

## CHAPTER 2. PREPARATION OF LETTERS

Par.

1. When should a letter be prepared?
2. How do I prepare letters?

1. **When should a letter be prepared?** The letter is a formal communication that is used:

- a. When writing to organizations, businesses, or individuals outside of the Federal Government.
- b. Where protocol dictates (Members of Congress, Cabinet Officers, Governors, Mayors, etc.).
- c. When writing a personal or private message to individual FHWA employees on such matters as retirement, commendation, congratulations, or condolences.

2. **How do I prepare letters?** Instructions for preparing correspondence are found in the following guidance. Letterhead templates are available on StaffNet at <http://staffnet/informs/tn0002.htm>.

Each Administrator may have his/her own preferences with regard to the preparation and/or formatting of correspondence which may contradict the guidelines described in the Correspondence Manual. The FHWA Exec Sec will forward these preferences to the Correspondence Contacts. The preferences should be followed when preparing correspondence for the Administrator's signature. Correspondence prepared for signature by someone other than the Administrator should follow the guidelines as described in the Correspondence Manual.

**NOTE:** Special logos at the bottom of the letterhead are not included in the examples within the Correspondence Manual as they can change between updates. The letterhead templates available on StaffNet will include the current logo.



## Letter Format Guidelines

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-XX

Ms. (Full Name)  
(Title)  
(Name of Organization)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State code\*##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Ms. (Surname):

*blank line*

Each Administrator will have their own preferences as to how letters should be formatted. The following format guidelines will be used in preparing a letter unless the Administrator has indicated other preferences. The Executive Secretariat will notify offices of these alternate preferences.

1. Use Microsoft Word.
2. Fonts: For correspondence use Times New Roman 12 pt.
3. In order to achieve a balanced looking letter, spacing may vary between the date and address.
4. The margins for a letter are:
  - a. Microsoft Word Page Set: Top: 1", Bottom: 1", Left: 1", Right: 1"  
(template margins are pre-set).
  - b. Right justification is not permitted in letters or memoranda.
  - c. Left margin: In line with the left edge of the letterhead caption.
5. On Office of the Administrator letterhead, the date is typed centered under "Office of the Administrator" and for Headquarters letterhead, the date is centered between the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) logo and the DOT address. On Field letterhead the date is centered under the division office name. Spell out the month and show the date and year in numerals. Do not use st, th, or rd with the numerals.

**Example:** April 15, 2010

\*The USPS two-letter State code (ALL CAPS) for the State should be used on the inside address and the envelope. Use DC, not D.C. However, when mentioning a State in the body of the letter, it should be spelled out. There should be two blank spaces between the two-letter State code and the ZIP Code (the ## symbol indicates two blank spaces within this manual).

**NOTE:** The margins and placement of the address on short letters may vary for an attractive, well-balanced appearance.

1. The Sender's reference is typed directly below the office routing code and flush with the right margin.

**Example:**

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-XX  
Sender's Reference:  
TWDX

2. The address begins at the left margin, space down a minimum of two times to create at least one blank line below the FHWA or sender's reference. Single space in block style. The address should not exceed five lines (additional lines may be typed on the envelope). When any line extends beyond the center of the page, space down one time and space right four times so the line begins under the third character of the line above.

**Example:** Mr. John A. Smith  
President  
The Washington Area  
Computer Group  
Washington, DC 20590

3. There should be two blank spaces (indicated by ## in the manual) between the State code and ZIP Code.
4. Do not use two titles on the same address line, such as "The Honorable (Senator or Representative), Chairman" or "Mr. John A. Doe, P.E."

**Incorrect:** The Honorable (Senator or Representative's full name), ~~Chairman~~  
Committee on XXXXXXXXXXXXX

**Correct:** The Honorable (Senator or Representative's full name)  
Chairman/Chairwoman  
Committee on XXXXXXXXXXXXX

**Incorrect:** ~~Mr.~~ John A. Doe, P.E.  
(Title)

**Correct:** John A. Doe, P.E.  
(Title)

The salutation is typed flush with the left margin, space down two times to create one blank line below the address followed by a colon. Do not use first-name salutations in letters unless

Figure 2.1-2

you have received specific instructions from the person who will be signing the letter or Exec Sec. These instructions also apply to letters that will be signed in Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST).

5. **Subject Lines:** For correspondence drafted in Headquarters, do not use a Subject Line. If a Subject Line is used in correspondence prepared by a Field office, place it two spaces down after the address to create one blank line below the address and the Subject Line. Space down two times to create one blank line between the Subject Line and the salutation. A Subject Line should only be used when writing to a State department of transportation or businesses about specific projects and should be very brief (e.g., project name). When corresponding with Members of Congress or the general public, do not use a Subject Line; use the opening paragraph to introduce the subject of the letter.

