



B.C. Government Internet Standards and Guidelines

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Client Services
Online Channel Office
Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services
Province of British Columbia

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About the B.C. Government Internet Standards and Guidelines

This document provides standards, guidelines and best practices for the design and development of B.C. government websites. In this case, “standards” refers to mandatory elements or processes; “guidelines” are non-mandatory, general methods to obtain intended results; and “best practices” are non-mandatory suggestions gleaned from research, feedback, and experience.

- Generally speaking, standards contain the word “must”, or will be stated definitively (for example: “The standard file format for audio files is MP3.” or “Ministries are responsible for...”).
- Guidelines and best practices offer recommendations using words like “may” or “should”. Standards and guidelines appear together in the relevant section.

This document replaces all previous versions of the Internet Standards.

It contains standards, guidelines and best practices for navigation, screen layout, data elements, and should be used as a companion to:

- the [Communication Standards for the B.C. Government Internet](#), which include the B.C. Government’s Identity Program (the BC ID Graphic Standards Guide).
- the B.C. Government Web Templates and Documentation (available by contacting the [Online Channel Office Helpdesk](#)).

Why are standards needed?

Web development standards bring benefits to both government and citizens or end users. For government, standards eliminate the cost of developing new layouts or graphics as more services and content are added. Internet standards also make it simpler for web coordinators to reuse content across websites or transfer program areas between ministries.

For citizens, standardized site design means a common user experience across one or many websites, which allows predictable features and greater ease of use. When standards are implemented the site maintains its usability over time, is easier to adapt to changing technologies and will be simpler to migrate as designs change.

The Province currently has a number of diverse websites that need to be channeled into a seamless, cohesive web presence. These standards will help enable the transformation into a common user interface and common end-user experience for all B.C. Government websites.

Definitions

- In this document, “ministries” means all organizations that are required to follow the standards as defined in the section “Who must follow the standards?”
- “Website” is a cohesive group of web pages that delivers information or a service with a specific, identifiable focus.
- “E-service” is a transactional web application that delivers a business function for a government program. One program may have many e-services. One web application may deliver one or many e-services.
- “PAB” is the Public Affairs Bureau, responsible for leading and coordinating communications with internal and external stakeholders. PAB is responsible for the B.C. Government’s Visual Identity Program (BC ID) and the look and feel of government websites and online services.

- “OCO” is the Online Channel Office in the Service BC Division of the Ministry of Labour and Citizens’ Services. OCO is responsible for ensuring citizens and business have access to government’s online information and services, and for providing the technical support for the government’s online presence.

Who must follow the standards?

The *B.C. Government Internet Standards and Guidelines* apply to all government websites and e-services that are accessible by the public over the Internet.

All B.C. provincial ministries and organizations that have a direct reporting structure to a Deputy Minister must follow the standards and guidelines. If you are unsure of your organization’s requirement to follow the standards, please contact the Public Affairs Bureau Online Communications Unit.

Exemptions to the B.C. Government Internet Standards may be considered if there is a valid business reason. The process for applying for exemptions is available from the Public Affairs Bureau.

Common services, such as the credit card payment service, search engine, and government authentication service, will also follow the standards where their screens are visible to the public.

When must the new standards be followed?

Both informational websites and e-services will follow these standards, and the same templates can be used to achieve this. E-services will have additional components, such as a “Logoff” button that would not apply to information pages, and are provided as part of the template package.

E-services must comply with the standards unless granted an exemption through the formal exemption process mentioned above.

E-services that don’t comply with the standards, and where an exception has not been granted, may be required to comply. In such cases, ministries will be expected to bear the cost of retrofitting e-service applications to comply with the standards.

How will the new standards be implemented?

New websites and e-services, or those that are undergoing significant modification, must be developed with the 2006 Internet templates.

Please note: it will not be possible to **automatically** apply the new “look and feel” to existing pages. Pages will need to be re-created, and ministries should plan accordingly.

The OCO will provide and maintain a set of templates, which will be used for both informational and e-service pages. These templates will be available from OCO. The OCO will manage all template changes and version control.

