



Better Forms for Better Regulation

Guidelines for Creating and Renovating
Nova Scotia Government Forms

**Better
Regulation**
Everyone's Business

Better Forms for Better Regulation

Guidelines for Creating and Renovating
Nova Scotia Government Forms

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the Better Regulation Initiative
and Communications Nova Scotia*

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The Better Regulation Initiative and Communications Nova Scotia developed these guidelines and an online forms development resource to help government employees produce user-friendly forms for the public.

Why do we need better forms in the Nova Scotia government?

Forms are important tools, both for the government and for the people and businesses we serve.

Forms allow us to systematically collect standardized information. With this information, we grant approvals, licenses, certifications, and permits. These in turn allow people and businesses to proceed with important projects—in ways that follow government regulations designed to protect citizens, communities, and the environment.

That said, we must recognize that forms are also a challenge—both for us and for the people we serve. That is why the Better Regulation Initiative has launched Better Forms for Better Regulation. Better Forms has three main goals:

- improve the quality, consistency, and user-friendliness of provincial government forms
- make forms easier and faster to find and complete
- reduce the number of forms businesses must complete

Making forms consistent and easier to find, read, understand, and complete will lead to many benefits:

- Fewer forms will be returned with missing or incorrect information. This saves staff time spent following up to get the necessary information. It also helps ensure that the form is processed within the expected service standard, so clients are satisfied and businesses are able to operate efficiently.
- Businesses will spend less time on paperwork, enabling them to be more productive and competitive.
- Citizens and businesses will comply more readily with regulations.
- Introducing common standards for forms will create a more consistent and professional image of the government, while making individual forms easier to identify.

Improving forms is good for businesses, good for citizens, and good for government employees.



How can we make our forms better?

Many Nova Scotia government forms are designed well, so that they are easy for people to understand and complete. However, there is room for many individual forms to be improved. Government forms overall will be improved when they are more consistent within and across departments. This can be achieved by adopting common standards that follow well-researched best practices for forms.

We can improve our clients' experience with government forms in many ways.

We can

- reduce the overall number of forms clients need to fill out
- ask only for information that is truly needed, to reduce the length of the form and the burden of filling it out and managing the data
- make it easy for clients to find and obtain the necessary forms
- post forms online in formats that clients can fill out electronically, save for their records, and e-mail to government
- write and design forms so they are easy for clients to understand and complete
- assign each form a unique identification code and version number or revision date—to aid version control and support client inquiries

We can make clear

- the purpose of the form and the agency responsible for it
- who clients can contact if they have questions or need help filling out the form
- how to pay when a cost is involved
- how and where clients should submit their completed forms

These guidelines will help you assess and analyze your forms. Along with resources on the Communications Nova Scotia website (www.gov.ns.ca/better-forms), they will help you write and design your forms so they are easier for your clients to understand and complete.

These resources will also help you decide what kind of form you should use for your particular program. For example, whether you should develop an online form or a paper form, and what format you should use to make paper forms available online.

The Better Forms guidelines and online resources will help you determine how best to manage your forms and ensure that the most up-to-date version is always the one in use. And, if you require assistance, they direct you to experts who can help you with your forms.

By following the guidelines and advice on these pages, you will improve your program's efficiency in processing forms and serving clients. As more departments embrace Better Forms for Better Regulation, we will save the public and private sectors time and money, while improving our clients' experience with government.

A step-by-step approach

Better Forms for Better Regulation offers a step-by-step approach to creating and renovating forms.

- Step 1: Gather and assess your forms
- Step 2: Set priorities for forms
- Step 3: Analyze the form
- Step 4: Plan your form
- Step 5: Write your form
- Step 6: Design your form
- Step 7: Test your form
- Step 8: Produce your form
- Step 9: Manage your form
- Step 10: Evaluate your form

Online forms versus paper forms—what’s the difference?

A big difference exists between an online form and a form that is available online as a downloadable document, in WordPerfect, Word, or PDF. Forms posted online as downloadable documents are still essentially paper forms. A true online form is filled out directly in the web portal. Clients enter their information in the fields provided and submit their completed form directly through the web portal. The information generally goes directly into a database or temporary data storage facility.