**Example:**

Address

*blank line*

Subject: Project Name

*blank line*

Dear Secretary Smith:

6. The body of the letter begins two spaces down from the salutation to create one blank line. Paragraphs are single-spaced, and there should be one blank line between paragraphs. Use two blank spaces between sentences. Use clear, concise language and make sure the letter answers the questions asked in the incoming correspondence. Avoid the excessive use of acronyms. The first reference shall be spelled out followed by the acronym in parentheses. Begin each main paragraph flush with the left margin. Letters consisting of one paragraph that is ten lines or less should be double-spaced.

7. **Opening paragraph:**

When correspondence has been referred from OST (or from another source) for FHWA response, advise the addressee of this referral in the opening paragraph.

**Example:** Thank you for your letter of September 30 to Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood regarding opposition to the East River Project in Pennsylvania. I have been asked to reply.

- a. In replying to a letter, provide enough detail in the opening paragraph to reference the incoming letter, but do not repeat all details of the subject.

*blank line*

- b. If an interim letter was sent, mention it in the opening paragraph. Give the date of the interim letter and any other clarifying information.
8. Begin the complimentary close at the center point, two spaces down from the last line of the body to create one blank line. There is no required complimentary closing. However, within FHWA, “Sincerely yours,” and “Sincerely,” are the most commonly used closings.
- a. When an individual is detailed to a position as a result of a personnel action, use the term “Acting” before the title in the signature block.

**Example:**

Sincerely yours,  
*blank line*  
*blank line*  
*blank line*  
*blank line*  
 John A. Jones  
 Acting Chief, Program Review Branch

- b. When an individual is acting in another position without a personnel action, the signature block will reflect the name and title of the incumbent, and the authorized person will sign for the incumbent.

**Example:**

Sincerely yours,  
*blank line*  
*blank line*  
*blank line*  
*blank line*  
 for: John A. Jones  
 Associate Administrator for  
 Program Development



## Paragraphs and Subparagraphs

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-XX

John B. Doe, P.E.

(Title)

(Name of Organization)

(Street Address)

(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Mr. Doe:

*blank line*

1. Begin each main paragraph flush with the left margin. Single space within paragraphs, and there should be one blank line between paragraphs. Keep paragraphs to ten lines or less. Double space letters (one blank line between each line) consisting of one paragraph and ten lines or less.
2. When a paragraph is subdivided, it must have at least two subdivisions. Each successive subdivision of a paragraph is indented.
3. Indents should be set at every half inch.
4. When a paragraph is subdivided, each subdivision is numbered and lettered for clarity. Place periods after letters or numbers in an outline format. Omit the periods when the letters or numbers are enclosed in parentheses or are underlined.
  - a. Alternate use of numbers and letters.
  - b. Single space within a paragraph and space down two times to create one blank line between paragraphs.

**NOTE:** In the interest of brevity, only one subdivision at each level is shown in the example on the next page.

1. Open your bank statement.
  - a. Put canceled checks in sequence.
    - (1) Correct any mistakes in register.
      - (a) Mark off check number on the statement.
        - 1 Verify amount on check.
          - a Highlight discrepancies on statement.
  - c. Bullets, dashes, etc., may also be used to separate talking points in briefings, items in a list, or ideas to add clarity.
5. **Cited paragraphs:** The reference numbers and letters in a cited paragraph are typed without periods or spaces.
 

**Example:** (1)(a)(1)(a)
6. **Carryover paragraphs:** A paragraph may be split at the end of the page only if two or more lines of the paragraph can be carried over to the next page. There must be at least two lines of the paragraph at the bottom of a page before it can be split.
7. **Succeeding pages:** Use plain copier paper. The page number is at the top, flush with the right margin. Continue the body of the second page two spaces down from the page number leaving one blank line. When using a letterhead template, the succeeding pages are automatically added and numbered.