1 Governance

Standard 1.1 Governance framework

The Online Channel Office has implemented several working groups in order to ensure partnership with the ministries in the management of online standards and corporate services in support of its mandate.

The Public Affairs Bureau is the business owner of these standards, and is responsible for the business needs relating to accessing government information and services.

Current working groups include:

- search
- web analytics and reporting
- standards and guidelines

Each committee provides input and approval of related standards. Additional committees will be struck at any time as appropriate to support government online priorities.

The recommendations of the committees are approved by PAB and implemented by OCO. Where there is some potential conflict or issue in these recommendations, the OCO is responsible to escalate these to the Executive Director of OCO who will escalate to other levels of management / government as necessary.

Standard 1.2 Notification of new services and websites

All new e-services must be approved by the Public Affairs Bureau.

The ministry should also notify OCO of significant changes and/or new sites so they can be included in the government search engine index.

2 Communication Standards for the B.C. Government

Communication standards for the B.C. government are posted to the government Intranet at: http://gwww.fin.gov.bc.ca/comm_policy/PAB_Internet_Standards/

These standards include:

- Using the BC Mark
- Approved Banners
- Naming the Website
- Writing **for** the Web
- Writing **about** the Web
- Content Approvals
- Communications Plan
- Use of Photographs and Other Graphics
- Links to Sites Outside the B.C. Government
- Advertising
- Online Surveys
- Non-English Web Pages

3 Security Standards

Standard 3.1 Security

Ministry information systems directors are responsible for security of data and information residing on their servers.

The Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services, Workplace Technology Services, is responsible for the enterprise security gateway, and the security of content that it hosts.

Standard 3.2 Securing non-production servers

Non-production servers must be secured to prevent unauthorized access by B.C. government employees or the public. It is not adequate to simply use an "orphan" URL. The following techniques are also recommended to prevent search engines from spidering non-production web content:

- a) test and development content should reside in environments that require user ID / password for read access.
- b) block "hidden" directories with a *robots.txt* file
- c) request that non-production content be explicitly filtered out by the search engine's administrator. The process for this is found at <http://intranet.gov.bc.ca/oco/services/search.htm>

Standard 3.3 B.C. Government user IDs and passwords

It is the objective of the B.C. Government that a member of the public (whether a business or a person) will be able to obtain a single B.C. Government User ID and password for use in all ministries' password-protected websites and e-services.

The Chief Information Office will be responsible for government-wide policies regarding the use of B.C. Government User IDs, passwords, and other access features for the public.

Standard 3.4 Fees and payments over the web

Existing government policies and/or approval process for collection of revenue apply to Internet sites and e-services.

New fee and amended fee proposals must be reviewed by Treasury Board staff.

References:

[Core Policy Chapter 7.3.2 on Fees & Licences](#)

[Core Policy Chapter 7.3.8 Credit and Debit cards for the collection of revenue](#)

All payments received over the web must employ the application program interfaces provided by the Provincial Treasury, and must comply with all policy directives and standards issued by the Provincial Treasury regarding [web payments](#).

4 Technology standards

Standard 4.1 HTML 4.01

Government web pages will be developed using the HTML 4.01 standard that is described on the website of the World Wide Web Consortium at <http://www.w3.org/TR/html401/>

HTML techniques which are not part of the W3C standard and which are implemented for specific web browsers only will not be used in government web pages.

Standard 4.2 XHTML/XML

Compliance and compatibility of XHTML/XML standards are being reviewed. Please contact OCO if you would like to use these technologies on your website.

Standard 4.3 Scripting

For standard web pages no additional scripting is required. The templates do provide additional functionality using javascript where necessary. The pages will function if the client does not have javascript turned on, although some features may not be available. If you require other scripts for your website or have questions regarding the current scripts please contact OCO.

Standard 4.4 Browser compatibility

Government web pages must be compatible with Microsoft Internet Explorer version 6 and higher (IE 6+) on Windows 2000 and XP. Additional development and testing may be done to expand compatibility to other browsers (such as Firefox) as long as it does not impact IE6+ compatibility.

