

**Forest Service Handbook  
National Headquarters - Washington Office  
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook  
Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**

**Amendment:** 6209.12-2014-1

**Effective date:** September 02, 2014

**Duration:** This amendment is effective until superseded or removed.

**Approved by:** J. Lenise Lago, Deputy Chief for Business Operations

**Date approved:** August 27, 2014

**Responsible Staff:**

**Last Change:** 6209.12-2007-1 to chapter 30

**Superseded Document(s):** Entire Handbook including title page; 6209.12\_contents, Amendment 6209.12-2005-7, October 14, 2005; 00--2 thru 03, FSH June 1988 Amend 6, 6209.12\_10, Amendment 6209.12-2005-1, October 03, 2005; 6209.12\_20, Amendment 6209.12-2005-2, October 03, 2005; 6209.12\_30, Amendment 6209.12-2007-1, December 19, 2007; 6209.12\_40, Amendment 6209.12-2005-4, October 06, 2005; 6209.12\_50, Amendment 6209.12-2005-5, October 07, 2005; 6209.12\_60, Amendment 6209.12-2005-6, October 14, 2005

**Digest:** Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

**6209.12:** Revises entire handbook with extensive edits throughout.

Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook  
Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews  
Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1  
Effective date: September 02, 2014

**Table of Contents**

30.2 - Objectives .....	3
30.4 - Responsibility.....	3
31 - General Formatting Guidelines.....	3
31.1 - Letterhead .....	3
31.2 - Codes.....	4
31.3 - Dates .....	4
31.4 - Address Format.....	4
31.5 - Salutation .....	5
31.6 - Body of the Letter .....	5
31.7 - Complimentary Close .....	6
31.8 - Signature Block .....	7
31.9 - Notations.....	8
31.91 - Enclosure and Separate Cover Notations.....	8
31.92 - Courtesy and Blind Copies.....	8
32 - Examples of Addresses and Salutations.....	9
33 - Formatting of Internal and External Electronic Correspondence (Email) .....	29
33.1 - Electronic Correspondence in Place of Paper Correspondence .....	29
33.11 - Electronic Correspondence With a Physical Address .....	29
33.12 - Electronic Correspondence Without a Physical Address.....	29
33.13 - Address and Salutation for a Formal Email Response.....	29
33.2 - Signature Formatting for All Agency Email .....	30
33.21 - Email Signature Formatting Using the Email Signature Generator Tool in Outlook .....	30
33.22 - Email Signature Formatting Using Android, Blackberry, iOS (iPhone), or Similar Smartphone Device Mobile Operating Systems .....	31

## **30.2 - Objectives**

To provide consistent guidelines for the formatting, structure, and style of Forest Service correspondence, to ensure that correspondence is attractive, clean, and in compliance with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Forest Service standards.

## **30.4 - Responsibility**

Employees at all levels who handle correspondence are responsible for ensuring compliance with established style guidelines. The responsibility does not rest solely with any one staff or position.

## **31 - General Formatting Guidelines**

This chapter discusses general rules and guidelines for formatting correspondence. Certain types of correspondence may require different handling.

Instructions for email correspondence can be found in section 33.

Please also consult the relevant section(s) of FSH 6209.12, chapters 10 and 20, for more specific instructions.

### **31.1 - Letterhead**

1. For official Forest Service correspondence, always use the Agency's official formal and informal letterheads.
  - a. Letterheads are available as electronic templates in the electronic correspondence management system.
  - b. Letterhead templates will be customized for each administrative unit by adding the appropriate name and address to the heading.
2. Use only approved logos, slogans, and templates on official correspondence; do not modify the letterhead in any way, including with anniversary logos, watermarks, special event slogans, and so forth.
3. In accordance with USDA Office of the Executive Secretariat guidelines, formal and informal letters must be printed on single-sided paper. Letters must be kept to a maximum of two pages. If a response exceeds this limit, then the material will be placed in a briefing paper or fact sheet, which can be sent as an enclosure (also printed single-sided) with a brief cover letter.

