

# Memorandum

TO : ALL PERSONNEL  
FROM : THE ADMINISTRATOR  
SUBJECT : USE OF NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE  
DATE : 21 FEBRUARY 2024

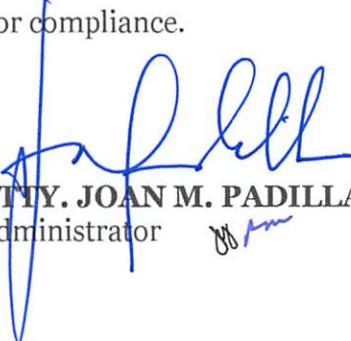
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Ahead of National Women's Month in March, may we reiterate compliance with Civil Service Commission (CSC) Memorandum Circular No. 12, series of 2005, re: USE OF NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE IN ALL OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND ISSUANCES.

Please be mindful of language used in official documents, correspondence, signage and social media accounts. Avoid words which are sexist or discriminatory against women or men. Let us also be sensible and sensitive when communicating with colleagues, clients and the community, as well as with our own families and personal acquaintances.

Attached are references on the subject.

For compliance.



**ATTY. JOAN M. PADILLA**  
Administrator

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# Questions & Answers

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CSC Memorandum Circular  
No. 12, S. 2005

## **Use of Non-sexist Language in all Official Documents, Communications and Issuances**

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National Statistics Office  
Gender and Development Committee  
March 2008

## **WHAT IS CSC MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 12, S. 2005?**

CSC Memorandum Circular No. 12, S. 2005, issued on March 30, 2005, encourages government officials and employees to use non-sexist language in all its official documents, issuances and communications.

## **WHY IS THERE A NEED TO USE NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE?**

Language is an essential tool in communication. It articulates consciousness, reflects culture, and affects socialization. Hence, the need to recognize the importance of transforming language from traditional usage to a more liberating one, that which is gender-sensitive.

## **HOW CAN THE CSC ISSUANCE PROMOTE GENDER AWARENESS?**

Since government officials and employees encounter gender issues everyday, the use of non-sexist language in preparing letters, memoranda and other communications will encourage us to make a conscious effort to avoid implicit and explicit discriminatory language against women and men. This, in turn, will help promote gender-sensitivity in the workplace.

## **HOW CAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES EMPLOY NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE IN THEIR COMMUNICATIONS?**

Below are some suggestions on how to use non-sexist language.

1. Eliminate the generic use of HE, HIS, or HIM unless the antecedent is obviously male by:

a. Using plural nouns

Traditional: The lawyer uses his brief to guide him.

Suggested: The lawyers use their briefs to guide them,

b. Deleting he, his, and him altogether, rewording if necessary

Traditional: The architect uses his blueprint to guide him.

Suggested: The architect uses the blueprint as a guide.

c. Substituting articles (a, an, the) for his; using who instead of he

Traditional: The writer should know his readers well.

Suggested: The writer should know the readers well.

d. Using One, We or You

Traditional: As one grows older, he becomes more effective.

Suggested: As one grows older, one becomes more effective.

e. Using the passive voice

Traditional: The manager must submit his proposal today.

Suggested: The proposal must be submitted by the manager today.

2. Eliminate the generic use of Man, instead use People, Person(s), Human(s), Human Being(s), Humankind, Humanity, The Human Race

Traditional: ordinary man, mankind, the brotherhood of man  
Suggested: ordinary people, humanity, the human family

3. Eliminate sexism in symbolic representations of gender in words, sentences, and text by:

- a. Taking the context of the word, analyzing its meaning, and eliminating sexism in the concept:

Traditional: feelings of brotherhood, feelings of fraternity  
Suggested: feelings of kinship, solidarity

Traditional: the founding father  
Suggested: the founders, the founding leaders

Traditional: the Father of relativity theory  
Suggested: the founder of relativity theory, the initiator of relativity theory

- b. Finding precise words to delineate the thing itself from supposedly sex-linked characteristics:

Traditional: Titanic was a great ship, but she rests at the bottom of the sea.  
Suggested: Titanic was a great ship, but it now rests at the bottom of the sea.

Traditional: "Don't let Mother Nature rip you off! She's out to kill your car's new finish. Stop her . . ."  
Suggested: "Don't let nature rip you off! It's out to kill your car's new finish. Stop it . . ."

4. Eliminate Sexual Stereotyping of Roles by:

- a. Using the same term for both genders when it comes to profession or employment:

Traditional: Salesman, Stewardess  
Suggested: Sales agent, Flight attendant

- b. Using gender fair terms in lexical terms

Traditional: Sportsmanship  
Suggested: Highest ideals of fair play

- c. Treating men and women in a parallel manner

Traditional: I now pronounce you man and wife.  
Suggested: I now pronounce you husband and wife.

- d. Avoiding language that reinforces stereotyping images

Traditional: a man's job, the director's girl Friday  
Suggested: a big job, the director's assistant

- e. Avoiding language that catches attention to the sex role of men and women

Traditional: working mothers, spinsters or old maids  
Suggested: wage-earning mothers, unmarried women

Traditional: busboys, chauvinist pigs  
Suggested: waiter's assistants, male chauvinists

5. Eliminate sexism when addressing persons formally by:

- a. Using Ms. instead of Mrs.

Traditional: Mrs. Dela Cruz  
Suggested: Ms. dela Cruz

- b. Using a married woman's first name instead of her husband's

Traditional: Mrs. Juan dela Cruz  
Suggested: Ms. Maria Santos-dela Cruz

- c. