

City Writing Style Guide

This guide sets out the City of Coquitlam's style for written communications, both internal and external. When developing written communications, it is important ensure that the content is inclusive and accessible to all audiences, including individuals with visual, cognitive and physical disabilities. (To learn more, refer to Coquitlam's Inclusive Language Guide (CEDMS [4836799](#)).)

In general, we opt for plain language: clear, concise and simple writing that uses widely-understood terms (see Grammar and Writing section). We also use proper grammar, spelling and punctuation in all City communications – even in quick emails – to convey professionalism and to ensure what we write is understood and taken seriously. Overall, we strive for consistency so that City communications have a common voice.

This guide covers key subjects but is not exhaustive. When in doubt, refer to the *Canadian Press Stylebook* (commonly known as CP Style) and related publications, which guide all City writing – with a few exceptions that are noted throughout this document. The *Canadian Oxford English Dictionary* is the City's default dictionary. Communications and Civic Engagement staff are also happy to provide guidance.

Note: The English language and CP Style are constantly evolving, consequently this guide will change over time as well. Contact Communications and Civic Engagement with comments and suggestions.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

General

To support greater accessibility of the City's information, including those with visual or cognitive considerations, avoid using abbreviations and acronyms that are not universally known. Where this cannot be avoided, follow the guidelines below.

- **2023 Update¹** - Unless an abbreviation or acronym is universally known – e.g., RCMP, MP or NATO – write out the phrase throughout the communication.
- You may include abbreviations or acronyms in parentheses after the first appearance of a phrase. Example: We're updating the Official Community Plan (OCP). *Note: This differs from CP style and is not recommended for reasons of accessibility.*
- Do not add quotation marks to abbreviations, as you may see in legal or academic writing. Incorrect: We're updating the Official Community Plan ("OCP").
- Do not add periods to abbreviations or acronyms (unless they are a geographic location, such as B.C.).
- Use plain-language alternatives when they make sense. Example: We're updating the Official Community Plan. We'll be seeking input on the plan next year (in second reference, do not capitalize words like plan, program or initiative, even if they derive from the proper name of the plan, program or initiative).

E.g. versus i.e.

Some people believe *e.g.* and *i.e.* are interchangeable, but they are not. Think of *e.g.* as another way of saying "for example" or "such as." Example: They makes good use of Coquitlam's recreation amenities, *e.g.*, parks, trails, ice rinks and pools. Think of *i.e.* as another way of saying "that is" or "in other words." Example: They regularly go to Coquitlam's state-of-the-art aquatic centre (*i.e.*, the City Centre Aquatic Complex). Both *e.g.* and *i.e.* may be used with or without parentheses.

Dates and Times

- **2023 Update¹** Spell out all months in full.
- Use commas in specific dates (as in, "The event is December 2023.") but not to separate months and years (as in, "The event is in December 2023."). Do not abbreviate days of the week, either on their own or in specific dates (as in, Friday, December 1, 2023).
- Do not add suffixes to dates (write June 3, not June 3rd).
- Add periods to a.m. and p.m. (as in, 7 a.m.).

Capitalization and Spelling

Canadian spelling

- Use *our* rather than *or* at the end of words such as neighbour, behaviour and candour.
- Use *re* rather than er at the end of words such as calibre, centre and fibre.

¹ While not consistent with current Canadian Press (CP) Style, this change supports improved accessibility, including for individuals with cognitive considerations or using assistive technology, such as screen readers.

- Use *ce* rather than *se* at the end of some nouns such as licence or practice. (Note that verbs and other derivatives, such as “licensing,” use *se*.)
- Use *ize* rather than *ise* at the end of words such as categorize, authorize and customize.
- Use *lled* or *lling* rather than *led* or *ling* for words such as labelled, barrelling and cancelling.
- Don’t include an *e* when adding *able*, *ing* or *ment* to words such as likable, aging and judgment.
- Add *ue* to the end of words such as dialogue and catalogue.
- Pick up the cheque, not the check.