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line**blank line**blank line**blank line*

(Full Name)

(Title)

## Signing Authority

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-XX

Mrs. (Full Name)  
(Title)  
(Name of Organization)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Mrs. (Surname):

*blank line*

The following rules apply to incoming correspondence addressed to the FHWA or assigned by the OST Executive Secretariat (S-10) for signature by an FHWA official:

1. Correspondence will be signed at the lowest practical level, consistent with current delegations of correspondence signing authority in the FHWA Delegations and Organization Manual, FHWA ORDER M 1100.1A, at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/legregs/directives/orders/m11001a.htm>, and in the Executive Director's memorandum dated July 21, 1999.
2. The authority for signing correspondence may be delegated and redelegated consistent with these instructions.
3. Within the limits of delegated signatory authority, each FHWA official shall exercise individual discretion in determining whether any correspondence requires signature at a higher level.
4. Signing authority is reserved for the Administrator, as set forth in the FHWA Delegations and Organization Manual, FHWA ORDER M 1100.1A (see link above), for correspondence that:
  - a. Sets forth newly established FHWA policy.
  - b. Deals with sensitive or controversial areas.
  - c. Involves the functional responsibilities of more than one Associate Administrator.
  - d. Contains FHWA comments on proposed DOT issuances involving new policy or significant revisions in existing delegations or policy statements.



- e. Is addressed to: the Secretary or Deputy Secretary of Transportation, White House Officials, the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Members of the Cabinet, Heads of Independent Agencies, and Governors and Mayors when it involves non-routine and/or policy-related issues.
  - f. House and Senate leadership and key committee chairs and ranking minorities in both houses, including routine State-oriented issues.
  - g. Members of Congress when the correspondence is about policy-related issues; or a member expresses his/her personal view such as an objection to or suggestion about a project, issue, or policy. Congressional letters forwarding constituent correspondence may be signed at a lower level as long as the cover letter does not express an opinion regarding the topic of the constituent's concern.
5. Associate Administrators, in their respective areas of responsibility, may:
- a. Sign all correspondence not reserved for the Federal Highway Administrator, as set forth in number 4 above.
  - b. Delegate signatory authority to Office Directors and Division Chiefs, consistent with their assigned responsibilities, and not required to be reserved for Associate Administrators.
6. Office Directors, in their respective areas of responsibility, may:
- a. Sign all correspondence not reserved for the Federal Highway Administrator or Associate Administrators as set forth in numbers 4 and 5 above.
  - b. Delegate signatory authority to Division Chiefs or the equivalent, consistent with their assigned responsibilities, and not required to be reserved for Office Directors.
7. Directors of Field Services, Director of Technical Services, Federal Lands Highway Division Engineers, and Division Administrators, in their respective areas of responsibility, may:
- a. Sign all correspondence not reserved for the Federal Highway Administrator, as set forth in number 4 above.

*blank line*

- b. Delegate signatory authority to other field officials, consistent with their assigned responsibilities, and not required to be reserved for Directors of Field Services.

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line**blank line**blank line**blank line*

(Full Name)

(Title)

## Enclosures

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-XX

Dr. (Full Name)  
(Title)  
(Name of Organization)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Dr. (Surname):

*blank line*

The notation “Enclosure” is reserved for letters. Do not use “Attachment” as it is reserved for memorandums. Type “Enclosure” two spaces down from the end of the signature block to create one blank line and flush with the left margin. When more than one enclosure is involved, identify each enclosure by number; e.g., Enclosure 2. When there is more than one lengthy enclosure, use tabs to identify each enclosure by number. If there is some combination of enclosures, courtesy copies, and/or delivery notation, the order in which they should be listed below the complementary closing is shown in Figure 2.5.

1. Enclosure(s) identified in the body of the letter are noted as follows:  

Enclosure	or	2 Enclosures
-----------	----	--------------
2. Enclosure(s) not identified in the body of the letter are noted as follows:  

Enclosure:	or	2 Enclosures:
Form Letters Handbook		Form Letters Handbook
		Plain Letters Handbook
3. If some enclosures are identified within the body of the letter, and some are not, follow the format example of number 2 above, and list all of the enclosures.
4. Identify multiple copies of the enclosure(s) identified in the body of the letter in parentheses as follows:  

Enclosure (2)	or	2 Enclosures (2)
---------------	----	------------------
5. Identify multiple copies of the enclosure(s) not identified in the body of the letter in parentheses after identification of the enclosure as follows:  

Enclosure:	or	2 Enclosures:
Form Letters Handbook (2)		Form Letters Handbook (2)
		Plain Letters Handbook (2)

Figure 2.4-1

*blank line*

6. When documents referred to in the body of a letter are sent separately from the letter, type "Separate Cover:" two spaces down from the enclosure notation to create one blank line and flush with the left margin. One line below "Separate Cover:" type the titles or descriptions of the documents that are being sent separately. The documents are identified here, whether or not they were identified in the text, as follows:

Separate Cover:  
 Bridge Manual  
 Design Manual

- a. When sending more than one copy of the document under separate cover, indicate the number of copies in parentheses following the identification of the document as follows:

Separate Cover:  
 Bridge Manual (2)

- b. When the material is mailed separately, include a copy of the signed letter.

