

# Administrative Rules Styling Manual



Colorado  
**Secretary of State**

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## Introduction

The Secretary of State's Office publishes the official version of all state administrative rules in the Colorado Register and the Code of Colorado Regulations (CCR), as required by the State Administrative Procedure Act (CRS § 24-4-103). To ensure rules are published accurately and on time, agencies must follow a uniform format for readability, accessibility, and consistency.

All rule filings are submitted electronically through the Secretary of State Office's eFiling system. Agencies use this system to file both notices of proposed rulemaking and adopted rules.

The Attorney General's Office and Office of Legislative Legal Services also receive filings through this system.

Additionally, agencies are required to send proposed rule notices to the Colorado Office of Policy, Research & Regulatory Reform (COPRRR) that is under the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA).

This Styling Manual outlines five steps for submitting your rulemaking documents to our office.

The [Styling Manual and Templates page](#) offers a reference template and example rule document to assist you with meeting with our guidelines.

## Getting Started

- If you do not have a login, email the Administrative Rules Program staff at [rules@coloradosos.gov](mailto:rules@coloradosos.gov) to request a login for the eFiling system.
- Please provide the following information for each employee who needs an account:
  - Full name (first and last)
  - Agency or division name
  - CCR number(s) for the rule series requiring access
  - Work email address



### Step 1 - Create New Rule or Download Previous Rule Version

**New rules:** Use the “Blank template - use for new rules (DOTX)” to draft your rule. It includes built-in styles for proper formatting.

1. Go to [www.coloradosos.gov](http://www.coloradosos.gov)
2. Under “Business” select “Administrative rules of state agencies.”
3. Under “Help & resources” select “Styling manual and templates.”
4. Select “Blank template - use for new rules (DOTX).” The corresponding Word document will download automatically.
5. Open the downloaded file and add your rule content directly to it.

**Amendments:** Download the latest version of the rule from the eFiling system and make edits directly in that file.

1. Go to [www.coloradosos.gov](http://www.coloradosos.gov)
2. Under “Business” select “Administrative rules of state agencies.”
3. Under “Submit & manage rules”, click “Log in to eFile.”
4. Login with your account information.
5. Click on “Download the latest version of a rule.”
6. Select the rule you wish to update. The corresponding Word document will download automatically.
7. Open the downloaded file and make your amendments directly within it.
8. Since this document has already been published, our office has applied the appropriate styles. Please continue using these styles when making edits. For a quick reference of our styles, open the CCR Template with Suggested Formatting.

**Repeals:** Download the latest version of the rule from the eFiling system and make edits directly in that file. A rule is repealed through normal rulemaking procedures.

1. Go to [www.coloradosos.gov](http://www.coloradosos.gov)
2. Under “Business” select “Administrative rules of state agencies.”
3. Under “Submit & manage rules,” click “Log in to eFile.”
4. Login with your account information.
5. Click on “Download the latest version of a rule.”
6. Select the rule you wish to update. The corresponding Word document will download automatically.
7. Open the downloaded file and make your amendments directly within it.



## Step 2 - Accessibility

In accordance with Colorado's accessibility rules and statutes, all public entities and state agencies must comply with the accessibility standards established by the Governor's Office of Information Technology (OIT) when submitting documents to be published with the Secretary of State's Office. CRS §§ 24-34-802(1) and 24-4-103(12).

All individuals and entities are encouraged to submit their filings ahead of their relevant filing deadlines, as the Secretary of State's Office will, where possible, evaluate whether filings are compliant with 8 CCR 1501-11, Rule 11.5, and require inaccessible documents to be resubmitted in an accessible format. Failure to submit compliant documents may impact a rulemaking deadline, including publication, adoption, and effective dates.

While we are happy to answer questions, please note that the Secretary of State's Office cannot provide accessibility training or make documents accessible on your behalf.

### Check Accessibility in Microsoft Word

1. Go to the "Review" tab in the ribbon.
2. Click "Check Accessibility."
3. The "Accessibility Checker" pane will appear on the right, showing any issues found.

### Font

- Do not overuse **bold** and *italics*. Use sparingly and purposely.
- Do not underline for emphasis at all.