City or city

- Capitalize the C when using “City” as a shorter form of “City of Coquitlam.” Example: “The City is thriving” means “The City of Coquitlam is thriving.” (Note: this differs from CP style.)
- Keep the C lower-case in other cases. Example: In the sentence “Our city is beautiful,” the C is lower-case because “city” is being used generically and is not a substitute for “City of Coquitlam.”

Connecting and hyphenated words

When wording is capitalized (such as in a department name or title; see below):

- Capitalize all principal words, including nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs, as well as the first and last word.
- Do not capitalize connecting words (e.g., *the*, *an*, *in*, *of*, *and*, *or*, *but* or *for*) except for those with four or more letters (e.g., *from*, *through*, *under*, *whether* or *which*).
- Do not capitalize the second half of a hyphenated compound word (e.g., Long-term Solutions).

Example: Searching Through Our Files for Long-term Solutions

Department and division names

- Capitalize the names of all government departments and divisions (e.g., Planning and Development Department, Community Planning Division, Engineering and Public Works Department).
- Avoid generic references to departments (the planning department, engineering, etc.).
- Use the proper department names (e.g., Parks, Recreation, Culture and Facilities, not Parks & Recreation or Parks and Rec).
- Use *and* rather than an ampersand (e.g., Planning and Development, Engineering and Public Works).

Headings and titles

- Headings may be either sentence case or capitalized, or a blend to demonstrate hierarchy (e.g., capitalizing primary headings and using sentence case for secondary ones).
- Capitalize occupational titles such as City Manager or Mayor when referring to an individual (e.g. City Manager [name]), but use lower-case for generic references (e.g., “He attended a regional meeting of city managers.”).
- Capitalize City Council, except for generic references (e.g., “... city councils from across B.C. met today.”)
- Capitalize official titles of books, reports, legislation and publications, but use lower-case for generic references (e.g., City bylaws, annual report.)

hə́ŋqə́mihəm spelling

- When writing Kwikwetlem use the hə́ŋqə́mihəm spelling: kʷikwə́ləm
- The lands formerly identified as Riverview should be referred to as sə́mihə́wəʔelə (*Suh-MEE-kwuh-EL-uh, formerly known as Riverview*)

See also [Writing for Indigenous Content](#) for additional guidelines.

Words ending with “ce” and “se”

Following these guidelines for words like licence/license and practice/practise:

- When the word is used as a noun, it's spelled with a C. Noun example: I work at a law practice.
- When the word is a verb, it's spelled with an S. Example: I'm here to license your business.
- Derivatives of the words are spelled with an S. Example: I work in the licensing department.

Directions and Locations

Geographic locations

- Capitalize *widely recognized* geographic regions (but not the *the*), such as: Pacific Northwest, the North, North Shore, North Atlantic, Far East, Downtown Eastside.
- Lowercase directions, positions or derivatives, such as: northeast, northerner, west side of town, west Coquitlam, north of Coquitlam, southbound on the highway.

Do not hyphenate compound words or derivatives, such as northeast or northbound.

Thus, a northerner who lives on the North Shore would head south to Vancouver and then east to reach northeast Coquitlam.

Street addresses

- **2023 Update¹** – Whether writing a specific street address or general directions, do not abbreviate and write out the street type in full (e.g. “Go to 633 Poirier Street” or “The event is on Lougheed Highway”).

Web addresses

- When writing web addresses, you can omit the “www.”
- **2023 Update¹** Use *TitleCase* where there are multiple words together to increase accessibility for those using screen readers (e.g. coquitlam.ca/SummerConcerts, LetsTalkCoquitlam.ca). In the absence of multiple words lowercase should be used. Acronyms may be lowercase or ALL CAPS – whichever option provides the optimal readability (eg. coquitlam.ca/mcc, coquitlam.ca/MCC).

Grammar and Writing

Avoiding “governmentese”

As a City employee, there's a good chance you use jargon and acronyms to communicate with your coworkers every day. However, when writing or speaking to others, it's important to remember that not everyone – especially members of the public – will understand insider terms that are familiar to you.

Before using a word, phrase or acronym, consider if a person without your government background will instantly know what it means.

Plain language tips

- Convey your point in the simplest way possible. Consider how you would talk about it in a one-on-one conversation.
- Avoid stuffy, overly formal sentences. Write in a conversational manner. Use short, common words whenever possible.
- Use the active voice. Example: *The dog bit the man*, not *The man was bitten by the dog*.
- Unless an abbreviation is universally known – e.g., RCMP, MP or CBC – write out the full name or phrase.
- Write concisely, avoiding unnecessary words or lengthy expressions. However, don't sacrifice length if examples or explanations are required for reader understanding.
- Avoid lengthy paragraphs, and typically limit them to one topic or idea.
- Avoid long sentences with multiple commas. Vary sentence length, and consider using bulleted lists to communicate important or lengthy details.
- Avoid clichés and over-used, trendy expressions whenever possible (e.g., dialogue, strategic).
- Dropping *that* from a sentence often improves flow. "Here is the report *that* I had referenced" is better without the *that*, as in: "Here is the report I had referenced." When to keep *that*:
 - When eliminating it could mislead the reader, even momentarily. Example: "The reporter warned *that* a snowstorm was coming."
 - When a sentence has two or more clauses. Example: "The City confirmed that it was aware of the coming storm and that it had alerted its snow-removal crews."
- Avoid the phrase *in regards to* – it's bureaucratic and grammatically incorrect. (Tip: Never add an S to *regard* except in the phrase *as regards* – or if you're giving your regards to Broadway, of course). Wrong: *In regards to* or *with regards to*. Right: *In regard to*, *with regard to*, or *as regards*.) Instead, use plain-language options such as *concerning*, *about*, *in*, *with* or even *regarding*. Example: Rather than, "I'm contacting you in regard to your letter," say "I'm contacting you about your letter."
- Avoid using *amongst* – it sounds pompous and archaic. Using *among* instead.

He, she or they

It is not acceptable to refer to both men and women as "he" (as in, "A Coquitlam resident may learn more about his city by attending Council meetings.")

In support of inclusivity, wherever possible City communications should use gender-neutral language. See also Coquitlam's Inclusive Language Guide (CEDMS [4836799](#)) for additional information on gender-neutral language.

Interchangeable terms

Some grammar experts have strong opinions on these terms, but feel free to use them interchangeably in your writing for the City:

- *Like* and *such as*: Use either option when making a comparison. Example: "We offer programs like aerobics and yoga" or "We offer programs such as aerobics and yoga."

- *More than* and *over*: Use either term to convey when something is in excess of something else. Example: “He made over \$1 million a year” or “He made more than \$1 million a year.”

Split infinitives

Grammarians have long railed against using split infinitives. (A refresher: infinitives are two-word forms of verbs, such as “to go” or “to read,” while a split infinitive involves inserting a word – typically an adverb – between the “to” and verb, as in “to happily read.”)

Sometimes this can easily be fixed by moving the adverb elsewhere (“to read happily”). However, most modern style authorities say there are many cases where moving the adverb produces clumsy sentences or changes the meaning. Our advice is to split infinitives sparingly, and only when it reads and sounds better. Example: “The City expects revenues to *more than* double over the next decade.” It wouldn’t make sense to move *more than* anywhere else in that sentence.

Numbers

- Always spell out whole numbers one to nine, but use figures for 10 and up. Above 999,999, switch to words if absolute precision is not required, e.g., one million. A mix of spelled-out numbers and figures is acceptable in the same sentence.
- Do not repeat written numbers with figures in parentheses, e.g., four (4). One reference is sufficient.
- Use figures for all decimals (e.g., 9.75) and for numbers with fractions (e.g., 9 3/4); decimals are preferred when possible. Spell out and hyphenate common fractions used alone (e.g., three-quarters).
- If the number is an official name, use the organization’s spelling style (e.g., 7Up).
- Use figures when a dollar sign is used, even for numbers under 10 (e.g., \$2 million).
- Write out numbers that start a sentence, and hyphenate in cases of multiple words (e.g., Thirty-five lawns were mowed.)

Punctuation

Apostrophes

Use an apostrophe when you are creating a contraction. For example, *it’s* and *you’re* are contractions of *it is* and *you are* so you should always be able to interchange them in your sentence. Example: “*It’s* a beautiful day” means “*It is* a beautiful day,” while “*You’re* a great help” means “*You are* a great help.”