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line**blank line**blank line**blank line*

(Full Name)

(Title)

*blank line*

Enclosures (2)



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

Office of the Administrator  
Type date here after signature

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.  
Washington, DC 20590

## Delivery Notations

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-XX

Mr. (Full Name)  
(Title)  
(Name of Organization)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Mr. (Surname):

*blank line*

1. Increasingly, correspondence is delivered in a manner other than first-class mail. Delivery notations are not required, but may be useful information for the file copy. The following examples, as provided in *The Gregg Reference Manual*, 10th edition, show the different types of notations that could be used. If there is some combination of enclosures, courtesy copies, and/or delivery notation, the order in which they should be listed below the complementary closing is shown on Figure 2.5-2.
2. Delivery notations are indicated by typing the method type of delivery flush with the left margin and two spaces down from the signature block to create one blank line.

### Examples:

By fax  
By email  
By FedEx  
By messenger

3. Special instructions when using a delivery notation: The fax number, or email address should be included on the Grid as a record on the file copy.

Figure 2.5-1

**Example:**

Sincerely yours,

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

(Full Name)

(Title)

By fax (202-366-3244)

By email (email address)

By FedEx (tracking number)

4. Exec Sec sends correspondence by FedEx when it is indicated on the letter, unless otherwise noted on the correspondence package. If Exec Sec is to send correspondence by FedEx, please include a FedEx envelope with a completed shipping form.



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

Type date here after signature

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.  
Washington, DC 20590

## Courtesy Copies

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-XX

Mr. (Full Name)  
(Title)  
(Name of Organization)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Mr. (Surname):

*blank line*

1. Courtesy copy distribution notations are shown on the original of the letter only if the addressee has a need to know who received a copy of the letter. Always show the courtesy copy distribution on the internal information copies including the grid.
2. Courtesy copies are indicated by typing cc: flush with the left margin two spaces down from the signature block, Enclosure notation, or Separate Cover notation, to create one blank line followed by the name or routing symbols of the recipients two blank spaces to the right after the cc:. If there is some combination of enclosures, courtesy copies, and/or delivery notation, the order in which they should be listed below the complementary closing is shown on Figure 2.5-2. There should be one blank between each notation.

### **Example:**

cc: HIF-1  
HOP-1  
HCC-1

3. To avoid starting a new page, courtesy copy notations may be listed across the page.

### **Example:**

cc: HIF-1, HOP-1, HCC-1,

4. When enclosures are not furnished to those listed in the cc: indicate as follows:

### **Example:**

cc: HSA-1  
HIF-1, w/o enclosure  
HPA-1

Figure 2.6



## Writer's Identification, File Locations, and Distribution Copies

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-XX

Mr. (Full Name)  
(Title)  
(Name of Organization)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Mr. (Surname):

*blank line*

1. The Writer's Identification, Control Numbers, File Location and Distribution Information are indicated on the grid of all letters. The writer's identification line consists of the FHWA identification, routing symbol of originating office, writer's first name initial and last name, typist's initials, writer's telephone number, and the date. The Paper and Electronic File Location information consists of the hard copy file name located in the originating office, followed by the fileserver name, path, and filename of the electronic document. This information is typed at the bottom of the grid.

**NOTE:** Electronic documents should be stored on a shared directory so that documents can be accessed by others if changes are needed and the writer is unavailable. If it is not accessible, and the letter needs to go out, the office may be requested to retype the letter.

### Example:

Writer's Identification Line:	FHWA:HIF-1:RWeingroff:sw:64856:1/31/10
Control Numbers:	100127-001-2004; S10-100126-003 or I-2010-0061 (Include all the assigned control numbers, FHWA, S-10 or OST/I. They will be listed on the FHWA control sheet.)
Paper and Electronic File Location:	Location:F:/HIF-1/pasys.doc
Distribution Information:	cc: (List all information copies, reading file, etc.)

2. If the letter is rewritten or retyped, this should be indicated directly below the first identification line.

### Example:

FHWA:HIF-1:KGee:rw:64856:2/4/10  
Rewritten:HFL-1:RWeingroff:rw:64856:2/5/10

Figure 2.7-1



*blank line*

3. Any grid copies (formerly known as the Official File Copy) voided by revision or retyping, should be retained and attached behind the current or active grid with the oldest version on the bottom. Draw a diagonal line through voided grid copies so they are not confused with the current or active grid. When the edits or changes are not significant, neatly type "previous concurrences valid" in the upper right-hand corner or along side of the active grid (examples shown on Grid Copy on Figure 2.11). If there are significant changes made to a letter, then you need to begin the approval process over from the beginning; keeping previous versions with the package.

