



Maryland
Energy
Administration

BRANDING AND IDENTITY GUIDELINES

Small agency with a large Mission

The mission of the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) is to promote affordable, reliable, cleaner energy for the benefit of all Marylanders.

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BRAND

BRANDING AND IDENTITY GUIDELINES

The elements below are used to create the core visual identity of the agency. Reference each section below to learn more about proper usage and application in order to ensure the brand is applied consistently across all agency materials.

1 LOGO - How to use the official agency logo

2 COLOR PALETTE - Correct colors for print and digital

3 TYPOGRAPHY - Approved fonts

4 STANDARD GUIDELINES - Overall forward facing regulations, see SG-10, internal guidance (coming soon).

BRAND

Logo

The MEA logo is the keystone of our visual identity and is used on all communications materials. This logo should be used on all communications materials in its entirety. Using the logo consistently will enhance the recognition of the agency by all audiences.

OFFICIAL LOGO There are three distinct color versions of our approved logo. All other use is prohibited.

- 1: Full Color Horizontal Logo (use this version whenever possible)
- 2: Limited Color Horizontal Logo (for use if only 6 colors are available for printing)
- 3: Single Color Horizontal Logo

1



Maryland
Energy
Administration

2



Maryland
Energy
Administration

3



Maryland
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Administration

USAGE

- The logo must be reproduced from high-resolution digital artwork.
- As the primary graphic identity for the agency, the official logo must appear on all communications, including brochures, stationery, and websites.
- The logo may not be reconstructed or altered in any way. This prohibition includes but is not restricted to type, the vertical line, outlines or embellishments. Do not create secondary logos, as this is confusing to audiences and dilutes our goal of creating a common, mutually reinforcing image.
- The logo may not be cut or cropped in any way.

IMPROPER LOGO TREATMENT

- Do not configure the elements into a different logo.
- Do not crop or remove any part of the logo.
- Do not distort the logo.

- Do not tilt the logo in any direction.
- Do not add any shadows, effects or other elements to the logo.
- Do not alter the proportions of the logo.
- Do not attach a program-level identification to the logo or attempt to create a team logo (ex. Legislative team, program team)
- Do not duplicate any part of the logo to create a pattern.
- Do not recreate the type or substitute another typeface.
- Do not surround the logo with other competing shapes.
- Do not change any colors of the logo.
- Do not screen any of the logo colors.
- Do not print the logo in black over a dark background.
- Do not print the reversed (white) logo onto a light or white background.
- Do not place the logo over a heavily patterned background.

CLEAR SPACE REQUIREMENTS

To ensure the integrity and visual impact of the logo, the appropriate “clear space” of 1/2” must be maintained on all sides.

SIZE REQUIREMENTS

The logo must be resized proportionally and in its entirety; therefore, measurements for all elements in the logo are relative to each other. When PMS® 7700 or 108-7 is used in printing of the logo, the minimum width for the logo is 1.875 inches wide. When the logo appears as a white knockout on a color, the minimum width is 2 inches wide. If a publication is using a 4-color process build in the printing of the logo, the minimum size is 2 inches wide.

BRAND

Color Palette

The signature color of the Agency is P 108 -7 C or P 7700 C. Adhering to the following color reproduction guidelines will help to create a consistent image and maintain the visual impact of the identity. A minimum of approximately 10% P 108 -7 C or P 7700 C should appear in all print and web materials produced for the Agency.

BRAND COLOR PALETTE

The color palette below contains the only colors* to be used with Maryland Energy Administration's logo and tagline.



P 108-7 C
P 7700 C



P 4-7 C
Pantone 115 C



P 121-3 C
P 317 C



Black



P 156-16 C
P 350 C



Red 032 CV
P 45-8 C

BRAND

Typography

The official Agency typefaces are Georgia (serif) and Franklin Gothic (sans serif). These typefaces are required for use on official Agency stationery (headers) and are suggested for use on other Agency print publications.

Georgia

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Georgia Regular *Georgia Italic* **Georgia Bold** ***Georgia Bold Italic***

Franklin Gothic

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Franklin Gothic Regular *Franklin Gothic Italic* **Franklin Gothic Bold** ***Franklin Gothic Bold Italic***

Typography

RECOMMENDED AGENCY WEB FONTS

The MEA website uses a SharePoint template which relies on Arail for the exclusive typeface, body and headers.

Arail body 10 pt.

