

# ColoradoSprings.gov: Introduction & Style Guide

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*Welcome to the City Web Team*

## **Naming conventions**

ColoradoSprings.gov

COSprings.gov

The City of Colorado Springs

## **Issue escalation**

*Content Manager >> Service Desk >> Web Admin (App Support) >> Development Team (vendor)*

## **About the Style Guide itself**

Italicized items in paragraphs are technical terms that are defined in the appendix of this *Style Guide*. If you are unsure as to what an italicized word means, look for it at the end of this document in the appendix.

## **Styling text**

### **Titles**

*Sentence case—not title case.* Capitalize where appropriate, but refrain from capitalizing out of uncertainty. If uncertain whether or not to capitalize a word in a title, check to if see it's either a proper noun, specific job/position title, or a project that's currently underway by the City. If you want to yell, go ahead and hit that Caps Lock button and go crazy.

**Correct:** "The Dubliners are playing live at the Red Rocks"

**Correct:** "The new building is being built for new things"

*Incorrect:* "The Dubliners Are Playing Live At The Red Rocks"

### **Headings**

COSprings.gov uses H1 for the "title" field in every *Content Type* in the *Content Management System* (CMS). Therefore, the only options you'll see in the *Paragraph Styles* drop-down menu will be H2 to H6—if H6 isn't enough, let me know and I'll get you more.

The headings are pre-styled using a site-wide *Cascading Style Sheet* (CSS) file. You won't need to manually change anything about the heading; simply select your text and click on the appropriate heading for it.

Use lots of headings. Start with headings. Headings are never a bad idea. They help break up content, make it easier to skim the information for specific items, and they help with searchability of content. Use them like they're going out of style.

**Correct:** "Using lots of headings"

**Correct:** "Structuring your content with headings"

*Incorrect:* "Not using headings"

## Paragraphs

Paragraphs inside of ColoradoSprings.gov are created by using <p> tag in *HyperText Markup Language* (HTML). These make up the main body text of any article or page on the site. Once again, they are pre-styled using a site-wide CSS file. You can make basic changes to the <p> tag text in a few ways.

- **Bold** <b> or <strong>
- *Italicize* <i> or <em>
- Underline <u>
- ~~Strikethrough~~ <a>

As a general rule of thumb, use the *CKEditor's* default buttons to make these changes rather than changing them using HTML in the *source view*. *Semantic markup* is the <strong> and <em> tags—they are usually depicted as bold and italicized though their purpose is a bit more involved.

Consistent use of these items needs to be maintained throughout each individual page. If you use bold on the first item in an unordered list, continue to do so for the whole list. Likewise, if you use strikethrough to show that an item has been changed—and that the user needs to know that the item has indeed changed—then do not use strikethrough for anything else on the page.

Make changes to paragraph text sparingly and be consistent in your use of any special designation to text on the page.

If you use acronyms, be sure to define the acronym at its first occurrence in your document. For example, in the first paragraph of this section I use both "CMS" and "HTML," both of which I've defined before this occurrence. All a user would need to do is look up at the first paragraph of this section, or check out the appendix at the end of the document, to find the definition for the acronym.

**Correct:** "Users consider the CMS annoying when they accidentally break HTML tags on their pages."

**Correct:** "<em>: denotes ~~italics~~ *emphasis* of the text within the tags."

*Incorrect:* "Horvath **the wizard** doesn't cast spells at **penguins anymore**."

## Lists

Ordered and unordered lists—depicted by numbered and bulleted lists when displayed. A combination of lists and headings, when used properly, can make tough, technical content easy for users to skim for specific pieces of information.

### Ordered Lists:

1. Should list steps to be performed—such as first step, followed by second step, etc.
2. Can also list items in order of importance—for instance, this item is second in importance to the item above
3. When in doubt, use an unordered list

### Unordered Lists:

- Bulleted lists show related information, links, or items
- Items in the list are considered to be of equal importance, hence, unordered
- Skimmable doesn't mean "shortcut," it means structured for use by a targeted audience

For more information on ordered and unordered lists, [visit this page on using lists](#). Or, if your list is getting too verbose, you might try a table.

