



MODEL FORMS MANAGEMENT

PROGRAM MANUAL

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
Purpose	3
History	3
Implementation	3
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION	
Definitions	4
Program Processes.....	7
▶ New Forms	8
▫ Design Conventions for New Forms	
▫ Naming Conventions	
▫ Assignment of Form Number/Edition Dates/Page Numbers	
▫ Authorized Forms Software	
▫ Necessary and Appropriate Approvals	
▶ Database Maintenance.....	8
▫ Procedure for Establishing a New Form	
▶ Specifications	9
▫ Media Determination	
▫ Manufacturing and Stocking – Paper Forms	
▫ Source Files – Electronic Forms	
▶ Form Reviews – Changing Form Status	10
▫ Reviews	
▫ Changing Form Status to “Hold”	
▫ Changing Form Status to “Inactive”	
▫ Changing Form Status to “Abandoned”	
▫ Changing Form Status to “Obsolete”	
▶ Forms Management Program.....	11
▫ Forms Analysis Projects	
▫ Design Standards and Style Guide Enforcement	
▫ Forms Design Activities	
▫ The Forms Control System	
▫ Forms Library	
▫ Forms Database Structure and Maintenance	
▫ Deployment and Distribution of Company Forms	
▫ Forms Inventory Production, Stocking, and Distribution	
▫ Operational and Financial Reporting.....	12
▶ Forms Catalogs/Forms Portal.....	12

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

TABLE OF CONTENTS - continued

PAGE

DESIGN STANDARDS / STYLE GUIDE

▶ Form Number	13
▶ Edition Date	
▶ Logo(s)	
▶ Company Name Presentation	
▶ Form Title.....	14
▶ Form Instructions	
▶ Section Titles	
▶ Section Subtitles	
▶ Captions	
▶ Checkboxes/Radio Buttons/Dropdown Lists	15
▶ White Space	
▶ Screened Areas	
▶ Screened Type/Screened Rules	
▶ Reverse Type	
▶ Typography.....	16
▶ Sizes	17
▶ Use of Color.....	18

FORM FILE STRUCTURE

▶ Form File Contents	20
▫ Forms Data Sheet	21
▫ Forms Specifications	
▫ Samples	
▫ Pending Changes	

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE:

This document is presented as a means of recording standards and guidelines related to the systematic creation, modification, deployment, production or presentation, use, filing, and archiving of the business forms employed by the (Company Name). These guidelines apply equally to both paper-based business forms and electronic forms.

This document also addresses the administrative processes of the Forms Management Program, including the Forms Management Database and the physical Forms Files maintained by the Forms Management function. It defines the Design Standards (Style Guide) conventions, requirements, and restrictions currently in place and provides Forms Designer Tools for those within the company who have responsibility for designing forms.

HISTORY:

As long ago as 1955, the U. S. Government Hoover Commission determined that for every dollar spent to purchase a form, no less than twenty dollars was spent to use that form. This 20:1 ratio has been referred to as “the iceberg concept.”

Modern updates calculate that ratio at more than \$100 to use a form for every dollar spent to buy it. Business forms are the lifeblood of most business organizations. The resulting recognition, then, that significant economies are available through the careful management of an organization’s business forms prompt focused attention on assuring that forms design, forms manufacture, forms deployment/distribution, forms use (by all classes of forms users), filing and recovery procedures should be deliberately managed by trained, competent staff to maximize program efficiencies and operations.

IMPLEMENTATION:

To realize maximized efficiencies and the accompanying economies, a series of operational procedures have been developed to guide the efforts of the (Company Name) Forms Management function. Specific topics include:

New Forms

- Design Conventions for New Forms
- Naming Conventions
- Assignment of Form Numbers/Edition Dates/Page Numbers
- Authorized Forms Software
- Necessary and Appropriate Approvals

Forms Database Maintenance

- Purpose and Function
- Building and Maintenance Responsibility
- Access Parameters
- Procedure for Establishing a New Form

Specifications

- Media Determination
- Manufacturing and Stocking – Paper Forms
- Source Files – Electronic Forms

Form Reviews

- Form Revisions
- Putting a Form on Hold Status
- Declaring a Form Inactive, Obsolete, or Abandoned

Forms Management Program Processes

- Forms Analysis Projects, Design Standards and Style Guide enforcement, Forms Design Activities, Forms Control, Forms Library, Forms Database Structure and Maintenance, Deployment and Distribution of Forms, Maintenance of Forms Management Page on the (Company Name) intranet

Forms Catalogs

- Distribution – Paper Forms
- Deployment – Electronic Forms

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

DEFINITIONS:

Term	Definition
Business Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basic business tool (whether printed or electronic) for collecting and transmitting information. • The catalyst for getting things done. • The record of what was done. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Copyright 1986 – Business Forms Management Association, Inc.</i></p> <p>Four Elements of Every Form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INTENT - Justification for the existence of the form. • CONTAINER - Physical layout of the data capture vehicle. • DATA - Variable information captured by the form. • IMAGE - Interface among users, data, and systems <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Copyright 2002 – Essociates Group, Inc.</i></p>
Design Analysis	<p>In addition to resulting in the design layout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases productivity by creating a basic business tool that is self-instructive. • Encourages cooperative response. • Provides easy entry of data. • Reduces the potential for error. • Facilitates the use of the information. • Enhances the organization's image. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Copyright 1986 – Business Forms Management Association, Inc.</i></p>
Forms Management	<p>The systematic process of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing productivity and minimizing errors in information capture, transmission, and recovery using workflow analysis and graphic design techniques. • Providing administrative control. • Reducing procurement, storage, distribution, and use costs through standardization. • Ensuring the adequacy, business as well as legal, of all historical records <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Copyright 1986 – Business Forms Management Association, Inc.</i></p>
Forms Manager/Administrator	Forms Management staff responsible for implementing Forms Management Program procedures.
Form Owner	A staff member with authority to create, revise, oversee the use and archiving procedures, and to declare a form obsolete.
Limited Use Form	Form used exclusively within a particular department to support specific unit activity.
eForm (Electronic Form)	Form in electronic format used in a fill-and-print environment.
iForm (Internet Form)	Browser-based intelligent electronic form available to internal and external users.
Intelligent Electronic Form (IEF)	Intranet or extranet form containing appropriate coding to support calculation, save, print, submit, and email features plus pre-processing and/or post-processing connection to one or more database(s). May be filled in online or offline.

