

Writing for ASSE's Practice Specialty/Branch Newsletters

The practice specialty and branch newsletters are a leading benefit of belonging to ASSE's practice specialties and/or branches. They provide industry-specific information that readers can use to meet the challenges they face each day.

ASSE relies on you—the professional working in the field—to share your expertise and practical knowledge through the newsletters. Have you considered writing a newsletter article?

Why Write for Your Practice Specialty/Branch Newsletter?

Share knowledge to expand the safety, health and environment (SH&E) profession's body of knowledge.

Use your expertise in government affairs, regulatory compliance, research and development and other areas to provide your own unique perspective on common problems, lessons learned and successes experienced.

Offer new ways of thinking about SH&E practices.

By sharing your expertise and experience, you promote discussion about key related issues that help to advance the profession.

Receive professional recognition and enhance career advancement.

When you share your expertise, colleagues and peers begin to view you as a true resource—someone they can look to for sound guidance and professional leadership. In addition to

earning the respect of your colleagues, publishing an article is an excellent way to demonstrate that you are an asset to your employer. Publishing is also a great source of personal satisfaction.

Continue to advance the standard of excellence of your practice specialty/branch and to enhance ASSE's standing as the leading professional safety resource.

Your contribution will help to build and maintain your practice specialty's/branch's standing as a primary source of industry-specific information. It will also help to enforce ASSE's profile as the leading source of cutting-edge SH&E information.

Here are Some Useful Writing Tips to Help You Get Started:

Start and finish strong.

Draw readers in with a solid introduction. For example, begin with a surprising fact or an open-ended question. Conclude with a strong paragraph that summarizes the article and makes readers think.

Keep sentences short.

For easy reading, sentences should vary in structure and in length, but the average sentence length should be between 15 and 20 words. Always favor the simple to the complex. Ask yourself whether the longer word is really needed.

Avoid unnecessary words.

Nothing weakens writing more than wordiness. Make sure that every word carries its own weight. Eliminate excess words.



Keep action in your verbs.

Use active verbs—they give writing impact by emphasizing action. Write “they developed the safety program” instead of “the safety program was developed by them.”

Use concrete language.

Abstract words can make writing dull, and they can obscure meaning. Use short, concrete terms that readers can visualize.

Write in the third person.

This perspective (he, she, they, it) is consistent with standard publishing style.

Minimize “-ing” words.

They reduce action. Instead of “inspecting the machine shop is a requirement” say “employees must inspect the machine shop.”

Relate to your readers’ experiences.

Choose words that appeal to the audience's unique mindset. Words do not have fixed meanings.

Vary your style.

Keep your writing interesting by varying sentence structure and length.

Write to express, not impress.

The best writing expresses complex ideas in clear and simple terms.

Getting Started

Discuss your article idea with the newsletter editor.

The newsletter editor can provide information on topics of interest, deadlines and specific material requests. If you are not sure who the practice specialty/branch newsletter editor is, refer to page 2 of the latest practice specialty newsletter or visit the group's website on the Council on Practice and Standards homepage.

Write the article.

Articles should be between 1,000 and 2,000 words. Do not worry if you need to make your article longer—longer articles are definitely acceptable, even if we must serialize them. Articles and any accompanying visuals should be created in a format that can be emailed or sent on a CD-ROM. Microsoft Word is the required document format. Visuals must be high-resolution (300 dpi or higher) and saved in JPG, TIF or EPS format. Graphs/charts must be in Word or Excel.

Define technical terms, jargon, abbreviations and acronyms.

Even if the audience is familiar with the topic, all such items should be defined to avoid any confusion.

Document facts & figures.

Although articles in the practice specialty/branch newsletters need not be footnoted, the following are guidelines if citations are included:

By acknowledging the sources for any statistics you cite, statements you make or quotes you include, you enhance the credibility and authority of your article, and you provide readers with information to locate the sources and to conduct further research. Sources should be acknowledged both in text (in parenthetical form) and at the end of the article. For end-of-article references, include the:

- Name of the author(s)
- Title of the work
- Publication title
- Issue date
- Page numbers
- Publisher (books)
- Publisher's city and state (books)
- Year of publication (books)

Sample citations

Book by one author

Norris, W. (1981). *The unsafe sky: The unvarnished truth about air safety*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

More Helpful Hints

- 1) Pose a question in your newsletter about a pertinent topic and ask readers to submit their answers for publication in the next newsletter issue. A continuing piece may be developed based on their responses.
- 2) If you attend or testify at hearings on topics that affect the profession, practice specialties or branches, your testimony can become the basis for an article.
- 3) ASSE has representatives on many standards development committees. Find out which standards affect your practice specialty/branch and interview the representatives. Contact Rennie Heath, ASSE's manager, practice specialties, for an interview subject or referral.

Magazine article

Kandel, E.R. & Squire, L.R. (2000, Nov. 10). Neuroscience: Breaking down scientific barriers to the study of brain and mind. *Science*, 290, 1113-1120.

Include a brief biography.

This should include current designation(s), job title, employer (including location), responsibilities and degree(s) held.

E-mail your article to the practice specialty/branch newsletter editor.

Follow-up with the editor to ensure that all materials were received and to verify if the article will be used.