GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING CORRESPONDENCE FOR EXECUTIVE SIGNATURE

Executive Office
(DRAFT)

4/1/2011

1.0 SUBJECT TITLE: Instructions for Preparing Correspondence for Executive Signature

1.1 EFFECTIVE DATE:

1.2 TYPE OF ACTION:

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2.0 PURPOSE:
2.1 To provide guidelines for the timely preparation of correspondence for Executive signature, ensuring that:
   • all written communication will be prepared consistently and in accordance with accepted business writing standards; and
   • original correspondence is properly addressed and mailed and the required copies are made, distributed, and filed.
2.2 To convey a favorable impression of King County through the writing of concise and well-planned communications.

3.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED:
3.1 Applicable to all King County departments.

4.0 REFERENCES:
4.1 King County Editorial Style Manual: http://www.metrokc.gov/exec/styleguide/
4.2 The Gregg Reference Manual, by William A. Sabin. (As of this printing 10th Edition is current)
4.3 Spelling/Hyphenation Dictionary
4.4 Roget's International or 21st Century Thesaurus
4.5 The Elements of Style, by Strunk and White
4.6 The Oxford American Dictionary, Heald Colleges Edition

5.0 DEFINITIONS:
5.1 Correspondence refers to written communications including, but not limited to: letters, memorandums, reports, policies and procedures, and handwritten notes.
5.2 Letters are formal means of communicating with the public, outside agencies, or other elected officials of King County such as the Assessor, the County Council, the Prosecuting Attorney, or the judges.
5.3 Memorandums are the usual form the Executive uses to communicate within the executive branch of county government. Memorandums are not appropriate for writing to people outside the executive branch of King County government.
5.4 Reports provide an in-depth analysis of problems, issues, and projects. Transmittal letters generally go with reports.
5.5 Policies and procedures are official statements and directives issued by the County Executive to the county departments. Predetermined formats are used.
5.6 "Author" refers to the person who prepared the correspondence.

6.0 POLICIES:
6.1 Written communications will be prepared following accepted business writing standards.
6.2 The thoughts to be conveyed by correspondence will be thoroughly analyzed and logically organized before the final document is prepared.
   6.2.1 Accuracy is essential. Proofread carefully.
   6.2.2 An impression of professional competence should be conveyed.
   6.2.3 The tone should convey warmth, empathy, and a willingness to help.
   6.2.4 Proper grammar, formatting, and spelling are required.
   6.2.5 Always use the simplest, clearest form of expression.
6.2.6 Unless otherwise required, the beginning paragraph should thank the addressee for the letter, the report date of the incoming letter (if available), and summarize the addressee’s letter.

6.2.7 Provide enough background information that those receiving copies of the response can understand the issue.

6.3 When correspondence is prepared for the Executive’s signature, a referral to the appropriate person (including his or her title, department, and phone number) who is available to answer questions should be in the letter. As a rule, when responding to an elected official, the Executive will answer questions directly.

6.4 Correspondence addressed to the Executive must receive immediate attention and result in a prompt response.

6.4.1 Responses must be returned to the Executive Office by the assigned due date.

6.4.2 If a timely response is impossible, a standard written or oral interim response must be given. State something similar to: “A detailed response is being prepared and will be sent by (specific date).” When the final response will be prepared for Executive signature, a written interim for Executive signature will be sent, unless otherwise noted. (See Appendix 9.1.A)

6.5 The appropriate department—not the Executive—will answer correspondence that is addressed to the Executive but requires a technical response.

6.5.1 Follow these procedures when a technical response is required.

6.5.1.1 It is the department’s responsibility to determine if a technical response is required.

6.5.1.2 If a technical response is required, the department will prepare the interim response for Executive signature (include a copy of the incoming letter).

6.5.1.3 When an interim response is required for a technical response, the following elements must be included. (See Section 9.1.B, Interim Form Letter—fill in the blanks):

- **Standard Opening:** “Thank you for your letter of (complete date), expressing your concerns about _______” (briefly summarize the addressee’s letter).

- **Referral:** “Because of the technical nature of your (concern, question, complaint, and so on), I have asked (Department Director’s name), Director of the Department of (department), to review your (complaint, situation, and so on) and respond to you directly. Meanwhile, if you have any questions, I encourage you to contact (Mr. or Ms. Department Director) at 206-xxx-xxxx.”