DEFINITIONS - continued:

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

Term	Definition
pForm (Paper Form)	Form that is physically stocked and made available for manual completion.
Print-On-Demand Form (POD) (in electronic format)	Form posted to the company intranet or other server and printable by individual users for use in an offline environment.
Stocked Form (non-electronic)	Carbonless (multi-part) form, pad, tag, envelope, etc., or cut sheet forms not currently available in electronic format which must be physically manufactured.
Forms Portal (intranet)	A site featuring a suite of forms and forms-related services used as a point of origin and frequent gateway to the company's intranet. Employing a complete catalog of the organization's forms as a base point, a portal allows each user to develop customized catalogs for their individual use. It serves as a deployment tool enabling various levels of access and control while providing users with detailed information on forms.
External Catalog	Extranet (the Internet) where electronic form files are accessed by customers or other non-employees.
Design Standards/Style Guide	The rules, conventions, requirements, and constraints governing the standard layout and composition of business forms.
Status	<p>Standing of a form within the forms database indicating its level of use and/or historical value, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABANDONED - Pending new or proposed form that was never finalized. • ACTIVE - A form that is currently authorized for use. • HOLD - A form that is under development or revision but has not been officially released for use. • INACTIVE - A form that has been <i>temporarily</i> removed from use, including previous editions of currently active forms. • OBSOLETE - A form that has been <i>permanently</i> removed from use
Inactive vs. Obsolete Form	"Inactive" assumes a temporary situation while "Obsolete" assumes a permanent one.
Edition Date	Date on which a specific edition of the form became active. Edition Date is changed only when form layout is modified, not upon reprint.

DEFINITIONS - continued:

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

Term	Definition
Revision	Action which changes the layout of the form caused, usually, by a change in the workflow associated with the form. This may result in a change in the Edition Date.
Version	Alternate rendition of a form – reflected in a variation of language, format (paper vs. electronic), geographically mandated modifications (e.g., state-to-state change), or some other factor, but where basic content and workflow associated with form does not change.

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

PROGRAM PROCESSES: (For Forms Management Department Use ONLY)

NEW FORMS

Prior to adding a new form to the list of active business forms used by (Company Name), an analysis must be conducted (1) to assure that there is no existing form to serve the intended purpose of the new form, (2) to confirm justification for the new form and (3) to obtain any necessary legal and/or regulatory approval for the new form prior to its implementation.

- **Design Conventions for New Forms**

Careful adherence to the Design Standards/Style Guide defined in this document (see page 13) ensures that all forms issued by (Company Name), for use by both the staff and the public, employ consistent business forms design conventions. A standard “look” helps users recognize standard form elements, such as form title, form number and edition date, major form sections, instructions, and other features. By using these standard elements and only the prescribed type fonts, point sizes, and ink colors, designers provide useful guidelines to users that may help them complete forms more rapidly and with fewer errors, making the overall system more effective.

- **Naming Conventions**

Form titles should be constructed as follows.

- Form titles should use as few words as possible to describe the subject and function of the form.
- Form titles ideally should not exceed five (5) words and should avoid including unnecessary words.
- First word(s) in the title identify the business area (e.g., Employment, Purchasing, Engineering, etc.)
- Final word in the title defines the function of the form (e.g., Report, Log, Application, Request, etc.)
- Form titles should **NEVER** contain the word “Form” since that would be unnecessary and redundant.
- A form title should not duplicate the title of any other form.
- Form titles must follow the typographic standard defined in the Design Standards/Style Guide.

- **Assignment of Form Numbers/Edition Dates/Page Numbers**

Form numbers are assigned exclusively by the Forms Management staff in the Forms Management department.

They consist of four digits and are assigned in strict numeric sequence. Every form number is accompanied by an Edition Date, the date on which the current edition of the form (new or revised) becomes available for use. Edition Dates are displayed as (MM/YYYY), including the parentheses, and are associated directly with the Form Number, being positioned to the immediate right of that number. Edition Dates are updated **ONLY** when a new layout or workflow of the form is released, not merely at the time of a new print production.

The standard location for the Form Number/Edition Date data group is in the bottom left corner of the form, within the footer area. Printing the Form Number/Edition Date data group is not necessary on the back side of a duplexed form but should appear on every odd-numbered page in a multi-page form set along with “Page _ of _” notations, which are right justified and located in the footer area.

- **Authorized Forms Software**

Forms design may be executed using the following software products.

- (List names of approved forms design software products)

Authorized databases to be associated with business forms include:

- (List names of approved forms design software products)

- **Necessary and Appropriate Approvals**

Any form with legal and/or regulatory associations must be approved by the (Company Name) Office of Counsel prior to its being activated and made available to users. External forms (only) must be reviewed by the (name of the department controlling the external image of the company – usually the Marketing department).

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

DATABASE MAINTENANCE

- **Purpose and Function**

The Forms Database exists as a formal repository for information pertinent to each individual form and to the operation of the Forms Management Program.