## Tables

First and foremost—**do not use tables to alter the display of the content on your page**. They are for tabular data only.

Let's go over that again. Only use tables to display data that falls into rows and columns, not to alter or change how content is displayed for your page.

Tables are pre-styled via that same site-wide CSS file that we've talked about previously. If a certain table doesn't fit your needs, contact the next level on your "Issue escalation" list to see about other options.

#### Correct:

Pages	Description	URL
Homepage	The homepage for COSprings.gov	<a href="http://www.coloradosprings.gov">http://www.coloradosprings.gov</a>

#### Correct:

User #1	
Favorite color	Blue
Best friend	Also Blue, from Blue's Clues

#### Incorrect:

Paragraph text	
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Other link</a>

# Media

## Images

Images can be placed into the *Body* of the content type, as a *Featured Image*, or as a *Slideshow Image* (Slider).

### Body images:

- Upload as any size
- Placed anywhere inside the “body” area of the page

### Featured images:

- Must be at least 650x310
- Placed at the top of the page when published
- Title of page placed over it with black gradient placed behind text over image

### Slideshow images:

- Must be at least 950x430
- Placed on homepage slideshows only

### Blog entry slideshow:

- Can be any size
- Automatically cropped and scaled to fit within slideshow
- Showed at top of content directly below title of page

Images can be placed anywhere inside the CKEditor editing window, but their use needs to be specifically calculated. ColoradoSprings.gov populates both the *Mobile Version* of the site and the *Desktop Version* from the same database, so images placed into your pages will need to follow rules for both mobile and desktop displays.

To this end, we’ve made the CKEditor strip out any additional styling. So adding `’style=’height:150px;width:400px;’` to the HTML will not affect the display of the image at all. To make the image display, you must either upload the file already in the appropriate size, or use the *resize* option in the *File Browser* in the CKEditor.

As with headings and paragraphs—along with much of the rest of the site—images will be styled by the site-wide CSS file, so there’s no need to add crazy borders or incredible effects. Notice the odd edge effects on the incorrect example below—these will cause issues when placed as a Featured Image, or placed in a Slider.



## Videos

Videos can be displayed two ways on the current version of COSprings.gov—as an embedded video in the body area of the CKEditor and as a *Featured Video*.

### Body videos:

- Upload as any size
- Placed anywhere inside the “Body” area of the page

### Featured videos:

- Needs only URL of video hosted on either YouTube or Vimeo
- Placed at the top of the page when published
- Title of page placed beneath video window

Video embed codes are input as *iframes*, please refer to that section for technical information on how they’re displayed.

## iFrames

iFrames can **only be viewed as a non-logged in user**. If you try to view iframes as an authenticated user (logged in), you’ll see loading bubbles continuously run across the screen.

Use the iframe icon in the CKEditor to build out the iframe, or—for YouTube/Vimeo—use the embed code provided by the service hosting the video. The iframe icon in the CKEditor will give you all of the configuration settings you’d need with an iframe.

Using iframes is an exception to the standard solution for displaying files, pages, or information across sites. Generally speaking, links to the content, either followed or preceded by a simple description is

the preferred method of giving the user that information. Some things have to be done in an iframe, just be sure you're not using it as a shortcut.

## Links

Links should target to “\_self” unless doing so would interrupt the narrative of the user on the site. In that case, it's appropriate to use the “\_blank” target.

Avoid using the actual URL as the display text for the link itself. That text ought to give the user an indication of what will happen when the link is clicked on. View the examples below for more information on this.

It's best practice to keep the links at the beginning or very end of the document. Try to push them to the edges so users won't have to dig through a paragraph to find the right link.

If you're going to link an item in a bulleted list, link the entire line.

Try to think of things in a hierarchical manner. For example, if the link I'm placing simply references more information about the subject of the page, I can leave it as a simple link. However, if the link performs an action the user will be moving on to, or breaking away completely from the purpose of the original page—separate the link and make it a large *button* so that it calls attention to itself.

