

# Publication Guidelines for CDOT Research Reports (updated 04.09.2022)

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## I. Final Report Submission and Review Process

The Principal Investigator (PI) should submit the draft final report to the CDOT Research Project Manager (PM) for review upon completion of the study. The PI will provide the report as a Microsoft Word file to the CDOT PM. The PM will coordinate review by the Study Panel and the Research Librarian and return it to the PI for any necessary revisions. Once the report is deemed acceptable by CDOT it is converted to PDF format and posted online. Reports are published only in electronic format.

The PI is required to follow the formatting guidelines in this document. Only well-written, properly formatted, and complete reports following these guidelines will be reviewed. The PM will communicate comments about the report's content and formatting to the PI and will indicate any changes that must be made prior to acceptance. Editing deadlines will be determined by the PM.

The PI is responsible for ensuring that all comments and changes are incorporated into the final report. Once the draft final report has been reviewed, no content altering the substance or conclusions is to be added to the report unless authorized by the PM.

The final report will be accepted when the PM determines that:

- The report fulfills project objectives
- The report meets publication requirements, meaning the guidance in this document including Section 508 accessibility requirements, unless exceptions have been agreed to by the PM
- All CDOT comments have been addressed and all errors have been corrected, and
- The report has been submitted in the agreed upon file format (Microsoft Word).

The PI should also identify or provide one or more photographs (portrait orientation) that represent the project and are suitable for use on the report cover. An image format such as .jpg or .png should be used. The image should be one that can be used by CDOT without copyright restrictions, for example a photograph taken as part of the research or a CDOT photograph.

## II. Report Requirements

### A. Writing Guidelines

The PI is responsible for conducting a thorough review of the content, writing style and formatting of the report to make sure that it complies with CDOT guidelines and requirements BEFORE submitting the report to the PM for review. This includes checking for spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors.

Reports which are written with poor sentence structure, or which contain numerous errors or inconsistencies in grammar, syntax, spelling, and punctuation will be returned to the PI for correction and/or improvement.

### 1. Style Guide

A specific style manual is not mandated. However, an accepted or widely used style manual must be used to format citations within text and in the reference list. The style must be applied consistently throughout the report.

### 2. Copyright/Proprietary Information

It is the responsibility of all authors of the report to obtain (and retain) all permissions from the copyright owners before reprinting graphical material in the report. Examples: photographs, software screenshots, scans or screenshots of text, pictures, maps, tables, charts, and graphs from copyrighted sources. As a reminder, content from AASHTO and TRB publications such as NCHRP reports, and most journal articles in the Transportation Research Record is copyrighted. The PI should seek reprint permission before including excerpts from copyrighted publications in the final report. This stipulation does not apply if the producer of the text, chart or image is the performing organization or CDOT itself. All images should be sourced or attributed according to the style guide you are following. The authors assume responsibility for any copyright violations.

### 3. Accessibility (“Section 508”)

Reports must comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794d), as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220) as much as possible to increase accessibility for individuals with disabilities and to allow for screen reading using assistive devices. Section 508 compliance is also required by the National Transportation Library for all research report submissions. Accessibility is best accomplished by creating the report in Microsoft Word at inception. The accessibility checker in Word may be used to identify and fix any issues.

Required:

- Use heading styles throughout the report
- Include captions for all images, figures, graphics, and tables
  - Add brief descriptions in the ALT-TEXT field

For further instructions, go to [Section508.gov - Documents Authoring Guide](https://www.section508.gov/create/documents/authoring-guides/).  
(<https://www.section508.gov/create/documents/authoring-guides/>)

## III. Organization and Formatting

Submit the report in a single electronic file including the following sections. Use the following sequential order as much as possible.

- Report cover, using the [template provided by CDOT](#)
- Technical Documentation Page using the template provided by CDOT (includes the abstract)
- Disclaimer
- Acknowledgements
- Table of Contents
- Abstract
- Executive Summary

- Introduction
- List or Table of Figures (if applicable)
- List of Tables (if applicable)
- List of Abbreviations (if applicable)
- Body of Report
- References or Bibliography (if applicable)
- Appendices (if applicable, e.g., Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.)

## A. General Guidance

### 1. Styles

In Microsoft Word, assign a quick style for each heading level throughout the report. Headings can be defined as section titles, chapter titles or subchapter titles. This will allow a reader to navigate more easily through the report using the navigation pane.

Avoid widows or orphans whenever possible.

Include appropriate paragraph spacing before and after as part of the style instead of using hard returns. This includes styles for figures and tables.

Use heading styles in order, e.g., H1, H2, H3, etc.

### 2. Fonts

Use a font size no smaller than 11-point. Text should be left aligned.

### 3. Spacing

Use single line spacing for the body text. Paragraphs should use double line spacing (or be separated by at least 12-point spacing if you are using 12-point font size). Set this up using paragraph spacing for body text. Avoid using hard returns for “line spacing” in between paragraphs.

The first word of a paragraph should not be indented. Avoid leaving a single line of text at the top or bottom of a page. Do not leave a header without text at the bottom of a page.

### 4. Margins

A minimum of 1 inch is preferred for all margins.

### 5. Pagination

Center page numbers at the bottom of the page. Use Arabic numbers starting with the body of the report. Use lower case Roman numerals for front matter. Start new numbering with appendices (e.g., A-1, A-2, etc. for Appendix A and B-1, B-2, etc. for Appendix B). Although it is counted, do not number the title page or the Technical Documentation Page.

## 6. Abbreviations, Acronyms and Symbols

Define acronyms the first time they are used. The definition should be given first, followed by the abbreviated term in parentheses. Include a list of acronyms if warranted.