- **Building and Maintenance Responsibility/Access**

It is the responsibility of the Forms Manager (and his/her staff) to define, establish, and maintain the Forms Database. Access is limited to only those individuals who have a need to know.

- **Procedure for Establishing a New Form**

Requester Initial Action:

- Form Owner submits a New Form Requisition (Form XXXX) to Forms Management

Forms Management function Response:

- Check the Forms Management database for the same or a similar form.

If the same or similar form already exists, begin **Form Revision Procedure**

- > Propose to Requester that the existing form be revised in lieu of creating a new form.
- > Change the status of existing form in Forms Database to “Hold” pending the release of the revised form.
- > Determine disposition of any printed stock remaining on hand.

If the same or similar form does **NOT** exist, begin **New Form Procedure**

- > Issue a new Form Number and set up the form record in the Forms Database.
- > Leave Edition Date blank until the form has completed the approval/authorization processes.
- > Enter status in Forms Database to “Hold” until the new form is approved and released for use.

Design Analysis:

- Ascertain the appropriate format for the form – electronic vs. paper.
- If paper, determine materials and manufacturing techniques to be used.
- If electronic, determine the platform and design software to be used.

Requester/Form Designer:

- Complete the design layout for the new or revised form per the Design Standards/Style Guide defined in this manual.
- Obtain appropriate approvals/authorizations for new or revised forms.
- Forward the final source file to Forms Management for release processing.

Approval/Testing:

- Obtain authorization from legal and/or regulatory resources, as appropriate.
- Alpha Testing – thorough testing by the Form Owner to assure that the form, as designed, serves the business process(es) and associated workflow(s) appropriately.
- Beta Testing – Limited testing by a small group of users (e.g., a department) to confirm that the form is understandable to the user community and that it works smoothly within their operations.
- Accessibility Testing – Focused testing to assure that Section 508 requirements are met.
- General Release to all potential users of the form.
- Validation Testing – Follow-up (after general use has become routine) to affirm that the form works as designed and intended.

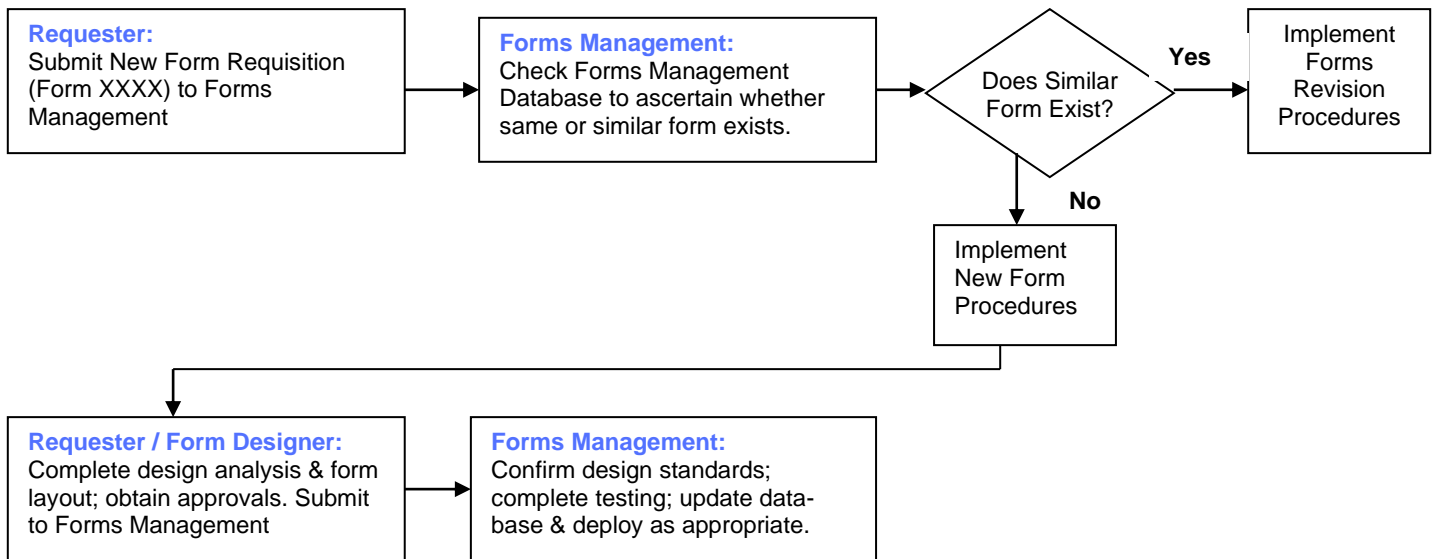
Forms Management Release Processing:

- Confirm that Design Standards guidelines have been followed.
- Assign the Edition Date to the form and update the Edition Date in the Forms Management Database.
- Change the status setting in the Forms Management database from “Hold” to “Active”.
- Place a sample of the form in both the Forms Library and in the physical Forms File.
- Deploy the new or revised form as appropriate.
- Notify the Requester that the form has been released and deployed.

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

New Form Procedure Steps:



SPECIFICATIONS

• **Media Determination**

Form media must be determined prior to design execution – that is, whether the form is to be on paper or some other physical material, whether it is to be a strictly electronic form, available only through the intranet, or a combination of multiple media. This decision may have an impact on the selection of the design software product to be used. Electronic forms, for example, may need to be compiled as fillable PDF forms before being made available to the user community. Other electronic forms, which are to be made available as print-on-demand (print and fill) forms, may be deployed in one of several formats, depending upon potential user requirements. Stocked items will need to be converted to PDF format but will not require the addition of fillable fields.