- **Redress:** “If after getting the response from (Mr. or Ms. Department Director), you still have questions or concerns, please let me know.”

- **Closing:** “Thank you for taking the time to write and for bringing this important matter to my attention.” or “Thank you again for writing. I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your concerns”

6.5.1.4 The department will prepare the technical response.

- The department’s response must deal with all the constituent’s concerns.

- The department’s response will be prepared on the department’s letterhead.
Executive Office
Effective Date: 04/01/2011

6.5.1.5 The department’s response will include a “cc” to the Executive. When you send the copy (cc) to the Executive, attach a copy of the incoming letter plus the tracking form.

6.6 Executive correspondence that is likely to be used more than once (such as a form letter response) or mailed to more than one addressee (for example, a response to a community issue) will be prepared in draft form to be approved by the Executive before the final responses are prepared.

- Include a sample of the incoming letters, if one is available.
- The draft and incoming letter may be faxed or e-mailed to the Executive Office.
- The Executive Office will provide written or oral approval for the final printing of the responses.

6.7 Official communications must be printed on appropriate letterhead.

6.8 The forms of written communication, as considered appropriate, may include letters, memorandums, reports, policies and procedures, and handwritten notes as defined in Section 5.0.

6.9 “King County Executive” is Dow Constantine’s official title. The words “Executive Constantine” or “the Executive” may be used when an earlier reference has been made to the “King County Executive.”

7.0 PROCEDURES:

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<td>7.1.1 Left alignment, standard punctuation, single-spaced with double space between paragraphs.</td>
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<td>7.1.2 Prepare a double-spaced draft response for the Executive’s approval only if the letter is complicated, sensitive, likely to be used more than once (such as a form letter response), or mailed to more than one addressee.</td>
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<td>7.1.3 All other letters should be prepared in final form for the Executive’s signature.</td>
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<td>7.1.4 All Executive correspondence will use the following typographic style:</td>
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<td>Font Size: 12 point</td>
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<td>7.1.5 Left and right margins must be 1.12 inches each on correspondence submitted to the Executive’s Office. This is a practical consideration to ensure that the left margin aligns with the logo on the Executive Office’s printed letterhead— you can use a standard 1” margin when using electronic letterhead or when it better fits other printed letterhead. Do not make the margins smaller to fit the letter onto one page.</td>
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<td>7.1.6 Use the appropriate letterhead with matching bond paper for second and additional pages.</td>
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<td>7.1.7 Proofread the letters carefully.</td>
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DATE

Writer/Word Processor 7.2. Type the date three lines below the letterhead, flush with the left margin. (With a 1" top margin, this is typically nine line spaces.)

7.2.1 The date can be typed two lines below the letterhead, flush with the right margin, if this will allow correspondence to fit onto one page. (Only use this format when the page will not look too crowded.)

7.2.2 Future-date the letter, allowing three working days from the date the response reaches the Executive Office—which should be on the assigned due date.

7.2.3 The date of the letter must logically correspond with any dates referenced in the body of the letter. For example, do not mention a September 12 meeting in the future tense if the letter is dated September 12 or later.

PERSONAL OR CONFIDENTIAL NOTATION

Writer/Word Processor 7.3. If needed, please type the notation two lines below the date using all uppercase letters.

INSIDE ADDRESS

Writer/Word Processor 7.4 Type three lines below the date (or more if the letter is very short).

7.4.1 Do not use the titles Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Miss before personal names on the inside address line. For example, the inside address for Ms. Jane W. Scott would be typed as follows:

Jane W. Scott
Northwest Society of Certified Public Accountants
1234 - 321st Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98123-4567

7.4.2 Use "The Honorable" as an honorific title in all correspondence to elected officials and foreign dignitaries. The only other honorific title we use is The Reverend, for an ordained minister.

7.4.3 Include addressee's title and organization, if known.

7.4.4 Abbreviate street directions (N., NE, E., S., SW, W.) and state names (WA, OR, CA).

7.4.5 Include the correct ZIP code. If available, include the ZIP+four code (for example, Renton, WA 98055-9086). Leave two spaces between the state abbreviation and the zip code.

7.4.6 Copy the firm's name exactly as it appears on the incoming letter. This is the company logo, so if an ampersand (&) is used on the letterhead, it should be used in the letter also.