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890

Arail header 24 pt. bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

CONTENT

**All content areas
must work
together to
produce engaging
and effective
communications
and marketing
materials.**

This will ensure the full and accurate representation of the Maryland Energy Administration to its various audiences.

CONTENT

Photography

Photography is one of the best tools to communicate a sense of place. It often creates the first impression with its visual presence. Thoughtful and carefully chosen photography can transform a marketing piece and can become an effective way to communicate energy into a relatable element for our audience.

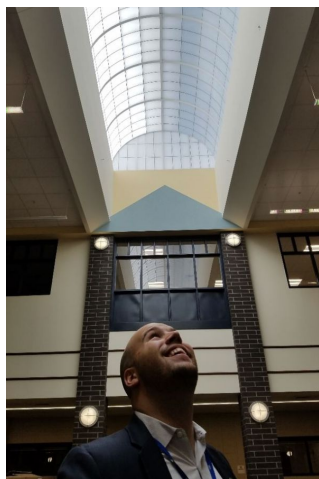
Whenever possible, the Agency prefers to use the actual image of Agency funded projects and real grantees or staff. A marketing outreach provision is included in all Agency contracts. Additional photo release forms may be used for public events.

TONE AND MOOD FOR AGENCY PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography should display the diversity of Agency programs.

To capture the right tone and mood in your materials, keep these guidelines in mind:

Photographs of people should be a mix of formal and candid. Our photos help viewers put a face to energy and more importantly, make viewers think about energy. Represent racial, gender, age and professional diversity.



Candid shot (above left) shows a team member looking at the designed ambient lighting provided via skylight. The formal shot (above right) is typical of official Agency photos.

Profile photographs and portraits of individuals should be friendly and approachable.



ESSENTIAL FOUNDATIONS FOR A GREAT PHOTO

Reduce Visual Clutter – A cluttered photograph can distract from the subject matter and the story being told. It is best to reduce or eliminate extraneous objects and background matter in order for the subject and focus of the photograph to stand out in a clear way.



Left photo shows a team member speaking with shadow behind and reflection in the foreground and distracting backs of heads of attendees. Right photo focuses on a clear image of the subject speaking.



Focus - All photos need to be in focus or high enough quality to use without distortion. Grainy feature images are not on brand and should be avoided.

Create or Find Great Lighting – Great lighting can be created by setting up artificial lights or by utilizing the natural daylight—or a combination of both. It is best to avoid direct sunlight in order to reduce harsh shadows, particularly on faces.



Left photo is an indoor photo but the subjects are hard to see. Right photo is also an indoor photo but natural lighting is coming in from the side, not behind the subject.



Use the Rule of Thirds – The rule of thirds is a compositional guideline for creating well-balanced photographs. Utilizing this rule adds visual interest to photographs by placing the subject matter in an area where the viewer's eyes are naturally drawn. An example of the rule of thirds grid is illustrated below.

CONTENT

Photography

Keep it Simple with Portraits – The focus of a portrait should be on the subject. Try to avoid complicated lighting setups and backgrounds. Instead, err on the side of simplicity so that the image looks as natural as possible.

CONSENT GUIDELINES

A release is needed in the following situations: Anytime a minor is photographed (under the age of 18); any person not employed by an Agency contracted partner, vendor or grantee. For photo release contact Kaymie Own, CMP, Communications Manager at kaymie.owen@maryland.gov

COPYRIGHT / SOURCING GUIDELINES

Copyright is a property right. Under the Federal Copyright Act of 1976, photographs are protected by copyright from the moment of creation. All photos used from GovPics or other sources must be attributed correctly (see example left). Copyright free images do not need to be sourced.

Important to understand that you may own a photo but you do not own the creative elements or logos in the photo. Ex. if a grantee is wearing a logo shirt in their photo that is not their organization but a commercial logo like Nike. In this case, the Agency should blur out the Nike logo. MEA does not have the right to use the Nike logo. The exception is when a grantee or staff member is wearing an organization logo shirt which also features a commercial logo, ex. MEA Under Armour shirts.