• **Manufacturing and Stocking – Paper Forms**

Manufacturing specifications for all cut sheet paper forms, multi-page (carbonless) form sets, labels, tags, envelopes, and other printed form products must be developed. These specifications must include:

- Size (width x length)
- Substrate material (paper; envelope, tag, or label material; cover stock; etc.)
- Number of plies (e.g., for multi-part carbonless sets)
- Ink colors (standard is black; specify any other colors)
- Bindery operations (drill, pad, perforate, fold, bind, etc.)
- Authorization requirements if restricted forms
- Packaging (number per shrink-wrap/number per carton, etc.)
- Economical Ordering Quantities (EOQ)

• **Source Files – Electronic Forms**

For electronic forms, source files must be deployed appropriately to the servers from which users may obtain the forms when needed. If databases are accessed (either to feed data to the form or to receive data captured by the form), they must be clearly specified and permission obtained from the database administrator, where appropriate, before connecting the new form.

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

FORMS REVIEWS – CHANGING FORM STATUS

- **Reviews**

On a regularly scheduled periodic basis (usually once every calendar year), each form in the forms catalog should undergo review to:

- Confirm continued usefulness to the related business system or function.
- Determine whether text, graphics, or other copy changes are needed.
- Ascertain whether the form is a candidate for conversion from a paper format to an electronic format.
- Ascertain whether stocked quantities of paper forms are providing economic periodic inventory turns.

One easy way to schedule these general reviews is to make them coincide with reprint orders. But, since some forms in the system are electronic and not subject to physical inventory (or reprint cycles), those forms must be reviewed according to a predetermined schedule. Such a schedule might call for 10% of the total forms population to be reviewed in each of the ten calendar months during the year (excluding one summer month and December, for example).

Other Ad Hoc reviews may be conducted:

- To study all the forms serving a specific business system.
- To evaluate all forms of a certain category (e.g., all envelopes).
- For any other analytical purpose that may be defined by the Forms Manager.

- **Changing Form Status to “Hold”**

Any time a new form is in the development process, or an existing form is in the revision process, the status indicator for that form in the Forms Management Database is “Hold” until the form is released and deployed by Forms Management for use by the staff and/or by the public.

- **Changing Form Status to “Inactive”**

When a form apparently no longer serves a useful purpose, or when that form has had no usage for at least the last six (6) consecutive months, it may be a likely candidate to be declared inactive, a temporary status. When that action is deemed appropriate, certain actions are required. These actions include:

- Removing the form from the active catalog of available forms (either stocked or print-on-demand).
- Determining the disposition of any remaining printed stock.
- Updating the status in the Forms Management database, including “status change date”.

- **Changing Form Status to “Abandoned”**

When a form number has been assigned and the form has been designed (or partially designed) but has never been officially deployed – either because the system it was to serve was not completed or the form was determined to be unnecessary, the status code for that form is changed to “Abandoned.” The form number assigned to such a form project is not reused. The Forms Database is updated – from “Hold” to “Abandoned” including a “status change date” – and any remaining source file for the form is filed appropriately.

- **Changing Form Status to “Obsolete”**

When it has been determined that a previously active form will **NEVER** be used again, it may be declared “Obsolete.” These actions include:

- Removing the form from the active catalog of available forms (either stocked or print-on-demand).
- Determining the disposition of any remaining printed stock.
- Updating the status in the Forms Management database, including “status change date”.

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

FORMS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Forms Management Program for (Company Name) shall be organized under the (define organization positioning for the department/function).

The Forms Management Program shall perform or oversee the following functions:

- **Forms Analysis Projects** – both scheduled and Ad Hoc
Detailed analyses of individual forms, form groups, product types, or any other specific classification of forms can be studied for a variety of purposes: conformance to design standards, confirmation of relevance to the business system(s) served, manufacturing specification consistency, the addition of intelligence to electronic forms, or for any other economy- or efficiency-related purpose.
- **Design Standards and Style Guide Enforcement**, as related to business forms.
For the Design Standards/Style Guide principles to be effective, they must be enforced, regardless of who may design the forms. While final forms design may be performed by other staff members within the company or by outside contractors, the Forms Management office shall review each new (or revised) form prior to its deployment to assure conformance to all published standards. All exceptions must be fully justified.
- **Forms Design Activities**
The final selection of forms design tools, while important, is ultimately under the control of the designer. Software built specifically for forms design purposes is preferred, but alternate software may be used when that is the only tool available.
- **The Forms Control System**
Maintenance of the form files in the Forms Management Department is the exclusive responsibility of the Forms Manager. Typical contents of these files are outlined elsewhere in this document (see pages 20 - 21). Access to these files is limited to Forms Management personnel.
- **Forms Library**
A complete set of physical samples of all active and inactive forms is maintained by the Forms Management Department. Each time an existing form is revised, or a new form is released, a sample is inserted into a plastic page protector and filed numerically in the appropriate binder. These binders provide a quick reference for all official forms in the system and are maintained by the Forms Management Department.
- **Forms Database Structure and Maintenance**
The content and context of the forms database, as well as its maintenance, is the responsibility of the Forms Management Department. This data may be queried in a variety of ways:
 - For use as a reference resource for information about individual forms.
 - To list forms status and stocked items included in the intranet and/or on the Internet.
 - To record specifications and comments and as a repository for alert information.
 - To support a variety of forms analysis projects.
- **Deployment (eForms) and Distribution (pForms) of Company Forms**
Determination of appropriate media (electronic or paper) for each form used by (Company Name) shall be the responsibility of the Forms Management Department. Subsequent deployment to the appropriate server for electronic forms and distribution of pre-printed paper products shall also be under the ultimate control of Forms Management. Either or both administrative functions may be delegated, as appropriate, but are subject to oversight by the Forms Management Department.
- **Forms Inventory Production, Stocking, and Distribution**
At the introduction of a new form into the system and when a periodic review is conducted for an existing form, a determination must be made as to whether the form item is to be preprinted and stocked for subsequent distribution. In cases where such distribution is to be made, it is the responsibility of the Forms Management function to determine economic ordering quantities (EOQ) for the item and to place orders with the appropriate vendor.

