



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JUN 13 2003

THE ADMINISTRATOR

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Plain Language

TO: All EPA Employees

I am pleased to announce the availability of a web-based course that can help Agency employees learn to write in plain language.

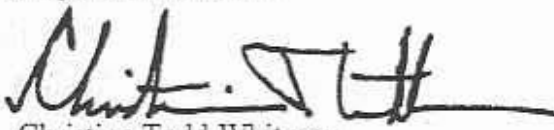
The Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation has developed the online writing course – and is testing a plain language editing program – to help EPA employees ensure that our documents are clear on the first reading, answer the questions of the reader, and maintain technical and legal integrity. Improving communication between EPA and the American public is more important now than ever before. The Agency has already made outstanding strides to include citizens in our decision-making, to work with the regulated community, and to provide stakeholders with needed information. The unprecedented challenges we face, however, require continuous improvement in our communication skills.

Regulations, correspondence, fact sheets, brochures, press releases, and reports to Congress are among our major publications. By writing these documents in plain language, we enable readers to find information quickly and understand how it applies to them. Using plain language can also help increase compliance with regulations and decrease mistakes, frustration, and appeals, allowing us to serve American citizens more cost-effectively and efficiently.

Plain language is not a new initiative at EPA. We have pioneered methods to teach plain language to regulation writers, and we have taken the lead among federal agencies to develop computer software that will improve our standards of communication. This does not present a simple challenge – learning to write clear, direct prose is hard work, and employees may need to acquire new skills and abandon writing habits ingrained over the years.

To learn more about the plain language initiative or to download the new writing course, please visit our Plain Language Homepage, at <http://intranet.epa.gov/plainlanguage>. You can also contact EPA's plain language coordinator, Andrew McIntosh, at (202) 564-4696 or at mcintosh.andrew@epa.gov.

Thank you for supporting this important initiative.


Christine Todd Whitman