

LEGIBLE HANDWRITING

Even in the EHR era, legible handwriting is especially important in the practice of medicine where the findings of each physician seeing a given patient may have a significant bearing on the total medical picture. Please make a conscious effort to write legibly with black or dark blue ink in all records and communications. Do not use a felt-tip pen as ink may bleed onto the opposite page. Each entry should be made in the patient's record at the appropriate place and include a clear signature, date and time.

- **Orders must be legible**
- **Orders must avoid unacceptable abbreviations**
- **Always use ballpoint pens**
- **Always sign, date and time each order**
- **Always print name if signature illegible**

Prohibited and Acceptable Abbreviations

Prohibited	Acceptable	Potential for Error
U, u	Units, units	U is read as a zero (0), 4 or cc (e.g., an order for 10 U of insulin can be misread as 100).
IU	International Units	Misread as IV (intravenous) or 10.
.X (lack of leading zero)	0.X	Use of leading decimal point causes errors as decimal point is sometimes not seen.
X.0 (trailing zero)	X	Use of trailing zeros causes errors as decimal point is sometimes not seen
Q.O.D., QOD, q.o.d., qod	every other day	Mistaken for qid or qd.
Q.D., QD, q.d., qd	daily	Mistaken for qid or qod
MS	morphine sulfate morphine	Mistaken for magnesium sulfate
MgSO ₄ , MSO ₄	mag sulfate, magnesium sulfate	Mistaken for morphine sulfate.
SC or SQ	Subcutaneously or Subcu	
TIW	Three times a week (specific which days)	
Cc	Cubic centimeters	
Abbreviated Drug names	Use the complete spelling for all drug names	
Abbreviated Left or Right	Spell out "left" or "right" on consent forms, surgery schedules and intra-operative/procedural notes	
Abbreviated Procedures	Use the appropriate terminology to describe a procedure/surgery to which a patient is consenting	