7.4.7 If the incoming letter's letterhead shows both street address and the Post Office Box, type both (but each on a separate
line). Include the room number, suite, or building name if available.

7.4.8 Proofread the inside address carefully—mistakes often occur here, such as number transposition and incorrect ZIP code.

**REFERENCE LINE**

*Do not* use a reference line.

**SALUTATION**

Type the salutation two lines below the inside address. Follow the salutation with a colon. (See Appendix 9.1.D)

7.6.1 Abbreviate only the titles *Mr.*, *Ms.*, *Mrs.*, and *Dr.* All other titles, such as *Professor*, should be written out.

7.6.2 Follow the commonly used forms of salutation described in *The Gregg Reference Manual* (sections 1346-1361).

- If the addressee has a gender-neutral name like Chris, Lee, or Pat, and you do not know the person’s gender, do not use a courtesy title (for example, *Mr.*, or *Ms.*). Instead, use the person’s full name in such instances.

  For example: Chris West (gender unknown)

  Incorrect: Dear *Mr.* West; 
  Correct: Dear *Chris* West;

7.6.3 People who use initials in place of their first and middle names (for example, *R.B. Smith* or *M. Brown*), should be addressed as follows (unless you also know their full names): 

  Dear R.B. Smith; Dear M. Brown

7.6.4 Do not refer to the addressee by first name only, unless the addressee is a child under 13 years old.

7.6.5 Address elected officials as in the following examples:

*The Honorable Christine Gregoire*  
*Governor, State of Washington*  
*Legislative Building, M/S 40002*  
*Olympia, WA 98504*

  Dear *Governor Locke*:

  *The Honorable Larry Gossett*  
  *Chair, Metropolitan King County Council*  
  *Room 1200*  
  *C O U R T H O U S E*  

  Dear *Councilmember Gossett*:

7.6.6 If two or more people live at the same address and write individual letters on the same subject, address only one letter to both or all of them. Be sure to deal with all issues or concerns identified in both letters.
If a letter is addressed to two or more people at the same address (other than private citizens), list each name on a separate line. The inside address should reflect how the individuals who wrote signed their original letter:

For example:
Paul J. Rogers, M.D.
Jane D. Adams, Chief Financial Officer
Michael Moore, Accountant
ABC Boating Company
700 NE 87th Street
Seattle, WA 98125-0700

Dear Dr. Rogers, Ms. Adams, and Mr. Moore:

- Print as many originals as there are names listed in the inside address for the Executive's signature. (For three names, print three originals.)
- On the respective envelopes for each individual, give the full address for that individual, and omit all reference to others named in the inside address.

When three or more people sign their name to one letter and do not provide individual addresses, as in an informal petition, prepare only one letter and address it to only one person—the spokesperson (when identified). Be sure to acknowledge, however, that there were others interested in the matter, and welcome the spokesperson to share the response with them. If a spokesperson is not named, address the response to the person who is listed on the return address. When in doubt, call the Executive Correspondence Manager for guidance.

When one person sends a letter and includes a formal petition, with petitioners' names and addresses, prepare individual letters for each person listed on the petition.

OPENING PARAGRAPH

The subject of the letter must be mentioned in the opening paragraph of the letter.

The following format will be used for the opening to all executive correspondence, unless otherwise noted: "Thank you for your letter of (complete date), and briefly summarize the addressee's letter." For example:

"Thank you for your letter of March 23, 1994, telling me of the overgrowth of grass and weeds along Northwest ABC Street in White Center."

If there is no date on the incoming letter say, "Thank you for your recent letter..." and briefly summarize the addressee's letter. (Of course, if the response is not recent, delete the word "recent" from the sentence.)

When responding after having sent an interim letter, use the following for the opening sentence: "Thank you again
for your letter of (complete date)...
and briefly summarize the addressee’s letter.

7.7.4 If the letter is written for the Executive, for the opening sentence use “King County Executive Dow Constantine has asked me to respond to your letter of (complete date)...” and briefly summarize addressee’s letter. Show a “cc” to the Executive. Be sure to include a copy of the incoming letter plus a copy of the tracking form with the cc to the Executive.

7.7.5 When the incoming letter is a copy of correspondence addressed to someone outside King County government (for example, Senator Murray), use this opening sentence: “Thank you for sending me a copy of your (complete date) correspondence to _________ (dignitary, Mayor, Judge, and so on)...” and briefly summarize the addressee’s concerns.