Here are the general rules for possessive words (showing that something belongs to someone/thing else):

- Never use an apostrophe for possessive pronouns. Example: “I put the sandwich back in *its* bag” or “Is that *your* book or *hers*?”
- For singular nouns that end in S or an S sound, CP style dictates the use of both an apostrophe and another S *after* the final S. Example: “The bus’s tire” or “James’s toy.”
- For singular nouns that don’t end in S, use an apostrophe *before* the S. Example: “The child’s toy.”
- For plural nouns that end in S or ES, use an apostrophe *after* the S. Example: “The dogs’ toys” or “The buses’ tires.”

- For plural nouns that don't end in S, use an apostrophe *before* the S. Example: "The children's toys."

Bulleted lists

Use one of these conventions:

- Type A lists are for complete sentences or paragraphs. Each sentence should start with a capital letter and end with a period.
- Type B lists are for sentence fragments that complete a sentence leading up to the bulleted list. Each list item should start with a capital letter and have no ending punctuation.
- Type C lists are for words or short phrases with no verb that do not complete a preceding sentence. Each bullet should start with a capital letter and have no ending punctuation. This is a good style for sentences with short phrases or lists of features.

Hyphenating compound adjectives

Cost effective and *long term* are examples of compound adjectives (that is, adjectives made up of two or more words). Sometimes compound adjectives are hyphenated and sometimes they are not. The general rule is to hyphenate them if they are immediately followed by a noun. This conveys that the two words together are making up a single adjective. Examples:

- We strive to offer cost-effective programs, and that program is simply not cost effective.
- We want to achieve long-term savings to benefit the community for the long term.

The Oxford comma

Academics often favour using the Oxford (or serial) comma – a comma before the last item on a list. However, CP style typically forgoes the Oxford comma. Examples:

- Oxford comma: Coquitlam's parks are green, well equipped, and plentiful.
- CP style: Coquitlam's parks are green, well equipped and plentiful.

The exception is when an Oxford comma is required for clarity. Examples:

- Coquitlam's parks are green and lush, well equipped with play equipment and sports fields, and plentiful due to proper community planning. *The comma after "fields" helps separate long clauses – particularly those with commas or an "and."*
- John likes his neighbours, the Mayor, and the Prime Minister. *Without the Oxford comma after "Mayor," it may seem that the Mayor and Prime Minister are John's neighbours.*

Not sure if an Oxford comma is needed? Read the sentence aloud, with and without pauses for the commas.

Quotation marks

Quotation marks are often overused. Use them for:

- Direct quotes or sayings
- Book chapters and magazine or newspaper articles
- Television programs and musical compositions
- Unfamiliar or significant terms, or words used ironically (e.g., "friendly fire")
- Highlighting a word or phrase in instances when italics don't work

Do **not** use them for:

- The name of books, reports, legislation, publications, films and works of art (use italics instead)
- Foreign words or short phrases (use italics instead)
- Abbreviations (e.g., "Plan")

Writing for Indigenous Content

The City defers to the Province of BC's online guide to support writers in creating content that respects the cultural integrity of Indigenous Peoples. Coquitlam materials should reflect these guidelines to reflect the City's commitment to reconciliation and respect and recognition of Indigenous rights.

General guidelines

All Indigenous places and names should be identified by their Indigenous name first, followed by the phonetic pronunciation and other relevant context italicized and in parentheses. Where known, when including the phonetic pronunciation, use uppercase to identify syllables that should be emphasized.

Examples:

kʷikʷə́ləm (*kwee-KWET-lum*)

hə́hə́míhə́m (*HUN-kuh-MEE-num*)

qí́cə́y (*kat-zee*)

Place/Name Formerly Identified by a Colonial Name

Write the Indigenous name, followed by phonetic pronunciation, former Colonial name, and/or translation, as applicable. Unless there is an English term in the name/title, everything except the Indigenous name should be in parentheses and italics.