Standard 4.5 Screen compatibility

Pages must be optimized for a screen resolution of 800 x 600 pixels and sizeable in a browser window

Standard 4.6 No beta software

The government's websites and e-service applications must be "production sites". Testing of web-based applications and features must occur on separate controlled-access test sites. Ministries may not present beta applications or pages to the general public.

Standard 4.7 Error messages

Whenever possible, informative and useful error handling should be available. Useful error messages are those that are displayed when the page or service is unable to perform the expected task:

- explicitly state that something has gone wrong (not just return to the home page),
- provide a meaningful, concise description of what went wrong in plain language, without “blaming” the user,
- provide a course of action to correct the situation.

On data entry pages, it is acceptable to place an error icon with verbiage to indicate an error that relates to a particular field. This indicator should be large enough to be easily noticed. Avoid using colour-only indicators, such as turning a field label a different colour on error.

See Section 9.5 for examples on data entry pages.

Standard 4.8 Logfiles

Ensure that traffic to your websites is being logged in an appropriate server logfile. Since logfiles may quickly take considerable disk space, it is recommended that the file be periodically burned to another appropriate backup device. Archived logfiles must be stored according to Records Management rules.

Standard 4.9 Analyzing web traffic and activity

Web analytics are encouraged for many purposes such as determining the usefulness of your pages, analyzing content organization, and ensuring that there is no unauthorized access to parts of your site.

Counters on web pages are not permitted.

Usage statistics for e-service applications should be included in the system design, and should monitor system usage, performance statistics, and transaction volumes by transaction type.

Ministries should ensure that statistics are being logged and reviewed for all sites, including those hosted on non-government servers.

The Online Channel Office provides a Web Analytics and Reporting service and manages the Web Analytics and Reporting group. The analytics group supports consistent website usage reporting. Information about this service and working group are found on the OCO intranet (<http://intranet.gov.bc.ca/oco/>)

Standard 4.10 Optimization of graphics and photos

Graphics and photos should be appropriately resized (e.g. not with Microsoft Word) and optimized for speed of loading, using optimization routines available with web authoring tools. GIFs should be in “89A” format with transparent backgrounds. JPEGs should be used for near-photo quality and to support graphics with gradients.

It is recommended that contracts which include website graphic development clearly state that the original graphic (such as “.psd” / photoshop files), in addition to the final jpeg or gif used on the website, are required deliverables. All text within the graphic, especially ministry and/or branch names, must be placed on unique layers within the original file.

Standard 4.11 Meta tags

There are several html tags that are used in the header of your html pages to provide other software with information about the page.

The following meta tag standards are set to ensure a common and standard use on the most important of these tags.

The “description” tag

All web pages will include a meaningful description metatag. Generally, 200 to 250 characters are all that is stored by any search engine, though only a smaller portion of this amount may be displayed as a description with search results.

The “keywords” tag

Uniqueness is most important: do not use generic terms that are relevant to multiple program areas or all government (such as “Province of B.C.”).

Use single keywords and some two-word phrases. Longer keyword phrases will almost never be searched.

Add metadata keywords to the entry pages of each program or sub-site, not to every page. From the entry page, customers can be guided to the most appropriate content.

Do not add the same keywords to every page.

Standard 4.12

Tagging PDF, PowerPoint, Word and Excel documents

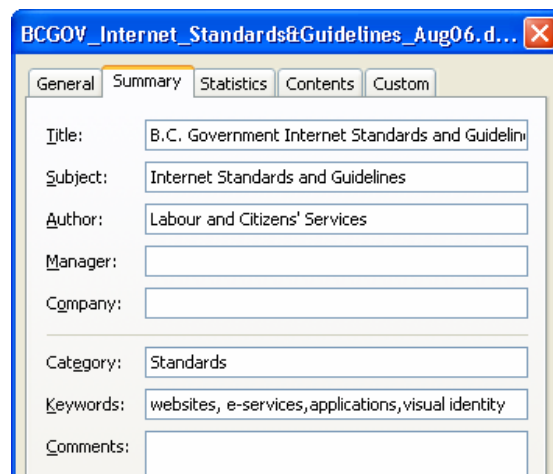
To ensure search engines display an accurate summary of all documents posted to the website, including PDF, PowerPoint, Word and Excel files, it is **mandatory to complete** the Title and Subject fields of the document properties. Instructions for PDF and Word files are detailed below:

PDF files

From the FILE menu, select DOCUMENT PROPERTIES. In the Document Summary dialog box, fill in the Title, Subject and Author fields with the information you want to appear on the public website.

Word files

From the FILE menu, select PROPERTIES. In the Properties dialog box, click on the Summary tab. Fill in the Title and Subject fields with the information you want to appear on the public website.



The image shows a screenshot of a software dialog box titled "BCGOV_Internet_Standards&Guidelines_Aug06.d...". The dialog has several tabs: "General", "Summary", "Statistics", "Contents", and "Custom". The "Summary" tab is selected. It contains several text input fields with the following values:

- Title: B.C. Government Internet Standards and Guidelines
- Subject: Internet Standards and Guidelines
- Author: Labour and Citizens' Services
- Manager: (empty)
- Company: (empty)
- Category: Standards
- Keywords: websites, e-services, applications, visual identity
- Comments: (empty)

Standard 4.13 Title tags

Every web page must have a unique, meaningful, descriptive title in the <TITLE> field. The title should identify the contents of the document in a global context.

A short title, such as "Introduction" may be meaningless out of context. A title such as "Introduction to the 2006 B.C. Provincial Budget" is more appropriate. The length of a title is not limited; however, long titles may be truncated in some applications and/or browsers.

To minimize the impact of the truncation the most descriptive portion of the titles should appear in the first 64 characters.

An example of a good format is:

```
<title>Page Title - Ministry/program - Province of B. C.</title>
```

The html title tags are used in several ways: to display a title in the browser window, to weight the page within a search engine; and to provide meaningful information to someone using a screen reader. It is important to provide the most specific information at the beginning of the page title, as most browsers will cut off the window title after 256 characters.

Standard 4.14 ALternative attribute (ALT tags)

All government web pages must be navigable and provide a coherent experience for sighted and non-sighted people. To ensure this, complete the ALT attribute of images, area and input fields.

In most cases this will also help the search engine ranking of your page.

When developing textual alternatives, be brief, clear and provide contextual descriptions. Do not tag "spacer.gif" which only will serve to display the layout of your site. Instead, the alternate text should be the empty string ("").

Alternative text, in most browsers (excluding Firefox for instance) is also used as hover text.

ALT text must use appropriate Canadian Press style. For example: capitalize awards, honours and decorations such as "Governor General's Awards", but use lowercase for common-noun references such as "the order, the prize."

You can order your own Canadian Press Stylebook at <http://www.cp.org> or reference PAB's editing hit list at http://gww.fin.gov.bc.ca/comm_policy/PAB_Internet_Standards/PDFs/editing_hit_list.pdf

Standard 4.15 Format of documents intended to be downloaded by the public


PDF (Portable Document Format) will be used for downloadable documents that are not intended to be altered by the public. This includes official government documents such as annual reports. These files will be opened in a new browser window which is set to be smaller than the current window.

If downloadable documents are expected to be modified by the public, they may be provided in other formats (such as Microsoft Excel or rtf). Best practices discourage assuming that end users are equipped with additional programs such as the Microsoft Office suite.

All files greater than 2 megabytes in size should be split into several documents to facilitate easier downloads by people on lower speed network connections.

It is acceptable not to split large files, if splitting them will make them unusable, such as with GIS maps.

The size and approximate download time of large files should be clearly indicated to the user ("approximate download time on a modem will be 2 hours").

All downloadable files will be identified with a recognizable file type symbol (). The size of downloadable files will be displayed beside the link.

Standard 4.16 Frames

Frames cause inconsistent browser behaviour that negatively impacts user experience. For instance, browser controls for "back" and "print" do not behave as expected.