Who should be involved

People you may wish to involve in creating and renovating forms include program managers, staff members who answer client questions and process forms, Better Regulation coordinators, communications advisors, and process analysts. You may wish to consult others on specific issues, such as your department’s FOIPOP (Freedom of Information, Protection of Privacy) representative or legal counsel.



Step 1: Gather and assess your forms

The first step to making government forms better is for your department or division to take a close and critical look at the forms you use to administer your various programs.

After gathering your forms, assess them closely with an eye to the following common problems.

PROBLEM	SOLUTION
The form	You can
collects information already gathered by other forms	› combine two or more forms within or across program areas
asks for information that is not really needed or is no longer relevant	› remove unnecessary questions
is not clearly identified by source	› use the Better Forms templates in this resource
does not clearly state what it is for	› give your form a title that states its subject and purpose
does not look like other forms in our division or department	› apply Better Forms standards to all forms
does not give clients enough space to record the required information	› follow Better Forms standards—a two-page form with room for responses is better than a one-page form without enough space
is crowded with too much information and too many graphic elements	› follow Better Forms Standards—a two-page form that is spacious is better than a crowded one-page form
is printed in a small type size that is difficult to read	› follow Better Forms Standards—a readable two-page form is better than a one-page form that requires magnification
is laden with technical or legal language	› follow the plain language guidelines in this resource; consult your communications advisor
does not provide clear instructions for completing and submitting the form	› provide concise instructions at the end of the form, as shown on the Better Forms templates
does not identify if or what other forms or information must be submitted	› state what other forms and information the client must submit with the form
does not tell the client how they can get help with the form	› give the name and contact information for a staff person clients can call for help
is not available online	› create an electronically fillable PDF and upload it to the appropriate portal
is available online but is difficult to find	› simplify the online pathway to your form and make sure it is labeled the same way everywhere it appears
is available in different versions in different locations	› assign a version number/revision date to the form; ensure that the most recent version is posted online and stocked at distribution points; recall and shred obsolete versions, except a copy for archives

Step 2: Set priorities for forms

After you have gathered your forms and assessed their strengths and weaknesses, you will need to take a big-picture look at your programs' forms. In addition to problems with individual forms, you may discover forms that could be combined or eliminated to streamline paperwork burden.

Discuss the following:

- What do you hear from clients about your forms, directly or indirectly?
- What business processes do your forms serve?
- Do they adequately serve these processes? If not, what needs to change?
- Could you combine forms?
- Could you eliminate forms? If you plan to stop using any forms, see Taking a form out of service, page 18.
- Do you need to create any new forms? If you need to create new forms, see Making new forms, below.
- Do you need to renovate any existing forms? If yes, which ones should you renovate first? See Renovating Forms, page 10.

Step 3: Analyze your form

After gathering and assessing your forms, setting priorities for forms, and deciding if you will create new forms or renovate existing ones, you need to do an analysis. This analysis is different for new forms than it is for existing forms.

Making new forms

New forms can be necessary—for example, when you launch a new program. It is important to analyze the need for a new form before you produce it.

Before developing a new form, carefully consider the following:

- Is a form really required?
- What information will the form gather?
- Why is this information needed?
- What service or business operation does this information feed into?
- Are there other ways to obtain the required information?
- Will a new form increase administrative burden for staff or clients?



If you determine that a new form is required, consider the following:

- Who will use this form? How will they access the form?
- How will the data be collected, input, stored, and managed?
Map out the process to help your team follow the flow of information.
- Should this form be developed as an online form that can be completed and submitted online via the government website? What are the costs and benefits of producing an online form?
- Is there a financial transaction involved with this form? Is online payment a cost-effective or feasible option?
- Is a signature required on this form? If yes, is this a legal or financial requirement or is it a habit to collect a signature? If a signature is truly required, the client should be required to date the form as well. Refer to the Nova Scotia Government authentication policy <http://10.2.155.101/econ/im/> for more information.
- How confidential or sensitive is the information to be collected? How secure does it need to be? (Online forms are more secure than forms that are e-mailed as attachments).

Renovating forms

Making better forms often involves changing forms that are already in service. It can be difficult to know which form or forms to renovate first. Focus your attention on forms that cause the most problems or are so high volume that improving them will have a major impact inside and outside government.

