREE HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND PESOS PhP350,000.00</b> intended for the completion of the project.</p>	<p>The facility repair will entail an amount of PhP100,000.00 while the various additional equipment cost PhP250,000.00. Thus, this Command requests for the release of funds amounting to <b>THREE HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND PESOS (PhP350,000.00)</b> intended for the completion of the project.</p>

## ARCHAIC/LEGALESE TERMS vs PLAIN ENGLISH

As explained by Wydick in his book *Plain English for Lawyers* (2005), legal writing or “legalese” is “(1) wordy, (2) unclear, (3) pompous and (4) dull.” In the Philippine Navy, this is reflected by the traditionally/commonly used archaic/legalese terms that lengthen sentences without adding essential content. Plain English solves this by removing archaic/legalese terms. These terms are easily replaceable with simple terms and phrases that will be easily understood by the readers.

Some legalese compound constructions are listed below with their corresponding plain English synonym. This list is mentioned in many plain English guides, books and manuals such as *Plain English for Lawyers* (Wydick, 2005) and *Concise is Nice* (Henning, 2010).

Compound	Simple
at the point in time	then
by means of	by
by reason of	because of
by virtue of	by, under
for the purpose of	to
for the reason that	because
in accordance with	by, under
inasmuch as	since
in connection with	with, about, concerning
in favor of	for
in order to	to
in relation to	about, concerning
in the event that	if
in the nature of	like
prior to	before
subsequent to	after
with a view to	to
with reference to	about, concerning

The *PN Staff Writing Manual* also enumerates a number of lengthy phrases that may be resolved, as follows:

Don't Write	Write
Advance plan	Plan
Take action	Act
Have a discussion	Discuss
Hold a meeting	Meet
Study in depth	Study
New innovations	Innovations
Consensus of opinion	Consensus
At the present time	Now
Until such time as	Until
In the majority of instances	Most, usually
On a local basis	Locally
Basically unaware of	Did not know
In the area of	Approximately
At management level	By management
With regard to	About, concerning
In connection with	Of, in, on

Don't Write	Write
In view of	Because
In the event of	If
For the purpose of	For
On the basis of	By, from
Despite the fact that	Although

Other archaic and outdated terms used in naval documents can be replaced by simple words including the following:

COMPOUND	SIMPLE
Anent above reference	Per reference/According to
Request be informed	Please be informed
In view of the foregoing	Based on
In this regard	Therefore

# EMPHASIZING WORDS/STATEMENTS

## Putting emphasis in writing

Uppercase and/or bold letters are oftentimes used to put emphasis on words or phrases. They are used because “the capitalization and bold type attempt to catch the reader’s attention” (US Securities and Exchange Commission, 1998). Excessive use of these techniques, however, defeats the intent and even cause inconvenience to the readers. Hence, staff writers must limit the use of **boldface**, ALL CAPS and *italics*.

## How to emphasize words and statements

The University of Oxford Style Guide (2014) prescribes the following in emphasizing texts (p. 21):

### Bold

- Use sparingly for intended text highlight.
- Could be used for names, deadlines and other text of high significance.
- Punctuation that follows bold texts should not be bold.

#### EXAMPLE

You are requested to submit to this office your accomplishment report **NLT 181700H April 2016**.

### Italics

- Use to flag text that is different from all other text in the sentence.
- Use for titles of books, plays and other published materials.
- Use when writing foreign text.

#### EXAMPLE

This will boost the *bayanihan* spirit among our stakeholders and other partner agencies.

### Underline

- “Avoid underlining for emphasis.”
- Use for hyperlinks.
- In the PN, underlining is used to highlight the tasks of Commanders and Staff in the Directives, LOIs, IMPLANs and SOPs.

# CITATIONS AND REFERENCES

Naval writers often give credit to their sources; however, the use of proper and complete citation or reference list must always be practiced. As observed, the citations in naval documents are usually footnotes with a mere list of internet websites or name of the author and book. This practice might be considered as plagiarism.

## What is plagiarism?

“Plagiarism is the act of taking the words, ideas, or research of another person and putting them forward without citation as if they were your own” (Rampolla, 2004). It must be noted that not all plagiarism cases are obvious, but are sometimes unintentional, due to “confusion about when and how to cite sources, uncertainty about how to paraphrase, and carelessness in taking notes” (Rampolla, 2004). All writers in the Navy must be careful not to commit plagiarism, as most of the documents bears the name of the organization and are for signature of higher authorities, such as the FOIC,PN.