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

- **Operational and Financial Reporting** regarding the Forms Management Program. On a routine and scheduled basis, various reports will be generated by the Forms Manager for presentation to management. These reports may include:
 - Metrics (such as total forms, listed by category, in the forms management system).
 - Annual forms department expenditures (budget vs. actual).
 - Cost savings realized through various analysis projects.
 - Cost avoidance realized through form combinations, conversion from paper to electronic format, standardization of manufacturing specifications, and obsolescence.
 - Other Ad Hoc reports, as appropriate.

FORMS CATALOGS / FORMS PORTAL

Forms Catalogs are useful tools helping both Forms Management Program administrators and the user community to locate and obtain forms when they are needed. Catalogs are made available to internal and external users in a variety of ways.

- A listing on the (Company Name) intranet provides immediate access to electronic forms, that is, forms that may be downloaded for print-on-demand use or as an intelligent electronic form. This listing may take the form of a Forms Portal.
- The Forms Database lists all forms in the Forms Management Program and is available exclusively to the Forms Manager and administrative staff. This database also contains other pertinent information.

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

DESIGN STANDARDS / STYLE GUIDE

The primary goal of developing design standards for a Forms Management Program is to ensure the introduction of consistency to the design of all the forms in the system. Form users develop habit patterns based on recognizable element positioning, font selection, ink colors, and other graphical design conventions. These habit patterns help to improve the speed and accuracy with which the variable data is entered into and recovered from the form container. Standards also enhance the usefulness of the data collected to the database(s) fed by the form.

FORM NUMBER:

The form number is the primary device, other than the Form Title, for identifying the appropriate form to be used for specific data collection activities by the user community. The form number should ideally consist of an all-numeric, four-digit generic codifier. Minimal use (and then only when unavoidable) of prefixes and/or suffixes should be permitted. Attempting to “add meaning” to a form number invites future confusion when the code element changes. For example, the inclusion of a department or division identifier prefix becomes obstructive (as opposed to useful) when the department designation changes because of reorganization. Suffixes denoting geographic locations become meaningless when offices are relocated.

EDITION DATE:

The edition date is a critical companion data element to the Form Number. It denotes the two-digit month and the four-digit year (MM/YYYY) when a specific edition of the form became active. Even the first edition of a form needs a date designator. The use of the prefix “Rev.” in conjunction with the Edition Date is superfluous. This system allows for the design and preliminary deployment of a “future” edition of a form that is being revised, but which will not be made available to users until its effective date.

Format: The Form Number and the Edition Date should always be displayed as a set of two related elements. The only acceptable format [where “Form 1234” is the form number and “(11/2002)” is the edition date], is:

Form 1234 (11/2002)

These two elements should always be in this sequence and proximity. Separating the two related elements can result in confusion. These two elements should always be thought of as a set.

The Form Number and Edition Date should typically be positioned in the lower-left corner of the form page. Depending upon use, it may be appropriate to repeat this information on every page of the form.

LOGO:

Logo use and consistent placement are critical to the public image and marketing effort of the organization. Since its forms may be the only contact that some individuals in the general population may ever have with the organization, it is necessary to display the appropriate logo in the appropriate location on the form. Usually, that location is at the top left of the form – always on the first page of a multi-page document, often on every page of such a document, and occasionally included in backer printing. Whether that logo is presented in color or as a black-and-white image, it must be the current, official version.

COMPANY NAME PRESENTATION:

The business form is a marketing tool. The company name, therefore, must be presented in a standardized manner both to assure that official company forms are readily identifiable to the staff and that they are easily recognized by the public. The consistent display of the company name, on electronic forms as well as on paper documents, enhances public perception and complements the professional image of the organization.

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

FORM TITLE:

The form title provides an alternative to the form number as a means of identifying the form. Titles should contain as few words as practicable and should be descriptive of the purpose and catalytic function of the form.

Since directories and other form listings are used for reference and to locate the needed form, the primary subject of the form should be expressed in the first word of the title, e.g., "Travel Expense Report" or "Employment Application."

The function or the activity to be triggered using the form should be the last word in the title, e.g., "Leave of Absence Request" or "Payroll Check," or "Workers' Compensation Questionnaire."

FORM INSTRUCTION:

Form instruction defines for the form user specifically what data is to be entered at a designated location on the form. Instructions must be presented in plain language, without the use of acronyms or jargon that could confuse the user and result in the capture of incorrect or incomplete data. Instructions should ideally be placed near the area where they are needed.

Paper form instructions may be placed in the heading area, below the form title, along the bottom edge of the form, or near the field where the data is to be entered – depending upon space available and clarity considerations. Instructions printed on the back of a form are the least effective of all and should be avoided whenever possible. If instructions must be printed on the back of the form, then an annotation to that effect must appear on the face of the form directing the user to those instructions. Alternatively, instructions may be referenced to the policy or procedure where they may appear in their most complete form.

Electronic form instructions are handled differently from paper form instructions. With electronic forms, instructions may be placed in help screens (accessible by clicking on the HELP icon), in dropdown boxes associated with the field (where actual choices may be presented in lieu of the user entering the data), or in tool-tip-type balloons made visible when the cursor is passed over the field. Valuable real estate is not usurped on electronic forms with preprinted instructions since they may be made to appear when/where needed.