### Heading Hierarchy

- Start with a Heading 1 (H1).
- Each document should have one, and only one, unique H1.
- Nest headings and don't skip levels.
- Do not exceed more than five or six levels of headings.
- All documents must have the appropriate heading structure. Ensure headings are applied whether they are flagged or not.

### Alt Text for Images

Alternative (or 'alt') text is a description of an image or other non-text object that can be read by assistive technology.

- Make it brief but accurate.
- Think about context.
- If the image has a function, describe it.
- Avoid images that contain text.



- AI-generated descriptions aren't always accurate. To ensure compliance and accessibility, review all images and confirm the alt text is correct.

## Tables

For tables in a rule to be searchable, create simple tables in Microsoft Word. Do not merge cells, unless they are part of the table's header rows.

Tables should organize information. They should not serve as a visual layout or design tool. Using tables for design can make content harder to understand and less accessible.

- Use tables for data.
- Designate a header row.
- Add a title.
- Repeat header row at the top of each page.

Avoid:

- Do not allow rows to break across pages.
- Do not use tables for visual/layout reasons.
- Do not make tables too complex.
- Do not nest a table within a table.
- Do not split or merge cells.
- Do not include blank rows or columns.

Watch Microsoft's support video on [Creating accessible tables in Word](#).

## Lists - Numbered and Bulleted Paragraphs

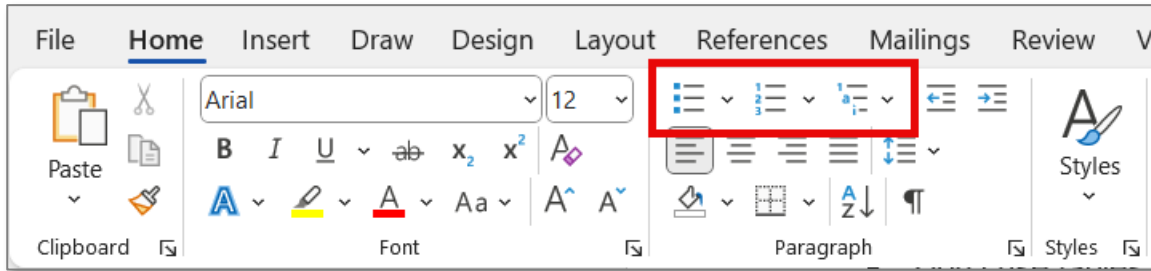
**Numbered and Multilevel Lists:** Use the "Numbering and Multilevel List" options in Word to apply a list style. Enter your rule text, press "Enter" to add the next number and use "Tab" to create indented sub-lists. The CCR template includes a predefined numbered list and multilevel list section. If needed, you can create a custom multilevel list.

**Bulleted Lists:** Use the "Bullets" option in Word to insert bullets. Select the appropriate paragraph style, insert a bullet, then type or paste the text for the bulleted paragraph.

**Formatting Tips:** Always use Microsoft Word's built-in list, numbering, and bullet features.



### Lists – Numbered and Bulleted Paragraphs Options in Word:

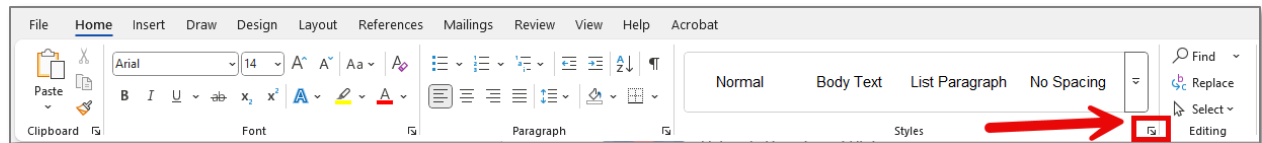


If you encounter spacing issues, apply the 'List Paragraph' style from the CCR template, then reapply numbering, bulleted, or multilevel list formatting as needed.

### Step 3 - Formatting

Ensure your document meets formatting requirements.