## How to avoid plagiarism

Richard Saunders (n.d.) of the Paul Meek Library, University of Tennessee suggests two things:

- Write original ideas; and
- Be mindful of where all ideas that are not yours come from.

Utah Valley University Writing Center, on the other hand, gives more specific tips:

- Take note of pertinent information of data from the internet (e.g. author, title, page numbers and publication information);
- Use quotation marks for direct quotes;
- Summarize, paraphrase and cite sources properly; and
- Have an accurate list of references/works cited.

## How to cite sources properly

Naval writers often give credit to their sources; however, using proper and complete citation must be practiced. As observed, the citations commonly involve footnotes with a mere list of internet websites or name of the author and book.

To avoid plagiarism, naval documents must reflect “standardised style to acknowledge

the source of information used” (Universal College of Learning [UCOL], 2015). The American Psychological Association (APA) Citation Style is a widely-known style that can be used by all navy writers to ensure standard, consistent and proper citations in all naval documents.

Paragraphs must contain “in-text”/“parenthetical” citations made up of author and date of publication, sometimes even page numbers of the source (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology [NAIT], 2016). Both direct and indirect (paraphrased or summarized) quotations must have proper citations (University of Waikato, 2016).

#### EXAMPLES

- Direct Quotation

“Tone is how your writing comes across to your reader.” (Standards New Zealand, 2007).

“Voice refers to whether or not the subject is the actor in the sentence.” (Bailey, 1996).

As argued by the International Association promoting Plain Legal Language (2014), “Whatever is not pertinent must be excluded, no matter how interesting or correct it may be in itself” (p. 11).

- Indirect Quotation

In making lists, two main things must be given attention: *parallelism* and *punctuation* (Wydick, 2005).

*Could* is the past tense of *can* and suggests that something is less likely to happen (Brown & Brown, 2010).

A sentence that immediately presents the subject, verb and object close together is easily understood by the reader (Wydick, 2005).

Citations do not end in the “in-text”/“parenthetical” part. A reference list is also necessary in proper citation. The reference list is located at the end of the document and must contain all the sources cited in the entire document (UCOL, 2015). The content of citations on the list are almost the same, however, special cases require different information. Listed below are referencing examples of most common types sources taken from *A Guide to the APA 6th Edition Referencing* (UCOL, 2015). For the complete list of referencing style/format, visit <http://www.apastyle.org/>.

#### **Book – one author**

Collier, A. (2008). *The world of tourism and travel*. Rosedale, New Zealand: Pearson Education New Zealand.

**Serial / journal article (print)**

Thompson, C. (2010). Facebook: Cautionary tales for nurses. *Kai Tiaki: Nursing New Zealand*, 16(7), 26.

**Serial / journal article (online from a database – e.g. EBSCO or Newztext)**

Marshall, M., Carter, B., Rose, K., & Brotherton, A. (2009). Living with type 1 diabetes: Perceptions of children and their parents. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 18(12), 1703-1710. Retrieved from <http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0962-1067>

**Internet – no author, no date**

*Pet therapy*. (n.d.). Retrieved from [http://www.holisticonline.com/stress/stress\\_pet-therapy.htm](http://www.holisticonline.com/stress/stress_pet-therapy.htm)

# EFFECTIVE CORRESPONDENCE CHECKLIST

To impart an easily understandable message even in one reading, naval communication must be free of errors, must use the standard format, and must reflect plain writing style. The following quick checklist is prescribed to achieve “concise, organized and to the point” correspondence. (US Army Writing Style Guide, 2013):

- ✓ **Main point first.** Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) writing is adopted to immediately convey the main point of the correspondence. In naval writing, this technique is often used, particularly in writing military Subject-To Letters (STLs).
- ✓ **Use active voice.**
- ✓ **Use short words and sentences.** The average length of a sentence should be about 15 words.
- ✓ **Paragraphs should have 10 lines or less** as much as possible.
- ✓ **Avoid naval and military jargons,** especially for civilian letters.
- ✓ **Use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.**
- ✓ **Aim to keep letters and memoranda not more than one page.** Use enclosures for additional information.

Below is a flowchart on how naval communication are processed at the Headquarters Philippine Navy.