BWMC's Laura Kautz explaining the to Governor Hogan how the CHP powers the hospital to run efficiently year round photo credit Maryland GovPics

PHOTOGRAPHY RESOURCES

Coming soon

CONTENT

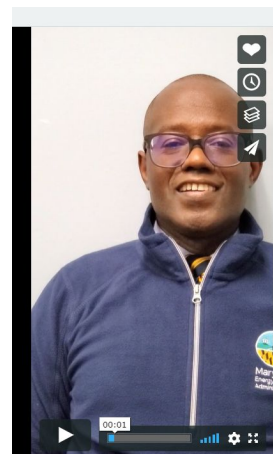
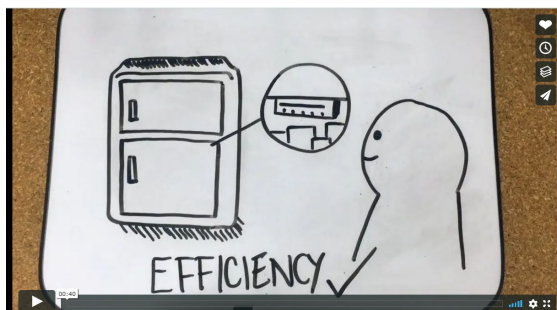
Videography

Use the Rule of Thirds – The rule of thirds is a compositional guideline for creating well-balanced scenes. Utilizing this rule will add visual interest to your videos by placing the subject matter in an area where the viewer's eyes are naturally drawn (see below).



Consider the Lighting – Lighting can set the tone and change the mood of a video. Position the subjects and focus of the shot so that there is not a major light source behind, above or to the side of them. Avoiding harsh lighting will eliminate unnecessary shadows and make the subject appear more natural in the environment.

Shoot Horizontally – It is best to shoot video horizontally so that it can be used on the most platforms possible. If you are unable to shoot horizontally due to needing a steady camera, please opt for the steady camera work. The horizontal image below on the left is preferable whenever possible.



Keep the Subject in Focus – Some equipment will automatically focus on areas slightly off the intended subject, such as the speaker's ear instead of his or her face. Check that the subject is fully in focus before beginning to record.

Keep the Video Short and Concise – An ideal video length is typically less than two minutes. When considering its use on social media, cutting it to be about 30 to 45 seconds long is preferred. Attention spans are typically short; getting the message out quickly and in an engaging manner will help keep audiences watching to the end of the video.

Control the noise – Background noise can ruin your video. Be sure to do a sound check when filming outside, especially for wind. When filming inside try to find a quiet space where your subject can speak at a normal volume and be clearly heard.

CONTENT

Social Media

Social media platforms are valuable tools for sharing information about the Agency and engaging with residents, nonprofits, governments and businesses in Maryland. At the same time, social media can pose unanticipated problems for users and have unintended consequences. The best practices described below are designed to assist staff. These best practices are not intended to address personal accounts of staff.

BEST PRACTICES

Be Strategic- Consider the purpose of the social media account. Have a goal. It is better to use one social media site well than to stretch resources across multiple platforms. The Agency currently focuses on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Vimeo.

Be Accountable - At least two people should share access credentials to the social media account. The Agency Communications Manager and Agency Office Manager have access to all social media accounts.

Be Clear - Clearly identify the energy technology focus, partnership or program that is being shared. Social media posts work best when just one URL is shared per post.

Be Respectful - Do not post anything that is not appropriate to say in public. Be polite and constructive.

Be Accurate - Ensure all posts are factual. Errors should be corrected promptly.

Be Timely and Engaging - Page administrators should post and monitor content regularly. Encourage comments on social media and be prepared to respond.

Stay in your lane - Content on the agency social media feeds should be germane to energy. Because the agency is an extension of the Governor's office, sharing of Governor information is expected, especially in times of crisis. Additionally, as a state agency, we are sometimes asked to share timely information from another agency by the Governor's communications team.

Add Value - Provide the audience with useful, relevant information: news they can use, answers to their questions, insights that inform, photos that strike a chord, stories that inspire or items that will make them laugh.



The posts above are an example of something to avoid. The large photo should be cropped and a detailed description should be provided in the post. Especially when we travel, we must demonstrate the value to Marylanders.



The posts above are more engaging and offer detailed information, incorporating a call to action when appropriate.

Do Not Post Confidential and Proprietary Information - Agency staff should not post confidential or proprietary information about grantees. Follow state and federal privacy and confidentiality laws.

Know the Rules Learn the terms of service and policies of the relevant social media sites and pay attention to updates.

Consult Agency Electronic or Forward Facing Communication Policies - Be familiar with the Agency's communication policies, which cover issues that could have implications for the use of social media.