SECTION TITLES:

Section titles help to define form zoning boundaries. Related data fields may be grouped together for the convenience of the user or the ultimate reader of the form. Section titles identify those zones. Use of this convention should be limited since overuse can easily lead to confusion rather than enhance clarity.

SECTION SUBTITLES:

Section subtitles divide Sections (or zones) of data fields into subsections. Unless there is a demonstrable need, section subtitles use should be minimal.

CAPTIONS:

Captions are the structural indicators that guide the user to enter the appropriate information in the designated field.

The optimal design position for captions inside fill-in boxes is in the upper left corner. When check boxes (multiple choices possible) or radio buttons (a single mutually exclusive choice possible) are used, the caption should follow the box or button circle and sufficient space for clear differentiation should be left between the end of one caption and the occurrence of the next box or button circle in a sequence. (Positioning selections too close leads to confusion for the user, i.e., "Does the caption go with the one on the left of the one on the right?" This confusion causes incorrect use of the form and errors when recovering the entered information by an ultimate reader of the form.)

Captions should "whisper" (that is, they must be unobtrusive guides) so that the variable data entered on the form may "shout." Captions should be short, simple and provide a clear indication of the appropriate data to be entered. The length of the caption should **NOT** be the determining factor in the length of the data field. The length of the expected data should control field length.

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

CHECK BOXES / RADIO BUTTONS / DROPDOWN LISTS:

Providing quick and easy techniques for making selections facilitates form use. While a few devices are available, the most common are checkboxes, radio buttons, and dropdown lists.

- **Checkboxes** are used to facilitate the selection of one or more responses applicable to a related group of choices on a form when those responses are **NOT** mutually exclusive - that is to say, where multiple choices may be appropriate. The checkbox convention is equally useful for both paper and electronic forms.
- **Radio Button** use is generally found only in electronic forms because the choices, in this case, *are* mutually exclusive. Only one choice from the options offered may be selected at a time. The radio button convention is controlled by the person programming the electronic form functions.
- **Dropdown Lists** work in a similar way to radio buttons. The advantage of dropdown lists is that longer descriptions of mutually exclusive options are available in a compact space. The existence of a dropdown list is signaled by the presentation of a combo box on the electronic form screen, which includes a down arrow symbol that, when clicked, opens the list to view. Cursor positioning, usually followed by a mouse click, completes the selection.

WHITE SPACE:

Employing the use of white space in the design of a form provides the user with visual guidance to form zones (areas containing related data fields), instructions for forms use, and the logical progression path through the form completion process. The term “white space” simply means including appropriate open areas on the form intentionally designed to avoid crowding text and/or graphical devices (such as rules, boxes, screening, bold text, and excessive color), thereby reducing clutter, confusion, and possible eye strain for electronic forms users.

SCREENED AREAS:

Screening, usually displayed as a series of dots producing a 10% to 20% solid pattern of background color in a defined area, is useful to help guide the form user’s eye. Screening may be employed to apply focus to form completion instructions, column captions in a table, specific areas on the form for use only by selected individuals, a signature area, or any other area where special attention is appropriate. Use of this eye-guiding device should be selective and judiciously limited to avoid loss of emphasis. Screening may be presented either in the base ink color (usually black, which produces a gray screened area) or in another color already in use on the form. It is generally inappropriate to introduce a new color to be used exclusively for the screening.

SCREENED TYPE / SCREENED RULES:

Like screened areas, screened type is the type displayed at less than full value – usually 20% - 50% (depending upon the situation). Screened type should not be used for form completion instructions since it is often difficult to read. Instead, its limited use may be effective to identify specific, localized areas.

Screened rules are effective in displaying the line structure of the form in a muted way so that the variable data entered into the form may appear more prominent. One typical use for screened rules is to separate cents from dollars in amount columns. Another would be to provide an unobtrusive outline box to define a specific area on the form. Screened rules are routinely presented in the base ink color used on the form.

REVERSE TYPE:

White type in a solid black background field is defined as “reverse type.” It should be used sparingly and only for quick area identification purposes. Text in reverse areas should **ALWAYS** be bold to enhance legibility.

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

TYPOGRAPHY:

The standard type fonts and point sizes to be used on business forms are as follows. These standards generally apply equally to both paper and electronic forms. Where there are exceptions related to the medium, they are so noted. Note that all fonts are readily available in Microsoft Word. Helvetica is a reasonable substitute for Arial.

RULES

Element or Area of Use	Font, Font Style and Other Applicable Attributes	Point Size	Comments
Company Name	Arial – Bold – All Capitals	9 or 10	Position to the _____ of logo
Form Title	Arial – Bold – Upper and Lower Case	20	Right Justify
Form Instructions	Arial – Regular – Upper and Lower Case	9	Also used for Body Text
Section Titles	Arial – Bold – Upper and Lower Case	10	Used to identify form zones
Section Subtitles	Arial – Regular – Upper and Lower Case	8	Underlined, if appropriate
Captions	Arial – Regular – Upper and Lower Case	7	Upper Left Corner Captions
Check Boxes	Wingdings – Regular –	10 or 12	(WORD Keystroke: Alt + 0168)
Form Number	Arial – Regular – Alpha pre/suffix in Upper Case	7	Format: Form XXXX
Edition Date	Arial – Regular – All Numeric	7	Format: MM/YYYY

EXAMPLES

THIS IS THE COMPANY NAME **10-point Arial – Bold – ALL CAPITALS**

This is a Form Title Example **20-point Arial – Regular – Upper and Lower Case**

This is an example of Form Instructions / Body Text **9-point Arial – Regular – Upper and Lower Case**

This is an example of a Section Title **10-point Arial – Regular – Upper and Lower Case**

This is an example of a Section Subtitle..... **8-point Arial – Regular – Upper and Lower Case**

This is an example of Caption text **7-point Arial – Regular – Upper and Lower Case**

This is an example of a Form Number: Form 1234 **7-point Arial – Regular – Alpha pre/suffix (if any) in Upper Case**

This is an example of an Edition Date: (10/2003) **7-point Arial – Regular – All Numeric (MM/YYYY)**

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

SIZES:

The use of industry-standard sizes whenever possible promotes cost savings in both the production cycle and in post-processing activities such as filing and archiving. Various products are manufactured routinely in various standard sizes. The following are typical examples of standard sizes for common products.