- Use Arial, size 12, for all rule text.
- In the Word ribbon, open the “Styles Preview:”



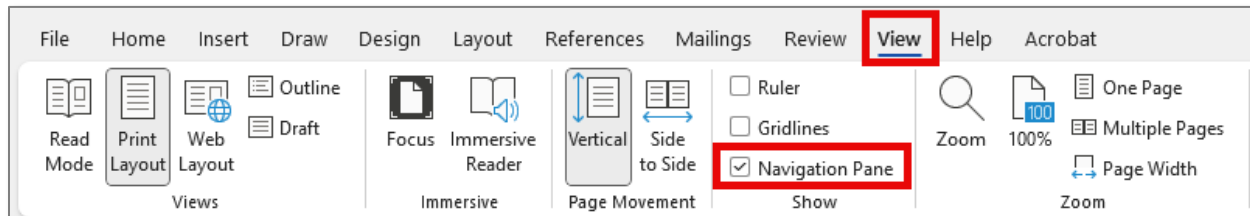
- Use only the styles provided in the CCR Template. After saving the template, you'll find custom styles in the "Style Gallery" on the "Home" tab. The CCR Template uses built-in styles to control font, spacing, and indentation. Applying these styles keeps your rule text clean, consistent, and professional. It also saves time by preventing common formatting issues. You won't need to manually adjust tabs or spacing.
- Use built-in heading styles for heading structure.



## Step 4 - Add, Delete, or Edit Content

### 1. Navigate and Edit

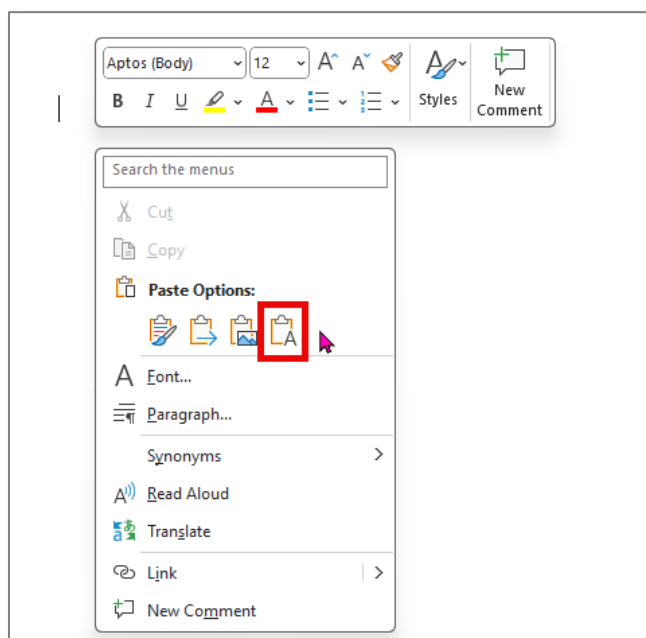
Open the “Navigation Pane:” Go to the “View” tab and check “Navigation Pane” to easily move between headings.



### 2. Copy and Paste Text

When copying text from another document, paste it using the “Keep Text Only” option (clipboard icon with the letter “A”) under “Paste Options” to prevent unwanted formatting.

Note: This removes bold, italics, and underlining, which are not recommended in rule text.





Note: You do not need to copy and paste the entire rule if only specific sections are changing. To indicate that there are no changes, include a publication note in brackets. Example:

*Amendments to 8 CCR 1505-8 are as follows:*

*Amendments to Rule 5 are as follows:*

*Amendments to Rule 5.6.1 concerning the inclusion of a reference to 8 CCR 1505-3, Rule 3, for the administrative hearing process and updating language to be consistent with the administrative hearing process outlined in 8 CCR 1505-3, Rule 3:*

5.6.1 If, after its investigation, the division has reasonable grounds to believe that a violation of section 24-6-301 et seq. C.R.S., has occurred, the division may initiate a hearing with ~~the Secretary of State or their designee~~ a hearing officer under section 24-4-105, C.R.S., ~~and 8 CCR 1505-3, Rule 3.~~

5.6.2 During the hearing, the division may recommend that the ~~Secretary of State or their designee~~ hearing officer take any one or more of the following actions:

**[Not shown: no changes to sections (a) through (e).]**

(f) Determine another remedy in accordance with section 24-6-301, et seq., C.R.S. ~~and 8 CCR 1505-3, Rule 3.14.2.~~

*Repeal of Rule 5.6.3 as it is no longer consistent with the administrative hearing process outlined in 8 CCR 1505-3, Rule 3, and these rules:*

