

# *Note Taking and Report Writing*

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# *DISCLAIMER*

- Presenter's degree is in Biology
- Writing styles are different
- Understand your target audience
- Can't control yawning, snoring, or sleeping



# Note Taking



- **Who:** Should take notes?
  - Everyone
- **Where:** Should notes be taken?
  - More complex CESQGs, SQGs, LQGs, definitely permitted facilities
- **When:** Should notes be taken?
  - Anytime, if it helps
  - Especially if you suspect a criminal case
- **Why:** Should notes be taken?
  - Give the next inspector a better understanding of the facility
  - Reminders to self
  - Document, document, document
- **What:** Do you take notes about?.....

# Note Taking

- What to take notes about:
  - Names of participants
  - Specific storage locations, release locations, types of releases, quantities of wastes in storage/generated monthly, types of wastes
  - The process
  - Questions to ask at the end of inspection
  - Strange goings on



# Note Taking

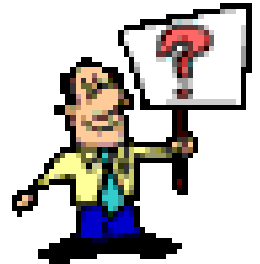


- Be brief and concise
- Could be part of public records
- Don't editorialize or doodle
  - This guy is a stupid @#!\$?.
  - The facility was a pig sty.
- Get everyone's name who is participating in the inspection (you might need to chat with them later)



# Note Taking

- Try to ask certain inspection questions in the same order every time
- Come up with symbols that you understand
  - "\*" = violation
  - MSDS = request MSDS
  - "?" = something did not make sense
  - (15) 55-gallon drums or use slash marks
  - Write in shorthand  $H_2O$ , NaOH, EHS Manager, HW, non-HW



# Report Writing

## **Why are inspection reports important?**

- Inspection reports inform owners and operators of potential Areas of Concern or violations and how to correct them.
- They remind you and new inspectors of what to look for
- Aid in calculation of penalty
- Aid in preparation of legal documents such as COs, NOVs, Case Reports, etc.
- Serve to refresh your memory for a hearing or trial
- For use as evidence at a hearing or trial
  - It is the Department's burden to prove a violation occurred

# Inspection Reports

## **Who will read or use the inspection report?**

- Owner/operator/responsible party
- Other Department staff (other sections, districts, successor inspectors)
- Office of General Counsel (OGC)
- Attorneys representing the owner/operator, responsible party, or interested parties (neighbors, competitors)
- Hearing Officer, Judge, Jury
- The public

# Inspection Report-SWIFT

- Attachments
  - Pictures
  - Description: Figure 1: bla, bla bla
- Introduction:
  - Inspection date
  - Participants names, titles
  - Drinking water supply: private well, city system?
  - Domestic waste system: sewer or septic?
  - Number of employees
  - Operating times
  - Inspection History

# Inspection Report-SWIFT

- Process Description:
  - Type of business
  - Follow the process beginning to end
  - Describe each step in the process
- Narrative (under Process Description)
  - Include wastes generated
  - Include violations observed and cite them [40 CFR 262.11]
  - Odd ball stuff, releases, locations of stuff Bldg A, other program issues

NOTE: Mr. Bean sent an email with corrective action on June 1, 2013.

# Inspection Report

- Narrative Dos:
  - Plagiarize good previous inspection reports
  - Define acronyms prior to using Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)
  - Organize report to flow
  - Use Plain language
  - Document specific information,
    - Who stated?
    - Number of drums
    - Dates

# Inspection Report

- Narrative Don'ts:
  - Fib or stretch the truth, Just the facts Jack
  - Be bias
  - Editorialize
  - Document specific information,
    - Who stated?
    - Number of drums not a “few”
    - Dates
    - Labeling?
    - Secondary containment?

# Inspection Report-SWIFT

- Records Review (under Process Description)
  - ✓ Review manifests, weekly inspections, contingency plan, notification of local authorities, etc.
  - ✓ Include transporter and TSDF information and EPA Id #
  - ✓ Include violations observed and cite them [40 CFR 262.20]
- Conclusion
  - ✓ Contacts made since inspection
  - ✓ Inspection status at time of inspection
  - ✓ Verbal exit interview
  - ✓ Compliance status at the time of the issuance of report

# Inspection Report-SWIFT

- Potential Violations
  - State the rule
  - Specifically describe the facility's violation as it relates to the rule
  - Request a corrective action in a specific number of days with documentation

# *Reporting Technical Information*

- *Reporting*: providing an account or description of what we learn by experience, observation, or investigation.
- *Technical*: peculiar to or characteristic of a particular art, science, discipline, or profession.
- *Information*: a body of knowledge gained from experience, observation, or investigation.



