

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**
- **Residents must print their pager number**

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. |
| .2 | 0.2 | Use of leading decimal point causes errors as decimal point is sometimes not seen. |
| 2.0 | 2 | 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, MSO ₄ | morphine sulfate morphine | Mistaken for magnesium sulfate |
| MgSO 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 | |