~~5.6.3—Following a hearing under Rule 5.6.1, the Secretary of State or their designee may dismiss the complaint or take any of the actions listed in Rule 5.6.1. The decision following a hearing is a final agency decision.~~

Add Publication Notes to Proposed Rules and Redline Documents (Optional)

Publication notes are encouraged and can be helpful. To ensure accessibility, enclose the note in square brackets and begin with the phrase "Publication Note." Using a different font color is also acceptable. Publication note example:

**COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

**[8 CCR 1505-3, et seq<sup>1</sup>]**

**General Policies and Administrative Rules, et seq<sup>2</sup>**

**Rules as Adopted - Redline**

**October 9, 2024**

**Amendments to these rules are in Track Changes. Publication instructions and notes are shown in blue italics and enclosed in brackets.**

*[Publication Note: Amendments to 8 CCR 1505-3 are as follows:*

*Amendments to Rule 1 concerning grammatical changes, technical changes to the numbering format, and repeal of Rule 1.7:]*

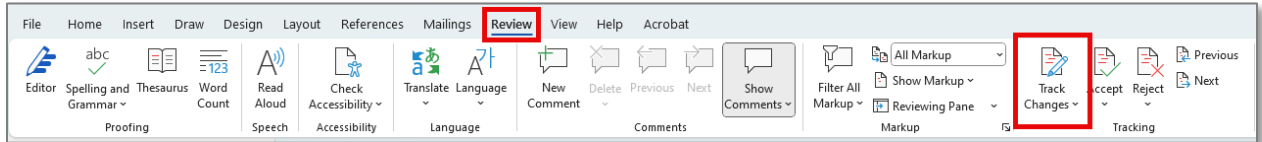


### 3. Show Changes in Proposed Rules and Redline Documents

Use Track Changes to show deletions and edits.

Refer to Microsoft's support page for detailed [instructions on Track Changes in Word](#).

An example of a redlined document is available on the [Styling Manual & Templates page](#).



Example of Track Changes in Proposed Rules and Redline:

**Rule 1. Declaratory Orders**

1.1 → Applicability. Any person may petition the Secretary of State for a declaratory order to terminate controversies or to remove uncertainties as to the applicability to the petitioner of any statutory provisions or any rule or order of the Secretary of State as required by CRS-section:24-4-105(11), C.R.S.

1.2 → Initial determination.

1.2.1(A) → The Secretary of State will determine, at ~~their~~ discretion and without notice to petitioner, whether to rule upon the filed petition. If the Secretary decides not to rule upon the petition, the petitioner shall promptly be notified of the action. The notice shall state the reasons for the action.

1.2.2(B) → In determining whether to rule upon a petition filed pursuant to this rule, the Secretary will consider the following matters, among others:



#### 4. Prepare Adopted Rules

Provide a clean copy without track changes, comments, or strikethrough text. Publication notes, if provided, should remain in the submitted clean copy.

To finalize:

- Open the redline document.
- Use the “Accept” button in the “Tracking” section to accept all changes.
- Save as a new document (your adopted rules).

Example of Accepted Track Changes in Adopted Rules:

##### **Rule 1. Declaratory Orders**

- 1.1 Applicability. Any person may petition the Secretary of State for a declaratory order to terminate controversies or to remove uncertainties as to the applicability to the petitioner of any statutory provisions or any rule or order of the Secretary of State as required by section 24-4-105(11), C.R.S.
- 1.2 Initial determination
  - 1.2.1 The Secretary of State will determine, at their discretion and without notice to petitioner, whether to rule upon the filed petition. If the Secretary decides not to rule upon the petition, the petitioner shall promptly be notified of the action. The notice shall state the reasons for the action.
  - 1.2.2 In determining whether to rule upon a petition filed pursuant to this rule, the Secretary will consider the following matters, among others:



## Step 5 - Proofread and Submit Word Document

### Proofread

Having a second pair of eyes to review your document is essential to catch errors such as misspellings, incorrect numbering, and other inconsistencies.

We also recommend using Microsoft's 'Editor' feature to check for spelling errors.

The Secretary of State's Office is not authorized to correct typographical errors to rule text, unless an agency files a correction request in accordance with CRS § 24-4-103(11)(d).