Before deciding to renovate a form, consider the following:

- Is this a high-impact or high-volume form?
- How many people or businesses use this form each year?
- Are you meeting the service delivery standard in processing this form?
- Do you receive complaints from clients about this form? How often?
- Do you receive incomplete or incorrect information on this form?
- How much staff time is required to follow up with clients to complete and correct the information on the form?
- Do delays in processing this form create problems for people or businesses?
Map out the process to reveal where delays exist. The process map can then help your team to discover solutions.

If you determine that the form should be renovated, consider the following:

- What information does the form gather?
- Does it gather all the information we need?
- Why is this information needed?
- Are we collecting information we do not need?
- Who will use this form? How will they access the form?

- How will the data be collected, input, stored, and managed?
- Does newly collected information need to be compatible with historical information?
- Should this form be developed as an online form, which can be completed and submitted online via the government website? What are the costs and benefits of producing an online form?
- Is there a financial transaction involved with this form? Is online payment a cost-effective or feasible option?
- Is a signature required on this form? If yes, is this a legal or financial requirement or is it a habit to collect a signature? If a signature is truly required, the client should be required to date the form as well. Refer to the Nova Scotia Government authentication policy <http://10.2.155.101/econ/im/> click for more information.
- How confidential or sensitive is the information to be collected? How secure does it need to be? (Online forms are more secure than forms that are e-mailed as attachments.)

Step 4: Plan your form

After thoroughly analyzing your new or improved form, write a short statement to clearly define the objectives of the form. For example: “This form allows citizens to apply for a building permit.” Keep these objectives close at hand to guide you as you create or renovate the form.

As you plan your form, consider the following:

- Decide what information you really need to obtain through the form. Eliminate any unnecessary questions.
- Are you asking for private information, such as date of birth, income, or civic address? Do you really need that information? Why?

Remember that privacy regulations require forms to state clearly why private information is being requested – why it is necessary, what it will be used for. For more information about Nova Scotia’s privacy policy, visit www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/manuals/PDF/300/30411-01.pdf. You may also want to speak to your department’s Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) coordinator and refer to the government’s website privacy policy, www.gov.ns.ca:80/govt/privacy/

- Decide if you want to produce the form as an online form or in a paper format (available on paper by request and as a downloadable document on the government website).
- If you choose to produce a paper form, consult these guidelines for advice on writing, designing, producing, managing, and evaluating the form. Visit the Better Forms for Better Regulations online resource to download the Better Forms Do-it-Yourself Templates and see Before and After Makeovers. Examples of these templates, as well as the Better Forms Standards, can be found on pages 19 to 20 of these guidelines.



- If you choose to produce an online form, the development costs will be higher. However, if your form is high-volume, an online form may be the most efficient and cost-effective option. Follow these guidelines for writing, testing, managing, and evaluating forms. Consult IT specialists in your department for technical advice. Communications Nova Scotia can also assist your department in developing online forms. Remember that online forms must also be made available in a paper format to be accessible to everyone.

Better Forms online resource: www.gov.ns.ca/better-forms

Step 5: Write your form

Three important things to consider as you begin writing or re-writing your form are audience, language, and sequencing.

Audience

The people who fill in government forms come from many backgrounds and have varied levels of literacy and education. Write your form so it can be easily understood by everyone who uses it.

Questions to ask about your audience

- Who fills in your form? Consider their age, education, first language, reading ability, and experience with forms.
- Is your audience the general public? If yes, keep in mind that government documents for the general public should be written in language that an average junior high student could read and understand. This is the level you will find in popular fiction. Short sentences, short paragraphs, and action verbs are key to clear writing.
- Does your audience have specialized knowledge of the form's subject matter? If not, you must avoid technical and legal jargon, as well as acronyms. While familiar to you and your colleagues, this kind of language is not easy for everyone to understand.

Language

Often government forms use phrasing similar to that in the legislation. This kind of language can be confusing and difficult for many people to understand.

Tips for writing clearly

- Use everyday language that is appropriate for your audience. For information about plain language, see the Nova Scotia Plain Language Guide on the Better Forms for Better Regulation online resource (www.gov.ns.ca/better-forms). Keep in mind that plain language will make your form easier for busy people to read, understand, and complete quickly and accurately.
- Use “you” instead of impersonal terms like “the applicant.”
- Use simple phrases and sentences. How would you ask someone this question if you were talking to them in person?

