

Publications Style Guide

MassCPAs Publications Style Guide

The Massachusetts Society of Certified Public Accountants (MassCPAs) serves a diverse and growing membership of more than 11,000 CPAs and other accounting professionals in public practice, industry, government and education. We are always seeking quality articles from authors who have information of interest to our membership. Authors have the opportunity to publish articles in *SumNews*, the Society's bi-monthly member magazine, or the society's website, masscpas.org.

The Review and Publishing Process

All submitted articles must be reviewed by a member of MassCPAs. We will acknowledge receipt of your manuscript and will notify you regarding acceptance. Please notify us if your article is published elsewhere, so that we may give proper attribution.

All materials, once reviewed and selected, are published by the method our advisory board feels appropriate to our membership. It may include both methods listed above or only electronically or in print.

How are articles evaluated?

Editors review articles for:

- Accuracy
- Timeliness
- New ideas and insights
- Writing quality and subject development
- Practicality versus theory
- Value to the public or business community
- Topical suitability and interest to readers

By submitting an article, you give MassCPAs permission to post the article on our website, with proper attribution. It may be in the public or member only section of our site, at our discretion. You must have all rights to materials you submit.

Generally, MassCPAs publishes articles on topics relating to the accounting industry, practice management, legislative updates, estate planning, taxation, marketing (business development), technology and financial planning. *Please do not submit sales pitches or promotional articles.*

The Review and Publishing Process (cont.)

How should you prepare your information?

Please send articles with the information below to Hannah Naranjo at hnaranjo@masscpas.org:

Include the title as well as the name, address and business phone number and email of all authors on the cover page. Please include a brief author biography to appear at the end of the article, including professional title, place of employment, education and contact information.

For example:

Jane Doe, CPA, has extensive experience in accounting for income taxes. She is a partner in the tax department of ABCD. She is also national director for tax services and accounting for the firm. In addition, Doe is the firm's National Director for Tax Services – Public Utilities. Doe received her BA in Economics from Yale University and her MS in Accounting from Northeastern University. A MassCPAs member, Doe serves on the _____ Committee(s).

Deadlines

Articles are reviewed on a rolling basis. All materials for upcoming issues of *SumNews* should be submitted by the following deadlines for the respective issue:

| Issue | Content Due | Issue Hits Members (second week of) |
|----------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| January 2023 | October 25 | January 2023 |
| March 2023 | January 10 | March 2023 |
| May 2023 | March 14 | May 2023 |
| July 2023 | May 3 | July 2023 |
| September 2023 | June 27 | September 2023 |
| November 2023 | September 6 | November 2023 |

The Review and Publishing Process (cont.)

How much should you write?

Articles for *SumNews* should be between 1,000 and 1,500 words. However, MassCPAs accepts any length, as the editors reserve the right to edit the article as they see fit (sometimes it is necessary to make minor adjustments for our layout).

Keep sentences and paragraphs short. A good sentence length is no more than 19–22 words, but lengths should vary within a paragraph. Your title and opening paragraph should entice the reader.

Write in the active voice. This minimizes unnecessary words and enlivens your

writing. Use “we decided” rather than “it was decided.” Active, direct writing is more interesting and effective.

Avoid elaborate checklists, footnotes and tabulations. Personalize statistics by applying them to the people they affect.

When you are writing, consider our audience. *SumNews* is read by accounting professionals, although more technical articles are accepted. General information for the public will be posted to the website rather than published in *SumNews*.

Grammar and Style

The following are general grammar and style guidelines to follow while writing your article:

Capitalization

- Capitalize academic degrees (e.g. Bachelor’s degree, not bachelors degree)
- Capitalize the full names of government agencies, departments and offices (e.g. The U.S. Department of State)
- Lowercase condensations of the name in further mentions (e.g. the department, the council)

Abbreviations

- Abbreviate company (Co.), corporation (Corp.), incorporated (Inc.) and limited (Ltd.), etc. when used after the name of a corporate entity
- Abbreviate the following professional titles and follow with a comma: CPA, DR., GOV., LL.D., LT. GOV., M.A., MR., MRS., MS., PH.D., REP., THE REV., SEN.
- Always abbreviate the following: CIO, CFO, CEO, COO, VP
- Lowercase professional titles when they are spelled out: president, certified public accountant, auditing supervisor

The Review and Publishing Process (cont.)

Acronyms

- When first mentioning an organization, spell out the name and follow with the acronym in parentheses (e.g. Massachusetts Society of Certified Public Accountants (MassCPAs))
- Use only the acronym in all further references

Commas

- No serial comma is used before the concluding conjunction (e.g. apples, oranges and pears)

Publications

- Article: Title case, in quotation marks
- Books: Title case, in quotation marks; publisher and year of publication follow in parentheses
- Chapter: Title case, in quotation marks
- Magazine, Newspapers and Periodicals: Title case, in italics

Currency

- \$25.75; \$25; \$10 thousand; \$10 million; \$10 billion
- Spell out dollar amounts with three or more zeros

Numbers, Ages and Percentages

- One to nine: Spell out
- 10 and over: Use numbers
- A group of related numbers should be written in one style; use numbers when one of the numbers is greater than 10.
- Spell out indefinite numbers such as hundreds and thousands
- Spell out numbers with three or more zeros, e.g. 2 million
- Percentages: Use numbers if above 10, spell out if under 10, and use the percent sign (e.g., 25%, not 25 percent and 1%, not 1 percent)
- Use numbers for someone's age, but spell it out if the person is under 10. Ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun require hyphens (e.g. A 23-year-old woman.)

The Review and Publishing Process (cont.)

Quotations

- Generally, use a comma to introduce a quotation
- Use a comma at the end of a quote that is attributed
- Commas and periods appear inside the quotation marks
- Semicolons and colons appear outside the quotation marks
- Question marks and exclamation marks appear inside the quotation marks if an integral part of the quoted statement; otherwise, they appear outside the quotation marks (e.g. He asked, "What are you doing there?" What did she mean when she said, "You look strange"?)

Time

- Decades: Sixties, 1960s or '60s; not sixties, 1960's or '60's
- a.m. and p.m.: lowercase (e.g. 10:00 a.m. not 10AM)

Internet

- website not Web site
- email not e-mail

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Please forward all articles to be considered for publication in *SumNews* or on MassCPAs' website to Hannah Naranjo at hnanranjo@masscpas.org.