

Section 3: Acronyms

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Acronyms are a concise way to reference agencies, organizations, associations, commissions, and other commonly used words that appear repeatedly in a manuscript or publication. However, it is easy to get carried away; rather than enhancing comprehension, acronym-heavy text can be confusing to your readers. The guidelines listed here will help you decide in which instances your readers are better served by an acronym.

1. Spell out the acronym or abbreviation on first use and follow with the acronym in parentheses to prepare your readers for subsequent use. If the acronym is parenthetically introduced in the abstract, it must be introduced again in the text.
2. For large publications, if an acronym appears fewer than five times in a publication, it should be spelled out each time it is used. An exception to this rule is made for news releases; acronyms can be used without restrictions after first introduction.
3. Be sure to use the correct acronym. It is important to keep acronyms standard between divisional publications to increase their recognition factor, and conform to defined abbreviations. Agencies, businesses, corporations, etc., have defined their own abbreviations or acronyms; under no circumstances is it correct to modify that abbreviation in any way. In other words, upper and lowercase letters, periods, and symbols are used exactly as the agency or business uses them. It is almost always appropriate to define these abbreviations on first use.
4. Do not use acronyms for subsequent references if they appear far later than the initially spelled-out instance. How far is too far? Would readers who are unfamiliar with the topic understand the acronym if they came upon it after the first reference?
5. Avoid alphabet soup. It is more often confusing than impressive. Rewrite copy peppered with acronyms.
6. Generally, do not put *the* preceding an acronym when it is standing alone. Acronyms are read as words and, except when used adjectivally, are rarely preceded by *a*, *an*, or *the* (CMS 2003).

Use: New restrictions were announced by ADF&G last year.

Avoid: The ADF&G announced the new restrictions.

Use: Member nations of NATO enhanced their counter-piracy mission.

Initialisms are read as a series of letters and are often preceded by an article.

Use: Member nations of the EU [initialism]

Depending on your audience, particularly if it is scientific, removing periods from most general abbreviations is a recognized standard (e.g., NOAA, VFDA). Once an acronym or abbreviation is established, follow that form exactly throughout the document.

3.1 Pluralizing Acronyms

When an acronym denotes a plural (if its spelled-out meaning is plural), the fact that it is an acronym makes it a word in its own right and therefore it is treated as if it were singular.

Acronyms without periods are pluralized by adding an *s*. Although periods in abbreviations should be limited as much as possible, they are sometimes needed to prevent misreading. To create a plural abbreviation, omit the apostrophe when there are no periods in an abbreviation (MDs), but use it when an abbreviation has periods or internal capitalization (Ph.D.'s).

If the abbreviation without periods forms a word that has another meaning and adding *s* alone would create confusion, use an apostrophe and *s* for the plural. An apostrophe and *s* is also used for the possessive.

Use:	c.o.d.	Avoid:	cod
Use:	c.o.d.'s	Avoid:	cods or cod's
Use:	CWTs	Avoid:	CWT's (unless it is possessive)
Use:	URLs	Avoid:	URL's (unless it is possessive)
Use:	ATVs	Avoid:	ATV's (unless it is possessive)

3.2 Agencies, Organizations, Associations, and Commissions

a. ADF&G divisions and sections

Alaska Board of Fisheries	BOF
Alaska Board of Game	BOG
Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund	AKSSF
Big Game Commercial Services Board (replaced the Guide Board)	BGCSB
Boards Support Section (formerly the Division of Boards)	BSS
Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission	CFEC
Commissioner's Office	CO
Division of Commercial Fisheries	CF
Division of Administrative Services	DAS ¹
Division of Habitat	Habitat
Division of Sport Fish	SF
Division of Subsistence	Subsistence ¹
Division of Wildlife Conservation (formerly the Division of Game)	DWC or Wildlife Conservation ¹
Fisheries Rehabilitation, Enhancement and Development Division	FRED ²
Joint Board of Fisheries and Game	Joint Boards
Kachemak Bay Research Reserve	KBRR
Public Communications Section	PCS

b. State of Alaska

Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development	DCCED
Alaska Department of Corrections	DOC
Alaska Department of Education and Early Development	DEED
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation	DEC
Alaska Department of Fish and Game	ADF&G ³
Alaska Department of Health and Social Services	DHSS
• Division of Public Health	DPH
Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development	DOLWD
Alaska Department of Law	DOL
Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs	DMVA
Alaska Department of Natural Resources	DNR
• Division of Forestry	DOF
Alaska Department of Public Safety	DPS
• Division of Alaska Wildlife Troopers	AWT
Alaska Department of Revenue	DOR
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities	DOT&PF
Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation	APFC
Alaska Public Offices Commission	APOC
Office of Management and Budget	OMB
University of Alaska Anchorage	UAA
• Institute of Social and Economic Research	ISER–UAA
University of Alaska Fairbanks	UAF
• Institute of Arctic Biology	IAB–UAF
• Institute of Marine Science	IMS–UAF
• School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences	SFOS–UAF
University of Alaska Southeast	UAS