Product	Standard Sizes	Comments
Cut Sheets (1-part forms)	8 1/2" x 11" 8 1/2" x 14" 8 1/2" x 5 1/2" 8 1/2" x 7"	20# Forms Bond 60# Book
Carbonless Multi-part Alternate, non-standard color sequences are available	8 1/2" x 11" 8 1/2" x 14" 8 1/2" x 5 1/2" 8 1/2" x 7"	2 Part – White, Yellow 3-Part – White, Yellow, Pink 4 Part – White, Yellow, Pink, Goldenrod 5 Part – White, Green, Yellow, Pink, Goldenrod 6 Part – White, Blue, Green, Yellow, Pink, Goldenrod
Tags Standard Size Tags are sizes 1 through 8. Standard Oversize Tags are sizes 9 through 16. Tags may be in other sizes as appropriate. Various tag hole fasteners (string/wire/etc.) and reinforcement materials and techniques are available.	Size 1 2 3/4" x 1 3/8" Size 2 3 1/4" x 1 5/8" Size 3 3 3/4" x 1 7/8" Size 4 4 1/4" x 2 1/8" Size 5 4 3/4" x 2 3/8" Size 6 5 1/4" x 2 5/8" Size 7 5 3/4" x 2 7/8" Size 8 6 1/4" x 3 1/8" Size 9 3 3/8" x 6 3/4" Size 10 3 5/8" x 7 1/4" Size 11 3 7/8" x 7 3/4" Size 12 4 1/8" x 8 1/4" Size 13 4 3/8" x 8 3/4" Size 14 4 5/8" x 9 1/4" Size 15 4 7/8" x 9 3/4" Size 16 5 1/8" x 10 1/4"	100# Tag Stock 125# Tag Stock
Labels	As Needed	Various label stock, page configurations, form/label combinations, matrix designs, inks, substrates, face coatings, liner materials, and adhesives are available.
Envelopes Note that the United States Postal Services rules apply to all mailing pieces. Pre-sorting addresses, ZIP* code sorting, proper minimum material weights, and other factors all influence postage charges. *ZIP = acronym meaning Zone Improvement Program *MUST BE ALL CAPITAL LETTERS*	# 6 1/4 3 1/2" x 6" # 6 1/2 3 9/16" x 6 1/4" # 6 3/4" 3 5/8" x 6 1/2" # 7 3 3/4" x 6 3/4" # 7 3/4 3 7/8" x 7 1/2" # 8 5/8 3 5/8" x 8 5/8" # 9 3 7/8" x 8 7/8" # 10 4 1/8" x 9 1/2" # 10 1/2 4 1/2" x 9 1/2" # 11 4 1/2" x 10 3/8" # 12 4 3/4" x 11" # 14 5" x 11 1/2"	Envelope stock varies according to usage. Construction options include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid face envelopes • Flat form self-mailers • Window envelopes • Continuous envelopes • Continuous mailers Flaps may be located on either the long or short side of the envelope and adhesives may be of a variety of types, depending upon use. Window positions may vary, but the standard allows 5/8" between the bottom of the envelope and the window and 7/8" between the left edge of the envelope and the window.
Other Paper Products	Any	Contact your print vendor for industry standards.

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

USE OF COLOR:

The standard ink/computer display color to be used on business forms is black. This standard generally applies equally to both paper and electronic forms. Where there are exceptions related to the medium, they are so noted.

RULES

Area of Use	Medium	Color	Comments
Company Name	Paper Forms	Black	The Company Name is displayed in the point size appropriate to the item: 9- or 10-point Arial – Bold. The Company Name is usually positioned at (insert corporate standard for logotype positioning)
Company Name	Electronic Forms	Black	For purposes of consistency, the same rules apply for displaying the Company Name on electronic forms.
Logo	Paper Forms	Black	The appropriate version of the logo to be used on business forms is (insert corporate standard here). Customized logos are not authorized for use on business forms.
Logo	Electronic Forms	Black	For purposes of consistency and because electronic forms are often printed on black ink only printers, the same rules apply for displaying the logo on electronic forms.
Form Container Layout	Paper Forms	Black	Most business forms should be displayed in all-black text on a white background. Occasional use of red ink for critical, special emphasis, may be deemed an acceptable exception. Two-color printing, however, should generally be avoided.
Form Container Layout	Electronic Forms	Black	Electronic forms are also displayed in black. Special emphasis areas using red (or some other basic color) are acceptable but should be limited so their effectiveness is not diminished. Avoid using more than three colors in one electronic form.
Form Number	Paper Forms	Black	Form numbers are printed in the base ink used on the paper-based form.
Form Number	Electronic Forms	Black	Form numbers are displayed in the base color used on the electronic form.
Edition Date	Paper Forms	Black	Edition dates are always printed in the same ink color as the form number.
Edition Date	Electronic Forms	Black	Edition dates are always displayed in the same color as the form number.
Exceptions	Paper Forms	(Color)	(Define any acceptable exceptions here.)
Exceptions	Electronic Forms	Blue	Fill-in text (data entered by the person completing the form) may be displayed in blue to provide contrast to the base container (template) content.