Unless bundled with a third-party e-service (for example, Peoplesoft) frames are not allowed on B.C. government websites. Please note 'Standard 4.18 - Accessibility' must still be met if frames are used in third-party e-service applications.

Standard 4.17 Emerging media: including RSS, podcasting, flash, streaming video

Standards for using emerging technologies on the government website are being developed in consultation with the Chief Information Office, Public Affairs Bureau and the Online Channel Office.

For more information, please see

http://gww.fin.gov.bc.ca/comm_policy/PAB_Internet_Standards/new_technologies.htm#video

Standard 4.18 No incomplete or "under construction" pages

Websites must not contain pages that are incomplete, e.g. a header and nothing else, or a link to a page that contains no information.

Web pages shall not contain phrases such as "under construction" or "in progress". Material that is under construction is only permitted on the ministry's internal development and test sites.

"Coming soon" announcements will be permitted if the new item is planned for implementation within one week. In these cases, the date on which the new material will be available must be clearly displayed. If the release date has passed, the page must be removed; ministries may not keep extending the release date.

Standard 4.19 Testing and quality assurance

Every e-service and web page must be tested before being installed on a production website. Testing must be completed in a separate environment, mirroring the production environment (i.e. the same operating system, server software, database management system, and coded pages).

In situations where stakeholders outside government will test e-service applications, the selected and named testers must have controlled access to the test application through individual passwords and possibly other methods of control.

Testing must ensure:

- compliance with these and any other applicable standards
- content is accessible on at least Internet Explorer version 6 browser
- content is correct
- spelling is correct
- there are no broken links
- security compliance
- compliance with the HTML 4.01 standard by validating the HTML code through the World Wide Web Consortium's HTML 4.01 validator at <http://validator.w3.org/>
- compliance with standards for accessibility as identified in Standard 4.18 - Accessibility
- readability when using the standard-level browsers (Internet Explorer 6.0 and above)
- completion of the formal testing and validation process for Internet payment interfaces, if applicable, as required by the Provincial Treasury.

Standard 4.20 Accessibility

While it is not yet mandatory to comply with formal Web Accessibility Guidelines, it is recommended to comply with Priority 1 and 2 checkpoints. This will ensure broad accessibility to web content and e-services by both conventional browsers and assistive devices.

Please see w3.org for a [tabular summary of checkpoints](http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/full-checklist.html) (<http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/full-checklist.html>) or a [simple list of checkpoints](http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/checkpoint-list.html) (<http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/checkpoint-list.html>).

For web content, and external files such as PDFs, ministries are responsible for ensuring compliance or providing an alternative means of access, such as a telephone number or e-mail contact.

5 Legal clauses

Standard 5.1 Copyright and intellectual property clauses

The copyright notice on all material appearing on government websites must state that the copyright belongs to the Government of British Columbia. This requirement will be met where the standard web page footer is used, which links to a standard Copyright page maintained by the Online Channel Office. The link to the standard Copyright page is <http://www.gov.bc.ca/com/copyright.html>.

If a website presents material or computer applications where the copyright or intellectual property is not owned by the B.C. Government, the owner and appropriate copyright notice must be identified on the website. This requirement would be met where the standard web page footer is used, and the Copyright link is associated with a site-specific Copyright or Intellectual Property page (i.e. not the standard B.C. Government Copyright page).

Standard 5.2 Standard disclaimer, privacy and accessibility clauses

Web content, including e-service pages, must link to the B.C. Government standard disclaimer, privacy and accessibility clauses maintained by the Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services. This requirement will be met where the standard web page footer is used, which links to standard pages maintained by the Online Channel Office. These standard links are:

- Disclaimer <http://www.gov.bc.ca/com/disclaim.html>
- Privacy <http://www.gov.bc.ca/com/priv.html>
- Accessibility <http://www.gov.bc.ca/com/accessibility.html>

6 Links to Other Sites

Standard 6.1 No links to intranet or extranet

Links from Internet sites to Intranet or Extranet sites must not be available to the public, unless authorized by the ministry's information systems director or ministry Chief Information Officer.