- Use action words. For example, start the section of the form that asks for name, address, and contact information with the simple request: “Give your personal information.” Other action requests include: “Tell us about your complaint,” “Provide your business information,” and “Attach supporting documents.”
- Word your questions so they do not require additional instructions.
- If you need additional instructions, keep them simple and place them exactly where they are needed on the form. Research shows that people often ignore instructions on forms and are even more likely to do so if they are on a separate sheet or if the instructions are complex.
- Tell the client who to call for help with the form and how to submit the form.
- Avoid asking people to fill in tables. Research shows people have difficulty with them.
- When possible, phrase questions so they can be answered by ticking multiple choice or “yes” or “no” boxes. This is preferable to open-ended questions, which people are more likely to leave blank.
- Consider if the form needs to be bilingual or available in languages other than English to reach its intended users. If you are considering making your form available in French, be aware that this may imply to the user that they will also receive service from the related program in French. If you need translation, allow time for this step in your development process.

For more tips, see the Better Regulation Plain Language Guidelines at www.gov.ns.ca/better-forms

Sequencing

Look at the list of information you need to obtain with this form. What is the most logical order in which to ask these questions?

What sequence will work best for your audience?

- Begin with general questions that will be easy for people to answer, such as name, address, and contact information. Refer to the Better Forms Do-it-Yourself Templates on pages 23 and 24 for examples of how to request name, address, and date information.
- Move from general, easy questions to more specific questions that may require more effort from the client.
- Number your questions. Research shows that dividing forms into boxed-in sections encourages scanning, which can lead people to skip questions. People are more likely to systematically complete the entire form if the questions are presented in a continuous sequence.
- Finish the form with any necessary declarations or signatures, and instructions that tell the client how to submit the form and any required fees. If you are asking for a signature, include a space for the person to mark the date.



Step 6: Design your form

Once you have your form drafted, it is time to put it in the standardized format for Nova Scotia government forms. See Better Forms Standards on page 19.

You can take one of two approaches:

Option 1

Use the Better Forms Do-it-Yourself Templates on the Communications Nova Scotia website at www.gov.ns.ca/better-forms

If your form is simple and relatively short (one or two pages), you should have no problem adapting it to the template. Just download the template, overwrite the sample information with your specific information, and save the new form.

Option 2

Take your form to Communications Nova Scotia to be professionally designed. Consider having your form professionally designed if your form is

- **complex** — it can be very difficult to make a form that has several multiple choice lists, for example, look neat and inviting for the user
- **high volume** or is provided to many clients on paper
- **high profile**

The cost of having your form professionally designed (or printed) will vary from project to project. You should access Communications Nova Scotia through your department's communications advisor.

Step 7: Test and finalize your form

Once your form is designed, you will want to test it to make sure your new form is easy to use or that your renovated form solves the problems you were having with that form.

First, share your form with people inside your department. They may have valuable suggestions. Next, share the form with people who use your program. Depending on the volume of your form, you could test it with as few as 5 clients or as many as 20.

When you provide the clients with the draft form, whether online, in person, or by mail, make it clear that this form is undergoing revision and that you are seeking client feedback on the form.

You may wish to provide this explanation in a one-page document that includes a short questionnaire about the usability of the form.

When testing forms, be sure to clearly mark the form DRAFT, so it cannot be submitted to or accepted by a program by mistake.

Another way of testing your form is to hold a focus group discussion with a small number of clients. This method would be suitable for programs that interact frequently and have established relationships with clients. A caution about focus groups is that they give opinions and feelings, not actual results. For example, a group may say they prefer the look of the bright green paper, but in actual use this may interfere with people's ability to read and complete the form.

After a number of clients have completed the draft form and provided their written or verbal feedback, make adjustments as required and proceed to the next step.

Step 8: Produce your form

Once your form is designed according to the Better Forms Standards on page 19, you are ready to produce your form.

Printing

If it is a high-volume form that will be distributed in hard copy, contact Communications Nova Scotia to discuss your printing options. Your department's communications officer can help you coordinate with Communications Nova Scotia.

If it is a low-volume form and most clients will be accessing it online, you may need to print only a few copies at a time, using a desktop printer.

Producing a PDF

Make paper forms available online in PDF (portable document format), rather than in a word processing document. In PDF, the layout remains stable and people cannot alter the form.

To make your form as user-friendly as possible, produce a PDF that can be completed electronically rather than printed and filled in by hand. This makes it easier for the form filler to complete the form in the space provided and ensures that responses are legible, thus reducing data-entry mistakes.