c. U.S./Federal

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies	AFWA
Bureau of Indian Affairs	BIA
Bureau of Land Management	BLM
• National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska	NPR-A
Code of Federal Regulations	CFR
Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act	FIFRA
• Special Local Need	SLN
Federal On-Scene Coordinator	FOSC
National Environmental Policy Act	NEPA
National Marine Fisheries Service	NMFS
• Restricted Access Management Division	RAM
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	NOAA
National Park Service	NPS
North Pacific Research Board	NPRB
Pacific Salmon Commission	PSC
United States	U.S.
United States of America	USA
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	COE
U.S. Department of Agriculture	USDA
• Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service	APHIS
• Food Safety and Inspection Service	FSIS
U.S. Department of Commerce	DOC
U.S. Department of Defense	DOD
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	USDHHS
• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	CDC
• Division of Global Migration and Quarantine	DGMQ

U.S. Department of Homeland Security	USDHS
U.S. Department of the Interior	DOI
• Customs and Border Protection	CBP
U.S. Department of Transportation	USDOT
• Federal Aviation Administration	FAA
• Maritime Division	MARAD
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	EPA
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	USFWS
• Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge	AMNWR
• Arctic National Wildlife Refuge	ANWR
• Fisheries Information System	FIS
• Office of Subsistence Management	OSM
• Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge	YFNWR
U.S. Forest Service	USFS
U.S. Geological Survey	USGS
• Biological Resources Discipline	BRD
U.S. National Park Service	NPS
• Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve	GAAR
U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration	OSHA
• Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response	HAZWOPER
U.S. Public Health Service	USPHS

d. Other agencies, organizations, associations, and commissions

Ahtna Regional Corporation	Spell out
Alaska Aquaculture, Inc.	AAI
Alaska Coastal Management Program	ACMP
Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission	Spell out
Alaska Federation of Natives	AFN
Alaska Invasive Species Working Group	AISWG
Alaska Native Foundation (The)	Spell out
Alaska Outdoor Council	AOC
Alaska Professional Hunters Association	APHA
Alaska Public Employees Association	APEA
Alaska Rodent Action Team	ARAT
Alaska Rural Development Council	Spell out
Alaska Sea Life Center	ASLC
Alaska Sea Otter Commission (The)	Spell out
Alaskan Shellfish Grower's Association	ASGA
Alaska State Employees Association	ASEA
Alaska Trappers Association	ATA
Alaska Village Initiatives	Spell out
Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center	AWCC
Aleut Regional Corporation	Spell out
Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association	Spell out
American Fisheries Society	AFS
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation	ASRC
Armstrong-Keta, Inc.	AKI
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies	AFWA
Association of Village Council Presidents	AVCP
Bering Sea Fishermen's Association	BSFA
Bering Straits Regional Corporation	Spell out
Bethel Native Corporation	Spell out
Bristol Bay Native Association	BBNA
Bristol Bay Native Corporation	BBNC
Burro Creek Farms	BCF
Calista Regional Corporation	Spell out

Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans	DFO
Central Council—Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska	Spell out
Chignik Regional Aquaculture Association	CRAA
Chugach Regional Corporation	Spell out
Chugachmiut	Spell out
Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association	CIAA
Cook Inlet Regional, Inc.	CIRI
Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy	CWCS
Copper River Native Association	Spell out
Council for Yukon First Nations	CYFN or (First Nations) ⁴
Dingell–Johnson	D–J
Doyon Regional Corporation	Spell out
Douglas Island Pink and Chum, Inc.	DIPAC
Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trust Council	EVOSTC
Eskimo Walrus Commission	Spell out
Hunter Heritage Foundation of Alaska	HHFA
Independent Science Advisory Board	ISAB
Indigenous People’s Council for Marine Mammals	Spell out
International Bowhunter Education Program	IBEP
International Pacific Halibut Commission	IPHC
Inuit Circumpolar Conference	ICC
Joint Technical Committee	JTC
Kake Nonprofit Fisheries Corporation	KNFC
Kawerak, Inc.	Spell out
Ketchikan Tribal Hatchery Corporation	KTHC
Klawock River Hatchery, Inc.	KRHI
Kodiak Area Native Association	Spell out
Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association	KRAA
Koniag Regional Corporation	Spell out
Kuskokwim Native Association	Spell out
Maniilaq Association	Spell out
Marine Mammal Commission	MMC
Medvejie Creek Hatchery	Spell out
Metlakatla Indian Community	MIC
NANA Regional Corporation, Inc.	Spell out
National Academy of Sciences	NAS
National Science Foundation	NSF
Nongovernmental organization	NGO
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission	NPAFC
North Pacific Fishery Management Council	NPFMC
Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association	NSRAA
Public Broadcasting System	PBS
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission	PSMFC
Port Graham Hatchery Corporation	PGHC
Prince of Wales Hatchery Association	POWHA
Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation	PWSAC
Qutekcak Shellfish Hatchery	Spell out
Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc.	RurAL CAP
Sealaska Regional Corporation	Spell out
Sitka Sound Science Center	SSSC
Sikusuilq Hatchery	Spell out
Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium	SEARHC
Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association	SSRAA
Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc.	TCC
The Nature Conservancy	TNC
Trans-Alaska Pipeline System	TAPS