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line**blank line**blank line**blank line*

(Full Name)

(Title)

Figure 2.7-2

## Making Copies

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-XX

Peter A. Smith, Esquire  
(Name of Organization)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Mr. Smith:

*blank line*

1. If the letter was signed in the Federal Highway Administrator's Office, Exec Sec makes all of the HOA and OST copies and mails the original. Exec Sec will return one signed, clean copy of the original. The originating office is then responsible for making all other copies listed in the distribution block. The distribution block, as described on Figure 2.7-1-2, should be typed separately on plain copier paper and cut to fit at the bottom or where appropriate.
2. If the letter has been signed by an Associate Administrator or other official, the originating office will mail the letter, and provide a clean copy to Exec Sec.

**NOTE:** Where instructed by Exec Sec, copies will be distributed electronically to the appropriate offices.

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

(Full Name)

(Title)

*blank line*

Enclosures (2)

*blank line*

By FedEx

*blank line*

cc: HIF-1

**Type of folder to use:**

1. **Red and White Striped Folders:** This type of folder should be used for correspondence addressed to:

- Members of Congress
- White House officials
- Heads of Independent Agencies
- Supreme Court Justices
- Mayors (cities exceeding 50,000 population)
- Governors
- State Legislators
- Foreign Equivalents of the above
- VIP (Stakeholder groups)
- Correspondence to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, and Modal Administrators

2. **Blue and White Polka Dot Folder:** This type of folder should be used for correspondence addressed to:

- State DOT heads
- General Public
- All Other Correspondence

Figure 2.9

## Folder Assembly

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-XX

Mr. (Full Name)  
(Title)  
(Name of Organization)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Mr. (Surname):

*blank line*

This section shows the correct way to assemble correspondence in a logical, neat package for signature. Keep all items together that belong with the outgoing letter, and all items that belong with the grid. Use binder clips to assemble packages. Do not use staples on the correspondence folders including the Route and/or Review Slip on the front of a package.

1. **Right side of folder:** Only items that will be mailed should be on the right side of a correspondence folder. Attach the outgoing letter and any enclosures on the right side of the folder with two binder clips:
  - a. **Executive Correspondence plastic cover sheet:** This clear, plastic sheet is used to protect the original letter.
  - b. **Original outgoing letter:** The original letter, even when there are several pages, is never stapled.
  - c. **Enclosure(s):** Enclosures are clipped (not stapled) in the sequence in which they are referenced in the letter, suitably captioned or tabbed.
  - d. **Envelope:** An appropriate size, addressed envelope should be included except for letters to be signed by the Secretary and Deputy Secretary.
2. **Left side of folder:** Official file documents are assembled in the following order with the summary sheet on top:
  - a. **Summary Sheet:** One-page summary of the issue/problem/request and rationale of position taken in response (see Figure 2.21 for a Summary Sheet form).
  - b. **Grids:** The grid (Form DOT F 1320.65) (<http://intra.fhwa.dot.gov/informs/adobeforms/dot132065.pdf>) is placed under the yellow Concurrence tab (Form FHWA-222B). The grid should be the same version as the current letter on the right side of the folder.

*blank line*

- c. **Voiding grid copies:** Any grid copies voided by revision or retyping should be attached behind all pages of the current or active grid. Voided grid copies should be differentiated from the current or active grid copy with a line drawn diagonally through them and “previous concurrences valid” typed or neatly written above or along side of the concurrence new grid.
- d. **Incoming letter:** Staple a copy of the Correspondence Control Sheet on top of the incoming letter and place the pink Incoming Tab, Form FHWA 222C, between the Control sheet and the first page of incoming letter.
- e. **Background:** Include a copy of sections of legislation that are referenced in the incoming or outgoing correspondence. Include copies of prior correspondence from the same writer on the same subject matter or recent responses to others on the same issue. To add clarity, include maps or pertinent articles. If there are a number of items included in the Background, it is helpful to use sticky notes as tabs for the different items. Place the background material under the blue Background Tab, Form FHWA-222A.
- f. **Interim letters:** Include copies of any acknowledgment or interim letters with the background information.
- g. **Edits:** ALWAYS retain all edits made by offices other than the Action Office and place them behind the background material. Edits made by an Action Office before it goes to other offices for review, do not need to be retained with the correspondence package.

