

# American Red Cross Style Guide

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# 1. Layout

## 1.1. PageLayout

### 1.1.1. Header

- Start each page with a header section, containing the company/organization logo, global navigation.
- Place the company/organization logo in the top left of the screen, linked to the start page/home page.

### 2.2.2. Body

- Begin the body section of the page below the header. The body contains the page title, introductory text, and the application controls and elements.
- Place the page title at the top of the body section.  
Start the introductory text on a new line, below the page title. Left align the start of the introductory text with the page title.

### 3.3.3. Footer

- Place the footer at the bottom of each page, below the body section. The footer includes a text-based global navigation and a statement of copyright, and linked social media icons.
- Align the text-based global navigation to the right in the browser window and

separate each link with a bullet so they are visually distinct.

- Position the statement of copyright to the left of the text-based global navigation and left-aligned.
- Right align the linked social media icons

## 1.2. Form Layout

### 1.2.1. Chunking

- Use only one form per web page, unless the forms each have only one or two fields. Having more than one form per page requires multiple submit buttons, which can lead to errors and confusion.
- Avoid more than one input field per line in a form, except when the fields are small or during the credit card payment process where users are more familiar with the fields.

### 1.2.2. Starting the Form

- **Begin each form with 1-3 introductory sentences.** The first sentence is mandatory and explains the purpose/usage of the form. The second sentence details any constraints (e.g., who should not fill out the form) and the third sentence provides instructions (e.g., clarifying field labels with multiple meanings). The second and third

sentences are included as appropriate.

### 1.2.3. Alignment

- Place labels to the top of the corresponding form element, with three exceptions:

1. Payment Information may use text inside the form fields that stays visible when selected

2. For radio buttons place the label to the right of the radio button. Groups of radio buttons have their group label on the left.

3. For checkboxes place the label to the right of the checkbox.

Shipping Information	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	My Shipping Address is the same as my billing address

Checked Check Box

- Have labels right aligned and form elements left aligned, with three exceptions:
- For multi-line text input the text area may stretch across the left and right areas occupied by the other form elements and their labels.

- For groups of radio buttons have the group label left aligned, the radio button left aligned, and the individual button label to the right of the button (and left aligned).

I Want to Support	
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Desaster Relief Help people affected by disasters big and small
<input type="radio"/>	Where It Is Needed Most Support all of the urgent humanitarian needs of the American Red Cross
<input type="radio"/>	Your Local Red Cross Provide for local Red Cross programs and services in your community
<input type="radio"/>	Blood Services You can help ensure that the life-saving gift of blood and blood products will be available and as safe as possible whenever it is needed

Radio buttons

- For groups of checkboxes have the group label right aligned, the checkboxes left aligned, and the individual checkbox label to the right of the checkbox (and left aligned).
- Position the Submit button at the bottom of the form, after all the fields of the form.
  - Left align the Submit button with the column of form elements.
  - Place examples of correct input to the right of the associated form element.

- Place labels closer to their associated form element than to any other form element. This practice assists in visual association of labels with their corresponding input fields.

The diagram shows a form with two main sections: "Payment Information" and "Billing Information".

**Payment Information:**

- Radio buttons for "Credit card" (selected) and "Paypal".
- Text input field for "Card Number \*".
- Dropdown menus for "Month \*" and "Year \*", and a text input field for "CVV \*".

**Billing Information:**

- Text input fields for "First Name \*" and "Last Name \*".
- Text input field for "Address \*".
- Text input fields for "City \*", "State \*", and "ZIP \*".

Field Label and Input Fields

#### 1.2.4. Grouping

- Group together text-based input and group together mouse-based input. This minimizes switching between keyboard and mouse, which incurs cognitive and time costs for the user.

#### 1.2.5. Required Input

- Indicate required form input with an asterisk. The asterisk appears at the end of the form field name.

- Provide a legend with the asterisk symbol and its meaning at the top of pages containing form elements that are required.

The diagram shows a form with three main sections: "Personal Information", "Card Information", and "Billing Information".

**Personal Information:**

- Text input fields for "First Name \*" and "Last Name \*".
- Text input fields for "Email Address \*" and "Phone Number".

**Card Information:**

- Text input field for "Card Number \*".
- Dropdown menus for "Month \*" and "Year \*", and a text input field for "CVV \*".

**Billing Information:**

- Text input fields for "Address \*" and "City \*".
- Dropdown menus for "Country \*" and "State \*", and a text input field for "ZIP \*".

A "DONATE \$xxx" button is located at the bottom left.

Required Field

## 2. Navigation

### 2.1.Global Navigation

- Populate the global navigation with the available applications, as well as links to the home page, account settings, preferences, and logging out.

### 2.2.Graphics

- Provide descriptive alternative text for all graphical navigation buttons. The alternative text should reflect the graphical text in the image.

### 2.3. Linking

- Unlink and boldface links/buttons in the global navigation for the page or application that is being displayed.

## 3. Text

### 3.1. Fonts

- Specify sans-serif fonts for all text. List Verdana, Geneva, and Arial as the fonts and end with the generic font-family. Listing multiple fonts increases the likelihood that the user has at least one installed on his or her computer.

### 3.2. Technology

- Use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to specify all fonts, font sizing, emphasis, and text color.
- Avoid the use of the HTML tag. This tag has been deprecated by the World Wide Web Consortium; future browsers may not support it.

