

Style Guidelines/Instructions

Style Guidelines:

1. **Statement of Originality:** Each submission should include a cover page explaining briefly the scope of the academic writing, how the writing is legally timely and important, and how the writing is different or novel from other articles written within the VLR or other major legal periodicals within the last five years.
 - a. Editors will be looking for “Publish-Worthy” submissions, which assert the author’s opinion or stance on something rather than mere information.
2. **Types of Submissions:** The basic difference between a case note, a comment, and an article is the breadth of the subject matter covered.
 - a. *Notes and Comments*
 - i. Traditionally 10,000 words or less.
 - ii. A “Note” is an academic writing which discusses and analyzes an original legal issue or problem in some depth. The topic generally analyzes particular legal questions or puts forth more normative arguments on how courts or legislatures should analyze a particular problem that they have not yet addressed adequately. Still others are historical or theoretical.
 - iii. A “Comment” is an academic writing that is centered around an analysis of a recent case, piece of legislation, law journal article, or law-related book. Comments are significantly shorter than Notes.
 - b. *Articles*
 - i. There is no page limit for an Article, but the VLR has a strong preference for articles that are 20,000 words or less.
 - ii. An “Article” is an academic writing that should discuss an original legal issue or problem in a broader scale. Unlike a Note or Comment, an “Article” should be expressing some novel analysis by an author with expertise in a certain area.
 - c. *Book Reviews*
 - i. Traditionally 8,500 words or less.
 - ii. Should include an analysis of the book, to include why the book review is legally timely and important.
3. **Style:** Generally accepted style guidelines for law review articles are as follows:
Authors should:
 - a. Avoid passive voice;
 - b. Use gender-neutral language;
 - c. Avoid long quotations;
 - d. Avoid excess verbiage;
 - e. Avoid using a long word when a short one will do;
 - f. Avoid using a foreign phrase, scientific word, or jargon if you can think of a more common English equivalent;
 - g. Avoid overworked figures of speech;

- h. Avoid excessive capitalization;
 - i. Avoid excessive use of commas; and
 - j. Avoid inconsistent verb usage.
- 4. Author Biography: The Author Biography will be the very first footnote and should include a one-sentence description of the author's current professional affiliation.
- 5. Substantiation: Every point that the author does not have the authority to say on his/her own must be cited with a footnote even if this means every sentence ends up having a footnote.
 - a. All citations must be current and good law (unless otherwise prefaced in the citation).
 - b. All quotations must be exact from the source cited.
 - c. ***It is requested that copies of all sources cited be provided with your submission.***
- 6. Bluebooking: Footnotes referenced must use the citation style of "The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation", Eighteenth Edition.
 - a. Note: we follow the "five footnote rule."
 - b. Citations Specific to Veterans' Law
 - i. General Counsel Opinions:

DVA Op. Gen. Counsel Prec. 7-93 (Aug. 12, 1993).
 - ii. Board Decisions:

No. 95-22 787, 1995 WL 17873805, at *1 (BVA Oct. 20, 1995).
 - iii. Manuals:

VA ADJUDICATION PROCEDURE MANUAL M21-1, PART IV, CH. 5, ¶ 5.05 (1991).

M21-1, PART IV, CH. 5, *supra* note xx, ¶ 5.05. [Short Cite]
 - iv. Chairman's Fiscal Year Annual Report:

BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS REP. OF THE CHAIRMAN, FISCAL YEAR 2008, 19 (2008), *available at* <http://www.va.gov/VetApp/ChairRpt/BVA2007AR.pdf>.

BVA FY 2008 REP., *supra* note 21, at 24.
[Short cite]

v. DSM-IV: (Manual for psychiatric disorders; BB Rule 15):

THE DIAGNOSTIC AND STATISTICAL MANUAL OF MENTAL
DISORDERS [hereinafter DSM-IV], § 309.81 (Am. Psychiatric Ass'n
4th ed.) (1994).

DSM-IV, *supra* note [], § 309.81. [Short Cite]

vi. VACOLS:

Fiscal Year 2006 Statistics, Veterans Appeals Control and Locator
System [hereinafter VACOLS] (May 21, 2008) (on file with author).

VACOLS, *supra* [], at 20. [Short Cite]

vii. VBA Fast Letters

Expedited Claims Adjudication (ECA) Initiative, Veterans Benefit
Admin. (VBA) Fast Letter No. 09-24, 10 (June 1, 2001) (on file with
author).

VBA Fast Letter No. 09-24, *supra* note 44, at 19. [Short cite]

viii. Past Editions of the Veterans Law Review

John Smith, *Veterans Law Article*, 2 VETERANS L. REV. 2, 4
(2010).

Smith, *supra* note [], at 6. [Short Cite]

7. Font/Size/Etc: Text should be in Times New Roman 12 point font; Footnotes
should be in Times New Roman 10 point font.

8. Headings:

a. Introduction and Conclusion should be centered, bold and in CAPS;

INTRODUCTION

b. Major headings are numbered I, II, III and are bold and in CAPS;

I. MAJOR HEADING

- c. Subheadings should be numbered A, B, C and centered, underlined and bolded; Sub-subheadings should be numbered i, ii, iii centered and italicized.

A. Subheadings

i. Sub-Subheadings

9. Abbreviations:

- a. Use the “commonly recognized” abbreviation when possible. If using a commonly-recognized abbreviation, do not place quotation marks around the abbreviation:
 - i. e.g. Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- b. For author made abbreviations or acronyms, place quotation marks around the abbreviation:
 - i. e.g. The manufacturers, Best Bowling Ball Corporation (“BBBC”), breached its contract.
- c. If using a combination, then do not put quotation marks around the commonly-recognized abbreviation, but an author may also create his/her own abbreviation with quotation marks:
 - i. e.g. Administrative Procedure Act (APA or “the Act”).
- d. FOR ALL ABBREVIATIONS: Define abbreviations the first time they appear in the text AND the first time they appear in footnotes.
- e. “Commonly Recognized” abbreviations within the VA system:
 - i. BVA = Board of Veterans’ Appeals
 - ii. CAVC = Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
 - iii. RO = Regional Office
 - iv. AOJ = Agency of Original Jurisdiction
 - v. DVA = Department of Veterans Affairs
 - vi. VBA = Veterans Benefits Administration