Standard 6.2 Links to sites outside the B.C. Government

A B.C. Government website or e-service may contain links to the websites of:

- a semi-autonomous agency of the B.C. Government (e.g. Crown Corporations)
- other Canadian provincial governments including Crown Corporations
- the Canadian federal government including federal Crown Corporations

Any exceptions to this must be approved by the ministry Communications Director.

7 Other standards for content on the website

Standard 7.1 No naming web authors or developers

No government website may display a reference, link, credit or other information related to the individuals or companies who have authored or developed a web page or e-service. For example, a web page may not contain a link to a résumé, photograph, brochure or similar information about a named government employee or contractor who developed a web page or e-service application.

Individuals and companies may be mentioned in intellectual property clauses. See the standards in the “Legal clauses” chapter above.

References to individual authors or developers who create and maintain e-service source code may be included in the source code for documentation purposes.

Standard 7.2 Naming individuals and use of model release forms

Reference to named individuals is permitted where the individual is already known as a public resource (for example, a minister, the privacy commissioner, or the ombudsperson) and when direct contact with the public is expected in the fulfillment of their role.

Photos of individuals cannot be used unless a model release form has been signed. Model release forms are available from the Public Affairs Bureau.

Contacts for the public to gain further information or communications, to obtain help in using e-services, or to provide feedback to the ministry regarding specific issues, must be addressed to a job title or a generic e-mail address, e.g. Webmanager@xxxxx or Communications@xxxxxx

8 Screen layout

Standard 8.1 Standard layouts

The standard layout for information and e-service web pages is provided in the templates package. The following features are included, but may not apply to every page:

- Number of columns
- Banners and headers
- Use of graphics and logos
- Navigation features
- Link Behavior
- Buttons
- Mandatory fields
- Fonts
- Colour schemes
- Display area for “logged on” users (applicable to e-services)
- Provisions for future related content areas

Standard 8.2 E-service components

The information about a logged on user must display in the area just below the header (see *templates for the standard layout*), with a “Logoff” icon. The format of the user information is:

First name Last name, [User ID and business name if applicable]

If a user must provide an ID and password for the e-service, be consistent with the language used, for example, use “login” / “logoff” or “login” / “logout”

There is also an “Exit this e-service” element for the bottom of the left nav. “Exit this e-service” should not close the last browser window the user has open. If the user is involved in a transaction, a warning and cancel (return to e-service) option should be provided.

9 Field types

Standard 9.1 Radio buttons


Radio buttons are used where the given choices are mutually exclusive, i.e. the user may only select one choice.

If the choice is significant, such as a choice that determines legal liability, none of the radio buttons should be selected by default, i.e. the user should be required to make a conscious choice. Here is an example¹:

* Is this a national development?

Yes No

Simple choices such as “yes / no” can be presented as a row or column of radio buttons. However, if the choices contain more explanatory text within each choice, as shown in the “Future Effective Date” choices below, the choices should be clearly indicated with an [a], [b] style of numbering and the word OR placed prominently between the choices:

Effective Date 

Please indicate whether your Development Permit will become effective when filed, or on a future date. If in the future, please enter an effective date and time below.

[a] Effective when filed

OR

[b] Future effective date and time:

a.m. p.m. Pacific Time

¹ A red asterisk identifies a mandatory field, please see standard 9.4 for details.

Standard 9.2 Check boxes

Check boxes are used when the user is allowed to select more than one of the given choices. For example:

* Please choose one or more of the following legal descriptors:

<input type="checkbox"/> Regional development	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental exemption
<input type="checkbox"/> Rural development	<input type="checkbox"/> Underwater exemption

Standard 9.3 Placement of field labels

As shown in the examples below, field labels may be placed

- above the data entry field, OR
- left-aligned, at the left of the data entry field, OR
- right-aligned, at the left of the data entry field.

The field labels must be followed by a colon.

The placement of field labels must be consistent on all of the screens within an e-service.