**Correct:** “For more information, [visit our homepage.](#)”

**Correct:** “[Starports](#) can be hives of scum and villainy.”

**Incorrect:** “We have pictures [here](#) if you want to see them.”

## Buttons

Buttons in ColoradoSprings.gov give the user a better experience navigating from one individual page to another. They generally denote action needing to be taken by the user. Use buttons to bring attention to the link and follow the guidelines for “Links” when creating the display text for a button.

Make your use of buttons consistent across the site. They can be used for many reasons, sending the user to a new page, moving outside of the site entirely, downloading/viewing a document, or starting a *webform* to name a few.

Avoid placing buttons inline with other text. This provides a disturbing experience for the user. Instead, break up the text and place the button on its own line, so the user can see that it's independent of other text but not a separate idea altogether.

Buttons make a much nicer experience for users than regular links, but their use shouldn't be haphazard across your pages. If you're going to have more than one button on your page, it's generally advisable to group all of the buttons together to give the page a more structured feel.

*(See appendix for “Button examples”)*

## Content workflow

### Publishing

ColoradoSprings.gov has a two-stage publishing process that's meant to assist Content Editors and Managers in pushing content to the live site. Editors do not have the ability to publish content and need someone in their department with Manager level access to publish the content for them. This user doesn't need to be an executive or supervisor, but must be able to make the call to publish content and moderate users (internal only) on the website.

Please consult the "issue escalation" section of the Style Guide if you need publishing access.

## Content types

### Alert

Alert Content types are used to share important information to site visitors.

### Basic Page

Use basic pages for your static content, such as an 'About us' page.

### Blog Entry

Blog entry--automatically populates in Mayor's blog area when published.

### Event

Events are posted to their respective calendars. Also used for community room reservations for Fire and PD.

### Job Posting

To post jobs directly onto ColoradoSprings.gov—does not integrate with NeoGov at this time.

### News Item

Use this to post news, press releases, etc. News items are most likely promoted to either Department or Global homepages.

### Readiness Guide Page

Coming late 2014!

### Slider

This populates our slideshows—large image, brief content, maximum visual impact.

### Webform

Create a new form or questionnaire accessible to users. Submission results and statistics are recorded and accessible to privileged users.

# Appendix

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*Listed in alphabetical order*

## Definitions

### Body

Body refers to the HTML <body> tag—it's everything being displayed on a particular page. In this Style Guide though we'll use "body" to reference anything you've published on the page yourself via the CKEditor or "editing window" for the page. This can contain text, images, videos, and tables to name a few.

### Button

Button refers to a particularly styled "link" on the website. This styling gives the link a border, background color, and the appearance of an HTML button generally used to submit. Technically, it's still only an <a> tag with a particular CSS class to it.

### Cascading Style Sheet

Generally referred to as "CSS" this gives styling to the entire site. HTML provides the structure of the page and CSS formats it to give the user a better, smoother experience on the site. Coloration, images, and even some of the interactions are governed by this "style sheet" for the site.

### CKEditor

This is the "What you see is what you get" or WYSIWYG for ColoradoSprings.gov. With this "editing window" you're able to place text, images, videos, and the rest of your content directly into the window without having to code the HTML tags for them. This streamlines the process of writing content for most users; however, if you prefer to write HTML, you can use the "source" icon to view and edit the HTML through the same window.

### Content

Content is the sum of all the text, audio, video, and images on your website. It's what engages visitors to the site and makes the site worthy of their time and attention. If you are looking for better engagement, first create better content.

### Content Management System

Content management systems have risen in popularity as a way of speeding up the site building, maintaining, and updating process. You've probably heard of Wordpress, Joomla, or Drupal. ColoradoSprings.gov is built on the Drupal content management system. For more information, check out [www.drupal.com](http://www.drupal.com).

## **Content Type**

A content type is a specific template built for publishing pages to the live site. The “Basic Page” content type will typically cover 90% of what you’ll need on the website. It’s a collection of fields—Title, body, featured image—with specific rules that can be applied to the database record—published, unpublished, category. For more information on content types, [visit the video tutorial library](#).