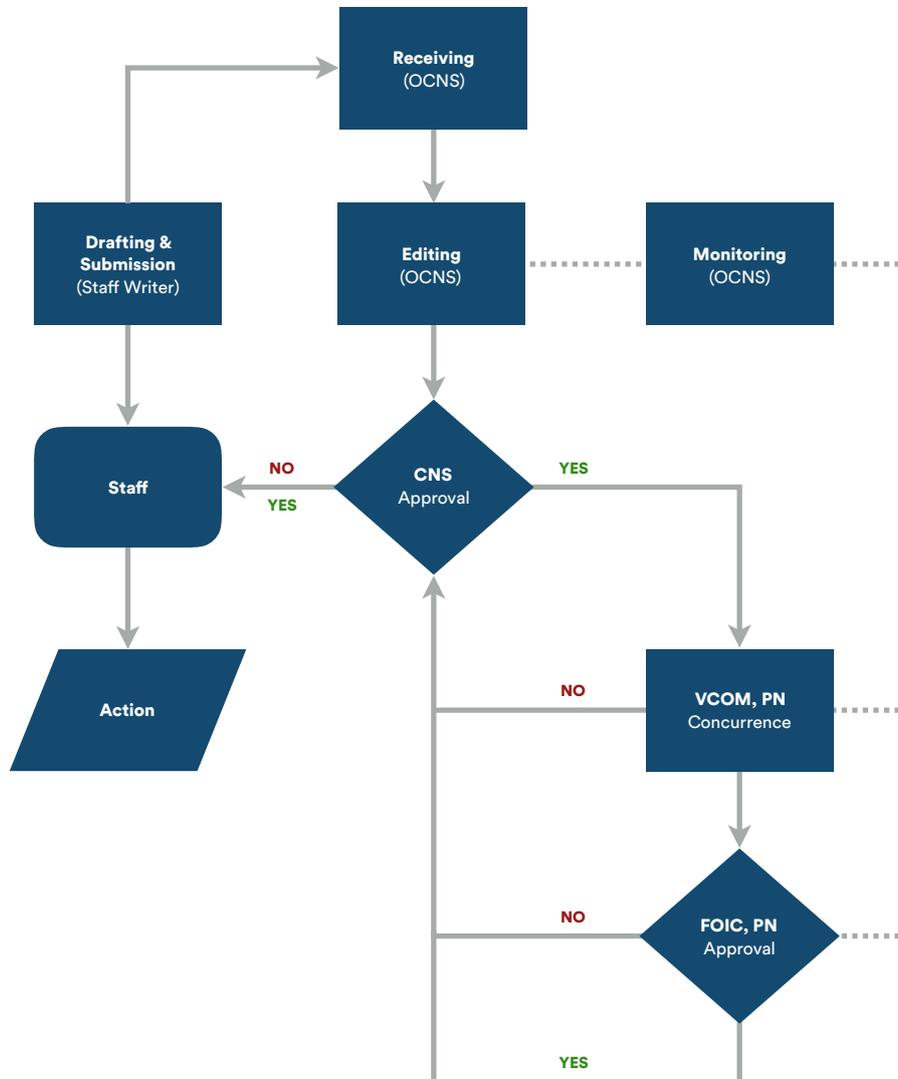


Figure 1.4 Flow of Communication at HPN

# References

Bailey, E. P., Jr. (1996). *Plain English at Work*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc.

Brown C. & Brown, P. (2010). *English Grammar Secrets*. Retrieved from <http://grammar-teacher.com/englishgrammarsecrets.pdf>.

Henning, C. (2010). *Concise is nice*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Law Center.

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United States Army. (2002). *Preparing and Managing Correspondence*. Washington, DC: Author.

Universal College of Learning (2015). *A Guide to the APA 6th Edition Referencing*. Retrieved from [http://student.ucol.ac.nz/library/onlineresources/Documents/APA\\_guide\\_2015.pdf](http://student.ucol.ac.nz/library/onlineresources/Documents/APA_guide_2015.pdf).

University of Oxford (2014). *University of Oxford Style Guide*. Retrieved from [https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/media\\_wysiwyg/University%20of%20Oxford%20Style%20Guide.pdf](https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/media_wysiwyg/University%20of%20Oxford%20Style%20Guide.pdf).

Wydick, R. (2005). *Plain English for Lawyers (5th Ed.)*. Durnham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press.









