

PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL



Word Note (No. 25) Formatting of agreements etc.

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1 From time to time agreements that are to be incorporated into OPC Bills will be incorporated into Bills by OPC staff. These notes set out the formatting rules to be applied.

The substantially similar rule

2 The basic rule is that the agreement should be formatted in a way that is *substantially similar* to the format of the agreement. Exactly how closely the format of the agreement will be followed will be a matter of judgement in each case. If you are unsure, speak to First Parliamentary Counsel.

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3 The reason for adopting this approach is that it is unlikely that we will be able to exactly match the agreement as different fonts, page sizes etc. will have been used. By adopting a substantially similar rule we will be able to incorporate an agreement into a Bill without spending a large amount of time trying to exactly replicate the layout of the agreement. It is also noted that a similar approach was taken by CanPrint when they used to reset agreements for OPC.

Spelling etc.

4 The text of the OPC version of the agreement is to be exactly the same as the original agreement. In particular, spelling should not be changed (even if there is a spelling error in the original agreement).

5 If you use a spell checker on an agreement, be very careful to ensure that the “incorrect” spelling is not the spelling used in the original agreement.

Bills on disk

6 Generally there will be an electronic copy of agreements available from the instructing Department. If they do not have one, they should be asked to get one.

7 The agreement on the disk may or may not be in Word and may or may not be formatted using styles. If you obtain a copy on disk, you should speak to the ITO.

8 If it is in Word and is formatted with styles, you should ensure that none of the styles use the same name as an OPC style. The most likely ones are Heading 1, Heading 2 etc. If the same name is used, you should note what the formatting of the paragraph is and then change the style to Normal and manually applying the formatting (if you are unsure what to do, speak to the IT staff). Text that has other styles applied to it can be left with that style applied.

9 The text can then be copied into the appropriate Bill template.

Bills rekeyed

10 Where it is impossible to obtain an electronic copy of an agreement, the agreement will need to be rekeyed. The approval of First Parliamentary Counsel must be obtained before an agreement is rekeyed at OPC.

11 If an agreement is rekeyed at OPC, the text should be in Normal style and be manually formatted unless there is an OPC style that will give a substantially similar format. No heading styles should be used (even if they will give a similar format).

A specific rule

12 Agreements are generally included as Schedules to Acts. The title of the agreement is to be included in the Schedule heading. For example “Schedule 1—Agreement on drafting standards”. The heading to the Schedule is to be formatted with the ActHead 1,c style.

13 The heading should be set out in the same way as a normal OPC Schedule heading—that is, with the Schedule number followed by an em-rule followed by the title of the agreement. The title should *not* be in full capitals.

14 Where the Schedule containing the agreement is being inserted by an amending Schedule, the heading to the amending Schedule should be formatted with the ActHead 6,as style and the heading to the inserted Schedule should be formatted with the ActHead 1,c style

Some general guidelines

Font and size

15 The whole of the text of the OPC version of the agreement is to be in Times New Roman with the size of the “body text” of the agreement being in 11 point. Other font sizes should be substantially similar to that used in the original agreement.

Bold and italics

16 Where bold and italics appear in the original agreement, they must appear in the OPC agreement.

Centred text

17 Text that is centred in the original agreement must be centred in the OPC agreement.

Full capitals

18 Text that is in full capitals in the original agreement must be in full capitals in the OPC agreement. (This does not apply if it becomes part of the Schedule heading—see the specific rule.)

Indents tabs etc.

19 The indents used should result in the OPC version of the agreement looking substantially similar to the original agreement. It is not necessary, however, to ensure that the indents wrap to the same point (either relative to the page or relative to the text) as they do in the original.

20 Where OPC paragraphs styles are used to format paragraphs and subparagraphs, the letters in brackets may be aligned on the right (as they are in OPC Bills) even if they align on the left in the agreement (this is generally only apparent in subparagraphs in agreements).

Justification

21 All agreements in Bills should be left justified (whether or not the original is) *unless* the agreement is provided on disk and, when put into an OPC Bill template, the whole of the agreement is fully justified.

Vertical spacing

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22 Vertical spacing in the OPC version of the agreement should be substantially similar to that in the original. However, if OPC styles are used to format some parts of the agreement, the vertical space around those units does not have to be adjusted.

Smart quotes

23 Smart quotes (ie curly quotes instead of straight ones) should be used in agreements. This may mean that you will need to do a search and replace to change straight quotes to curly quotes. Remember to do both double and single quotes.

Provision of copies to Senate

24 You should note that if the text of an international or other agreement, or any other external document, is included in a Bill that is introduced in the Senate, a photocopy of the original document that we have obtained for our own proof-reading purposes should be sent to the Senate Table Office when the Bill is introduced.

25 This means that if you obtain an original of an external document for inclusion in a Bill, and the Bill is able to be introduced in the Senate, you should generally not return the original document to its custodians until you know definitely where the Bill will be introduced (the alternative would be to make a copy and then return the document earlier, but given the small number of Bills introduced in the Senate, most of these copies would probably be wasted).

26 If a copy of a document needs to be sent to the Senate Table Office, you should give the copy to the Bills Officer who will arrange delivery.

Andrew Newbery
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