

Guideline 7: Design clear pages

The design of your page is as important to its readability as the words you have chosen. The right design will highlight your messages so your customers can scan the document quickly.

How do I do this?

- **Pick one or two simple fonts.** A 12-point font is easy for most customers to read and is recommended by the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#).
- **Use boldfaced headlines to break up the text,** as shown on this page. It will grab the reader's eye.
- **Emphasize important information with boldface or *italics* - but sparingly.** Use on important words and phrases, but not entire sentences or paragraphs. Don't underline, unless you are indicating a link.
- **Choose bullets for lists when order isn't important.** Stick to one bullet style. The one we selected for this page works well.
- **Use numbers for directions and outlines.** This will show your reader the order in which instructions must be followed. Or, it may indicate a level of importance.
- **Create white space.** Allow for at least a one-inch border in letters. Place white space between paragraphs to separate large blocks of text.
- **Align your text.** Use a left-justified, ragged-right text alignment for letters. It keeps the spacing between words consistent and is easier to read.

Why do this?

- Headlines and sub-headlines are the visible outline of your document. They can help the reader scan the document more quickly, by breaking up large chunks of text.
- Too many font styles clutter your page and make it hard to read.
- Numbered lists help the reader understand a logical order.
- Bullets "pull out" the few key points you want to make.
- White space keeps your reader from being overwhelmed by too much information.

Do	Don't
If you submit your payment... - Electronically. We must receive it by: the 25th day of the second month after the month you are	We must receive your payment on or before the 15th day of the month after the month you are reporting if you do not send your payment electronically, or by the 25th day of the second

<p>reporting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other than electronically. We must receive it by: the 15th day of the second month after the month you are reporting. 	<p>month after the month you are reporting if you submit your payment electronically.</p>
<p>You must complete a certification form if you want to add a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spouse or qualified same-sex domestic partner. - Student over age 19. - Dependent over age 19 with a disability. - Extended (legal) dependent. 	<p>You must complete a certification form if you want to add any of the following: a spouse or qualified same-sex domestic partner; a student over age 19; a dependent over age 19 with a disability; an extended (legal) dependent.</p>

More Examples

Before: Before we can process your application, we will need you to forward us a copy of your birth certificate, your Social Security number, a copy of your college transcript, a photocopy of your passport and vaccination records.

After: Please enclose with your application:

1. Birth certificate
2. Social Security number
3. College transcripts
4. Passport photography
5. Vaccination records