# *Our Objectives as Technical Writers*

- Clear & meaningful presentation to intended audience
- Get the point across with less words
- Honest, objective, brief, clear, & consistent
- Never editorialize!
  - Overall the facility seemed in good shape.
- Be specific when possible
- Try not to use first person
  - I spoke to the manager. vs. The inspector spoke to Mr. Smith.
  - We are requesting the sample results. vs. The Department is requesting the results of the soil sampling conducted on March 5, 2008.



# *Punctuation: Commas,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,*

- Use where two complete thoughts are separated by *but, or, yet, so, for, and, nor*
  - The pumps and piping were in good repair, *and* chemical feeders were operating properly.
- Use to set off introductory clause
  - Before the inspector made her first visit, she thoroughly reviewed the files.
- Use where three or more items are listed in series
  - The outfall structure for the wet detention pond was equipped with a rectangular weir, bleeder orifice, and skimmer.
- Use to set off dates
  - Sunday, December 7, 1941



## Punctuation: Semicolons;;;;;

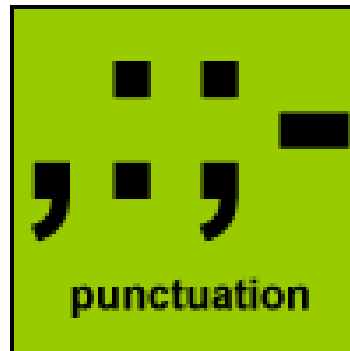
- Use when a conjunction (*but, or, yet, for, and, nor*) is omitted between two complete thoughts
  - The permit will expire within 61 days; you must submit the renewal application tomorrow.
- When two complete thoughts are linked by *however, therefore, accordingly, consequently, moreover*
  - The Department did not receive the application within 60 days of permit expiration; therefore, operations must cease on December 31, 2005.



# *Punctuation: Colons:::~::~:*

Use after an independent clause preceding a list or quotation

“The site was in violation of Rule 62~701.300(1)(a) F.A.C., which states: ‘No person shall store, process, or dispose of solid waste except at a permitted solid waste management facility...’ ”



# *Punctuation: Apostrophes''''''''''''''''*



- Use to show possession
  - The inspector's report
- For words not ending in *s*, use 's
  - A woman's blouse could be made of the same material.
- For any word ending in *s*, use *s'*
  - New Orleans' Jazz
- Exceptions
  - Singular word ending in *s* that, when plural, forms an extra syllable for pronunciation
    - This is my boss's day off.
  - Form contractions, show omission of letters/numbers
    - Can't, won't, shouldn't, couldn't, wouldn't, haven't
    - The big freeze of '89

# *Punctuation: Quotation Marks*””””””””

- Use to indicate exact words of a text or speaker
  - The Secretary said, “All employees must attend People First training.”
- Use when words are introduced by *labeled, marked, signed, entitled*
  - All drums of hazardous waste must be labeled “Hazardous Waste.”
- Periods, exclamation points and question marks go inside quotes (Some rare exceptions)
  - “What did he just say?”
- Colons and semicolons go outside quotes
  - “Do good work!”: Gus Grissom



# *Punctuation: Hyphens-----*

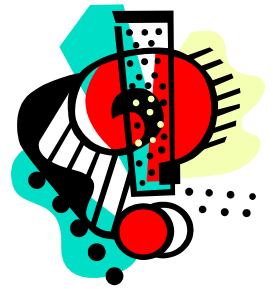
- Use in specifying container sizes
  - The 55~gallon drum.....
  - The 2000~gallon above ground storage tank
- Combine two words to form compound adjective
  - Large~tired vehicle
- Do not use when better written as one word
  - Freshwater fish
  - Groundwater hydrology



# *Punctuation: Periods, Question Marks, Exclamation Points*

- Period (.) Closes declarative sentence; used in abbreviations (
  - Ms., Dr., Ph.D., etc.)
- Question Mark (?) Closes a direct question
- Exclamation Points(!) Indicate loud noises, apology, endearment, astonishment...