Tlingit and Haida Fisheries Development Corporation	THFDC
United Nations	UN
Valdez Fisheries Development Association	VFDA
Vuntut Gwich'in First Nation	VGFN
Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies	WAFWA
World Wildlife Fund	WWF
Yukon Department of Environment	YDE
Yukon–Kuskokwim Health Corporation	YKHC
Yukon Territorial Government	YTG

Note: For a list of village councils and corporations not listed in this section, contact Rural CAP, 731 E 8th Avenue, PO Box 200908, Anchorage, AK 99520; phone 907-279-2511. Their Rural Directory can be purchased or accessed online.

- ¹ No official abbreviation, but short form is acceptable for informal use.
- ² Now merged into other divisions.
- ³ Do not delete the ampersand (&) from ADF&G, as it is an integral part of our agency abbreviation. Manuscripts submitted for publication outside the department should also use ADF&G (most editors do not know the correct abbreviation and will assume you do).
- ⁴ Following the signing of the Umbrella Final Agreement, Council for Yukon Indians (CYI) became CYFN.

3.3 Alaska Caribou Herds

The words *caribou* and *herd* are not capitalized.

Use:	Nelchina herd	Delta and Fortymile herds	Teshkepuk caribou herd
	Adak caribou herd		Spell out
	Beaver Mountains caribou herd		Spell out
	Central Arctic caribou herd		CAH
	Chisana caribou herd		CCH
	Delta caribou herd		DCH
	Denali caribou herd		Spell out
	Farewell–Big River caribou herd		Spell out
	Fortymile caribou herd		FCH
	Fox River caribou herd		FRCH
	Galena Mountain caribou herd		GMH
	Hodzana caribou herd		HCH
	Kenai Lowlands caribou herd		KLCH
	Kenai Mountains caribou herd		KMCH
	Killey River caribou herd		KRCH
	Kilbuck caribou herd		KCH
	Macomb caribou herd		MACH
	Mentasta caribou herd		MECH
	Mulchatna caribou herd		MCH
	Nelchina caribou herd		NCH
	Northern Alaska Peninsula caribou herd		NAP
	Nushagak Peninsula caribou herd		NPCH
	Porcupine caribou herd		PCH
	Rainy Pass caribou herd		Spell out
	Ray Mountains caribou herd		RMH
	Southern Alaska Peninsula caribou herd		SAP
	Sunshine Mountains caribou herd		Spell out
	Teshkepuk caribou herd		TCH

Tonzona caribou herd	TOH
Twin Lakes caribou herd	TLCH
Unimak caribou herd	UCH
Western Arctic caribou herd	WAH
White Mountains caribou herd	Spell out
Wolf Mountain caribou herd	Spell out

3.4 Miscellaneous Abbreviations and Acronyms

All of the following miscellaneous abbreviations and acronyms except those with a footnote should be spelled out in full on first use, and followed by the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses. In many cases, it may be better to avoid using the abbreviation, especially if the word is infrequently used in the document.