## 7. Measurements

The usage of measurement units (when appropriate) should be consistent throughout the document. English (U.S.) units should be used unless a test method specifies metric.

## 8. Numbers

Follow standard practice. Spell out numbers from one through nine. Use numerals for numbers 10 and above, unless they are the first word of a sentence. If a number 10 or above is in the same sentence as a lower number, use all numerals. Use numerals for units of money, measurement, and time.

## 9. Images, Photos, Tables, and Figures

See guidance under Accessibility.

Each figure should have a caption as well as a brief explanatory description in the ALT-TEXT field. Each table should have a title summary (added under Properties as ALT-TEXT).

Number figures consecutively and label with unique captions centered at the bottom, bold type (note: they should be called figures, not photos)

### **Figure 1. This is how the captions should look.**

Number tables alphabetically and label with unique captions centered at the top in bold. Use "Insert Table" feature in Word. In the layout ribbon, mark the header row as "Repeat Header Rows." Tables should be editable and not inserted as screenshots. Tables should supplement, not duplicate, the text.

Place figures and tables as close as practical to textual references.

Place graphics so that they can be viewed without turning the page sideways (if a graphic must be placed sideways, the top should be on the left side of the page)

## IV. Instructions By Section

### A. Front Matter

*Cover (use template provided by CDOT)*

PI's may choose two options for the cover of their report. Options include a cover with or without a photo. A cover template is provided by CDOT and should be filled in accordingly. If there is a question about a fillable option, leave it blank, and it will be filled in during the editing phase.

Follow all image/photo guidance and remember to apply Section 508 accessibility to the photo (tag).

*Technical Documentation Page* ([use template provided by CDOT](#))

CDOT will provide the template for the Technical Documentation Page. Follow instructions included or use [AASHTO guidelines](#) as needed.

(<https://research.transportation.org/Report-Guidelines-and-Requirements/>)

*Disclaimer* ([use template provided by CDOT](#))

Included on the inside of the front cover.

The contents of this report reflect the views of the author(s), who is(are) responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Colorado Department of Transportation or the Federal Highway Administration. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

*Acknowledgements*

Include a list of study panel members on all reports.

*Table of Contents*

Use style headings to generate the table of contents. Do not create it manually. Using the Word ribbon, use “References > Insert Table of Contents” or “References > Insert Table of Figures” (to insert a list of figures or a list of tables). When a heading is applied or a new figure or table is inserted in the report, the page number referenced can be updated automatically when lists are updated. Do not include front matter in the table of contents.

*Executive Summary*

The Executive Summary is placed after the Acknowledgements page and is approximately one to two pages long. Discuss why the research was needed and how the research was completed. Compare research results with expectations. Discuss how the research can be used by CDOT, include recommendations for action or further research and describe cost benefits.

*Implementation Statement*

The Implementation Statement is a subheading below the Executive Summary (on the same page). It should identify recommendations to be implemented by CDOT. Include one or two paragraphs with a specific CDOT implementation strategy and discuss who could benefit from this research.

*Introduction*

Include background, the study objectives, and the scope of the study.

## B. Body of Report

Headings should be organized and formatted using quick styles (not just changing the font style or size of the text).

### *Figure and Table Caption Examples*

Number every figure within each chapter or section, e.g., Figure 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc. in Chapter 1; Table 2-1, 2-2, etc. in Chapter 2. Use sentence case (the first letter of a sentence is capitalized; all other letters are lowercase unless the word is a proper noun). Caption titles should be bolded. If the figure or table must be centered, then the caption should be centered under the figure or above the table. Keep figure captions and table titles with their figures and tables respectively.

### *Conclusion and Recommendations*

Both conclusions and recommendations should be valid, appropriate, and properly supported, include discussion of how research findings should be used by CDOT.

## C. Back Matter

### *References*

Credit all information taken from other sources. List all references in alphabetical order. Use a hanging indent. Any accepted or well-known style manual may be used for formatting as long as it is consistently applied and basic relevant reference elements are included such as author(s), title, place of publication, publisher, publication year (or periodical volume and issue number).

### *Appendices*

Number appendix pages separately (e.g., A-1, A-2, etc.) If the appendices are lengthy, discuss with your PM if they should be published as separate documents.

## V. Document Revisions

**IMPORTANT:** In order NOT to lose any accessible tags that have been added to a Word document when a document is being revised (e.g., tracked changes were used or comments were inserted), copy the old file and rename the new file. **DO NOT DO A FILE-SAVE AS** and then rename the file. This will blow away all your accessible tags. The PM will follow this same guidance when creating a separate copy for comments and revision.

## VI. Research Brief

A Research Brief is required at study completion, and preliminary briefs may be requested by the study manager at the beginning as well. CDOT will provide a recommended template.

## VII. Report Publishing and Distribution

The CDOT Librarian or PM assigns a CDOT research report number, and once all revisions have been accepted, finalizes the technical report documentation page, produces a PDF, and publishes the report on the CDOT Research website. The Librarian also sends notification of publication to National Transportation Library (NTL), Transportation Research Board (TRB), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other organizations as mandated by the FHWA, and updates the TRB Research In Progress (RIP) record. NTL only accepts reports that meet Section 508 compliance standards and may reject a report if it does not meet the criteria.

### A. Report Preparation Checklist

- Is the report Section 508 compliant?
  - Use the accessibility checker in Word to identify and fix any Section 508 issues
- Make sure title, report # and date are the same on cover and documentation page
- Make sure keywords are included in documentation page
- Make sure font sizes and types are consistent
- Include all members of study panel in the report review process
- Have at least one person review entire report for clarity and grammar
- Spell check the report after all editorial changes have been made