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

4. Note: Letters to be signed at the USDA do not use Forest Service letterhead; USDA letterhead will be used instead. See chapter 20, sections 22.4 and 23.4, for more detailed instructions on how to format these letters.

### **31.2 - Codes**

Ensure that appropriate, required file code(s), routing code(s), subject headings, or other notations are included on the letter.

### **31.3 - Dates**

If the letter will be signed immediately, the current date can be printed at the top of the letter. Otherwise, a blank space is left until the letter has been signed and is being mailed, at which point a date stamp may be used.

The date indicates when the letter was signed and mailed, not when it was initially drafted, since there could be a delay between drafting and signature.

### **31.4 - Address Format**

1. The address must not be longer than five lines.
2. Type the addressee's title and name on the first line. If the title is very long, you may enter it on the second line, following the name.
3. For names without a formal title that precedes the name, use Mr. or Ms. Do not use Mrs. or Miss unless there is a good reason to do so.
4. Do not use two titles with one name, except when addressing a minister: "The Reverend Mr. Jones."
5. The title for members of Congress and most other government officials is "The Honorable [Full Name]," followed on the next line by "U.S. House of Representatives" or "United States Senate," or by the addressee's specific title or position (e.g. "President," "Secretary," "Commissioner").
6. When writing to a member of Congress in his or her capacity as a Committee (or Subcommittee) leader, use the appropriate title ("Chairman," "Chairwoman," or "Ranking Member"), followed on the next line by the full name of the Committee (or Subcommittee), and then "U.S. House of Representatives" or "United States Senate" on the following line.
7. Even if a staffer has been specified as the point of contact, the letter is still addressed directly to the Member of Congress, Senator, or other government official. On the envelope, after the name and organization, and before the street address, include an

attention line (“ATTN: Timmy McStaffer”). However, do not include the staffer’s name in the address block of the letter itself.

8. See section 32 for some examples of correct address formats for various types of officials, dignitaries, and professionals.
9. Place apartment number, room, suite number, or any other unit designation on the same line as the street address, if possible.
10. On the address block of the letter, spell out the name of the State (District of Columbia may be abbreviated as DC). On the envelope, use the appropriate two-letter postal abbreviation for the State. The ZIP code will follow two spaces after the State.
11. In the event of multiple addressees, send a separate letter to each addressee. Note: Separate responses must be sent to each person who signed the incoming letter. If only one individual, such as a Chairman, signed on behalf of the others, then only one response is sent.

### **31.5 - Salutation**

1. The salutation is separated from the address by one blank line.
2. The salutation is followed by a colon, not a comma: “Dear Mr. Johnson:”
3. Use Ms. rather than Mrs. or Miss, unless there is a good reason to do otherwise.
4. Use the person’s full name (and omit Mr. or Ms.) if it is not known whether the addressee is a man or woman: “Dear Leslie Brown:”
5. See section 32 for some examples of correct forms of salutation for various types of officials, dignitaries, and professionals.

### **31.6 - Body of the Letter**

Begin the body of the letter on the second line below the salutation, flush with the left margin (with no indent). See chapter 40 for more extensive writing tips and style practices.

1. Spacing Between Lines and Paragraphs
  - a. Letters are single-spaced, with one blank line between each paragraph. Double-space may be used if the letter consists of 10 lines or fewer and is a single paragraph.
  - b. Each main paragraph is flush with the left margin. (Bullet points or inset quotes may be indented.)

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

- c. Large paragraphs should be broken into smaller paragraphs for reading clarity.

## 2. Succeeding Pages

- a. If a paragraph will be broken across the bottom of a page, with only one or two lines of text appearing on the first page, it should be bumped entirely to the next page. Consider inserting a page break to shift the text, rather than a series of returns.
- b. If one or two lines are all that appear on the second page, reasonable steps should be taken to make room on the first page. (These may include slight adjustments of the margins, adjustments to font size or character spacing, as well as slight rewording to reduce the length of preceding paragraphs.)
- c. If the text really will not fit onto one page, and only one or two lines are extending onto the second page, adjustments should be made to shift more of the preceding text onto the second page, for the purposes of balance and attractiveness. One possibility could be to insert more blank lines before the address block, after the date, at the top of the first page.
- d. Succeeding pages will begin with a header that includes the name and title of the addressee (for example, “Mr. Jim Jones,” “The Honorable Tim Johnson”) and the page number. The addressee’s name and title, which should be identical to the first line of the address block, will appear on the left side, while the page number will appear on the right. A single number (“2”) is used to indicate the page. Example:

The Honorable Doc Hastings

2

The header is 1 inch below the top edge of the page. There is one blank line between the header and the body of the letter.