7.7.6 The opening sentence must clearly say what the letter is about. Instead of saying “regarding” or “concerning,” say “opposing, supporting, informing, expressing your disappointment, recommending, and so on.” The words “regarding” and “concerning” should not be used in the opening sentence of executive responses.

7.7.7 If the prepared response is late, place an apology statement after the opening sentence. Use this wording: “I apologize for the delay in responding.” (As a rule, use this phrase if it has been three or more weeks since the incoming letter was received.)

7.7.8 Place the apology statement after the opening sentence and follow it with a new paragraph.

**BODY**

**PUNCTUATION/Grammar**

- Punctuation and grammar should be correct.
- Capitalize the words “City” or “County” when referring to a specific city or King County. Lowercase “federal” and “state” when referring to federal and state governments.
- For the sake of consistency, always insert a comma after the year date in the opening sentence.

For example:
Incorrect: “Thank you for your letter of January 29, 1994 opposing the elimination of...”
Correct: “Thank you for your letter of January 29, 1994, opposing the elimination of...”

**COMMA & SEMICOLON RULES**

- Include a comma at the end of a phrase that identifies the title and department following the name of a staff person. (This is not necessary if such information ends a sentence). For example:
“Please call Harold Taniguchi, Director of the Department of Transportation, at 206-684-1481.”

- Check comma and semicolon rules in *The Gregg Reference Manual*. Some reminders are:
  - Insert a comma before the word “and” or “or” in a series;
  - Do not insert a comma between phrases when there is no grammatical reason to do so; and
  - Use a semicolon before and a comma after the word “however” when it separates two independent clauses (each with a subject and a verb).
- Always place periods and commas inside the closing quotation mark. Semicolons and colons always go outside the closing quotation mark.
- Pay attention to subject/verb agreement.

7.8.2 HYphenation rules

- Keep hyphenation to a minimum. As a rule, there should be no more than two hyphens in a paragraph.

7.8.3 word Groups

- Try to keep together certain kinds of word groups that need to be read together. For example:
  - Do not separate the day from the month at the end of a typed line.
    Correct: “The staff meeting will be held September 15, 1994.”
    Incorrect: “The staff meeting will be held September 15, 1994.”

- Do not separate titles (Mr., Ms., or Dr.) from the name at the end of a typed line.
  Incorrect: “Meanwhile, I suggest you contact Mr. Fox at 206-296-5555.”
  Correct: “Meanwhile, I suggest you contact Mr. Fox at 206-296-5555.”

7.8.4 Numbers

- When using numbers in a letter, use the following guidelines:
  - Spell out numbers from one through ten (10); use figures for numbers above 10.
In isolated cases, spell out a number above 10 to de-emphasize the number or make it seem indefinite. For example: "I have a hundred things to do today."

Spell out numbers that begin a sentence. For example: "Eleven (not 11) children wore hats."

**DATES**

- These rules apply to dates in sentences:
  - When the day precedes the month or stands alone, express it either in ordinal figures (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and so on.) or in ordinal words (the first, the twelfth, the twenty-eighth).
  - When the day follows the month, use a cardinal figure (1, 2, 3, and so on.) to express it. For example: "The application is due March 6." (NOT: March 6th or March sixth). Express complete dates in month-day-year sequence. Spell out the entire month, do not abbreviate it.
  - Do not use a comma when just the month and year are used.
    
    Incorrect: March, 1994
    
    Correct: March 1994

**PHONE NUMBERS**

- Include area codes. This is especially important since the number of area codes in our region keeps growing.
  
  Phone numbers should be formatted like this: 206-296-4057.

**FORMAT**

- Use left alignment. Do not right align or justify the text.
- Left and right margins must be 1.12 inch each.
- The date in the opening sentence must reflect the exact date of the incoming letter (not the date received). If the letter is received much later than (weeks or months) than the date on the incoming letter, it is appropriate to mention when the letter was received.
- If there is no date, say "Thank you for your recent letter..."
- Leave at least a two-line margin (about ¾ inch) from the printed address at the bottom of the letterhead.
- Use short paragraphs with clear and concise sentences. As a rule, paragraphs should not be longer than four sentences.
- When referring a constituent to sources of assistance, make the reference within the body of the letter, not in the closing paragraph. It is preferable for the referral to be made in the paragraph before the closing: "If you have any specific questions..."
about (subject of letter), \textit{I encourage you to contact} (name of appropriate staff and title), \textit{at} (phone number)."