Field labels above the data entry field:

First name:	Second name:
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Field labels left-aligned, at the left of the data entry field:

First name:	<input type="text"/>
Second name:	<input type="text"/>

Field labels right-aligned, at the left of the data entry field:

First name:	<input type="text"/>
Second name:	<input type="text"/>

Standard 9.4 Mandatory fields

Mandatory fields will be indicated with a red asterisk preceding the field label, as illustrated in the two examples below:

Part #1 - Register

For this registrant complete the following information.

* First name:	<input type="text"/>
* Last name:	<input type="text"/>
Position / Title:	<input type="text"/>


Standard 9.5 How to display error messages in data entry fields

A page that contains error messages should display the words “See Errors Below” in the page heading area. Error messages can appear in red below the fields in error.

If used, the error message should be preceded by a standard error icon (a circle containing an “X”).


An error message may include a link to “More” which could invoke a context-sensitive Help window, or link to a specific error page.

Address - See Errors Below

Developer's Address 

Please enter the Developer's mailing address. Use all capital letters with no punctuation.

* Address Line 1: Address Line 2:

 **You must enter at least one address line.** [More >>](#)

Address Line 3: Address Line 4:

* City: Province/State:

* Country: * Postal/Zip Code: (e.g. V8V 8V8)

An error message should not simply tell the user that the data is in error. It should tell the user what he must do to correct the error, e.g. “The Effective Date must be a future date”.

Standard 9.6 Tab controls


Tab controls may be used on e-service screens as illustrated. These tab controls must be in one of 3 states: enabled and selected (blue), enabled but not selected (dark grey), and disabled / not available (light grey).

Address

Development No. Cranbrook 345E

The Company's Address and Spouse's Address are optional.

Developer's Address | Company's Address | Spouse's Address

Please enter the Developer's mailing address. Use all capital letters with no punctuation. 

* Address Line 1: Address Line 2:

Address Line 3: Address Line 4:

* City: Province/State:

* Country: * Postal/Zip Code: (e.g. V8V 8V8)

10 Standard formats for common data types

Standard 10.1 Show the format in the field label

For common data types, show the required format in the field label if space permits. Use "eg." or "e.g." followed by an example:

Date of birth (e.g. Jan. 5, 1957):

Time (e.g. 6:16 p.m.):

Amount (e.g. \$35000.00):

Postal Code (e.g. V6A 3V6):

Phone (e.g. 604 555-6666):

Fax (e.g. 604 555-8888):

E-mail address (e.g. John.Doe@home.com)

Standard 10.2 Date

Standard format for data entry

The standard format for date fields is shown below. Drop-down lists are used because they reduce data entry errors.

- The month drop-down list will have 3 or 4-character months where the first character is capitalized.
- The day drop-down list will have the number of days in the given month (30 or 31) and 29 for February.
- The year drop-down list should have 10 years, or a number of years that makes sense in the context of the e-service.

Variation

Drop-down lists for years may not be appropriate where there is a wide range of years (e.g. birth dates). Therefore a text field may be used for the year, as shown below, but include an indication of how many digits are required, if necessary:

Date of birth (eg. Jan 5 1957):	Feb	12	1964
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Calendar icon

The user will also be able to enter dates by clicking on a calendar.



Standard formats for display

Dates may be displayed in the following formats on public web pages:

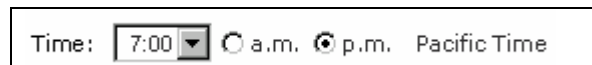
Date Type	Format	Example	Usage
Long alphanumeric	month dd, yyyy	February 7, 2007	Preferred
Short alphanumeric	mmm dd, yyyy	Feb. 7, 2007	Acceptable where space is limited
Numeric	yyyy mm dd	2007 07 23	For display of numeric lists

Standard 10.3 Time

Preferred format

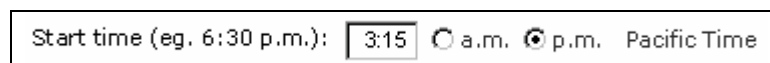
The preferred format for time fields is shown below. A drop-down list and radio buttons are used because they reduce data entry errors. The time drop-down list will have hours 1:00 through 12:00, all with minutes "00". The a.m. and p.m. indicators are required for the 12-hour clock.