- e. Note: Letters signed at the USDA use a different style, with the page number appearing below the addressee’s name and title, on the left side of the page, in the form “Page 2.” This style is not used by the Agency at this time. Example:

The Honorable Doc Hastings  
Page 2

### 31.7 - Complimentary Close

“Sincerely,” is the standard complimentary close.

The only exception is when writing to the President. In this case, “Respectfully,” is the complimentary close.

### **31.8 - Signature Block**

The signature block includes the name and title of the signing official. Signature block style for the Forest Service complies with USDA direction and does not follow the GPO Style Manual. See FSM 1230 for Delegations of Authority for signatures. See FSM 1223.1, exhibit 01, for guidance on standard titles and unit names.

Use the following guidelines:

1. Choose the name of the signing official from the list of approved signers. The official's title appears on the line below the official's name.
2. The name of the signing official is typed in all capital letters, with four blank lines separating it from the complimentary close, flush with the left margin.
3. The signer's title is typed in upper/lower case.
4. The signature block appears as follows:

EMMA J. AUSTEN  
Director, Human Resources Management

5. If an employee has been officially delegated as "Acting," include the word "Acting" before the title. A correct example is:

WALDEN H. THOREAU  
Acting Forest Supervisor

6. If an official is signing "for" another official, the name and title of the incumbent official are still used on the letter. A correct example is:

*Marsha Hatter, for*  
ALICE L. CARROLL  
Director, Lands and Realty Management

7. Letters must be signed with a physical signature. At the present time, e-Signature has been authorized for use only with certain applications and electronic forms. The Forest Service is developing a policy, as well as establishing systems and processes that meet National Archives and Records Administration requirements for official electronic records management, to address the use of e-Signature nationwide.

## **31.9 - Notations**

### **31.91 - Enclosure and Separate Cover Notations**

1. If extra material will accompany the letter, that material must be identified within the text of the letter (“See enclosure”).
2. At the bottom of the letter, separated from the signature block by one blank line, typed flush with the left margin, indicate that one or more enclosures will accompany the letter (“Enclosure,” “Enclosures”).
3. For more than one enclosure, you may wish to include the number in parentheses (“Enclosures (3)”). Or you may wish to identify them by name:

Enclosures:      Letter of Congratulations  
                         Mark Twain National Forest map  
                         Forest Service Cabins (brochure)

4. If extra material will be sent under separate cover, type the words “Separate Cover:” flush with the left margin, separated from the signature block or enclosure notation by one blank line.

- a. Identify the material that will be sent, even if the material has also been identified in the text.

Enclosures:      Letter of Congratulations  
                         Mark Twain National Forest map

Separate Cover: Forest Service Cabins (brochure)

- b. Note: Remember to include a copy of the original letter with the material that is sent under separate cover.
5. Prior to printing letters, attachments, and enclosures, check printer preview to ensure that printing preference are correct, if needed change margins to reduce or increase size.
6. Prior to sending, material may need to be reviewed under the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act.

### **31.92 - Courtesy and Blind Copies**

1. When sending a copy of the correspondence to someone other than the addressee, type “cc:” (for “courtesy copy”) flush with the left margin, separated from the signature block



**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

(or enclosure or separate cover notation, if present) by one blank line, followed by the person's name and/or title.

2. If a copy of the correspondence will be sent to a person or persons other than the addressee without the addressee's awareness, type "bc:" for "blind copy" on the file copy of the correspondence, using the same guidelines as for the courtesy copy. Blind copy notation does not appear on the copy of the letter to be mailed to the addressee.