- \textit{“Please feel free to contact”} or \textit{“I encourage you to contact”} are preferred phrases for referring constituents to sources of assistance in King County.

- Letters to elected officials or other important officials should usually offer further personal assistance from the Executive. For example, \textit{“After getting your letter, I discussed this matter with \underline{staff person} and I have asked him/her to \underline{activity}. If there is more I can do to personally assist you, please let me know.”}

\textbf{STYLE}

- Use words economically to get your point across. Use a direct and concise writing style.

- Use the word \textit{"I"} instead of \textit{“we”} if the Executive can take personal responsibility for the statement. However, do not overuse the word \textit{“I.”}

- Do not use contractions (for example, \textit{we’ve, I’ll, that’s.})

- Be specific and to the point. In particular, \textbf{answer directly the questions and concerns presented in the incoming letter.} If data is technical or involved, it may be appropriate to have a departmental response prepared in addition to a courtesy response from the Executive. In other cases, it may be appropriate to enclose a "report" that is referenced in the letter. The report can be attributed to staff and formatted with bullet points, numbers, graphs and so on to convey the information.

- When using acronyms, follow these guidelines:
  - Do not use acronyms without first writing out the full name. For example, use \textit{“Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention (DAJD).}” Then you may use the acronym throughout the body of the letter.
  - Do not overuse acronyms. Use a combination of both acronyms and full names.
  - Consider the cc list to be a starting-over point; do not use acronyms in the cc list unless you have first spelled out the full name within the cc list itself.

- For situations in which King County has no jurisdiction or responsibility, promise some kind of county action, such as forwarding a copy of the incoming letter. Be sure to include within the body of the reply letter the name, title, address, and phone number for the person to whom you are forwarding a copy of the incoming letter.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item Be sure to say, \textit{“I have forwarded a copy of your letter to...”} rather than \textit{“I have forwarded your letter to...”}
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Letter Preparer  7.11  **TONE**

- Do not write in technical jargon or “bureaucratese.” Respond to the constituent’s concern in lay terms and with phrases that convey a personal response from the Executive: “I understand... I agree...” or “I sincerely regret....”
- Be aware of the tone of the letter. The Executive’s response should convey:
  * empathy
  * understanding
  * concern
  * respect
  * interest
  * cooperation

Adopt a conversational tone.

Writer/Word Processor  7.12  **CLOSING PARAGRAPH**

The closing sentence(s) should be separate from body of the letter.

7.12.1  *Do not* refer assistance in the closing paragraph. If you need to refer a constituent to sources of assistance, do so in the body of the letter. (See Section 7.9)

7.12.2  The closing paragraph should contain at least two sentences. For example: “Thank you for bringing this important matter to my attention. If you have more questions or concerns, please contact me again.”

7.12.3  When the County Executive is writing to an elected official, use the following sentence for the closing: “If you have any further questions or concerns about (subject of letter), please feel free to contact me, at 206-263-9625, or contact (appropriate County staff), at 206-296-xccc.”

Writer/Word Processor  7.13  **COMPLIMENTARY CLOSING**

Type two lines below the body of the letter, flush to the left margin. Always use a comma after the closing.

7.13.1  In the complimentary closing use only the word “Sincerely.”

7.13.2  Drop four line spaces before typing the Executive’s name (three lines spaces are acceptable if crowded). Type the Executive’s title one line below the typed name.

The Executive’s signature block should appear as follows:

*Sincerely,*

*Dow Constantine*

*King County Executive* (Capitalize only the first letter of each word)
REFERENCE INITIALS

Do not use reference initials on a finished letter. If it is necessary to use these on a draft, they should be typed two lines below the complimentary closing. Please be aware that they may be removed on the final printed document if revisions need more space.

- Identify only the signer (CAPS) and the word processor (lowercase).

WORD PROCESSING/DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION CODE

Do not use these codes on finished letters. If used on a draft, type either on the same line as the reference initials or on one line below. Again, they may be removed from the final document if more space is needed.

- An 8-point italicized font is preferred. For example: corres797.
- Do not include the correspondent's name as part of the code.