If the web application decides the time zone, it should be displayed as "Pacific Time" or "PT". If the user is allowed to decide the time zone, it should be a drop-down box that defaults to "Pacific Time" or "PT".



Time: 7:00 a.m. p.m. Pacific Time

If the user is allowed to enter minutes other than "00", the following format may be used:

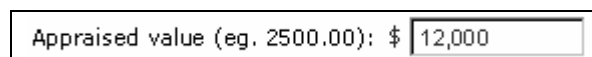


Start time (eg. 6:30 p.m.): 3:15 a.m. p.m. Pacific Time

Standard 10.4 Dollar amounts

Standard format

The standard format for dollar amount fields is shown below. The field should allow the user to enter the amount with or without commas. Amounts must be displayed with commas. If the user enters an amount without decimal fields, the cents will be assumed to be ".00".



Appraised value (eg. 2500.00): \$ 12,000

Variation

If the user is allowed to enter different currencies, the dollar sign may be omitted and a "Currency" drop-down box may follow the amount field.

Standard 10.5 Telephone and fax numbers

Standard format

The standard formats for telephone and fax numbers are shown below. Minor variations of these layouts are permitted to fit within the space on the screen, e.g. the word "Extension" may be abbreviated as "Ext.". The user should be allowed to enter the 7-digit phone number with or without the dash.

(eg. 604 555-6666)			
Area code and phone number:	<input type="text" value="250"/>	<input type="text" value="444-9999"/>	Ext. <input type="text" value="234"/>
Area code and fax number:	<input type="text" value="250"/>	<input type="text" value="555-7777"/>	

Variation

If only British Columbia area codes are allowed, the area code field may be a drop-down box containing "250" and "604".

Standard 10.6 Addresses

Addressing standard

The B.C. Government's preferred standard for entry and display of addresses will be the [Mailing and Delivery Address Data Standards](#) written by Canada Post.

Standard format for simple addresses

In some cases it may be necessary, especially for simple web forms, to use a simpler standard. This standard will be the following:

The standard address format will consist of:

- 4 address lines *first address line is mandatory*
- city *mandatory*
- province or state *drop-down list; default to B.C.*
- postal or zip code *mandatory if restricted to Canada and U.S.; optional otherwise*
- country *mandatory*

The fields may be arranged vertically with one field per line, or with more than one field per line as shown in the example.

Please enter the Developer's mailing address. Use all capital letters with no punctuation.			
* Address Line 1:	<input type="text" value="678 E FAIRVIEW ST"/>	Address Line 2:	<input type="text"/>
Address Line 3:	<input type="text"/>	Address Line 4:	<input type="text"/>
* City:	<input type="text" value="CRANBROOK"/>	Province/State:	<input type="text" value="BC"/>
* Country:	<input type="text" value="CANADA"/>	* Postal/Zip Code:	<input type="text" value="V8V 8V8"/> (e.g. V8V 8V8)

Standard 10.7 Personal names

Standard fields

The standard name will consist of the fields:

- Surname
- First name
- Middle name - optional.

Ministries may choose to implement the standard field lengths used by the Ministry of Health to register newborn infants. Surname has a maximum length of 35 characters. The first name, second name and third name each have a maximum length of 15 characters.

Variations

If required by the e-service, the name may have the following fields:

- Surname
- First name
- Second name
- Third name

OR

- Surname
- First name
- Second name or initial.

Standard 10.8 Declarative statements

Where the user is required to confirm or declare something, use a checkbox with a declarative statement that refers to the person's identification information entered elsewhere on the form.

The box must **not** be checked by default.

Please check the box below to confirm the following statement:

- I, the Completing Party shown above, have examined the Certificates and they appear to have been originally signed by each of the persons designated as incorporators in the Notice of Incorporation.