### Submit your Word Document(s)

Submit your documents using our eFiling system. While adopted rules are already required to be submitted in Microsoft Word format, we are now requiring that all rule-related documents be submitted in Word format (.doc) because they are also published in the Colorado Register.

This helps streamline processing and ensures better accessibility. Word files are much easier to make accessible and support automated accessibility checks, whereas Adobe PDFs require manual tagging, which can be time-consuming and complex.

Instructions for logging in:

1. Go to: [www.coloradosos.gov](http://www.coloradosos.gov)
2. Under "Business", click "Administrative rules of state agencies."
3. Under "Submit & manage rules", click "Log in to eFile."



## Rulemaking Filings & Document Best Practices

### 1. Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (First Filing)

#### *Required Document(s):*

- **Proposed Rule**
  - Published in the Colorado Register.
  - Must use Track Changes in Word. Do not use strikethrough formatting, as it is not accessible.
  - Must be in .doc format.
  - Must be accessible.
  - Ensure this document has been reviewed to confirm it contains no hidden or sensitive information. Use Word's "Document Inspector" to remove any metadata, comments, or other content that should not be publicly accessible.

#### *Optional Document(s):*

- **Additional Information**
  - Published in the Colorado Register.
  - Must be in .doc format.
  - Must be accessible.

#### *Best Practices:*

- Ensure edits are clear and accessible.
- Include all relevant context for stakeholders.
- Verify formatting before submission.



## 2. Adoption Notice / Request for AGO (Second Filing)

### *Required Document(s):*

- **Clean Copy of Rules**
  - For publication in the Code of Colorado Regulations (CCR) and Colorado Register.
  - Must be free of tracked changes and comments.
  - Must be in .doc format.
  - Must be accessible.
  
- **Statement of Basis & Purpose**
  - Explains rationale for rule adoption.
  - Must be in .doc format.
  - Must be accessible.
  
- **Regulatory Analysis** *(if completed, required)*
  - Must be in .doc format.
  - Must be accessible.

### *Optional Document(s):*

- **Redline Copy of Rules**
  - Highly encouraged
  - Shows edits to current rules resulting in the adopted rules.
  - Must use Track Changes. Do not use strikethrough formatting, as it is not accessible.
  - Must be in .doc format.
  - Must be accessible.
  - Ensure this document has been reviewed to confirm it contains no hidden or sensitive information. Use Word's "Document Inspector" to remove any metadata, comments, or other content that should not be publicly accessible.

### *Best Practices:*

- Review numbering and formatting carefully.
- Publication notes, if provided, should remain in the submitted clean copy.
- Use redline for transparency during hearings.



### 3. Emergency Rulemaking Notice

#### *Required Document(s):*

- **Clean Copy of Rules**
  - For publication in the Code of Colorado Regulations (CCR) and Colorado Register.
  - Must be free of tracked changes and comments.
  - Must be in .doc format.
  - Must be accessible.
  
- **Statement of Justification**
  - Explains emergency adoption under C.R.S. § 24-4-103(6).
  - Must be in .doc format.
  - Must be accessible.
  
- **Statement of Basis & Purpose**
  - Explains rationale for rule adoption.
  - Must be in .doc format.
  - Must be accessible.
  
- **Regulatory Analysis** (*required if completed*)
  - Must be in .doc format.
  - Must be accessible.

#### *Optional Document(s):*

- **Redline Copy of Rules**
  - Highly encouraged
  - Shows edits to current rules resulting in the adopted rules.
  - Must use Track Changes. Do not use strikethrough formatting, as it is not accessible.
  - Must be in .doc format.
  - Must be accessible.
  - Ensure this document has been reviewed to confirm it contains no hidden or sensitive information. Use Word's "Document Inspector" to remove any metadata, comments, or other content that should not be publicly accessible.

#### *Best Practices:*

- Clearly articulate emergency reasons.
- Ensure all documents meet accessibility standards.



#### 4. Additional Notes

- **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Not filed with SOS; only posted on agency website (COPRRR requirement).
- **Accessibility:** All documents must comply with accessibility standards.
- **File Format:** Always submit in .doc format.
- **Quality Check:** Have another person review for accuracy before submission.