ENCLOSURE NOTATION

Type "Enclosure(s)" two lines below the reference initials or word processing code, whichever comes last. (Type one line below if it will allow the letter to fit on one page.)

- The number of enclosures can be shown in parentheses. For example: Enclosures (2). If there is only one enclosure, the number is not necessary.
- When submitting enclosures write "Enclosure" on a post-it note and place it on the specific enclosure(s) in the correspondence folder to distinguish it for mailing.

MAILING NOTATION

Use only when necessary.

- Type two lines below the enclosure notation, using all capital letters.
- Type one line below the notation, if it will allow the letter to fit on one page. For example:
  
  RS:ch

  Enclosures (2)

  SPECIAL DELIVERY, REGISTERED, OR HAND DELIVERED

COURTESY COPY NOTATION

This is the last designation used in correspondence and should be typed two lines below the reference initials, enclosure notation, or mailing
For the copy notation: type *cc*, tab once, and type the name. (See Appendix 9.1.D)

- When the "cc" continues onto the next line, tab once, space four times, and finish typing the line. For example:

  \textit{cc: [TAB] Greg Kipp, Director, Department of [TAB] "Development and Environmental Services}

Keep the "cc" list to a minimum. If necessary, use the blind copy notation, "bcc." (It is not necessary to send the "bcc" list to the Executive Office. The originating department must keep a copy of the "bcc" list.)

Only list as receiving copies the individuals by full name, title, and organization who are directly interested in, affected by, or mentioned in the letter.

The Attention Line should be used only for Council notations.

For the attention line \textit{(ATTN)} tab twice, abbreviate, capitalize, and underline \textit{“ATTN:”}, space twice, and type the person's name. If there is a second line, tab three times, space twice, and type name.

For example:

\textit{cc: [TAB]} Metropolitan King County Councilmembers [TAB][TAB] \textit{ATTN: Tom Bristow, Chief of Staff [TAB][TAB]} Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

The following order is to be used for copy recipients:

- Elected officials: when copying all County Councilmembers, also show copies to the Council’s Chief of Staff and Clerk.

- For letters written for the County Executive, list \textit{“Dow Constantine, King County Executive”} as the first copy recipient.

- Offices outside county government.

- Offices inside county government in order of importance to the subject.

As a rule: when there are three or more county staff referenced in a letter, only show a copy to the department director or to the staff person identified in the letter.

If the constituent requests that a copy be sent to someone (for example, \textit{Mayor McGinn}), place that individual's name on the "cc" list. However, if the constituent "cc's" several people, there is no need to "cc" them also. Do not show a copy to them unless it is relevant to the response.
SECOND PAGE HEADING

It is preferable to print the second page of a letter on bond-quality paper that is comparable to that of the letterhead used.

7.19.1 At least two lines of text must appear on the second page in addition to the complimentary closing.

7.19.2 The second page heading will be about three lines (1/2 inch) from the top of the page and flush to the left margin.

7.19.3 On separate lines type the addressee's name, the date of the letter, and the page number (use numerals). Be sure the date used in the headers matches the date on the first page of the letter.

7.19.4 Use honorific titles (The Honorable, The Reverend, and so on.) with the addressee's name, when appropriate. If you have questions about what is appropriate, check your reference guides. All elected officials should be addressed as "The Honorable..."

7.19.5 Leave two lines between the page heading and the text.

MEMORANDUM

FORMAT

If correspondence is to be answered with a memorandum format (only for corresponding within the Executive Branch), use the following memo elements:

- Left alignment, standard punctuation, single-spaced with two lines between paragraphs. Do not right justify the text.
- Follow guidelines for letter format if any more elements are needed that are not listed below.

STATIONERY

Use appropriate letterhead.

MEMORANDUM HEADING

- Set the left margin for one inch.
- Place the date about two to three lines below the letterhead logo.
- Four lines below the date, type TO:
- Two lines below TO: type VIA: (if used).
- Two lines below TO: (or VIA: if used) type FM:
- Two lines below FM: type RE: and underline the subject.

BODY

Three or four lines below the "RE" line begin typing the message.
REFERENCE INITIALS
Type two lines below the body of the memo, flush with the left margin.

ATTACHMENT NOTATION
Type two lines below the reference initials.

COPY NOTATION
Type two lines below the enclosure notation.

TRANSMITTAL LETTERS FOR MOTIONS/ORDINANCES
Transmittal letters that go with motions and ordinances will be prepared according to the Executive Correspondence guidelines.