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line**blank line**blank line**blank line*

(Full Name)

(Title)

Grid Copy

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-XX

Mr. (Full Name)  
(Title)  
(Name of Organization)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State Code##ZIP Code)

Dear Mr. (Surname):

- 1. Official File Copies have been replaced by the Grid. The Grid, along with the contents of a correspondence package, will be retained by the originating office according to their retention schedule.
- 2. Exec Sec permanently retains a hard copy of the signed correspondence with its files as well as a scanned version on the electronic tracking system.
- 3. The originating office should retain any markup versions that were not included in the correspondence package until the outgoing correspondence has been signed and the package returned by Exec Sec.
- 4. Examples shown here of where "Previous Concurrences Valid" can be typed or written.

Sincerely yours,

(Name & Title)

Previous  
Concurrences  
Valid

Previous Concurrences Valid

CONCURRENCE
RTG SYMBOL
-----
INITIALS/SIG
-----
DATE
-----
RTG SYMBOL
-----
INITIALS/SIG
-----
DATE
-----
RTG SYMBOL
-----
INITIALS/SIG
-----
DATE
-----
RTG SYMBOL
-----
INITIALS/SIG
-----
DATE
-----
RTG SYMBOL
-----
INITIALS/SIG
-----
DATE

Figure 2.11

GRID



THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

The Honorable (Full Name)  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC##20510

*blank line*

Dear Senator (Surname):

*blank line*

Thank you for your letter regarding-----

-----  
This is the format for a letter prepared for the Secretary of Transportation's signature. Letters to be signed by the Secretary are prepared on special letterhead. Omit the sender's reference on all correspondence typed for signature of an OST official. Do not use a first name in the salutation unless directed by Exec Sec.

Refer to the date of the incoming correspondence in the opening paragraph of a letter prepared for the Secretary's signature. *"Thank you for your letter regarding..."* The subject of the incoming correspondence should be included in the opening paragraph. Make sure all letters are properly centered on the page. Do not write letters that are one paragraph in length and do not double space short letters (one blank line between each typed line). For congressional correspondence only, end each letter with *"If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to call me."*

The example below shows the format for a second page. It should begin flush with the left margin.

**Example:**

Page 2

The Honorable (Full Name)

*blank line*

*blank line*

To begin typing the body of the second page, space down three times to create two blank lines after the Full Name.

Type the Secretary's name seven spaces down from the complimentary close to create six blank lines. Do not type a title below the Secretary's name.

Page 2

The Honorable (Full Name)

*blank line*

*blank line*

If you need letterhead for the Secretary, contact Exec Sec.

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

(Full Name)





The Deputy Secretary of Transportation  
WASHINGTON, DC 20590

The Honorable (Full Name)  
Governor of (State)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)  
*blank line*

Dear Governor (Surname):  
*blank line*

Thank you for your letter regarding-----  
-----.

This is the format for a letter prepared for the Deputy Secretary of Transportation's signature. Letters to be signed by the Deputy Secretary are prepared on special letterhead. Omit the sender's reference on all correspondence typed for signature of an OST official. Do not use a first name in the salutation unless directed by Exec Sec.

Refer to the date of the incoming correspondence in the opening paragraph of a letter prepared for the Deputy Secretary's signature. *"Thank you for your letter regarding concerning..."* The subject of the incoming correspondence should be included in the opening paragraph. Make sure all letters are properly centered on the page. Do not write letters that are one paragraph in length and do not double space short letters (one blank line between each typed line). For congressional correspondence only, end each letter with *"If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to call me."*

The example below shows the format for a second page. It should begin flush with the left margin.

**Example:**

Page 2  
The Honorable (Full Name)  
*blank line*  
*blank line*

To begin typing the body of the second page, space down three times to create two blank lines after the Full Name.

Type the Deputy Secretary's name five spaces down from the complimentary close to create four blank lines. Do not type a title below the Deputy Secretary's name.

Page 2

The Honorable (Full Name)

*blank line*

*blank line*

If you need letterhead for the Deputy Secretary, contact Exec Sec.

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

(Full Name)

**For signature by OST officials other than S-1 or S-2**

Mr. (Full Name)  
(Title)  
(Name of Organization)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Mr. (Surname):

*blank line*

Thank you for your letter regarding-----  
-----.

This is the format for a letter prepared for an OST official who is not the Secretary or Deputy Secretary. Check with Exec Sec before preparing a letter for an OST office. The General Counsel and some Assistant Secretaries have their own letterhead. Omit the sender's reference on all correspondence typed for signature by an OST official. Do not use a first name in the salutation unless directed by Exec Sec.