**Do not use them in technical writing!**



# Commonly Misused Expressions

## Affect/Effect

- Affect (verb) = Influence or change

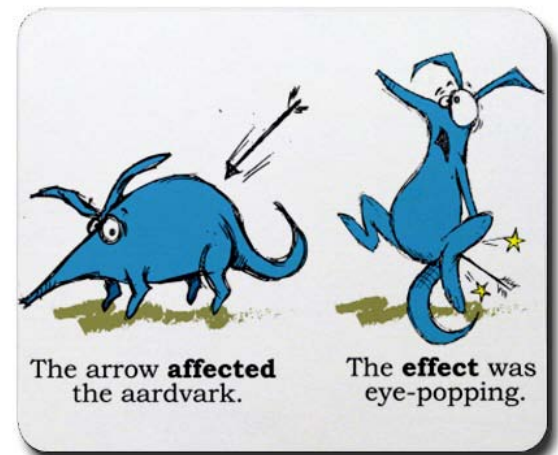
*Hiring an experienced inspector will positively affect our efficiency.*

- Effect (noun) = impression, results

*Hiring an experienced inspector had a positive effect on our efficiency.*

- Effect (verb) = to cause

*The reorganization effected a change in our efficiency.*



# Commonly Misused Expressions

## Because/Since



- Because: Refers to a reason

*“We had to delay reviewing permit applications because Hurricane Charley disrupted our office routine.”*

- Since: Refers to time

*“We have had to delay reviewing permit applications since Hurricane Charley passed over Orlando, FL.”*



# Commonly Misused Expressions

## It's/Its

- It's: contraction of it is

*“It's a small world.”*

**IT'S = IT IS**

- Its: possessive pronoun

*“Return your vehicle to its assigned spot.”*

# Commonly Misused Expressions

## Nor

Often misused for *or* after negative expressions

- Incorrect: “The manager could not locate the drums *nor* the manifests.”
- “The manager could not locate the drums *or* the manifests.”
- “The manager could locate *neither* the drums *nor* the manifests.”
- “The manager could not locate the drums, *nor* could he locate the manifests.”



# Commonly Misused Expressions

## Contaminate/Contaminant

- Contaminate: (*verb*); to pollute
- Contaminant: (*noun*); polluting substance



# *Other Examples of Misuse:*

## *Redundancy*

- “PIN number” = Personal Identification Number *Number*
- “ATM machine” = Automated Teller Machine *Machine*
- “MSDS sheets” = Material Safety Data Sheets *Sheets*
- “RPM per minute” = Revolutions per minute *per minute*



## *Other Examples of Misuse:*

- Avoid repeating same word in same sentence
  - A *separate* penalty for each of the 21 *separate* violations could have been assessed.
- Avoid flowery language
  - The perfectly beautiful intact 250-gallon tote was transported by the recently properly trained young handsome driver.



## Common Latin Abbreviations

- e.g.
  - *Exempli gratia*; means for example
- etc.
  - *Et cetera*; “others of the same kind”
  - “and so forth”
- i.e.
  - *Id est*; “that is” or “that is to say”
  - Often misused for e.g.



# *Numbers: Figures or Words?*

## Basic rule

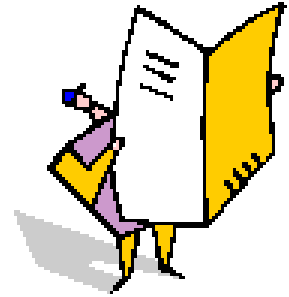
- One through ten: expressed as words
- 11 or more: expressed as figures
- Use figures for exact amounts, e.g., 3.2 mg/L

## Special considerations (*express as words*)

- Exact amount begins sentence
  - “Thirty companies...”
- “Inspectors found twelve 55-gallon drums.”
- Approximations
  - “About a thousand attended.”
- Dates/times
  - “We started at 9:30 a.m. on June 1.”
- Dimensions and weights
  - “The room is 15 x 20 feet.”



# *Helpful Tips*



- Draft thoughts quickly; fix later
- Read text aloud or have someone read to you
- Peer review
- Don't rely on spell check (nothing in SWIFT)
- Don't fear editing & constructive criticism



## References :

*The Elements of Style~Strunk and White*

*The New Well-Tempered Sentence~*

Karen Elizabeth Gordon

*The Deluxe Transitive Vampire~*

Karen Elizabeth Gordon

## Special Thanks to:

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# Questions?



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