# Military Letter (with Authority Line)

Standard Font: Arial, 12  
// = 1 blank space

(Align Logo with Heading) ↕ 3/4 or 0.75"



**PUNONGHIMPILAN HUKBONG DAGAT NG PILIPINAS**  
 (Headquarters Philippine Navy)  
 Naval Station Jose Andrada  
 2335 Roxas Boulevard, Manila

//  
//  
//  
//  
SUBJECT: \_\_\_\_\_  
//  
//  
//  
TO: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Attn: \_\_\_\_\_)

//  
//  
//  
//  
1 tab → 1. References: ↔ 3/4 or 0.75"

↔ 1/4 or 1.25"

a) \_\_\_\_\_

2 tabs → b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

//  
1 tab → 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

//  
1 tab → 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

//  
2 tabs → FOR THE FLAG OFFICER IN COMMAND, PN:  
//  
//  
//  
//

(7 tabs) →

**JUAN DELA CRUZ**  
 Captain, PN(GSC)  
 Position, PN Office/Unit

↕ 1/4 or 1.25"



## Naval Letter (with Authority Line)

Standard Font: Arial, 12  
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(Align Logo with Heading) ↕ 3/4 or 0.75"



**PUNONGHIMPILAN HUKBONG DAGAT NG PILIPINAS**  
 (Headquarters Philippine Navy)  
 Naval Station Jose Andrada  
 2335 Roxas Boulevard, Manila

//  
 //  
 //  
 //  
 From: Flag Officer In Command, PN  
 To: **Position, PN Office/Unit**  
 //  
 Subj: \_\_\_\_\_  
 //  
 Refs: a) \_\_\_\_\_  
 b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 //  
 Encls: 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
 2) \_\_\_\_\_  
 //

For single reference:  
 Ref: \_\_\_\_\_

For single enclosure:  
 Encl: \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_ ↔ 3/4 or 0.75"  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 //  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 //  
 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 //

1 tab BY COMMAND OF VICE ADMIRAL MERCADO:  
 //  
 //  
 //

↔ (7 tabs) ↔

**JUAN DELA CRUZ**  
 Captain, PN(GSC)  
 Position, PN Office/Unit

↕ 1 1/4 or 1.25"



# Letter of Instruction (LOI)

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**PUNONGHIMPILAN HUKBONG DAGAT NG PILIPINAS**  
 (Headquarters Philippine Navy)  
 Naval Station Jose Andrada  
 2335 Roxas Boulevard, Manila

//  
 //  
 //  
 OFFICE SYMBOL  
 //  
**Subject: Letter of Instruction Nr \_\_\_\_\_**  
 //  
 To: \_\_\_\_\_  
 //  
 References:  
 //  
 a. \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. \_\_\_\_\_  
 //  
 1. **SITUATION:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 //  
 2. **MISSION:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 //c v  
 3. **EXECUTION:**  
 //  
 a. **Concept of Operation:**  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 //  
 b. **Tasks:**  
 //  
 1) **Position, Complete Name of Office/Unit:**  
 //  
 a) \_\_\_\_\_ ;  
 \_\_\_\_\_ ;  
 (1) \_\_\_\_\_ ;  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_ ; and  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_ ;  
 //  
 b) \_\_\_\_\_ ; and  
 \_\_\_\_\_ ;

continued on next page →

← continued from previous page

c) \_\_\_\_\_

//

// 2) **Position, Complete Name of Office/Unit:**

// (same as above)

// 3) **Position, Complete Name of Office/Unit:**

// (same as above)

// c. **Staff Support and Supervision:**

// 1) **AC of NS for ( ), N( ):**

// a) \_\_\_\_\_ ;

// b) \_\_\_\_\_ ; and

// c) \_\_\_\_\_

// 2) **Director, (Complete Office Name):**

// (same as above)

// x. **Coordinating Instructions:**

// 1) \_\_\_\_\_

// 2) \_\_\_\_\_

// 4. **ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS:** \_\_\_\_\_

// 5. **COMMAND AND SIGNAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

//

//

//

//

//

(7 tabs) **RONALD JOSEPH S MERCADO**  
Vice Admiral, AFP  
Flag Officer In Command, PN

ADDENDA/ANNEXES:

\_\_\_\_\_

DISTRIBUTION:

FOIC, PN	1	CNS	1
VCOM, PN	1	HPN Staff	1ea

2 of 2

# Standard Operationg Procedure (SOP)

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(Align Logo with Heading)



**PUNONGHIMPILAN HUKBONG DAGAT NG PILIPINAS**  
 (Headquarters Philippine Navy)  
 Naval Station Jose Andrada  
 2335 Roxas Boulevard, Manila

//  
//  
//  
//

**STANDING OPERATING PROCEDURE**

//  
//

**NUMBER.....**

**SOP TITLE OR SUBJECT**

//

1. **PURPOSE:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. **SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY:** *encourage*

\_\_\_\_\_

3. **DEFINITION OF TERMS:**

\_\_\_\_\_

4. **POLICIES:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_ ;

b. \_\_\_\_\_ ; and

c. \_\_\_\_\_ .