### Other Helpful Information

#### Colorado Register

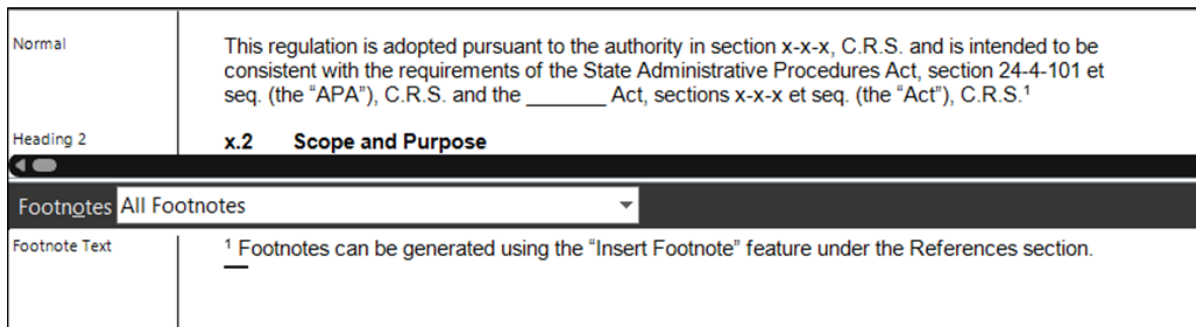
The Colorado Register is the official publication of the State of Colorado’s administrative rules. Before any administrative rule can take effect in Colorado, it must be published in the Colorado Register. This ensures transparency and gives the public an opportunity to participate in the rulemaking process. The Colorado Register is published on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of every month.

#### Footnotes

Use Word’s Insert Footnote feature to create footnotes.

1. Place your cursor where you’d like to have the footnote reference number in the body of text.
2. Under the References tab, click “Insert Footnote” and type your footnote.

Note: Microsoft’s Draft view does not show footnotes by default. To view them, select Draft from the “View” tab, then go to the “References” tab. Select “Show Notes.” Example:





## Graphics - Maps, Tables, and Figures

**Submission Options:** Maps, tables, and figures may be included within the rule document or submitted as separate files. If submitted separately, include a publication note indicating where the Administrative Rules Program staff should insert them in the text, and notify the staff by email at [rule@coloradosos.gov](mailto:rule@coloradosos.gov).

### Formatting Guidelines:

- Graphics and large tables may be displayed in landscape orientation for better readability.
- Charts must be accompanied by a data table showing all data points used.
- All charts and graphics must include alt text describing the visual for accessibility.

## History & Editor's Notes

This section is completed by the Secretary of State's Office and does not need to be included in any of your rulemaking documents.

## Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks and URLs included in rules text will be displayed as underlined text but disabled for publication in the CCR.

## Indents

Use the "Indent" style options in the CCR Template to indent paragraphs or use the tab key. Do not use the space bar for indentation.

## Page Breaks

If your rule is lengthy or you need specific sections to start at the top of a page, insert page breaks. This prevents paragraphs from splitting across pages and keeps long rules organized. To add a page break in Word, go to the 'Insert' tab on the ribbon and select 'Page Break.'



### **Sensitive Information**

Ensure that every submitted document has been thoroughly reviewed to confirm it contains no hidden or sensitive information. Use Word's Document Inspector to remove any metadata, comments, or other content that should not be made publicly accessible.

Document Inspector Instructions:

1. Open the Word document.
2. Select "File."
3. Click "Info."
4. Click "Check for Issues."
5. Select "Inspect Document."
6. Click "Inspect."
7. Review each category and click "Remove All" next to anything that should be cleared (comments, revisions, metadata, hidden text, etc.).
8. Save the document.

### **Spacing in Published Documents**

Our office may adjust spacing in published documents to improve readability. As the publisher, we follow established practices such as preventing paragraph breaks across pages.

A paragraph break occurs when part of a paragraph appears at the bottom of one page, and the rest continues on the next page. To avoid this, we sometimes add extra spacing or insert page breaks so that each paragraph stays together on a single page. This ensures consistency and makes documents easier to read.

These adjustments are applied uniformly across all rules to maintain a professional and accessible format.