Refer to the date of the incoming correspondence in the opening paragraph of a letter prepared for signature by an OST official. The subject of the incoming correspondence should be included in the opening paragraph. Make sure all letters are properly centered on the page. Do not write letters that are one paragraph in length and do not double space short letters (one blank line between each typed line). For congressional correspondence only, end each letter with "*If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to call me.*"

Type the OST official's name five spaces down from the complimentary close to create four blank lines.

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

(Full Name)

(Title, if not on special  
letterhead)

Figure 2.14

## Distribution Copies of OST Controlled Correspondence

Mr. (Full Name)

(Title)

(Name of Organization)

(Street Address)

(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Mr. (Surname):

1. On the distribution strip for OST controlled correspondence, include the following:
  - a. Division offices should be sent a copy of correspondence sent to a Member of Congress from their State, copies of correspondence discussing specific projects in their State, or correspondence with the State's DOT.
  - b. Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs (I), if the letter is addressed.
  - c. OST officials or other OAs requiring an information copy.
  - d. Copy for the Legislative Analysis Team Leader (HPLS-40) if the letter is addressed to a Member of Congress.
  - e. One copy for Exec Sec, include a copy of enclosures. This would be for responses for Direct Reply correspondence mailed by the Action Office, not Exec Sec.
  - f. Other information copies as required by the Action Office.
2. Using the list above include the appropriate offices on the distribution strip for noncontrolled correspondence. Noncontrolled correspondence is generally correspondence created in an FHWA office and going to an OST office (e.g., memorandum)

**NOTE:** Where instructed by HOAES, copies will be distributed electronically to the appropriate offices.

Sincerely yours,

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

(Full Name)

(Title)



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

Type date here after signature

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.  
Washington, DC 20590

## Preparing Letters for HOA

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-X

Mr. (Full Name)  
(Title)  
(Name of Organization)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Mr. (Surname):

*blank line*

This is the format for a letter prepared for signature by the Federal Highway Administrator, Deputy Administrator, or Executive Director. Do not use first-name salutations unless instructed by Exec Sec.

Letters prepared for signature by the Federal Highway Administrator, Deputy Administrator, or the Executive Director (or letters of special interest to them that are signed by others) are routed through and controlled by Exec Sec.

The following are examples of opening paragraphs; the closings are provided for letters signed by one or more people:

1. Thank you for your letter of August 9 (do not include year unless other than current year) to Secretary of Transportation (Full Name) regarding (subject). Your letter was forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration for reply as it is the Agency responsible for (program).
2. This is in further reply to your letter of July 3 to Mr./Ms. (Full Name), Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Governmental Affairs. Your letter was forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration for further response.
3. Thank you for your letter of December 15, cosigned by Senator Olympia J. Snowe, regarding (subject).

**Closing:** If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to call me. An identical letter has been sent to Senator Snowe.

4. Thank you for your letter of December 14, cosigned by your congressional colleagues, concerning (subject).

**Closing:** If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to call me. An identical letter has been sent to each cosigner of your letter.

Use the following guidelines when preparing a letter for the signature of the Federal Highway Administrator, Deputy Administrator, or Executive Director:

1. Prepare the letter on Office of the Administrator letterhead template. Include the original and the grid in the appropriate folder (red and white or blue and white), along with the distribution information.
2. Do not use an ATTENTION line on letters. They may be used on the envelope.
3. The signature block is typed five spaces down from the complimentary close to create four blank lines. Enclosure notations are typed two spaces down from the signature block to create one blank line after title of the signing official.
4. Do not show courtesy copy distribution on the original letter unless there is a need for the addressee to be informed.
5. Do not justify the right margin.
6. Do not staple originals, courtesy copies, or enclosures.
7. The final assembled package should include a copy of the incoming letter stapled to the control sheet, any enclosures, an appropriate size envelope, a completed Summary Sheet, and any background information.
8. The routing code, initials and surname of the drafter and the date are required on the grid. The grid must be the same version as the letter to be signed and must be a complete copy.
9. Upon receipt of the reproduced, signed copy, the Action Office should make copies to be distributed outside the office (except those for HOA-1, HOA-2, HOA-3, and higher offices). The Action Office is responsible for distributing the signed copies to field offices.

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

(Full Name)

(Title)

Figure 2.16-2



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.  
Washington, DC 20590

Type date here after signature

## Letters to CEO of State DOT

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-X

Mr. (Full Name)  
Commissioner, (Name of  
State Department of Transportation)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)

Through: Mr. (Full Name)  
Division Administrator  
City, State

*blank line*

Dear Mr. (Surname):

*blank line*

Thank you for your letter of March 10 to Secretary of Transportation (Full Name) concerning ---  
------. Your letter was forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration for reply.