### **32 - Examples of Addresses and Salutations**

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 01**

**The White House**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
President	The President The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20500	Dear Mr./Madam President:
Spouse of the President	Mr./Ms. [Full Name] The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20500	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Assistant to the President	The Honorable [Full Name] Assistant to the President The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20500	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Secretary to the President	The Honorable [Full Name] Secretary to the President The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20500	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Secretary to the President, with military rank	[Full Rank] [Full Name] Secretary to the President The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20500	Dear [Rank] [Last Name]:
Former President	The Honorable [Full Name] [Address]	Dear President [Last Name]:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 01--Continued**

**The White House**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
Vice President, formal	The Vice President United States Senate 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20510	Dear Mr./Madam Vice President:
Vice President, informal	The Honorable [Full Name] The Vice President of the United States 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20501	Dear Mr./Madam Vice President:
Former Vice President	The Honorable [Full Name] [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 02**

**The Federal Judiciary**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
Chief Justice	The Chief Justice of the United States The Supreme Court of the United States 1 First Street NE Washington, DC 20543	Dear Chief Justice:
Associate Justice	Mr./Ms. Justice [Last Name] The Supreme Court of the United States 1 First Street NE Washington, DC 20543	Dear Justice [Last Name]:
Retired Justice	The Honorable [Full Name] [Address]	Dear Mr./Madam Justice:
Presiding Justice	The Honorable [Full Name] Presiding Justice [Name of Court] [Address] (City, State ZIP+4 code)	Dear Mr./Madam Justice:
Judge of a Court	The Honorable [Full Name] Justice of the [Name of Court; if a District Court, give district] [Address]	Dear Judge [Last Name]:
Clerk of the Supreme Court	The Clerk of the Supreme Court The Supreme Court 1 First Street NE Washington, DC 20543	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Clerk of a Court	Mr./Ms. [Full Name] Clerk of the [Name of the Court; if a District Court, give district] [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 03**

**Congress: The Senate**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
The President of the Senate	The Honorable [Full Name] President of the Senate Washington, DC 20502	Dear Mr./Madam President:
President Pro Tempore of the Senate	The Honorable [Full Name] President Pro Tempore United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear Mr./Madam President:
Majority or Minority Leader United States Senate	The Honorable [Full Name] Majority/Minority Leader United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear Mr./Madam Leader:
United States Senator	The Honorable [Full Name] United States Senate [Number] Dirksen/Hart/ Russell Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510  or  The Honorable [Full Name] United States Senate [District Office Address]	Dear Senator [Last Name]:
Senator-Elect	The Honorable [Full Name] United States Senator-Elect United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 03--Continued**

**Congress: The Senate**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
Office of a deceased Senator	Office of the Late Senator [Full Name] United States Senate Washington, DC 20510  Or  [Secretary's Full Name, if known] Secretary of the Late Honorable [Full Name] United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear Sir/Madam:
Chaplain of the United States Senate	The Reverend [Full Name] Chaplain of the United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Secretary of the United States Senate	The Honorable [Full Name] Secretary of the Senate United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Committee Chairman/Chairwoman	The Honorable [Full Name] Chairman/Chairwoman Committee on [Name] United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear Mr. Chairman/ Madam Chairwoman:
Subcommittee Chairman/Chairwoman	The Honorable [Full Name] Chairman/Chairwoman Subcommittee on [Name] [Name of Parent Committee] United States Senate Washington, DC 20510	Dear Mr. Chairman/ Madam Chairwoman:
Joint Committee Chairman/Chairwoman	The Honorable [Full Name] Chairman/Chairwoman Joint Committee on [Name] Congress of the United States Washington, DC 20510	Dear Mr. Chairman/ Madam Chairwoman:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 04**

**Congress: The House of Representatives**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
Speaker of the House of Representatives	The Honorable [Full Name] Speaker of the House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Mr./Madam Speaker:
Majority or Minority Leader House of Representatives	The Honorable [Full Name] Majority/Minority Leader U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Mr./Madam Leader:
United States Representative	The Honorable [Full Name] U.S. House of Representatives [Number] Cannon/Longworth/ Rayburn/Ford House Office Building Washington, DC 20515  or  The Honorable [Full Name] U.S. House of Representatives [District Office Address]	Dear Congressman/ Congresswoman [Last Name]:
Representative-Elect	The Honorable [Full Name] Representative in Congress-Elect U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 04--Continued**