## **Department homepage**

Subdomains have a homepage with slideshow and newsfeed. The information located on this page is controlled by content managers from that department.

## **Desktop version**

There are two versions of the website, both of which are built from the same database, mobile and desktop. The desktop version, or the full site, expands all of the sections to be viewed by the user. These sections come through at their full size. For example, the slideshow is the third item from the top of the page on the full site where it’s the second item from the top on the mobile version.

## **Featured image**

Featured images are attached to Basic Pages and are automatically styled and positioned for you. All you have to do is upload the appropriately sized image in the editing window and you’re all set.

## **Featured video**

Featured videos are attached to Basic Pages and are automatically styled and positioned for you. All you have to do is enter the URL of the video into the editing window and you’re all set.

## **File Browser**

This is the place to upload your documents and images to the website server. You’ll automatically have access to the specific directories for your department. Be sure to communicate with your team as to where these documents are going—keeping track of content is a team effort.

## **Global homepage**

The global homepage can be found at [ColoradoSprings.gov](http://ColoradoSprings.gov).

## **HyperText Markup Language**

HyperText Markup Language, or HTML, is the code beneath all of the pages you see on the internet. For instance, if this paragraph were being displayed in HTML it would have <p> tags at the beginning and ending of the text. For more information on HTML, [check out this video from HowcastTechGadgets on YouTube](#).

## **Iframes**

Iframes are containers for HTML, PHP, or “website” files. For instance, the Police Blotter on [ColoradoSprings.gov](http://ColoradoSprings.gov) is an iframe at the moment (Sept. 2014). The embedded video codes from YouTube and Vimeo are iframes as well. For more information on iframes, [check out this video from WebStarts on YouTube](#).

## **Mobile version**

The mobile version of the site moves the items of ColoradoSprings.gov around so that they can be more easily viewed on a smaller screen. All this work is done for you, just follow the rules for sizing images, keep your text concise and use lots of headings to help out the users checking out your page on their mobile phone.

## **Paragraph styles**

Paragraph styles can be found in the drop-down menu inside the CKEditor in the editing window. These styles can only be applied to text. See “paragraph styles” under “examples” in the appendix (below) to find an image of what it looks like in action.

## **Resize**

Images can be resized from the File Browser window. This feature can create a copy of your original image at the new size, or overwrite your original with the new height and width changes. [Check out the walkthrough for resizing images here.](#)

## **Semantic markup**

Our website uses a Resource Description Framework (RDF) for Search Engine Optimization... suffice it to say that what you put in as text will be read differently than what you put in headings and will have an impact on how your content is found. Write clearly, concisely, and keep your audience in mind.

## **Sentence case**

Sentence case capitalizes the first word of the sentence, but none of the other words unless they are proper names/titles—read that as “meant to be capitalized”—don’t just capitalize words all willy-nilly. [Check out this resource for rules on capitalization.](#)

## **Slideshow image (slider)**

A slideshow image is called a “slider” on our site. There are specific rules for creating sliders as far as the size of the image goes. The slider is featured on homepages—either the global homepage (ColoradoSprings.gov), or individual departments’ homepages. Content managers have the ability to promote the slider to the live site in their department homepage and Communications has the ability to promote it to the global homepage.

## **Source view (HTML)**

See *HyperText Markup Language* above.

## **Style Guide**

You’re reading it!

## **Title**

Titles are located at the top of every page of the website. They can be used to search for the specific page and should therefore provide an accurate, brief explanation of what the page covers.

## Title case

Title case is different from sentence case in that every word (with the exception of a few) is capitalized. The standard for titles on ColoradoSprings.gov is to use sentence case (see “sentence case” above).