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

EXAMPLES

Company Name:

THIS IS THE COMPANY NAME **9-point Arial - Bold**

THIS IS THE COMPANY NAME **10-point Arial - Bold**



The company Logo is to appear on business forms as (e.g., simple line art with no gray-scale screening) and with the following size restrictions.

Minimum size = _____
Typical size = _____
Maximum size = _____

Logo must be exactly as designed, without distortion, and is to be printed in the base ink color of form, unless a standard corporate color is used elsewhere on the form.

Minimum space (logo isolation area) between Logo and other form elements is _____ in all directions.

Form Content:

- Standard font is sans serif Arial 10 point.
- Print in black ink.
- **Critical, special emphasis text may be printed in red ink.**
- Two color printing should generally be avoided.

Form Number / Edition Date:

- Forms numbers and Edition Dates are printed in Arial 7 point Regular, in the following format:

Form 1234 (00/0000)

Exceptions:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

FORM FILE STRUCTURE

FORM FILE CONTENTS:

The Forms Management Database and the physical Forms File are complementary tools used in the forms management function. While there is some overlap in the information in the two files, each has data fields that are exclusive to its own specific functions. Here we define the data to be kept in each file.

- ▶ The **Forms Management Database** is an _____ database, containing the following fields:
 - **Form Number:** (FieldName: FormNo) – With format of “Form XXXX”
 - **Edition Date:** (FieldName: EdDate) – With format of “MM/YYYY”
 - **Form Title:** (FieldName: FormTitle)
 - **Proposed Title Change:** (FieldName: ProposedTitleChange) – To improve clarity or search capability
 - **Status:** (Entry Options: H/I/A/O) – Hold/Inactive/Active/Obsolete
 - **Stocked:** (Entry Options: Y / N) – Yes/No – May alternatively show stocking location code, if available)
 - **Intranet Catalog:** (Entry Options: Y/N) – Yes/No
 - **Extranet Catalog:** (Entry Options: Y/N) – Yes/No
 - **Specifications:** Manufacturing or display specification fields in the following sequence:
 - for Paper Forms
 - ✓ Paper
 - ✓ Width
 - ✓ Length
 - ✓ Product Type
 - ✓ Number of Plies
 - ✓ Bindery Features
 - ✓ Other
 - for Electronic Forms
 - ✓ Electronic
 - ✓ Number of Screens
 - ✓ Source File Path
 - ✓ Server Path
 - ✓ Graphics Files Used
 - ✓ Other
 - **Comments:** Details about fillable fields, file path to software used to design these forms, etc.
 - **Alert:** Annotations regarding such things as anticipated design or specification changes at reorder time, candidate for special study, candidate for conversion from paper to electronic media, etc.

Maintenance of this database is the sole responsibility of the Forms Management function. Others may be permitted view-only access, but file additions, changes, and deletions are restricted to Forms Management personnel.

Forms Management Program Manual

(Insert Company Name)

- ▶ The **Forms File** is the physical file folder located in the Forms Management department. Its contents should include, at a minimum, the following items.
 - **Forms Data Sheet** – fastened to the left side of the file folder and containing the following data:
 - ✓ Form Number
 - ✓ Edition Date (current)
 - ✓ Form Title
 - ✓ Previous form number(s) and form title(s) if any
 - ✓ History of all edition dates since the inception of the form
 - ✓ Form Owner name, department, phone number, and email address
 - ✓ Business system served by the form
 - ✓ Database Owner name, department, phone number, and email address, where appropriate
 - ✓ Related form(s), if any (e.g., the envelope that is used with this form)
 - ✓ Logo(s) used on this form
 - ✓ Stocking location(s) for this form, if any
 - ✓ Source file location (path) for artwork
 - ✓ Name of software product with which form was designed
 - ✓ If an electronic form, server path (or intranet/extranet location of Print-on-Demand file)
 - ✓ Legal or regulatory obligations as related to this form (approvals required, etc.)
 - **Form Specifications** – also fastened to the left side of the file folder and containing the following data:
 - Paper Forms:
 - ✓ Form Number
 - ✓ Edition Date
 - ✓ Product Type (cut sheet, unit set, pad, book, label, tag, envelope, etc.)
 - ✓ Form Size – width x length (expressed in inches)
 - ✓ Paper type (20# Forms Bond / Carbonless / etc.)
 - ✓ Number of plies
 - ✓ Printed face only or face and back (if duplexed, whether backer is printed regular or tumble style)
 - ✓ Ink color(s) used on form (face and back)
 - ✓ Bindery features
 - Drilling
 - Trimming
 - Binding
 - Perforations
 - Die Cuts
 - Glued Edges
 - Padding
 - ✓ Packaging (both unit of issue packaging and carton packaging)
 - ✓ Path to the electronic artwork file
 - ✓ Vendor information (including vendor name, address, phone, fax, email, contact name)
 - Electronic Forms:
 - ✓ Form Number
 - ✓ Edition Date
 - Source file location (path) for artwork
 - Name of software product with which form was designed
 - ✓ Server path (or intranet/extranet location of Print-on-Demand file)
 - ✓ Path to logo file used on this form
 - **Samples** – A complete set of samples of every edition of this form since inception (fastened to the right side of the file folder). Superseded samples should be marked (and retained) to avoid accidental reproduction.
 - **Notes Regarding Pending Changes** – (Fastened to the right side of the file folder – on top of samples) Includes changes to text, layout design, media / specifications, distribution / deployment, restrictions, etc. These notes may, of course, be included in a special field in the database where appropriate.