**Congress: The House of Representatives**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
Office of a deceased Representative	Office of the Late Representative [Full Name] U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515  or  [Secretary's Full Name, if known] Secretary to the Late Honorable [Full Name] U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Sir/Madam:
Committee Chairman/Chairwoman	The Honorable [Full Name] Chairman/Chairwoman Committee on [Name] U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Mr. Chairman/ Madam Chairwoman:
Subcommittee Chairman/Chairwoman	The Honorable [Full Name] Chairman/Chairwoman Subcommittee on [Name] [Name of Parent Committee] U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Mr. Chairman/ Madam Chairwoman:
Joint Committee Chairman/Chairwoman	The Honorable [Full Name] Chairman/Chairwoman Joint Committee on [Name] Congress of the United States Washington, DC 20515	Dear Mr. Chairman/ Madam Chairwoman:
Chaplain of the House of Representatives	The Reverend [Full Name] Chaplain of the House of Representatives U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last name]:



**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 04--Continued**

**Congress: The House of Representatives**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
Clerk of the House	The Honorable [Full Name] Clerk of the House of Representatives U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico	The Honorable [Full Name] Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Delegate	The Honorable [Full Name] Delegate from [Name] U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 05**

**Legislative Agencies and the Library of Congress**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
Comptroller General (Head of the General Accounting Office)	The Honorable [Full Name] Comptroller General of the United States General Accounting Office [Address] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Director, Office of Management and Budget	The Honorable [Full Name] Director Office of Management and Budget [Address] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Public Printer (Head of U.S. Government Printing Office)	The Honorable [Full Name] Public Printer U.S. Government Printing Office [Address] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Librarian of Congress	The Honorable [Full Name] Librarian of Congress Library of Congress [Address] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 06**

**Executive Departments and Independent Agencies**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
Postmaster General (Head of the U.S. Postal Service)	The Honorable [Full Name] The Postmaster General [Address] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Madam Postmaster General:
Attorney General (Head of the Department of Justice)	The Honorable [Full Name] Attorney General [Address] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Madam Attorney General:
Cabinet Members addressed as “Secretary”	The Honorable [Full Name] Secretary [Name of Department] [Address] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Secretary [Last Name]:
Under Secretary	The Honorable [Full Name] Under Secretary [for Subject] [Name of Department] [Address] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Deputy Secretary/ Deputy Under Secretary	The Honorable (Full name) Deputy Secretary/Deputy Under Secretary [for Subject] [Name of Department] [Address] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
General Counsel of a Department	Mr./Ms. [Full Name] General Counsel [Name of Department] [Address] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 06--Continued**

**Executive Departments and Independent Agencies**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
Chairman or Chairwoman (of a Commission or a Board)	The Honorable [Full Name] Chairman/Chairwoman [Name of Commission] [Address] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Madam Chairwoman:
Head of a Federal Agency	The Honorable [Full Name] [Title] [Name of Agency] [Address] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Retired Forest Service Chief	Mr./Ms. [Full Name] U.S. Forest Service Chief, Retired [Address] [City, State] [ZIP]	Dear Chief. [Last Name]:
Head of a major organization within an agency (if the official is appointed by the President)	The Honorable [Full Name] [Title] [Name of Organization] [Name of Agency] [Address] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 07**

**American Missions and Foreign Government Officials**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
<p>American Ambassador</p> <p>Formal:</p> <p>Informal:</p>	<p>The Honorable [Full Name] American Ambassador [City, Country]*</p> <p>The Honorable [Full Name] American Ambassador [City, Country]*</p> <p><i>*Name of country must be written in English.</i></p>	<p>Sir/Madam:</p> <p>Dear Mr./Madam Ambassador: or Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:</p>
<p>American Ambassador with military rank</p> <p>Formal:</p> <p>Informal:</p>	<p>[Full Rank] [Full Name] American Ambassador [City, Country]*</p> <p>[Full Rank] [Full Name] American Ambassador [City, Country]*</p> <p><i>*Name of country must be written in English.</i></p>	<p>Sir/Madam: or Dear [Rank] [Last Name]:</p> <p>Dear Mr./Madam Ambassador: or Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:</p>
<p>Personal (Special) Representative of the President</p>	<p>The Honorable [Full Name] Personal Representative of the President of the United States of America to [Country] [Address]</p>	<p>Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:</p>

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 07--Continued**

**American Missions and Foreign Government Officials**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
American Consul General or American Consul	Mr./Ms. [Full Name] American Consul General/American Consul [Address]  <i>*Name of country must be written in English.</i>	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Foreign Ambassador in the United States  Formal:	His/Her Excellency [Full Name] Ambassador of [Country] [Address]	Your Excellency:
Informal:	His/Her Excellency [Full Name] Ambassador of [Country] [Address]	Dear Mr./Madam Ambassador:
Foreign Minister in the United States (Head of a Legation)	The Honorable [Full Name] Minister of [Country] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Madam Minister:
Foreign Minister Counselor in the United States	The Honorable [Full Name] Minister Counselor Embassy of [Country] Washington, DC [ZIP]	Dear Mr./Madam Minister:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 08**

**International Organizations**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
<p>Secretary General of the United Nations</p> <p>Formal:</p> <p>His/Her Excellency [Full Name] Secretary General of the United Nations [Address] New York, NY [ZIP]</p> <p>Informal:</p> <p>His/Her Excellency [Full Name] Secretary General of the United Nations [Address] New York, NY [ZIP]</p>		<p>Your Excellency: or Dear Mr./Madam Secretary:</p> <p>General: or Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:</p>
<p>U.S. Representative to the United Nations (or Organization of American States)</p> <p>Formal:</p> <p>The Honorable [Full Name] U.S. Representative to the United Nations/Organization of American States [Address]</p> <p>Informal:</p> <p>The Honorable [Full Name] U.S. Representative to the United Nations/Organization of American States [Address]</p>		<p>Sir/Madam:</p> <p>Dear Mr./Madam Ambassador:</p>

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 09**

**State and Local Governments**

*\*In most states, the lower branch of the legislature is the House of Representatives. In California, New York, New Jersey, Nevada, and Wisconsin, the lower house is known as the Assembly. In Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia, the lower house is known as the House of Delegates. Nebraska has a one-house legislature; its members are called Senators.*

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
Governor	The Honorable [Full Name] Governor of [State] [Address]	Dear Governor [Last Name]:
Acting Governor	The Honorable [Full Name] Acting Governor of [State] [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Lieutenant Governor	The Honorable [Full Name] Lieutenant Governor of [State] [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Secretary of State	The Honorable [Full Name] Secretary of State of [State] [Address]	Dear Mr./Madam Secretary:
Attorney General	The Honorable [Full Name] Attorney General State of [State] [Address]	Dear Mr./Madam Attorney General:
Treasurer, Auditor, Comptroller	The Honorable [Full Name] State Treasurer/Auditor/ Comptroller State of [State] [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
President of the Senate	The Honorable [Full Name] President of the Senate of the State of [State] [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:



**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 09--Continued**

**State and Local Governments**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
State Senator	The Honorable [Full Name] [State] Senate [Address]	Dear Senator [Last Name]:
Speaker of the House of Representatives / Assembly / House of Delegates	The Honorable [Full Name] Speaker of the House of Representatives / Assembly/ House of Delegates of the State of [State] [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
State Representative / Assemblyman / Assemblywoman / Delegate	The Honorable [Full Name] [State] House of Representatives / Assembly/ House of Delegates [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court	The Honorable [Full Name] Chief Justice Supreme Court of the State of [State] [Address]	Dear Mr./Madam Chief Justice:
Judge	The Honorable [Full Name] [Address]	Dear Judge [Last Name]:
Secretary, Commissioner, Director of State Department of Agriculture, etc.	The Honorable [Full Name] Secretary/Commissioner/Director [State] Department of Agriculture, etc. [Address]	Dear Secretary/Commissioner/Director [Last Name]:
All other State Government officials	The Honorable [Full Name] [Title] [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 10**