For forms to be filled in electronically, you need to create fields in the form. This can be done in any version of Adobe Acrobat (not the free Acrobat Reader).

For clients to be able to save their work-in-progress on a form, and save the completed form, you need to use Adobe Acrobat, version 8.0 or higher. If you do not have this version, you may purchase the software through your department's IT specialists.



The ability to save the form is convenient for clients. They can save work they have done on the form and come back to it later. They can store the form in their electronic files and print copies as needed. They can even e-mail the completed form to government, if a handwritten signature is not needed.

The online tutorial in Adobe Acrobat explains in detail how to create fields and which settings you need to activate so clients can save the document. Or you can go through your department's communications advisor to contact Communications Nova Scotia experts who can coordinate the creation of fields in your form. This is relatively inexpensive compared to purchasing and learning how to use new software.

Making your form

Before you upload the PDF of the form to the government website, make sure the title of the form is the same in the portal as it is on the form itself. Make sure all online references to the form use the same title. Upload the latest version of the form to one location only, to make it easier to ensure the latest version is always online. People may be able to access the form through various different pathways, but it should be stored in one central location only.

Make the route to your form as straightforward as possible. Talk to the web development staff in your department about creating meta-tags for your form so it is searchable by title and function on the government website.

If your form is related to a permit, licence, approval, registration, or certificate, provide your form to the Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations' e-Services division. They can make your form available to the public through the Nova Scotia Permits Directory.

Step 9: Manage your form

Once your form has been produced and is available online—and possibly in hard copy as well—you will need to manage it.

Version control is one of the most important things to consider in managing your form. Whenever you update your form, be sure to replace the old form with the new current version online. Recall and destroy obsolete forms.

Assign a form code and last revision date to each form to help ensure that everyone is using the current version of the form. The Better Forms Do-it-Yourself Templates include a place in the footer where you should put this code and revision date. These are shown in Appendix B and available for download at www.gov.ns.ca/better-forms

Your new form is most likely one of several or many forms your program, division, or department manages. We recommend that departments develop codes for forms across the department that indicate which program each form belongs to, or if the form is used department wide. These can be used in conjunction with a numbering system to clearly identify, track, and manage your forms.

A revision date in the footer of a form can be used as a cross reference by staff and clients to ensure that the client is using the most recent version of the form.

Step 10: Evaluate your form

If you have introduced a new form, you can evaluate the form after several weeks or months by asking clients for written or verbal feedback on the form. Is the form easy to find, read, understand, complete, and return to government?

You can also ask staff how well the new form is working. Are they receiving complaints about the form? Are they receiving incomplete forms that require follow up with clients for missing or incorrect information?

Based on input from clients and staff, you may need to revise and re-issue the form.

If you have renovated an existing form, you will want to evaluate the form to measure improvements over the previous version of the form.

The key to evaluating the success of your renovated form is to collect baseline data before you change the form. You may record such things as how much time staff spend following up with clients to complete or correct information on the form, how many complaints you receive, how many forms are returned incomplete, etc. You may also want to measure or estimate how long it takes clients to fill out your form.

With these benchmarks in place, you can re-measure after the revised form has been in use for several months, to see if you have successfully reduced paperwork burden and solved the problems caused by the old form. If the revised form has not solved the problems, you may need to make further revisions.

How long you wait to conduct this evaluation will depend on the volume of the form. You may be able to evaluate a high-volume form within a few months. You may need to wait longer if only a few forms are filled out each week or month.



Taking a form out of service

When you gather and assess your forms, you may find that there are forms you can eliminate.

What to consider

- What process did this form support?
- Who used the form?
- How frequently was this form used?
- Where does the form exist—electronically on the Internet? On paper?
- Confirm and seek approval that this form is no longer being used, and document why it is no longer necessary.
- Before removing access to the form, observe a waiting period. This may be a month or two or longer, depending on how frequently the form is or was used.
- Dispose of the old forms so that they are no longer in circulation. Electronic copies should be removed from the Internet, and the online references to the form removed. A hard copy or electronic file of the most recent version should, however, be kept on file for archive.
- Update your forms directory, inventory list, or departmental manuals to indicate the form has been taken out of service and destroyed except for the archival version.

