

## CHAPTER II. LETTERS

### 2-1 Purpose.

This chapter explains how to prepare letters for signature by departmental officials and includes information on the concurrence and dispatch processes.

- A. For information on how letters and memorandums are written, see Chapter I.
- B. For details on preparing memorandums, see Chapter III.
- C. For details on preparing secretarial correspondence (other than congressional correspondence), see Chapter IV.
- D. For details on preparing White House correspondence, see Chapter V.
- E. For details on preparing congressional correspondence, see Chapter VI.

### 2-2 Use.

The letter format is used:

- A. For formal correspondence with the public and government agencies when telephone or other informal communications are not appropriate; and
- B. To convey awards, commendations, congratulations, condolences, etc.

### 2-3 Stationery and Printer Requirements.

#### A. Stationery.

1. Department letterhead is available in Microsoft Word in HUDDocs. To access HUDDocs, click on "File," click on "New," click on "My Templates," click on "HUDDocs," and select the appropriate letterhead.
2. When using HUDDocs, plain white stock suitable for laser printers is acceptable as an original because HUDDocs prints the letterhead. For continuation pages, use plain white paper of equal quality.
3. See Section IV-4 for stationery requirements for correspondence that is for signature by the Secretary or Deputy Secretary.

#### B. Printer. Use a laser printer for all letters.

### 2-4 Type Style.

Always use Times New Roman font, 12-pitch type.

2-5 Margins.

- A. Standard Letter. The standard margins are one inch on the left, right, and bottom. The top margin is automatically set in HUDDocs.
- B. Short Letter. The margins may be adjusted for balance on the page. Set the margins at 1.25 inches and hit “Tab” five times for the signature block.

2-6 Date.

In HUDDocs, the cursor will be at the date line; however, the date may be added after the letter has been signed.

2-7 Addressing a Letter.

(See Appendix A for models of address and general rules.)

- A. Placement. (See Exhibit 2-1.)
- B. Spacing.
  - 1. Single-space the address and arrange it in block style.
  - 2. Limit the address to five lines or less on the letter.
  - 3. Limit each line to 3 inches or less.
  - 4. Indent run-over lines two spaces by hitting the spacebar two times
  - 5. If more than five lines are needed to ensure delivery, type the complete address on the envelope.
- C. Multiple Addressees. Prepare letters by using one of the following:
  - 1. Prepare an original for each addressee;
  - 2. In response to incoming correspondence with multiple signatures, prepare a single reply to the first person who signed the letter. In the first paragraph, state that the reply is also intended for the other addressees; or
  - 3. In response to petitions or resolutions, prepare a single reply addressed to the person who submitted the petition or resolution or to the first person who signed it. In the body of the letter, mention the other addressees as a group.
- D. State and Territory Abbreviations Table. (See Appendix B.)

- E. ZIP Code. All ZIP Codes should consist of nine digits (ZIP Code + 4). To find a ZIP Code + 4 when a street or postal address is available, go to the United States Postal Service website at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) and click on “Look Up a ZIP Code.”
- F. Attention Line. Attention lines are not necessary unless required by the incoming letter. If one is necessary, insert it as the first line of the inside address – with or without the word “Attention”. (**Exception:** Attention lines on replies to Members of Congress are placed on the Envelope only.)

2-8 Salutation.

(See Exhibit 2-1.) Do not personalize the salutation. The signer will personalize the salutation on the original, if necessary.

2-9 Body of a Letter.

- A. Placement and Spacing. (See Exhibit 2-1.)
- B. Paragraphs. (See Exhibit 2-1.)
- C. Subparagraphs. (See Appendix C.)
- D. Quotations. (See Appendix D to incorporate quotations into the body of a letter.)
- E. Multiple-Page Letter. Do not begin a paragraph near the end of a page, unless there is room for at least two lines. Do not continue a paragraph on the next page, unless at least three lines can be carried over.

In HUDDocs, the cursor will be on the correct line for the page number. Number continuation pages at the top right margin and continue typing the letter three lines below.

2-10 Complimentary Close. (See Exhibit 2-1 and Appendix A.)

2-11 Signature Element. (See Exhibit 2-1.)

- A. One Signature. (See Exhibit 2-1.) The signature element includes:
  - 1. The signer’s name;
  - 2. The signer’s title; and
  - 3. The signer’s office name. Use only enough to identify the office. For example, if the signer is a Division Director or Branch Chief, use the name of the division or branch only. Indent run-over lines two spaces by hitting the spacebar two times. Omit the office name when the title alone clearly identifies the signer.

B. Joint Signatures. (See Exhibit 2-2.)

2-12 Enclosure Notation.

(See Exhibit 2-1.) If the letter has an enclosure, type an enclosure notation.