5. **PROCEDURES:**

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

6. **RESPONSIBILITY:**

//

1 of 2

continued on next page →

← continued from previous page

a. **Position, Complete Name of Office/Unit:**

// 1) <sup>0.5"</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ ;

// a) <sup>0.5"</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ ;

// b) \_\_\_\_\_ ; and

// c) \_\_\_\_\_ ;

// 2) \_\_\_\_\_ ; and

// 3) \_\_\_\_\_ ;

//

b. **Position, Complete Name of Office/Unit:**

// 1) (same as above); and

// 2) (same as above).

//

c. **Position, Complete Name of Office/Unit:**

// 1) (same as above); and

// 2) (same as above).

//

7. **EFFECTIVITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ ;

//

8. **RESCISSION:** \_\_\_\_\_ ;

//

BY COMMAND OF VICE ADMIRAL MERCADO:

//

//

//

OFFICIAL: \_\_\_\_\_ **GAUDENCIO C COLLADO JR**  
Rear Admiral, AFP  
Chief of Naval Staff

//

**HERNANIE S SONGANO**  
Colonel, PN(M)(GSC)  
The Naval Adjutant

1 1/4 or 1.25" ← → 3/4 or 0.75"

1 1/4 or 1.25"

2 of 2

# Directive

Standard Font: Arial, 12  
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(Align Logo with Heading) ↕ 3/4 or 0.75"

	<b>PUNONGHIMPILAN HUKBONG DAGAT NG PILIPINAS</b> (Headquarters Philippine Navy) Naval Station Jose Andrada 2335 Roxas Boulevard, Manila
// // // //	
_____ DIRECTIVE ) NUMBER . . . . )	
	DIRECTIVE TITLE
// 1. <span style="color: red;">→ 0.5"</span> REFERENCES: //	
	a. _____ _____
	b. _____ _____
// 2. <span style="color: red;">← 1 1/4 or 1.25"</span> GENERAL: <span style="float: right;">↔ 3/4 or 0.75"</span> //	_____
	_____
// 3. PURPOSE: //	_____
	_____
// 4. OBJECTIVES: //	
	a. <span style="color: red;">→ 0.5"</span> _____ _____;
	// b. _____ _____; and
	// c. _____ _____.
// 5. EXECUTION: //	
	a. <span style="color: red;">→ 0.5"</span> Concept: // _____
	_____
	//

↕ 1 1/4 or 1.25"

1 of 3

continued on next page →

← continued from previous page

b. **Tasks:**

// 1) <sup>0.5"</sup> **Position, Complete Name of Office/Unit:**

// a) <sup>0.5"</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ ;

// \_\_\_\_\_ ;

// (1) <sup>0.5"</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ ;

// (2) \_\_\_\_\_ ; and

// (3) \_\_\_\_\_ ;

// b) \_\_\_\_\_ ; and

// \_\_\_\_\_ ;

// c) \_\_\_\_\_ ;

// 2) **Position, Complete Name of Office/Unit:**

// a) (same as above); and

// b) (same as above).

// 3) **Position, Complete Name of Office/Unit:**

// a) (same as above); and

// b) (same as above).

c. **Staff Support and Supervision:**

// 1) **AC of NS for ( ), N( ):**

// a) \_\_\_\_\_ ;

// b) \_\_\_\_\_ ; and

// c) \_\_\_\_\_ ;

// <sup>1 1/4 or 1.25"</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ ; <sup>3/4 or 0.75"</sup>

// 2) **Director, (Complete Office Name):**

// a) \_\_\_\_\_ ; and

// b) \_\_\_\_\_ ;

x. **Coordinating Instructions:**

// 1) \_\_\_\_\_ ;

//

2 of 3

continued on next page →



Office of the Chief of Naval Staff