7.21.1 Also, the following must be done for transmittal letters:

- Always date the letter for a Friday, two weeks from the date of preparation. (See Appendix 9.1.H)
- Address the letter to the chair of the King County Council.
- When listing people who will get a copy of the letter (cc:), the councilmembers and associated staff must always be listed first:
  King County Councilmembers
  ATTN: Tom Bristow, Chief of Staff
  Anne Norwich, Clerk of the Council

- Transmittal letters that go with ordinances about grants or finances must also show a copy (cc:) to the Director of the Office of Budget.

7.21.2 After the motion/ordinance has been sent to the Clerk of the Council, the division that originated the legislation will get a copy of the signed transmittal letter, with the time and date of transmittal stamped on it.

7.21.3 After the department gets its copy, department staff will make all necessary copies (one copy for each Councilmember plus any others listed) and distribute them at once.

- Copies for the councilmembers should be hand delivered directly to the 12th floor of the courthouse.

CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING
Executive correspondence is tracked through the following process:

7.23.1 Correspondence Stamp/Label

- All incoming correspondence is stamped with the imprint that appears below.
- Assignments are made by an Executive Office staff member, based on the subject matter.
- If assignments are incorrect, reassign the response to another department and tell the Executive Office immediately.
7.23.1.1 The meaning of each heading is as follows:

- **Received**: The date the correspondence is received by the Executive Office.
- **To**: The department that is assigned to respond to the correspondence. A request to coordinate the response with another department may also be included, but the “lead” department will be responsible for starting the coordination.
- **Due Date**: The date the response is due to the Executive Office. This date will usually be seven working days from the date received by the Executive Office.
- **Author**: The person(s) who signed the incoming correspondence.
- **Subject**: A brief reference to the subject of the correspondence.
- **Response for Executive Signature**: If checked, the response is to be prepared for Executive signature.
- **Respond for Executive**: If checked, the correspondence is assigned for a director’s signature.
- **Review By**: If a name or department appears, the response is to be reviewed by that person/department before signature.
- **FYI**: If checked or circled, a copy of the incoming correspondence was sent for informational purposes only.

7.23.1.2 After assignment is made:

- The incoming correspondence with the stamp imprint is copied.
- The original is kept in the Executive Office.
- The copy is distributed to the appropriate department usually by the close of the business day it is received.

*This is necessary in order for the Executive to honor his pledge that he is and will continue to be a responsive and accessible King County Executive.*
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING/APPROVAL FORM

See Appendix 9.2 for a sample tracking/approval form. The form is designed to simplify communication between the Executive Office and departments about actions taken on incoming correspondence.

- The department director or his/her designee must initial every tracking form.

- Attach a tracking form to all letters assigned by the Executive Office. Immediately complete upper portion through “Coordinate with.”

- Enter the date the correspondence was received in the Executive Office (see the first line of the assignment stamp), not the date the correspondence is received by the department. This date will be used for tracking purposes. The “Date Letter Received” must match the date stamped on the incoming correspondence by the Executive Office.

7.23.2.1 The tracking form must go with the correspondence throughout the entire process and thereby serve as a complete tracking/approval record.

7.23.2.2 It is not necessary to use the tracking form for correspondence initiated by the departments. If you choose not to use it, please attach a note and include the following information:

- Author/Subject
- Originating department
- Director or designee’s signature for approval
- Any instructions or comments for Executive

7.23.2.3 The upper portion of the form requires information from the correspondence stamp imprint. (See Section 7.23.1)

7.23.2.4 When more than one incoming letter is assigned to a tracking form (for example, when several letters are received about a community issue such as the Marymoor Park off-leash dog area), the department must do the following:

- Either print all the authors’ names on the tracking form or print “see list” on the form and attach a list of the authors’ names to the tracking form.

- It is acceptable to include a manageable number (approx. 10) of letters to one tracking form (if the subject matter for letters is the same or similar). Use your best judgment or call the correspondence manager for guidance.

