

PROCEDURE MANUAL

13-04



MICHIGAN STATE POLICE

Creation and Maintenance of Official Forms

Purpose: This manual establishes design specifications and standards for Official Forms. Adherence to these design and specification standards ensures the department's forms are effective and professional. Deviation from these standards may be approved by the Planning, Research, and Accreditation Section.

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Definitions:

None

Section 1: Form Design and Specification Standards

The following form design and specification standards are based on standards previously established by the State Forms Administrator. Adherence to these design and specification standards ensures the department's forms are effective and professional. Deviation from these standards may be approved by the Planning, Research, and Accreditation Section.

1.1 General Formatting

Time will be spent to analyze each form and its purpose before laying the form out. Consideration will be given to who will use the form, how it will be completed, and what information needs to be obtained. Official forms will direct the flow of data entry, allowing for easy completion, and considering a balance between functionality and aesthetics. The principles of unity, rhythm, scale, clarity, sequence, and simplicity will be taken into account.

- a. The MSP Style Guide shall be the first point of reference for design of forms.
- b. Underlining of text shall be avoided because it can be confused with a hyperlink.
- c. Bolding shall only be used for emphasis; the entire form shall not be bolded.
- d. The use of all capital letters and italics shall be avoided as they are difficult to read.
- e. Abbreviations shall not be used unless they are explained on first reference. First reference shall not include use in the form title, and abbreviated terms shall always be spelled out in the form title.
- f. The “#” sign and “No.” shall not be used in place of the word “number.”

- g. Area codes must be included for all telephone and FAX numbers.
- h. Social security numbers shall not be requested unless their collection is necessary.
- i. To avoid preprinted forms with personal names and/or signatures from becoming obsolete due to a personnel change, preference shall be given to preprinting only the title, or using a rubber stamp or automatic signature inscriber as alternatives to preprinted names and signatures.

1.2 Form Arrangement and Design

In most cases, a table format shall be used. Columns and rows should be aligned to obtain a professional appearance.

- a. Box and caption design for each item of information requested shall be preferred over using fill-in-lines.
 - i. If using a check box in an electronic word processing form (e.g. .docx file format), the box will be configured to fill with an "x" or filled square instead of a "II" (checkmark) because some printers do not recognize the checkmark. Check boxes shall be placed before items to be checked, rather than after. Appropriate spacing will be placed between the check box and before the first letter of text.
 - ii. Captions shall be in 8-point font and placed in the upper-left corner of the boxes.
 - iii. Punctuation shall not be used in field boxes, unless essential.
 - iv. Boxes shall be large enough for all necessary information to be entered.
 - v. Boxes may be numbered or lettered to correspond with instructions or for other reference, if desired.
- b. Essential information shall be placed to prevent obstruction by stamps, punches, or staples.
- c. "Return To" information shall be included on all forms that require a reply. A return address shall be included in either the heading or the instructions. To minimize form obsolescence, use of personal names shall be avoided on forms; only worksite names should be used.
- d. If additional sheets are needed, the form number, revision date, department name, and page number shall appear on each additional page in the upper left corner.
- e. Where completion of an MSP form by members of the public or by non-State of Michigan organizations is statutorily required, the form shall contain a conspicuous notice on the first page of the form setting forth the authorization for the form (i.e., citing the specific law or rule), stating that the information sought is required and the penalties that apply for failure to provide the information
 - i. The authorization area shall cite a specific rule, order, or Michigan Compiled Law citation.
 - ii. If and only if there is no specific authorization requiring use of the form, the general act establishing the Department of State Police or a division of the department shall be cited; e.g., "1935 PA 59, as amended."
 - iii. Optionally, authority and compliance information may be included on forms where completion of the form is not statutorily required. This option is intended to allow

forms owners to specify the consequence of not completing the form (e.g. “Completion is optional, but failure to complete will result in your request not being processed”). Including this option on a form requires approval by the Forms Manager.

- iv. The authorization and compliance information may be placed under the title or in a box at the bottom or top of the form in 8-point font.
- f. If a signature line is required, it shall be placed where most efficient for processing, with ample space for a normal-size signature. The date shall be on the same line as the signature.
 - i. Digital signatures shall not be used unless approved by the Planning, Research, and Accreditation Section.
- g. Brief instructions on completion and use of the form shall be included in the form itself, and most forms will not require more extensive instructions. Where such extensive instructions are necessary, they shall be conspicuously referenced on the first page of the form. The instructions may be presented at the end of the form or in a separate instructions document. In the latter case, a hyperlink or command button will be incorporated into the first page of the form linking to the instructions posted within PowerDMS or to the Official Forms Webpage, as appropriate.

1.3 Form Numbers and Titles

All official forms shall be identified with a title and a unique identifier.