Appendix A: Standards

The Better Regulation Initiative has developed standards for Nova Scotia government forms, based on extensive research into best practices. As more and more forms are developed using the Better Forms for Better Regulation standards, Nova Scotians will find government forms to be consistent, professional, and easy to look at and complete.

The following standards have been applied to make templates that government employees and contractors can use when developing forms. It is very useful to refer to these downloadable templates while reviewing the standards. The Better Forms Do-it-Yourself Templates are posted on the Communications Nova Scotia website at www.gov.ns.ca/better-forms

Electronic format

- Create basic, general-use forms in Microsoft Word or Wordperfect using the Better Forms Do-It-Yourself Templates.
- Produce complex, high-volume, or high-profile forms in appropriate page layout software.
- Create fields and save forms in Adobe Acrobat version 8.0 or higher to create an interactive PDF form that people can save and e-mail.

Design the form header

Forms must be clearly identified as Nova Scotia government forms. Their purpose must also be clearly identified in the form header.

The form header must include the Nova Scotia visual identity (stylized flag and provincial name logotype) and a title. The form header must appear at the top of the first page of every form. The header usually also includes a department name. The header is completed by a line rule that separates it from the body of the form. Here is how these elements must be placed within the form header:

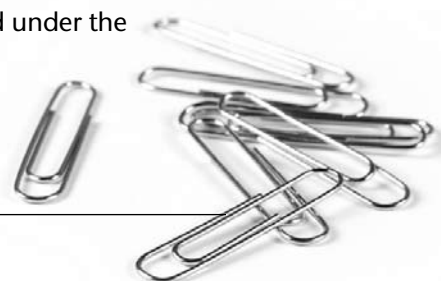
Visual identity

- Include a black and white version of the Nova Scotia visual identity mark at the top left corner, flush left.
- Go to www.gov.ns.ca/CMNS and click on “VIP Standards Manual,” under “Policies.”



Department name

- If the department name is required, place it beneath the logo, in Arial Narrow bold (or Helvetica Condensed bold), 11.5 or 12 point, upper and lower case, flush left, aligned under the Nova Scotia visual identity mark.
- If the division name is necessary, place it beneath the department name, in Arial Narrow (or Helvetica Condensed), 10 point, upper and lower case, flush left, aligned under the department name.



Form title

- Identify both the purpose and subject of the form in the title. Use as few words as possible (for example, Application for Approval to Alter a Watercourse).
- Place the title flush right directly across from the visual identity mark.
- Use Arial Narrow bold (or Helvetica Condensed bold), 18 point, upper and lower case.

Line rule

- Underline the header with a 1.5-point line rule, to be placed beneath the logo and text to separate the header from the body of the form.

Design the body of the form with an open layout

Less is more when it comes to making forms easy to read and to complete. That is why the Better Forms for Better Regulation standards specify an open layout for general use forms. The various sections of the form are not enclosed in boxes. Instead, they are separated by white space.

White space and margins

- Use margins of at least half an inch (13 mm) on either side, and half an inch to one inch (13 to 26 mm) top and bottom to create enough white space around the entire form.
- Ensure that enough white space separates lines of text and the line rules where people must enter information.
- Ensure that enough white space separates the sections of the form—use double or triple spacing, depending on how much text is on the form.
- If the form will be filed in a binder, make side margins at least three-quarters of an inch (20 mm) to ensure that no data is lost due to hole punching.

Typography

- Use Arial Narrow (or Helvetica Condensed) throughout the form.
- Ensure the text is flush left, never justified across the page. Research shows that justified text is harder to read.
- Put section heads in bold type, 14 to 16 point.
- Put questions in regular type, 9 to 12 point.
- Use the larger text sizes for general public and older audiences.

Contact information

Contact information should be provided in the final section of the body of the form, which specifies where the form filler must send the completed form. In addition to the mailing address, include a phone number or e-mail address that people can contact if they have questions.

Important! Do not try to crowd too much information onto one page. It is better to have a multi-page form that is easy to look at, read, and complete, than a one-page form that is difficult to read and fill out.

Close the form with a comprehensive footer

The form footer contains vital information for both the clients who fill in the form and the government employees who manage the form.