**Citizens with Formal Titles**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
Mayor	The Honorable [Full Name] Mayor of [City] [Address]	Dear Mayor [Last Name]:
President of a Board of Commissioners	The Honorable [Full Name] President, Board of Commissioners of [City] [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Minister/Pastor/Rector (with scholastic degree)	The Reverend [Full Name], [Degree] [Title, Name of Church] [Address]	Dear Dr. [Last Name]:
Minister/Pastor/Rector (without scholastic degree)	The Reverend [Full Name] [Title, Name of Church] [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
Rabbi (with scholastic degree)	Rabbi [Full Name], [Degree] [Address]	Dear Dr. [Last Name]: or Dear Rabbi [Last Name]:
Rabbi (without scholastic degree)	Rabbi [Full Name] [Address]	Dear Rabbi [Last Name]:
President of a College or University (with scholastic degree)	[Full Name], [Degree] President, [Institution Name] [Address]	Dear Dr. [Last Name]:
President of a College or University (without scholastic degree)	Mr./Ms. [Full Name] President, [Institution Name] [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 10--Continued**

**Citizens with Formal Titles**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
Dean of a School (with scholastic degree)	[Full Name], [Degree] Dean, School of [Name] [Institution Name] [Address]	Dear Dr. [Last Name]:
Dean of a School (without scholastic degree)	Mr./Ms. [Full Name] Dean, School of [Name] [Institution Name] [Address]	Dear Dean [Last Name]:
Professor (with scholastic degree)	[Full Name], [Degree] Department of [Name] [Institution Name] [Address]	Dear Professor [Last Name]: or Dear Dr. [Last Name]:
Professor (without scholastic degree)	Professor [Full Name] Department of [Name] [Institution Name] [Address]	Dear Professor [Last Name]:
Physician	[Full Name], M.D. [Address]	Dear Dr. [Last Name]:
Lawyer	Mr./Ms. [Full Name] Attorney at Law [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

**32 - Exhibit 11**

**Corporations, Companies, and Federations**

<u>Addressee</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Salutation</u>
Federation	[Full Name of Official] [Title, Federation Name] [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
President of a company or corporation (or other official)	Mr./Ms. [Full Name] President [or other title] [Company Name] [Address]	Dear Mr./Ms. [Last Name]:
A business, corporation, or entity comprised of several men or women	[Company or Corporation Name] [Address]	Gentlemen: or Ladies: or Ladies and Gentlemen:
Company, corporation, or federation when the individual's name is not known, but only the position: President, Treasurer, Editor, etc.	[Title of Individual] [Company or Corporation Name] [Address]	Dear Sir/Madam:

### **33 - Formatting of Internal and External Electronic Correspondence (Email)**

#### **33.1 - Electronic Correspondence in Place of Paper Correspondence**

The following instructions apply to email correspondence of a more formal nature, particularly emails that take the place of paper correspondence. Such emails may include responses from Agency officials to Members of Congress, high-level government officials, high-level officials of non-governmental organizations, or members of the public, particularly on controversial or high profile issues. The following instructions are not intended to apply to all ordinary, day-to-day, work-related emails.

##### **33.11 - Electronic Correspondence With a Physical Address**

If the sender of the electronic correspondence has provided a return post office or physical address, a paper copy response should be prepared and mailed in the same way any other paper copy correspondence is prepared and sent, rather than responding via email.

##### **33.12 - Electronic Correspondence Without a Physical Address**

If the sender of the electronic correspondence has not provided a physical address for return response, prepare the response as an email message.

1. The response should be sent to the email address provided by the sender, or to the address from which the sender's message originated.
2. The response should be entered in the body of the email, not as an attachment.