- Prepare a mailing list. The mailing list will have the name and address of each individual letter received and the date each letter was received in the Executive Office. (See Appendix 9.3) You may find it easiest to use your merge data source or labels as your mailing list.
7.23.2.5 The meaning and instructions on completing the remaining headings are as follows:

- **Interim Response Given**: If an interim response is given, indicate whether it was written or oral and provide the date of the interim response.
  - After Executive signature, one copy of the tracking form will be removed to update the mail log, and the remaining copies will be returned to the department with the response for further processing.
  - If the interim response is given orally or in writing directly by the department, a tracking form (use only one copy), with the upper portion completed showing a new due date, will be sent to the Executive Office for use in updating the mail log.

- **New Date Due**: If the due date cannot be met, prepare an interim response and record a new due date. Remember to tell the correspondence manager of the new due date.

- **Date Completed**: The date the response is sent to the Executive Office. This date is entered by the department as the last action before forwarding to the Executive Office.

- **Reassign to/Date**: Complete this area when the original assignment is inappropriate and needs to be changed.
  - Tell the Executive Office of the reassignment.
  - Forward the correspondence and the tracking form (keep one copy) to the correct department.

- **Letter Prepared By**: The division or staff person who prepared the response.

- **Department Director Approval**: All responses must be initialed by department directors or by a designee. If a designee is used, also type or print the name of the designee.

- **Comments**: Director’s notes to the executive, including verification of coordination with other county departments, if appropriate.

- **Executive Office Review By**: Executive staff will indicate approval and/or make any comments.

- **In KCE/Out KCE**: The date the response is received for Executive signature and the date signed. After
signature, the response and part of the tracking form will be returned to the department for processing.

- **Returned w/Edits:** When a letter is returned to the department for correction, the date returned will be noted. The Executive Office will remove one copy of the tracking form and update the tracking database accordingly.

- **Return To:** The department should note who is to get the response for changes and/or mailing.

- **Change Requested By:** Executive Office staff will initial here for changes to the log.

Executive Office 7.23.3  **LATE REPORT**

- The late report is distributed weekly to the department liaisons for their information.

- If the department notices that a letter has been incorrectly assigned to them, it is the department’s responsibility to reassign the letter to the appropriate department and tell the correspondence manager.

Confidential Secretary 7.23.4  **CORRESPONDENCE ROUTING**

Place all items for the Executive Office in a "For Executive Signature” folder with the name and phone number of the submitting department and liaison on the label.

7.23.4.1  **Order of Materials in Executive Signature Folder:**

1) Tracking form
2) Original letter
3) Copy of incoming letter
4) Edited version, if any
5) Enclosures, if any
6) Copy of interim, if any
7) Background (especially if recent previous correspondence)

Clip items #1 - 7 together.

7.23.4.2  **When a letter has been edited and returned to the department,** please “fast track” it back to the Executive Office on the same day, if possible. These letters must get top priority.

7.23.4.3  **Return to Executive Office:**

- **Interim Response:** An appropriately completed tracking form (keep one copy) should accompany all written interim responses when transmitted for Executive signature.

  - If the director signed an interim response, attach only one copy of the interim response (show the Executive getting a copy).
Final Response: The original response, a copy of the incoming correspondence, any enclosures, and an appropriately completed tracking form (keep one copy) must be returned to the Executive Office in a folder marked: "FOR EXECUTIVE SIGNATURE - RETURN TO"

- When a director responds for the Executive, a copy of the response, a copy of the incoming correspondence, and original (white) completed tracking form should be sent to the Executive Office.

7.23.4.4 Returns to Departments:
- The Executive Office may return a response for changes.
  - The department must enclose the edited letter in the Executive Signature Folder so a review of the changes can be made.
  - When the response is resubmitted to the Executive Office, a new completion date will be entered on the tracking form.
- Once signed, the response will be returned to the department for mailing.
  - The original (white) tracking form will be saved for Executive Office use, along with one copy of the signed response.
  - Make sure the letter and envelope match. Note the date of the signed response. Hold predated responses.

Executive Office

7.23.5 FILING

Once completed, a copy of the signed letter and the original (white) completed tracking form, along with the original incoming correspondence, will be maintained in the Executive Office.

8.0 RESPONSIBILITIES:
8.1 Authors of correspondence are responsible for adhering to the Executive Correspondence Guidelines. Department Liaison’s are responsible for making sure that letters are

8.2 Department directors or their designees are responsible for all Executive correspondence assigned for their signatures and for all correspondence assigned to their department requiring the Executive’s signature.

8.3 The Executive Office is responsible for final review of all responses for the Executive’s signature.