

IN-HOUSE STYLE SHEET

Updated 4.24.23

Basically, we follow the Chicago Manual of Style, 17th ed., and Miriam-Webster.com. The following conventions override it (or just emphasize certain points).

Capitalization

- Titles and subtitles are in title case
- A cut line or blurb after the title or subtitle is in sentence case
- Lake Country, Lakes Area
- COVID-19
- Realtor, but not real estate agent
- Land of 10,000 Lakes
- Don't capitalize north woods vacation, the north woods, the north country, the northland, northcentral Minnesota, up north, northern Minnesota, north country lakes

Italics

Do Italicize

- Words being emphasized (avoid using all caps or bold within body copy)
- Titles of books, magazines, newspapers, works of art

But not

- Names of television stations

Numbers

- Write out numbers one through one hundred and other numbers that can be written in one or two words. See General Rule 9.2
- Ages are numerals when listed without the word "years"
- Use numeral for degrees

Punctuation

- Use the Oxford comma (not required in ads)
- Put commas on both side of the name of the state if you are also naming the city
- Put only one space after a period
- Periods belong inside closing quotation marks
- End all captions (but not photo credits) with a period
- The way to make an en dash on a Mac is option+hyphen
 - Use an en dash instead of a hyphen to mean to or through or until, as between times or dates

Spelling (Chicago Style recommends Miriam Webster) and Abbreviations

- A historic (not an historic)
- U.S.
- Collectibles
- Nonprofit
- Honey bees, bumble bees, beekeeping
- U.S.
- a.m. and p.m.
- When listing a postal address, use abbreviations such as St, Hwy, Rd, Dr, and Ave (no periods following)
- Write out the names of states within the articles. If the city is also named, put commas on both sides of the state name
- If a town or city is in Minnesota, don't name the state unless you are listing a postal address (in which case use MN). And we don't put the state or the zip code when listing local street addresses.

Verb Tense

- If you're talking about what someone said in an interview that happened at a particular time and which you are specifically mentioning about in the article, use past tense. (As in, "I met So-and-So at Coco Moon to find out what he had to say about XWZ") But if you are just quoting a person or book or online source in general, even if you did learn it in an interview on a certain date (but you aren't talking about that interview per se in the article) use present tense.

Diction/Voice/Style

- On second reference, refer to people by their last names unless you need to use first names for clarity (when several people have the same last name).
- Individual writing voices are encouraged. We can have an eclectic mix of more or less formal voices, but in general we lean toward casual and conversational. For example, one writer may say, "You never can tell what will happen next," while another writer says, "One never can tell," and a third says, "A person never can tell."
- Contractions are fine if they sound natural. So are prepositions at the end of sentences—if the syntax or the musicality of the sentence requires it.

Words to Avoid

- Brainerd Lakes (instead say Lake Country or Lakes Area)
- etc., etcetera (instead say and such)

To Writers

Please send articles as Word docs attached to an email.

- We prefer 12 pt. Calibri for article drafts
- Indicate a new paragraph by skipping a line
- Check the paragraph formatting so that there are no extra points of space in the lines before or after paragraphs