2-13 Courtesy Copy Notation.

(See Exhibit 2-1.) If the originator wants the addressee to know that someone else will receive a copy of the letter, type a “cc” (courtesy copy) notation:

cc:

2-14 Proofreading.

Read the letter(s), (envelope(s), or label(s)) carefully to ensure there are no errors.

2-15 Concurrence/Clearance/Dispatch.

Follow concurrence, clearance, and dispatch procedures used by your program office’s correspondence unit or point of contact for correspondence, to ensure accordance with current departmental policies and standards.

2-16 Accommodating Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Limited English Proficiency.

The Department is committed to ensuring that its correspondence is effectively communicated with its employees, applicants, participants, personnel of other federal entities, and members of the public who have disabilities. Accordingly, your office should endeavor to provide correspondence in alternative formats when necessary to effectively communicate with persons with disabilities. For example, where the Department provides informal correspondence by telephone, the appropriate offices will attempt to make available telecommunication devices for deaf persons (TDDs), placing calls using telephone or video relay services or some equally effective communication system when it is necessary to effectively communicate with persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and, where the Department provides written correspondence, the appropriate offices will endeavor to provide the content of the written correspondence in an appropriate, alternative format (large print, electronic format such as email or MS Word document, or Braille) when it is necessary to effectively communicate with persons who are blind or have low vision. The person with a disability is generally in the best position to determine which means of communication will be effective given that individual’s disability; communication skill; and the length, nature, complexity, and content of the communication (e.g., use of legal or technical terms).

The Department is also committed to ensuring that its correspondence is effectively communicated with persons who have limited English proficiency (LEP). Questions about providing correspondence in translated formats for persons who have LEP should be directed to the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity.

## CHAPTER II: Exhibits of Letters

Exhibit 2-1 Structural Elements of a Letter

Exhibit 2-2 Letter with Joint Signatures



## Structural Elements of a Letter

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-3000

OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATION

(Date)

Mr. Ari Zona  
123 Desert Lane  
Sun City, AZ 77054-7777

Dear Mr. Zona:

The following guidelines address structural elements of a HUD letter. Access Microsoft Word. Click on “File,” “New,” and “HUDDocs,” select the appropriate letterhead. Make certain the font is Times New Roman, 12-pitch type. The cursor will be at the date line; however, most of the time the date will be added after the letter has been signed.

Hit “Enter” four times and type the inside address. Hit the spacebar two times between the state code and the ZIP Code. Hit “Enter” two times, type Dear, the professional or courtesy title, last name, and a colon. Hit “Enter” two times and hit “Tab” one time to begin typing the body of the letter.

Hit the spacebar two times after each sentence. For standard and short letters, single-space within each paragraph and double-space between paragraphs. Hit “Tab” one time before typing each paragraph. Hit “Enter” two times at the end of the last paragraph. Hit “Tab” six times and type Sincerely,. Hit “Enter” five times, hit “Tab” six times, and type the signer’s name. Hit “Enter” one time, hit “Tab” six times, and type the title, aligned directly under the signer’s name. Hit the spacebar two times to indent run-over lines. If there is an enclosure(s), hit “Enter” two times and type Enclosure(s). If a cc will be sent, hit “Enter” two times after typing the signer’s title (or enclosure notation, if any) and type cc:. Hit “Enter” one time and type the recipient’s name. List additional names single-spaced.

Sincerely,

Nevada Smith  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Handbook Regulations

Enclosure(s) (if required)

cc: (if required)  
Silvah Bells

**This letter is typed in Times New Roman, 10-pitch type for this handbook exhibit only.**

## Letter with Joint Signatures



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT  
WASHINGTON, DC 20410

(Date)

Mr. Ari Zona  
123 Desert Lane  
Sun City, AZ 77054-7777

Dear Mr. Zona:

Use the standard letter format as shown in Exhibit 2-1. For joint signatures, use general departmental letterhead (available in HUDDocs, "Generic HUD.dot") if the officials are in different primary organizations. Hit "Enter" two times after the last paragraph.

Hit "Tab" six times and type Sincerely,. Hit "Enter" five times, type the name of the first signer. Hit "Tab" five or six times (depending on the length of the names) and type the name of the second signer.

Single-space the title of each signer below and flush with their names. Limit signature elements to four lines or less. Indent run-over lines two spaces by hitting the spacebar two times.

Sincerely,

Barry Blanco  
Assistant Secretary for Housing-Federal  
Housing Commissioner

Amarillo T. Rose  
Chief Human Capital Officer

Enclosure(s) (if required)

cc: (if required)  
Silvah Bells

**This letter is typed in Times New Roman, 10-pitch type for this handbook exhibit only.**