## Webform

Webforms can be created by content personnel to collect information and email that information to specific employees in the City. [A good example of this is the Code Enforcement Complain Form.](#)

# Examples

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## Button examples

### Correct:

Paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text

Paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text

Take our Survey

### Correct:

View the map

Paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text

Paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text

### Incorrect:

Paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text

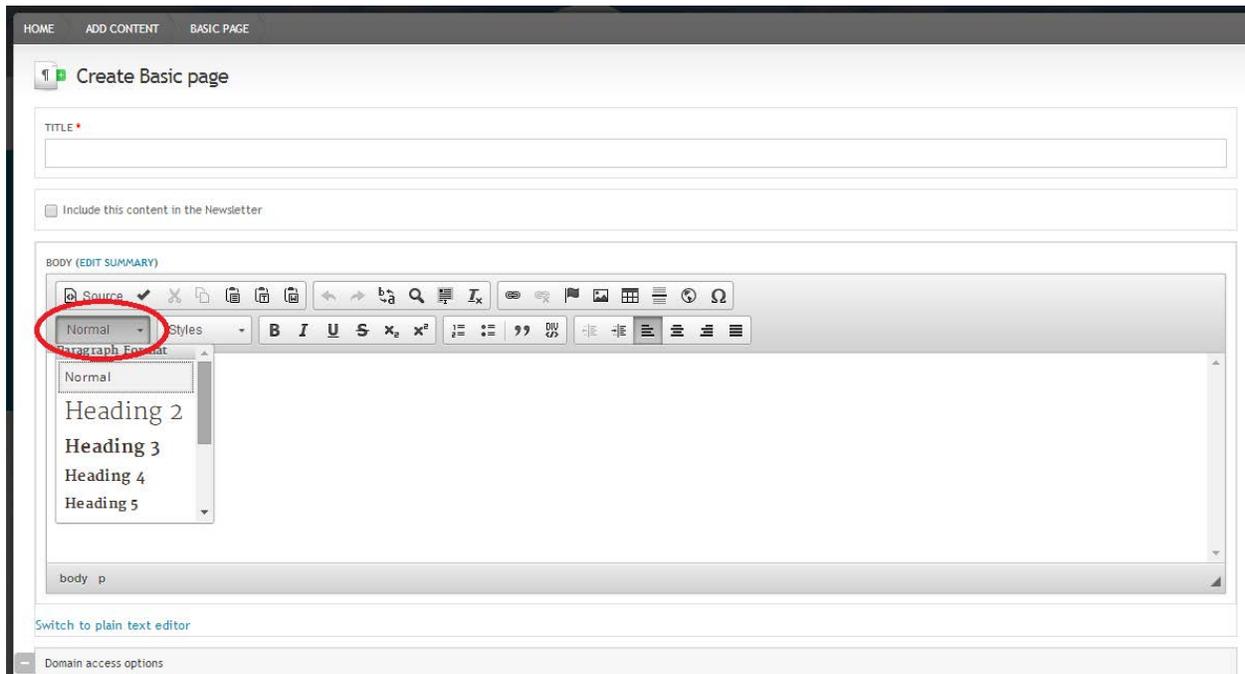
Paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text

### Also incorrect:

Paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text paragraph text

- paragraph text paragraph text
- paragraph text paragraph text

# Paragraph styles



The image shows a screenshot of a CMS editor interface. At the top, there are navigation links: HOME, ADD CONTENT, and BASIC PAGE. Below this is a header area with a title field labeled "TITLE" and a checkbox for "Include this content in the Newsletter". The main editing area is titled "BODY (EDIT SUMMARY)" and contains a rich text editor. The editor's toolbar includes various icons for text formatting, alignment, and insertion. A dropdown menu is open under the "Normal" style selector, showing options for "Normal", "Heading 2", "Heading 3", "Heading 4", and "Heading 5". The "Normal" option is circled in red. Below the editor, there is a link to "Switch to plain text editor" and a "Domain access options" section.

HOME ADD CONTENT BASIC PAGE

Create Basic page

TITLE \*

Include this content in the Newsletter

BODY (EDIT SUMMARY)

Source Styles Paragraph Format

Normal

Heading 2

Heading 3

Heading 4

Heading 5

body p

[Switch to plain text editor](#)

Domain access options