### 3.3. Sizing

- Specify font sizes in percentages. This allows the user to resize text in Windows Internet Explorer.

### 3.3.1. Page Headings

- Set the font size of page headings to 120% of the browser default

### 3.3.2. Section Headings

- Set the font size of section headings to 100% of the browser default

## 3.4. Emphasis

### 3.4.1. Boldface

- Use boldface sparingly and only to highlight section headings, examples, or critical instructions.
- Avoid boldfacing more than one sentence per paragraph.

### 3.4.2. Italics

- Do not use italic text. Italicizing text slows reading speed

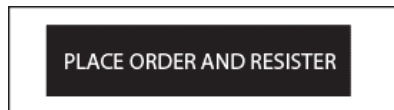
### 3.4.3. Underlining

- Use underlining only for link text. Do not underline any other text. Users assume that underlined text is a link and will click on the text.

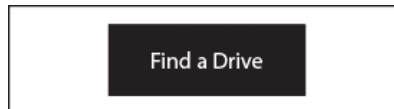
## 3.5. Capitalization

- Use capitalization for text in Submit buttons, and global navigation links/buttons.

- Use capitalization for references to forms and actions accomplished through the use of forms (e.g., editing an entry, saving an entry) that appear in sentences.



Capitalization



Title Capitalization

### 3.6. Color

- Set the background color of all pages to white.
- Set black as the font color for page headings, body text, and secondary text. Black text provides excellent visual contrast against the white background.

### 3.7. Graphical Text

- Avoid the use of graphical text (the presentation of text in an image format) for page headings, section headings, body text, and secondary text. Images increase download time and users with images turned off will not be able to read the text.

## 3.8. Link Text

### 3.8.1. Link Phrasing

- Avoid using 'click here' as the text for links. 'Click here' lacks the context to explain where the link will lead, a difficulty that is compounded for users employing screen reading software.
- Select active, descriptive words for link text. This may require rephrasing the existing content. For example, if the link goes to a page containing staff biographies, the text could read 'To learn more about our employees, read our staff biographies', with the underlined portion as the linked text.

### 3.8.2. Length

- Keep the number of words in a text link short. In general, three to six words should be sufficient. Longer text links slow down visual scanning.

## 3.9. Alternative Text

- Specify alternative text, using the (X)HTML alt attribute, for all graphics.
- If the image contains words, phrase the alternative text with the same words as the graphical text content. Global

navigation buttons often fall into this category.

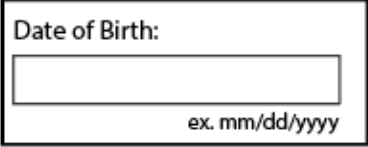
- For non-graphical-text images with meaningful content (e.g., photographs of people), write a short description of the image for the alternative text (e.g., alt="photograph of work environment").
- For non-graphical-text images without meaningful content (e.g., a pattern background graphic that tiles as the window is resized), include the alternative text attribute with no content (e.g., alt="").

### 3.10. Introductory Text

- Limit introductory text to a maximum of three sentences. The longer the text the less likely the user is to read it.
- Start the introductory text for applications with a sentence briefly describing the purpose and/or functionality of that application.

### 3.11. Examples

- Develop examples of correct data input for fields where the data format is unclear. The text 'Ex:' should be given, with the example data



The image shows a form element for a date of birth. It consists of a rectangular box with a label "Date of Birth:" to its left. Inside the box is a smaller rectangular input field. Below the input field, the text "ex. mm/dd/yyyy" is displayed as an example of the expected data format.

Example Data

## 4. Control Elements

### 4.1. Technology

- Use (X)HTML form elements.
- Implement JavaScript technology as needed for application functionality and input validation.

### 4.2. Tab ordering

- Tab ordering between control elements is left to right (if multiple fields are allowed per line), top to bottom.

### 4.3. Buttons

- Give Submit buttons task-specific labels, such as 'Create Entry' or 'Post Message'. Task-specific labeling reinforces, and possibly clarifies, the purpose and action of the form.
- Avoid the use of the Reset button, unless important default values are used that are difficult to reconstruct. In such a

case, label the Reset button as 'Reset Default Values'.

- Use radio buttons for options that are mutually exclusive.
- Set an appropriate default selection for radio buttons.

#### 4.4. Checkboxes

- Use checkboxes for options that are either in an 'on' or 'off' state and that are independent of one another, so that users can select no options, one option, or multiple options.
- Set appropriate default selection(s) for checkboxes.

#### 4.5. Text input fields

- Use text input fields for string and character data that cannot be gathered using checkboxes, radio buttons, or select (drop-down) menus.
- Include default text in text input fields, when appropriate.
  - Provide tailored labels for search fields, beginning each label with 'Search', such as 'Search Address Book'.
- Specify a size of at least 15 characters for search fields. Longer text input fields

encourage entry of more (and longer) search terms.

#### 4.6. Menus

- Set an appropriate default value for drop-down menus. If there is no default value among the options, set the default to be 'Select a <>'. For example, if the user was selecting an application in the drop-down menu, the default value would be 'Select an Application'.

#### 4.7. Required input

- Indicate required form elements with a small red triangle.

#### 4.8. Input validation

- Use JavaScript for input validation.
- Notify users of missing or incorrect input with an alert box, providing the label of the input field (e.g., Email Address) and an example of correct input, as appropriate.

#### 4.9. Action confirmation

- Provide a confirmation message for all navigation actions.