

# ADMIN 3.4

# Style Guide for Standards

- Version 4



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# DOCUMENT CONTROL

## Identification

| Document Title                     | Number    | Version | Date       |
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| Document Style Guide for Standards | ADMIN 3.4 | 2       | 04/02/2010 |
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## Document History

| Publication Version | Effective Date | Page(s) Affected | Changes           |
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| 1                   | 23/11/2007     | All              | Document Creation |
| 2                   | 04/02/2010     | All              | Review and update |
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| 4                   | 01/11/2017     | All              | Review and update |

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# Style Guide for Standards

## 1 Purpose

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The purpose of this document is to provide RISSB users with supporting information that regulates and assists the creation and development of RISSB Standards documents.

## 2 Scope

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This style guide has been produced as a RISSB procedure, to be used in conjunction with the authorised template, for persons involved in RISSB Australian Standard development.

The RISSB Style Guide for Standards supports the RISSB Standard Template and contains a comprehensive body of material to assist in the preparation of standards.

## 3 Application

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This Style Guide (ADMIN 3.4 Style Guide for Standards) provides style guidance and supportive information to RISSB authors and DG members engaged in Standards development.

It should be used in conjunction with –

- RISSB’s Standard template
  - The Standard template consists a Microsoft Word template to use as a basis for all RISSB Standards developments. The template is pre-formatted to be compliant with both RISSB and Standards Australia’s requirements for an AS Standard.
  - Standard template is available on RISSB DEPOT ([AS XXXX Standard Template](#))
  - Standard template incorporates the requirements and styles necessary for acceptance as an Australian Standard (as per SDAC’s [Accredited SDO Style Manual](#)’).
- SDAC’s ‘Rules for the Structure and Drafting of Australian Standards (SG-006)’
  - SG-006 describes Standards Australia’s rules for the structure and drafting of both Australian and joint Australian/New Zealand Standards. All RISSB Standards developments are required to comply with the requirements contained within SG-006 to be considered for publication as an Australian Standard.
  - available from Standards Australia’s website ([SG-006](#))

These three documents provide the basis for all RISSB Standards developments and shall be used by RISSB authors and Development Group members during a Standard products development.

Any author or development group requiring a deviation from the resident styles or structure of the Standard template, the documented requirements of SG-006 and/or ADMIN 3.4 shall make

request through the responsible Standard Development Manager who will facilitate approvals via RISSB Accreditation Manager and RISSB CEO.

## 4 Style Guidance

### 4.1 Content

Writing style varies from writer to writer however there are certain protocols that should be observed to ensure that all writers are consistent in their approach to producing technical documentation.

#### 4.1.1 Voluntary Standards / Performance Based Requirements

RISSB Standards shall be written in the form of voluntary / performance based Standards.

**Standard:** is a set of requirements that seek to achieve at least the minimum objectives of safety, quality or performance of a product or service.

**Voluntary Standards** - on their own, Standards have no legal status and no requirement for compliance by manufacturers, consumers or the public.

Voluntary Standards may however be subject to citation in legislation, or within the context of a commercial contract, having the effect of making the standard mandatory.

RISSB Standards are normative in so much as it is necessary to conform to the requirements for a user to be able to claim compliance with the Standard.

**Performance based Standards:** have their requirements expressed in terms of performance, i.e. outcomes to be achieved. This approach leaves freedom for the development of innovative technical methods to meet the requirements of the Standard.

Performance based Standards consist of –

- **Requirements** – are expressed as criteria to be fulfilled if compliance with the document is to be claimed and from which no deviation is permitted. ‘Requirements’ are identified within a Standard using the using the verb form ‘shall’ or ‘shall not’.
- **Recommendations** - are criteria which convey that among several possibilities one is recommended as particularly suitable, without mentioning or excluding others, or that a certain course of action is preferred but not necessarily required. ‘Requirements’ are identified within a Standard using the using the verb form ‘should’ or ‘should not’.
- Options and permissions might also be contained within the Standard. These informative criteria are identified within the Standard using verb form ‘may’.

#### Verifiable requirements

Requirements shall be able to confirm as being met, by calculation, inspection, demonstration or test. How or when a requirement is to be verified should only be stated if it is appropriately prescribed in the requirements source document.

Where it is not possible or unclear how conformance might be verified, the criteria cannot be expressed as a requirement (‘shall’). E.g. ‘considerations’ should not form any part of a requirement. Similarly, terms such as maximise, minimise, adequate, suitable, appropriate, easy, user friendly, and high quality should also not form part of any requirements.