Examples:

sə́míqʷə́lə (*suh-MEE-kwuh-EL-uh; means Place of the Great Blue Heron, formerly known as Riverview*)

lé́xə́təm (*tla-hut-um; means to be invited*) Regional Park (*formerly known as Colony Farm Regional Park*)

Exceptions

Where there is no known phonetic pronunciation available, write the Indigenous name, followed by the Colonial name in parentheses and italics. This protocol can also be used when the Indigenous name is not widely known.

Examples:

šxwə́lmə́xwə́ʔ tə́mə́xw (*"This is our land"*)

Ch'ich'iyúy Elxwíkn (*The Lions*) are a pair of pointed peaks along the North Shore Mountains in Metro Vancouver.

Additional resources

Provided by the Province of BC:

- [Creating content for or about Indigenous Peoples](#) – create content in a way that respects the culture integrity of Indigenous Peoples
- [Terminology](#) – choose terminology that respects the cultural integrity of Indigenous Peoples
- [Indigenous Peoples and names in B.C.](#) – use Indigenous names and spelling
- [Language and grammar](#) – Choose active language and avoid possessive terms and other harmful framing
- [Capitalizing and formatting Indigenous terms](#) – learn when and how to use proper capitalization and formatting of Indigenous terms

Common word-use mistakes

- Addictive and addicting: Use *addictive* (as in, “This cake is addictive”) rather than *addicting*.
- Affect and effect: *Affect* is a verb that means “to change or make a difference to” (as in, “Her positive attitude affects everyone in her department.”), while *effect* is a result or consequence (as in, “She has that effect on everyone.”), or to bring about a result (as in, “Working together, we can effect change.”)
- Appraise and apprise: *Appraise* means “to assess the value or quality” of something (as in, “He appraised the neighbourhood before buying the home.”) while *apprise* means “to inform or tell someone” (as in, “I will apprise you of the cost as soon as possible.”)
- Awhile and a while: *Awhile* is an adverb meaning “for a short time” – proper use would be “...and stood *awhile* in thought.” *While*, on the other hand, is a noun meaning “a period of time,” as in: “... and stood for *a while* in thought.” *While* is almost always prefaced with a preposition such as *in* or *for*. (Note: *while* is also a verb, but that use doesn’t typically get confused with *awhile*.)
- Between and among: In most cases, use *between* for two people or things (as in, “Share this cookie *between* the two of you.”) and *among* for more than two (“Divide these cookies *among* your friends.”). The exception is when the action or relationship among three or more objects is understood as “dual” at any given time. So it’s more proper to write “Many barriers block trade *between* Canada’s 10 provinces,” since only two partners trade at any given time.
- Canvas/canvass: *Canvas* is a strong cloth, while *to canvass* can mean “to solicit votes or support” (as in, “They canvassed the area on behalf of the candidates.”), as well as “to question someone/people to get information” or “to discuss thoroughly.”
- Compliment/complement: A *compliment* is an admiring remark (noun) or “to praise” (verb), while *complement* is something that improves upon something else (“That dessert really complemented the meal.”) or is a number or quantity of something (as in, “With the hiring of Fred and Jill, we now have a full complement of staff.”)
- Comprise and compose: *Comprise* means “to include or to contain” or “to consist of,” and therefore should never be followed by “of.” Correct use: “The department comprises four divisions.” A simple way to remember this is to swap in *contain* for *comprise* and see if your sentence still makes sense. *Compose* means “to be or constitute a part of element of” or “to make up or form the basis of.” Correct use: “The department is composed of four divisions,” or “Four divisions compose the department.”

