

Frequently Noted Concerns and Aberrations

In its review of agency articles of incorporation, bylaw, and policy documents, the Commission on Constitutional Matters has noted (1) common content-related concerns and (2) grammatical departures from the norm of how our Synod generally prepares its documents. Instead of calling attention to these concerns and aberrations each time the commission responds to an agency upon reviewing its documents, the commission has prepared the following listing to alert document preparers and editors to these frequently noted concerns and aberrations, thereby to encourage and facilitate uniformity of grammar usage and document content in official documents throughout our Synod.

(1) Regarding content-related concerns, the CCM encourages the following:

- Provide clarification (perhaps with a “preamble” paragraph) of the agency’s relationship to the Synod and the Synod’s expectations of the agency as articulated in the Synod’s Bylaws.
- Give careful attention to and assert compliance with Bylaws 1.4.5, 1.4.6, and 1.5.3ff. regarding Synod relationships and organization.
- Incorporate bylaw language whenever possible, especially when reiterating subject matters to which the *Handbook* directly speaks (e.g., powers and duties).
- Reference the Synod’s bylaws accurately and in a uniform manner, updating bylaw and policy documents after each national Synod convention.
- Bear in mind that agency bylaws and policies may go beyond the Synod’s Constitution, Bylaws, resolutions, etc., but they must not contradict them.
- Include in all how-to-amend-this-document paragraphs the Bylaw 3.9.2.2.3 (a) requirement that intentions to amend are to be made known to and approval of such amendments is to be obtained from the CCM in advance.

(2) Regarding departures from grammatical norms:

- Use capitalization sparingly, using the Synod’s *Handbook* as model, capitalizing only one-of-a-kind and proper nouns (such as “Synod,” “President,” “Secretary,” “Appeal Panel,” “Wyoming District,” “Concordia Seminary,” etc.), and not nouns of which there are more than one (“district,” “district president,” “circuit,” “commission,” “seminary,” “corporation,” etc.).
- Consider using the decimal and parenthetical numbering system used in the Synod’s *Handbook*, referring to major sections of Articles of Incorporation as “articles,” major sections of the bylaws as “chapters,” subsections numbered with a single decimal as “sections,” and all other subsections as “paragraphs.”
- Avoid the following frequently noted errors or undesirable terminology:
 - Avoid use of the word “synodical” when possible. Use “synodwide” or “Synod” or “of the Synod” in its place.
 - Reference to the “Synod” is always to be preceded by article “the.”
 - The proper name of the Synod is “The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,” using an “em” dash.
 - Distinguish between “agency” as defined in Bylaw 1.2.1 (a) and “entity,” the latter a broader term that includes also congregations, RSOs, auxiliaries, and the Synod itself.
 - When three or more items are listed in a series and the last item is preceded by a conjunction (e.g., “and,” “or,” or “nor”), place a comma before the conjunction as well as between the other items for clarity and readability.