## Performance versus prescriptive requirements

A ‘performance’ requirement is a measurable statement of an outcome without stating how it is to be achieved. A ‘prescriptive’ requirement is a statement of how to do something.

Performance requirements are generally preferred over prescriptive requirements.

Prescriptive requirements may be used where there are interface requirements (as the requirement may need to match exactly to a standard/proprietary item), where there has been a well-developed history of doing something a certain way (as detailed in existing standards for example), or where there is difficulty in coming up with a suitable performance requirement.

### 4.1.2 Expression

To define clear and unambiguous provisions a Standard shall:

- be as complete as necessary within the limits specified by its scope;
- be consistent, clear and accurate;
- take full account of the state of the art;
- provide a framework for future technological development; and
- be comprehensible to qualified persons who have not participated in its preparation.

### 4.1.3 Language

RISSB Standards are required to be accessible to a wide audience with diverse background, and varying degrees of technical experience. Notwithstanding the need to use appropriate technical or industry terms, all RISSB Standards shall be written in clear ‘Plain English’ terms and with equivalence to an Australian grade 10 level of education.

Authors and DG members engaged in RISSB Standards development should not use the following:

- Sexist and/or other discriminatory language. (Instead use gender neutral and person-first terms).
- Unnecessary or excessive use of technical jargon or terminology.
- Non-English words and phrases, such as ‘laissez-faire’ or ‘ad hoc’.

### 4.1.4 Source materials & copyright

Authors and DG members may be provided industry source documents to assist with development of RISSB Standards. Where such source material is provided the Standard Development Manager and author shall ensure that any material put forward for inclusion in a Standard does not infringe a third party’s copyright. In such cases, the material may be included in a Standard only after permission has been obtained from the copyright holder.

Authors are expected to reword /revise requirements taken from source documents so that they are consistent with the style and structure required of RISSB Standards.

All source material should be critically reviewed before acceptance into the Standard being developed. Authors should take care when incorporating information from source material to ensure subject applicability and language style of the source material is consistent with the content under development.

## 5 Document Style and Structure

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### 5.1 Headers and Footers

Headers and footers are supplemental elements in a document that routinely appear at the top and bottom of the page to provide information about the document's "properties". The following elements are incorporated:

- Corporate logo
- Standard designation and title
- ABN
- Page Numbering

The header and footer shall be maintained as per the format provided within the Standard template.

### 5.2 Sentences and Paragraphs

To ensure unambiguous referencing of requirements and recommendations within a Standard, there is to be only one identified requirement or recommendation per sentence.

Sentences may be structured into paragraphs to assist the readers understanding however each paragraph should not consist of multiple requirements and/or recommendations rather be formed by a clear topic sentence expressing the requirement then followed by supporting or explanatory sentences. Paragraphs should express a single topic or theme.

Where requirements or recommendations are expressed in the form of a list, such lists shall not confuse requirements ('shall') and recommendations ('should').

### 5.3 Section Numbering

Identification of each section of text within each standard shall be by numbering in the form of 1, 1.1, 1.1.1 and 1.1.1.1.

The sectional numbering scheme is resident within the template and applied via the use of the in-built styles (Heading 1, Heading 2, etc).

#### 5.3.1 Standard Sections

##### Introductory Section

All Standards shall consist the following Introductory sections (as given in the template):

**Purpose:** Section 1.1 of each Standard shall contain the Purpose.

**Scope:** Section 1.2 of each Standard shall contain the Scope.

**Compliance:** Section 1.3 of each Standard shall contain the Compliance section.

**Reference Documents:** Section 1.4 of each standard shall contain the Reference Documents section.

**Definitions:** Section 1.5 of each Standard shall contain the Definition, as given in the template.

## Main Section

Section 2 of each Standard shall consist the main body of the document and detail normative and informative elements pertinent to the subject matter. The structure; section headings and broad-based content of this section are by agreement the Author and Development Group to best express the requirements of the Standard.

**Appendices:** Appendices are added to the document where additional information where such additional information is valuable to the reader and pertinent to the main body of material.

The following should be used as guidelines for the inclusion of material as an appendix to a document:

- Is the material to be appended, relevant or related to the main document's material?
- Does it complement the main document?
- Can it be used to gain a better understanding of the main document?
- Is it compatible with the published format of the main document?

Do not copy unnecessary text from source materials – critically review source material

## 6 Record Requirements

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The following records are retained as evidence of compliance to this procedure:

- Draft Standards
- Records of Copyright permissions (if applicable)