**Department of Chemical Engineering**

**Auburn University**

**Auburn Alabama, 36849**

**Description of Short Memo Format**

Engineers and scientists frequently use **short memos** to make requests, to give announcements, answer inquiries and as cover letters to transmit (accompany) technical reports.

Memos that make requests or announcements are read quickly. Get to the point in the first paragraph; the first sentence, if possible. In other words, state what you want up front. Keep the sentence lengths and paragraph lengths relatively short. Sentences should average fewer than twenty words, and paragraphs should average fewer than seven lines. Also, keep the total memo length to one page, if possible. If more than two pages are necessary, consider using the technical memo format where information is broken into clearly identified sections. Do not use pagination for short memos.

In the departmental format, you should single space your memos and use a serif typeface (Times New Roman 12 preferred). Skip a line between paragraphs. Margins are 1” on each side. Do not indent the first sentence. Space your memo on the page so that it is balanced (does not crowd the top or bottom). Other specifics (such as header details) are transmitted in Attachment 1.

Send copies to anyone whose name you mention in the memo or who would be directly affected by the memo. These individuals should be identified at the end of the memo.

Finally, remember that final paragraphs of memos that make requests or announcements should tell readers what you want them to do or what you will do for them. Keep a pleasant tone throughout the memo.

Do not sign a short memo or use a closing phase such as “sincerely yours.”

On the next page, the layout for a short memo is provided. (Note: That layout conforms to all format issues such as font, margins, etc. and can be used as a template for starting Short Memos.)

CHEN 1234 Chemical Engineering Fun and Games  
Department of Chemical Engineering

Auburn University, AL 36849

**MEMORANDUM**

**Date:** May 18, 2006

**To:** Dr. George Tirebiter, Choo Choo Engineer

**From:** Tony W. Sophomoro ***TWS*** 🡨 Note: Must be hand initialed

**Subject:** Format Specifications for Short Memos 🡨 Note: Title Capitalization

(This is where the text of the short memo appears) Loquor, ibidem elit ymo wisi nibh, capto loquor ratis wisi reprobo. Eu, ad ut abbas, refero secundum duis in esca nostrud. Saluto iriure olim quadrum decet bene commoveo occuro ratis suscipere nostrud. Quadrum, vel zelus humo natu duis tation abdo ut. Secundum inhibeo ex roto ratis tamen olim facilisi verto bis in typicus. Ibidem, quis nonummy, ea luptatum roto ille. Ex enim loquor te tego nibh ut, augue vulputate humo consequat vel importunus comis.

Dolore scisco causa minim, nulla odio consequat modo praesent saepius. Tincidunt consequat velit duis feugait singularis tamen neo. Quia vel, dolor blandit luptatum tristique, zelus. Ad ut, ille accumsan, pneum feugait premo damnum macto os opto et feugiat. Melior zelus reprobo lobortis blandit erat multo caecus. Ad valetudo damnum ullamcorper torqueo cogo, tation turpis ingenium iusto multo tristique. Iustum adsum secundum veniam eros valetudo.

Defui eligo, nisl tation, reprobo foras ut duis antehabeo lucidus vicis foras gravis. Luptatum distineo, brevitas acsi exputo turpis mauris duis incassum.

**Attachments:** 🡨 Note: Number and list all attachments by title, omit if no attachments

Attachment 1 - Additional Information for Short Memos

Attachment 2 - HW 1: Writing for an Audience 🡨 Note: If appropriate, attach the original assignment

**Copy to:**

Mr. Edward Doggingit, Director of Downtime

**Attachment 1 – Additional Information for Short Memos**

**Font:** Times New Roman 12 or equivalent.

**Spacing:** Paragraphs are single spaced. A double space separates additional paragraphs within a section. Good memos make deliberate use of white space. Sentences should be separated by two space characters.

**Blocking:** The first line of each paragraph may be fully blocked at the left margin. It is not indented. Full block style is easiest to type because everything begins at the left margin. Full block style is useful, too, when a memo requires several levels of headings (such as in longer technical memo reports.) Text should be “left justified” not “fully justified” (that is, ragged on the right not even on the left and right).

**Date**: Always includes the date on which the memo was written. The date is never abbreviated. In the military style there is no comma. Unacceptable forms are: 9/1/03, Sept. 1, 2003, or 1 SEPT 03. The acceptable forms for writing the date are business style (September 1, 2006) or military/government style (1 September 2006.)

**To Line:** As most memos are filed for reference, complete information may be needed at a future date by another person. The “To line” includes the full name of the person to whom the memo is being sent. As a courtesy, the complimentary title -- Ms., Mr., Dr. --may precede the name. For clarity, the business title and often the department follow the name. If the writer plans to send the memo to several people, they are listed alphabetically (if they are equal in status in the organization) or by rank (with the highest ranking person first.)

**From Line:** The “From line” includes the full name, title and department of the writer. A complementary title is usually not used except for personal preference and to identify his/her gender (such as Pat and Leslie, which are names for both men and women). Then the complementary title is placed within parenthesis. Finally, on hard copies of the memo, the writer initials the end of the “From line” in blue or black ink to validate the report and resume responsibility for its content.

**Subject Line:** The subject line concisely (in a phrase with a maximum of seven words) previews the memo's subject. It contains sufficient information so the recipient has a clear idea of the message's purpose. Although all forms are equally correct, company policy may establish one as preferred.

**Copy To Line:** Send copies to anyone whose name you mention in the memo or who would be directly affected by the memo. These individuals should be identified at the end of the memo.