##### **33.13 - Address and Salutation for a Formal Email Response**

1. If the sender has not provided a name, the sender's email address should be typed at the top of the response. This will constitute the entirety of the "inside address." Something general like "Greetings:" should be used as the salutation. For example:

doglover62@aol.com

Greetings:

2. When a name is known, but no physical address, the inside address of the correspondence will consist of two lines. Place the sender's full name on the first line, followed by the email address on the second line. Use the sender's last name in the salutation. For example:

Ms. Barbara Johnson  
mommaj@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Johnson:

### **33.2 - Signature Formatting for All Agency Email**

The following instructions apply to all emails sent by Forest Service employees.

#### **33.21 - Email Signature Formatting Using the Email Signature Generator Tool in Outlook**

1. A standard email signature must be included with all messages. Use only approved formatting for all email correspondence, as noted in the exhibit.
  - a. An email template (see exhibit 01) will be used for all electronic correspondence.
  - b. The standard font is Arial. The standard font size for name, job title, Forest Service, organizational unit name, and slogan is 9 point. The standard font size for phone numbers, email address, street address, and URL is 8.5 point.
2. The Forest Service shield is the only graphic element approved for use in email correspondence signature templates. No other logos (including other logos used within the Forest Service), photographs, graphics, illustrations, or other images may be used.
3. Only the URL for the Forest Service ([www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)) may be used; no other URLs, including those for units or divisions within the Forest Service, may be used.
4. Only social media icons with embedded links to the agency's Facebook, Twitter and USDA pages are allowed.
5. The current slogan employed by the Forest Service ("Caring for the land and serving people") may be used in an email signature template. If this statement is used, it must be used verbatim. No variations on this statement or other slogans or taglines used by the Forest Service broadly or by any specific unit or division within the Forest Service may be used unless appropriately authorized by the Washington Office.
6. Other than the text shown in the email template (see exhibit 01), no other text (for example, favorite quotations) may be used as part of an email signature.
7. Employees will ensure that the contact information included in their email signature template (such as title, location, and telephone number) is current. Updates will be made by the employee as necessary.
8. Nothing in this policy is intended to conflict or otherwise change provisions provided for in any negotiated labor management agreements.

### 33.21 - Exhibit 01

#### Sample Signature Template for Email Correspondence



Joe Smith  
Forester

Forest Service  
Lassen National Forest, Almanor Ranger District

p: 999-999-9999 x321

c: 999-999-9999

f: 999-999-9999

[Jsmith@fs.fed.us](mailto:Jsmith@fs.fed.us)

123 Main Street  
Anywhere, CA 99999

[www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)



Caring for the land and serving people

#### 33.22 - Email Signature Formatting Using Android, Blackberry, iOS (iPhone), or Similar Smartphone Device Mobile Operating Systems

1. A standard email signature must be included with all messages. Use only approved elements for all email correspondence, as shown below:

Employee Name, Credentials *[optional; for example, Certified Forester]*

Job Title

*[leave line blank]*

Forest Service

Organizational Unit *[for example, Lassen National Forest, Almanor Ranger District]*

*[leave line blank]*

p: 999-999-9999 x999

c: 999-999-9999

f: 999-999-9999

Email address

*[leave line blank]*

Street address of Duty Station

City, State Zip

2. In the event that an employee's mobile operating system allows for inclusion of digital image files in an email signature, the employee should strive to duplicate the design shown in section 33.21, exhibit 01 as closely as possible. In such instances, creation of email signatures should adhere to the rules provided in section 33.21.
3. The current slogan employed by the Forest Service ("Caring for the land and serving people") may be used in an email signature template. If this statement is used, it must be

**Forest Service Handbook 6209.12 – Correspondence Handbook**  
**Chapter 30 - Correspondence Format, Standards, and Reviews**  
**Amendment: 6209.12-2014-1**  
**Effective date: September 02, 2014**

used verbatim. No variations on this statement or other slogans or taglines used by the Forest Service broadly or by any specific unit or division within the Forest Service may be used unless appropriately authorized by the Washington Office.

4. Other than the text shown in the email template (section 33.21, exhibit 01), no other text (for example, favorite quotations) may be used as part of an email signature.
5. Employees will ensure that the contact information included in their email signature template (such as title, location, and telephone number) is current. Updates will be made by the employee as necessary.
6. Nothing in this policy is intended to conflict or otherwise change provisions provided for in any negotiated labor management agreements.