This is the format for a letter written to a State department of transportation (DOT) from a  
Washington Headquarters office.

Prepare an appropriate size envelope for the letter and any enclosures to the State CEO (to be  
used by the Division Administrator if he/she decides to mail the letter). The letter and enclosures  
should not be folded or sealed. Place them and a copy, in a FedEx envelope which has been pre-  
addressed to the State's Division Administrator. This provides the Division Administrator the  
opportunity to hand deliver the letter to the State CEO.

Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, our Division Administrator in (State), will work closely with you -----  
------. He/she can be reached at (include a phone number).

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

(Full Name)

(Title)

Figure 2.17



## Signature by Two or More Modal Administrators

Add cosigning agency here

Each additional agency is two lines below the previous

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-1  
USS-1  
NXX-1

The Honorable (Full Name)  
Mayor of (Name of City)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Mayor (Surname):

*blank line*

Thank you for your letter of July 28 concerning -----  
-----.

This is the format for a letter prepared for the signature of two or more Administrators within DOT. The template is available at <http://staffnet/informs/tn0002.htm>. For the signature block type the name and title of the originating Administrator on the right side and the name and title of the second Administrator on the left side, five spaces down from the complimentary close to create four blank lines. If there is a third Administrator, center the name and title under the first two, five spaces down to create four blank lines.

If it is not known who the signing officials will be, leave enough room for the name, title, and signature. Use FHWA Office of the Administrator letterhead template (dual administration) and type in the full name, title, and name of the respective DOT Administrations.

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

(Full Name)

Administrator, Federal Transit

Administration

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

(Full Name)

Administrator, Federal

Highway Administration

(Full Name)

Administrator, National Highway  
Traffic Safety Administration





U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

Office of the Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.  
Washington, DC 20590

Type date here after signature

## Multiple Signatures by HOA and an Outside Group

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-XX

Mr. (Full Name)  
(Title)  
(Name of Organization)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Mr. (Surname):

*blank line*

This is the format for a letter cosigned by the Federal Highway Administrator and the head of an outside organization such as the Executive Director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Use FHWA Office of the Administrator letterhead.

This format is reserved for signature in the Office of the Federal Highway Administrator.

If it is known who the signing official will be, type in the name and title five spaces down from the complimentary close to create four blank lines. The Federal Highway Administrator's name and title is typed on the right side. The name and title of the cosigner is typed on the left side.

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

(Full Name)  
(Title), American Association  
of State Highway and  
Transportation Officials

(Full Name)  
Administrator, Federal  
Highway Administration

Figure 2.19



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.  
Washington, DC 20590

## Letter Signed by AA or Other FHWA Officials

In Reply Refer To:  
HXX-XX

Ms. (Full Name)  
(Title)  
(Name of Organization)  
(Street Address)  
(City, State code##ZIP Code)

*blank line*

Dear Ms. (Surname):

*blank line*

This is the format for a letter prepared for the Associate Administrator or other FHWA official's signature. First-name salutations may be used if instructed by the signing official.

*blank line*

The following are suggested opening paragraphs:

1. Thank you for your letter of June 20 to Federal Highway Administrator (Full Name) regarding (subject).
2. Thank you for your letter of April 27 to the President regarding (subject). The White House forwarded your letter to the Federal Highway Administration because we manage the (program).

Type the name and title of the signing official five spaces down from the complimentary close to create four blank lines.

*blank line*

Sincerely yours,

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

*blank line*

(Full Name)

(Title)

**SUMMARY SHEET**  
(Limit Information to 1-Page)

**SUBJECT:** State the title of the action/issue.

**ISSUE:** Clearly state the issue, problem, or request the writer/requester is asking FHWA to solve, fund, or assist them with solving.

**FHWA POSITION:** State in two or three sentences our response/action/proposed solution to the issue/problem/request.

**BACKGROUND:** Provide key facts that summarize the issue/problem/request and rationale for our position. Use this space to refer to specific tabs for detailed information highlighted on specific pages of accompanying documents.

**POINT OF CONTACT:** Include the name, routing symbol, and telephone number of individual preparing the response to the document.

**SUPERVISOR:** Include the name, routing symbol, and telephone number of Program Office Director or Division Chief.

This sheet should be placed inside the folder on the left side on top of the yellow Concurrence tab. The incoming correspondence should be placed under the pink Incoming tab. Any background material should be placed under the blue Background tab.