Footer specifications

- Separate the footer from the body of the form by a 1.5-point line rule.
- Place the footer information beneath the line rule.
- Place the program website address on the left, flush left, in Arial Narrow bold (or Helvetica Condensed bold), 8 points.
- Place the form identification information on the right, flush right, in Arial Narrow bold (or Helvetica Condensed), 8 point. This could include the department or program name (or a code), a version number, and a date that indicates when the form was created or last revised.
- If the form is more than one page long, number the pages. Centre the page number, in Arial Narrow bold (or Helvetica Condensed), 8 point. Be sure to indicate which page of the form it is, for example, “page 1 of 3”. This way, clients will know they have all the pages.



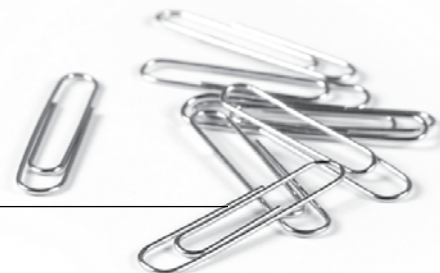
Appendix B: Do-It-Yourself Templates

Better Regulation and Communications Nova Scotia have produced two Do-It-Yourself Templates for government employees to use when developing forms for the public. The Individual Template is for forms that will be filled out by individual members of the public. The Business Template is for forms that will be filled out by businesses.

Both the Individual Template and the Business Template are available on the Communications Nova Scotia website at www.gov.ns.ca/better-forms. These are downloadable files, available in Wordperfect and Microsoft Word. Employees can download the appropriate version, overwrite the template with specific information, and save it as a new document. Once the form is finalized, it should be created as an electronically fillable PDF in Adobe Acrobat. See Step 8: Producing your form, page 15.

Do-It-Yourself Template Sample—Individual

 NOVA SCOTIA	< Program Name > < Form Title >
< Department Name >	
1 Give your personal information	
Last name: _____	
First name: _____ Middle name: _____	
Address: _____	
Postal code: _____	
Phone number: _____ Date of birth (dd/mm/yyyy): _____	
2 <Describe the section in plain language, starting with an action word >	
<Use this area to request details (see www.gov.ns.ca/better-forms for sample forms)>	
----->	
3 <Describe the section in plain language, starting with an action word >	
<Use this area to request details (see www.gov.ns.ca/better-forms for sample forms)>	
<Use check boxes if you need your client to make choices from a list of options> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
----->	
4 Attach supporting documents	
<If you require supporting documents, make your request a separate, numbered step so clients do not miss it>	
----->	
5 Sign the certification and consent	
I certify that the information given on this form is complete and accurate.	
I consent <use this area to request consents you may need to meet privacy rules> ----->	
Name (please print): _____	
Signature: _____ Date: _____	
6 Return the form and attachments to	For Staff Use Only
Attention: Organization name Address City, province, postal code	Authorized signature: _____ Date: _____
Questions? Call 902-555-5555	
www.gov.ns.ca/cdepartment	Page 1 of 1
	<Form Number> ddmmyyyy V.01



Do-It-Yourself Template Sample—Business

 <Department Name>	< Program Name> <Form Title>	
<hr/>		
1 Give your business information		
Name of company: _____		
Civic address: _____		
_____	Postal code: _____	
Mailing address (if different): _____		
_____	Postal code: _____	
Phone number: _____ <If you need a business ID#, request it here> _____		
2 Tell us who to contact if we have questions		
Name: _____ Position or title: _____		
Phone number: _____ Email: _____		
3 <Describe the section in plain language, starting with an action word >		
<Use this area to request necessary details (see www.gov.ns.ca/better-forms for sample forms)>		
<Use check boxes if you need your client to make choices from a list of options> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
----->		
4 Attach supporting documents		
<If you require supporting documents, make your request a separate, numbered step so clients do not miss it>		
----->		
5 Sign the certification and consent		
I certify that the information I have provided on this form is complete and accurate.		
I consent <use this area to request consents you may need to meet privacy rules> ----->		
Name (please print): _____ Position or title: _____		
Signature: _____ Date: _____		
6 Return the form and attachments to		
Attention: Organization name Address City, province, postal code	For Staff Use Only Authorized signature: _____ Date: _____	
Questions? Call 902-555-5555		
<hr/>		
<a href="http://www.gov.ns.ca/<department>">www.gov.ns.ca/<department>	Page 1 of 1	<Form Number> ddmmYYYY V.01