- a. The unique identifier shall consist of the form number, initiation/revision date, and the department name capitalized in Arial 8-point font in the upper-left corner of the form.
 - i. The division name may be included below the department in lowercase letters, if desired.
 - ii. Example of a unique identifier: ADM-023 (04/2017)
Michigan State Police
Budget and Financial Services Division
- b. Form numbers for official forms shall be issued by the Planning, Research, and Accreditation Section and shall consist of a prefix identifying the type of form, followed by a three-digit number, including leading zeros as needed.
- c. Form numbers may be retired if a form becomes obsolete, but the retired number shall not be reused of a period of 20 years.
- d. All forms, except form letters and envelopes, shall be titled.
 - i. The title shall clearly and briefly indicate the purpose of the form. The title shall not include the word “Form.”
 - ii. The title may be capped and bolded in Arial 12- to 14-point font, if desired.
 - iii. Shields and other special logos shall not be included unless approved by the Planning, Research, and Accreditation Section.

1.4 Digital Form Technologies

Forms may only be developed using the following digital technologies:

- a. “Word” means the form is authored in Microsoft Word.
 - i. Forms authored in Microsoft Word and made interactive shall be protected using a department-issued password assigned by the Planning, Research, and Accreditation.
- b. Excel” means the form is authored in Microsoft Excel.
 - i. Forms created in Microsoft Excel and made interactive shall be protected to enable users to only enter information in designated cells. The forms shall be protected using a password assigned by the Planning, Research, and Accreditation Section.
 - ii. The Planning, Research, and Accreditation Section may grant permission for use of Excel-based forms with protection removed.
- c. “PDF” means the form uses Portable Document Format (PDF). The document can be viewed with either appropriate software tools such as Nuance, Adobe Acrobat, or Foxit.
 - i. In almost all cases, forms in PDF format should be “Interactive PDFs” which allow users to enter information into the form.
 - ii. Whenever possible, interactive PDF forms shall be posted with the saving feature enabled. This allows users to save the information they have entered into the form.
 - iii. Internal forms which are in interactive PDF format shall always have the saving feature enabled.
 - iv. All non-savable PDF forms referenced in Section 1.4 c. of this manual shall be converted to other formats as soon as practicable.
- d. “Online” means the form will be developed using software which allows the automatic submission of form information to MSP through the Internet.
 - i. Work units requiring an online form will be responsible for purchasing and supporting the necessary software, arranging for hosting, and for developing the form. The department does not support a standard software solution for online forms.
 - ii. The design and functionality of each online form shall be approved by the Forms Manager before the form is placed into use.
 - iii. Online forms only include those resources that are designed to function as standalone forms, and which are assigned an Official Form number. Data entry components of electronic systems such as ICHAT, LEIN, BlueTeam, MAGIC+, and SIGMA are not Official Forms and do not follow the process set forth in this manual.

1.5 Letterhead Standards

- a. [Letterhead specifications](#) are determined by the DTMB.
- b. Letterhead may only be used on a form when approved by the Planning, Research, and Accreditation Section.

Section 2: Ordering Stock Forms

This procedure outlines the process for ordering and reordering forms stocked by the Distribution Center.

2.1 Responsibilities

- a. The Forms Coordinator is responsible for identifying when the inventory of a form has reached the reorder point; preparing the proper paperwork to place a forms print order; setting the reorder point based on form usage; and checking to see if a form needs to be created, revised, eliminated, or posted in PowerDMS as an online form.
- b. The Planning, Research, and Accreditation Section is responsible for reviewing, guiding, and approving any new form or changes to a form.
- c. The Distribution Center is responsible for processing and distributing Smart Scan inventory reports to the Forms Coordinators and receiving and stocking forms when printed and delivered.

2.2 Procedure

- a. On a quarterly basis, the Distribution Center shall send a Smart Scan inventory report to each Forms Coordinator in the department.
- b. The Forms Coordinator shall determine if any forms need to be ordered and stocked in the Distribution Center based on the Smart Scan inventory report.
- c. If a form needs to be ordered, the Forms Coordinator determines the quantity of forms to be printed and inquires with the worksite owner to see if changes are to be made to the form prior to the reorder.
 - i. If a form is new or revised from the previous version, the Forms Coordinator must email the form to the Planning, Research, and Accreditation Section for approval prior to contacting DTMB Printing Services personnel. The form may be printed once it has been approved by both the Forms Manager and the Forms Coordinator.
- d. The Forms Coordinator shall send a price quote request and a sample of the form to be printed to the [DTMB Printing Services](#).
 - i. If the quote comes back more than \$500:
 1. DTMB Print and Graphic Services must process the order in accordance with Executive Directive 2007-17.
 2. The requesting worksite must complete a Printing Order Form DMB-0598 and submit it through channels for approval.
 3. The bureau returns the DTMB-0598 to the Forms Coordinator after all approvals are obtained.
 4. The Forms Coordinator forwards DTMB-0598 to DTMB Print and Graphic Services for processing.
 - ii. If the quote comes back less than \$500:

1. The Forms Coordinator can send the order to an outside vendor and pay by either procurement card or direct voucher.
 2. DTMB Print and Graphic Services can process the order.
- e. The Forms Coordinator shall send a copy of the DTMB-0598 to the Distribution Center via email to MSPDistribution@michigan.gov.

2.3 Costs

- a. All forms stocked in the Distribution Center are distributed free of charge.
- b. The division having ownership of the form shall pay the printing costs and/or design costs.
- c. If DTMB Print and Graphic Services completes the printing job, payment shall be handled via interagency voucher.