- Currently and presently: *Currently* and *at present* both mean something happening right now. However, *presently* is defined as *shortly* or *soon* – essentially, something that has not yet happened. To avoid confusion, avoid *presently* and instead use *now* to convey something taking place at the moment. Alternatives include *currently*, *today* or the actual dates.
- Different from and different than: Things are generally *different from* others, not *different than* others. (Recall the root form: “differ from.”) However, exceptions may be made when a clause follows the *from*, or when using *from* would make the sentence clumsy. Example: “This neighbourhood is *different than* I remember” is preferable to “This neighbourhood is *different from* what I remember.”
- Disinterested and indifferent: *Disinterested* means having nothing to gain from – therefore, impartial. Judges are expected to be disinterested, for example. It does *not* mean uninterested or indifferent.
- Everyday and every day: *Everyday* (one word) is an adjective describing something that routinely takes place, as in: “Reading and playing board games were *everyday* activities in their household.” *Every day* (two words) is an adjective-noun combination describing something that takes place daily, as in: “She goes to work *every day*.”
- Fortuitous and fortunate: *Fortunate* means lucky, while *fortuitous* means by coincidence or by chance, and the outcome may be good or bad. Correct use: “It was *fortuitous* that a new volunteer applied just after the old one left. *Fortunately*, she could step in right away so the program wasn’t interrupted.” Also: “That *fortuitous* meeting with an old friend delayed me so much that I missed my meeting.”
- Hope and hopefully: Over the years, *hopefully* has become interchangeable with *I hope*, rather than its traditional intent, which was to express doing something in a hopeful manner, or in hope (e.g., She walked hopefully to the mailbox). No matter how it is used, *hopefully* has no place in City communications – it conveys no accountability and indicates a reliance on luck rather than a solid plan of action. Alternatives: we intend to, the goal is, we expect, we anticipate.
- Imply and infer: *Imply* means to suggest or say something indirectly, while *infer* means to draw a conclusion from what someone said or did.
- Less and fewer: *Less* is used for quantities that can’t be measured or counted precisely. *Fewer* refers to things than be counted. Thus, we may have *less* happiness than our parents had, but they had *fewer* bathrooms. Exceptions include money and weight, which can be counted but still use *less*.
- Likely and probably: *Probably* and *likely* are not interchangeable. Avoid phrases such as: “The government will *likely* introduce legislation to prohibit bungee jumping,” – use *probably* instead. *Likely* can be used correctly as an adjective (“a *likely* story” or “the weather is *likely* to get colder”), or as an adverb, but only if it is preceded by a sub-modifier such as *very*, *most* or *more* (He was *more likely* to go than I was”).
- Me, myself and I: People often incorrectly use *myself* or *I* instead of *me*. For example, “Call John and I when you get back” or “Call John and myself when you get back.” An easy trick is to try out the sentence without the other people. “Call I...” or “Call myself...” are both clearly wrong, so it should be: “Call John and me when you get back.” *Myself* is a reflexive pronoun and refers to the subject of the sentence – e.g., *I* is the subject in “I see myself in the mirror.” Reflective pronouns can also be used to add emphasis (e.g., I myself saw the improvements to the building.) These are the only ways to properly use *myself*.

- Nauseated/nauseous/nauseating: *Nauseated* means feeling sick to your stomach (as in, “I feel nauseated”); something is either *nauseous* or *nauseating* if it causes you to be sick to your stomach (as in, “That mouldy food is nauseous”).
- Orient and orientate: *Orient* is the correct verb; *orientate* is a newer but unnecessary coinage.
- That and which: *That* is used to introduce a defining or essential clause (one that would change the intent of the sentence if it was removed). Example: He didn’t like the speech that I wrote today, but he did like the speech that I wrote yesterday. *Which* is used to introduce a non-essential clause (one that could be removed without changing the intent). Example: He didn’t like my last speech, which I wrote today. An easy rule of thumb is that you typically use a comma before *which* and no comma before *that*.
- Whether and whether or not: If you can replace *whether* with *if*, the “or not” probably isn’t needed, as in: “I need to know whether anyone plans to attend the event.” Retain the “or not” when both alternatives are emphasized. Example: “It is important that you RSVP whether or not you plan to attend.”
- Who and whom: Use *who* when referring to the *subject* of a clause (the person doing something), such as when it stands for he, she or they. Example: “The people *who* love Coquitlam.” (“They love Coquitlam,” so *who* is correct.) Use *whom* when referring to the *object* of the clause (the person having something done to him or her), such as when it stands for him, her or them. Example: “To *whom* did they give the award?” (“They gave the award to *him*,” so *whom* is correct.)