Above Ground Level, or above ground level	AGL
Advisory Committee (state)	AC
age-weight-length (adj)	AWL
Alaska Family Leave Act	AFLA
Alaska Juneau Mine	AJ Mine
Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act ¹	ANILCA ¹
Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act	ANCSA ¹
Alaska Subsistence Salmon Database	ASSDB
amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence	ANS
approved leave without pay	ALWOP
Arctic–Yukon–Kuskokwim	AYK
as soon as possible	ASAP
bacterial kidney disease	BKD
biological escapement goal	BEG
brood year	BY
capital improvement project	CIP
capture–mark–resight	CMR
carapace width/length	CW/CL
catch per unit effort	CPUE
Clean Water Act	CWA
coded wire tag	CWT
Community Development Quota	CDQ
compare	cf.
compass directions (maps and coordinates):	
• east	E ¹
• north	N ¹
• south	S ¹
• west	W ¹
Community Subsistence Information System	CSIS
Comprehensive Conservation Plan	CCP
Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act	CERCLA
controlled use area	CUA
cub(s) of the year	COY
customary and traditional	C&T (use finding, by board)
days of week (first three letters in tables, figures, or parenthetical use only, no period; otherwise spell out)	Sun, Mon, etc.
defense of life or property	DLP
Deoxyribonucleic acid	DNA ¹
Doctor of Philosophy degree	Ph.D. ¹

emergency order	EO
Endangered Species Act	ESA
Environmental Assessment	EA
Environmental Impact Statement	EIS
Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action	EEO/AA
essential fish habitat	EFH
et alii (and others)	et al. ¹
et cetera (and so forth)	etc. ¹
Evolutionarily Significant Unit	ESU
Exclusive Economic Zone	EEZ
exempli gratia (for example)	e.g., ¹
<i>Exxon Valdez</i> oil spill	EVOS
Federal Family and Medical Leave Act	FMLA
federal fiscal year	FFY
field purchase order	FPO
file transfer protocol (Internet)	FTP
fiscal year (State of Alaska FY10 is from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010)	FY
fishery management plan	FMP
fish resource permit	FRP
fish transport permit	FTP
fork length	FL
free on board (do not spell out)	FOB or f.o.b. ¹
Game Management Unit	GMU
general fund	GF
geographic information system	GIS
Geospatial Population Estimator	GSPE
Global Positioning System	GPS
Great Circle Route	GCR
Guide Use Area	GUA
Gulf of Alaska	GOA
guideline harvest level	GHL
harvest per unit effort	HPUE
Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points	HACCP
hypertext markup language	HTML
id est (that is)	i.e., ¹
Individual Fishing Quota	IFQ
individual transfer quota	ITQ
infectious hematopoietic necrosis virus	IHNV
International Health Regulation	IHR
Integrated Pest Management	IPM
International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources	IUCN
joint venture	JV
latitude/longitude	lat/long ¹
leave without pay	LWOP
local area network	LAN
local ecological knowledge	LEK
Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act	Magnuson–Stevens Act ²
Marine Mammal Protection Act	MMPA
Matanuska Valley/Matanuska-Susitna Borough/region	Do not abbreviate to Mat-Su
maximum sustained yield	MSY
memorandum of agreement	MOA
memorandum of understanding	MOU
merit anniversary date	MAD
months (first 3 letters in tables, figures only, otherwise spell out)	Feb, Jun, etc., no period
National Environmental Protection Act	NEPA
news release	NR

not interested	NI
notice of violation	NOV
number	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for general audiences • for technical audiences 	no.
optical character recognition	nr
optical mark recognition	OCR
Pacific Fisheries Information Network	OMR
Pacific Salmon Treaty	PacFIN
Pittman-Robertson	PST
point of sale	P-R
portable document format	POS
position control number	PDF
Position Description	PCN
purchase request	PD
regional planning team	PR
regulatory year (e.g., July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 is RY09)	RPT
Shipwreck Response Plan	RY
Shipping Safety partnership	SRP
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement	SSP
Regional Advisory Committee (federal)	SEIS
Reimbursable Services Agreement	RAC
Retirement Incentive Program	RSA
river kilometer	RIP
river mile	RKM
sex (tables, figures, and crosses only—otherwise spell out)	RM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • male • female 	♂ ♀
Social Security number	SSN
special harvest area/terminal harvest area	SHA/THA
Statewide Harvest Survey	SWHS
Subsistence Halibut Registration Certificate	SHARC
sustainable escapement goal	SEG
time of day	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ante meridiem • post meridiem 	AM/a.m. ³ PM/p.m. ³
Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan	TLMP
total length	TL
traditional ecological knowledge	TEK
travel authorization	TA
viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus	VHSV
Wallop-Breaux	W-B
Wildlife Analysis Area	WAA
wide area network	WAN
World War I	WWI
World War II	WWII
World Wide Web	www
young-of-year	YOY

¹ Because this acronym is commonly used and widely recognized, it may be used as is on first reference with no introduction.

² Magnuson-Stevens Act is a shortened version of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. We expect it will be abbreviated sometime soon.

³ For more information, see Section 8.4 Time of Day.