Comments Guidelines - Agency guidelines for comments on the Agency Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Vimeo pages. For additional guidance about moderating comments and managing users on social media platforms, email questions to kaymie.owen@maryland.gov

Agency social media comments guidelines: The Agency encourages comments and opinions as they relate to our posts. This page is actively monitored for relevance. The Agency reserves the right to remove any comments that are not related to the particular post, make unsupported accusations, contain ad-hominem attacks, use obscene language or images, are blatant spam, contain advertisements, or contain inappropriate personal information or sensitive information. Repeated violation of these guidelines or behavior that substantially disrupts the maintenance of this page could result in a user being blocked from the page.

CONTENT

Writing

The words and tone we use help us showcase the Agency and energy. Our copy is split per the needs of our two audiences, general public / ratepayers and energy sector professionals . For the general public / ratepayers the copy should be direct and detail energy examples in a 100 level format. For energy sector professionals, copy can be technical and utilize energy sector terminology.

Brand Voice

Our Agency brand voice is the distinctive tone, manner and style in which we communicate. It defines the personality of our brand through our communications. Our brand voice is as follows:

We are:	Our products, services, solutions and capabilities are:	Our communication is:
Experienced	Veteran, Qualified	Authority, voice of the energy industry in Maryland
Genuine	Real, Proven, Trusted	Authentic and straightforward, our practices are transparent and ethical
Mentor	Senior, Master, Guide	Beacon of respectability to the residents and business of Maryland, providing counsel and leadership for best practices for energy issues
Reporter	Information driven	Industry expert, willing to share knowledge and trends

Remember that the audience must understand the benefits of working with our Agency— our points of differentiation and proof for credibility.

BREVITY PREVAILS

We are competing with hundreds of millions of active websites, plus social media, Netflix, blogs, family and friends. Follow these guidelines when creating written content:

- Keep it short and to the point.
- A story can usually be told in 400–600 words. If a story is long, consider pulling out some information and writing a second story.
- Link to other sites/stories to provide more information; do not duplicate information located elsewhere on the website.
- Audience is key - see point above and do not write over the heads of the audience if the article, story or blog is for general information.

TIPS FOR DISPLAYING DIGITAL CONTENT

- Use a lot of photos
- Video, video, video
- Use pull quotes
- Keep paragraphs short
- Use subheads
- Create an infographic

CONTENT

Editorial Style

Consistent writing helps unify our messages and keep the Agency within our brand voice: experienced, genuine, mentor, and standard. Our style helps our audiences better understand the Agency and energy. All State of Maryland agencies follow the Associated Press (AP) style. For guidance on editorial style issues not covered below, contact Kaymie Owen, CMP, Communications Manager, kaymie.owen@maryland.gov.

AP STYLE

The AP Style book is a constantly evolving resource that is published each year. However, a good online free resource can be found [here](#) from Purdue University. Agency staff will notice a difference in style from some MLA standards utilized by the legal team.

Reminders:

Use active voice when writing for the Agency. Passive voice speaks in the past tense and is a weak form of writing.

Example: Kermit presented 1,000 slides at the meeting. (**active**)

At the meeting, 1,000 slides were presented by Kermit. (passive)

Avoid gender oriented language, using he or she in articles is non inclusive and inappropriate. For example, NASA now prefers the use of "crewed" and "uncrewed" instead of "manned" and "unmanned", including when discussing historical spaceflight (except proper nouns).

Occupation examples: use police officer vs policeman; use flight attendant vs stewardess; use chair / chairperson vs. chairwoman / chairman; use server vs. waiter /waitress

COPYEDITING vs REWRITING

The Agency invites staff to verify details of a blog or act as a copy editor. Agency blog posts typically have a single author and it is imperative to preserve the author's voice. The job of the editor is to enhance not overtake a piece of writing. Copy editors fix grammatical problems in a way that does not insert their own writing style, or voice, into the author's blog. Good copy editing should be invisible. Remember this is not a legal brief, this is journalism. Avoid the temptation to revise text when there is no technical issue. Over editing is disrespectful to the author and lowers morale.

RESOURCES

Stationary

AGENCY TEMPLATES

The Agency has created a standard stationery template for letterhead, envelopes and business cards. Using these templates ensures consistency across the brand and keeps printing costs to a minimum. The Agency templates may not be altered, including rearranging information, changing abbreviations for office/cell phone/fax numbers, changing colors and adding additional design elements. In order to maintain consistency, logo usage is limited to the main Agency logo and Governor's Seal on business cards.

ELECTRONIC LETTERHEAD

The Agency most frequently uses electronic letterhead for communications. The electronic letterhead is a Microsoft Word document with a locked header and editable body. Please do not attempt to format customized electronic letterhead.



Maryland
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Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Mary Beth Tung, Director