Writing Style Guide Quick Tips

Topic	City of Coquitlam Style	CP style
Abbreviations and acronyms	2023 Update – Unless an abbreviation or acronym is universally known – e.g., RCMP, MP or CBC – write out the phrase in full.	☑
	Add abbreviations or acronyms in parentheses after the first reference (e.g., “We’re updating the Official Community Plan (OCP). The OCP is ...”).	
	Do not add quotation marks, and do not add periods unless referencing a geographic location (e.g., B.C. not BC).	☑
Addresses – street	2023 Update – Do not abbreviate street types (e.g. 633 Poirier Street or Head west on Lougheed Highway).	
Addresses – web	Omit “www.” (but ensure online content includes clickable hyperlink).	
	2023 Update Use TitleCase where there are multiple words together to increase accessibility for those using screen readers (e.g. coquitlam.ca/SummerConcerts, LetsTalkCoquitlam.ca). In the absence of multiple words lowercase should be used. Acronyms may be lowercase or ALL CAPS – whichever option provides the optimal readability (eg. coquitlam.ca/mcc, coquitlam.ca/MCC).	
Caps and spelling – internet and technical terms	Capitalize specific proper names: World Wide Web, Adobe Acrobat, Facebook.	☑
	Lowercase descriptive or generic terms: internet, email, blog, home page, hyperlink, media, web, web browser, webcast, web page, website.	☑
	Use all caps for well-known acronyms and abbreviations: FTP, HTML, HTTP (but lowercase in web addresses), PDF, URL.	☑
City vs. city	Capitalize the C when “City” is a shorter form of “City of Coquitlam.” (e.g., “The City is thriving” means “The City of Coquitlam is thriving.”)	
	The C is lowercase otherwise (e.g., the C is lowercase in “Our city is thriving” because “city” is used generically – not to replace “City of Coquitlam”).	☑
City departments and divisions	Capitalize the principal words in names, and use <i>and</i> instead of an ampersand (e.g., Planning and Development, Engineering and Public Works, Community Planning).	☑
Dates and times	2023 Update Spell out all months in full.	
	Use commas in specific dates (e.g., “The event is December 1, 2023.”) but not to separate months and years (e.g., “The event is in December 2023”).	☑
	Do not abbreviate days of the week, either on their own or in specific dates (e.g., Friday, December 1, 2023). (<i>n.b. The Program Guide uses different conventions</i>)	☑
	Do not add suffixes to dates (e.g., June 3, not June 3 rd).	☑
	Add periods to a.m. and p.m. (e.g., 7 a.m.).	☑
Directions	Lowercase and do not hyphenate directions or positions (e.g., northeast, northerner, west Coquitlam, north of Coquitlam, southbound). Capitalize <i>widely known</i> geographic regions, such as the Pacific Northwest or the North Shore.	☑
2023 Update Indigenous names and terminology	Always capitalize the terms Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples.	
	Identify Indigenous places and names by their Indigenous name first, followed by the phonetic pronunciation and other relevant context italicized and in parentheses. Where known, use uppercase to indicate emphasized syllables. (e.g. səmíqʷəʔelə (<i>suh-MEE-kwuh-EL-uh</i> ; means <i>Place of the Great Blue Heron, formerly known as Riverview</i>)	
	Always use the hən̓q̓əmiḥən̓ spelling followed by the phonetic pronunciation in English to reference kʷikʷəłəm (<i>kwee-KWET-lum</i>) (<i>n.b. The City website has limitations related to indigenous characters in calendar events and some headings</i>)	
Numbers	Spell out one to nine, but use figures for 10 and up. Exceptions: numbers with dollar signs (e.g., \$2 million), decimals (e.g., 9.75), fractions (e.g., 9 ¾) and times (e.g., 3 p.m.). You can mix spelled numbers and figures in the same sentence.	☑
	Do not add figures in parentheses after a written number [e.g., four (4)].	☑
	Write out numbers that start a sentence (e.g., “Thirty-five people attended.”).	☑
Percentages	Use “per cent” rather than “%” (but note that “percentage” is one word.)	☑

2023 updates support improved accessibility, including for individuals with cognitive considerations or using assistive technology, such as screen readers.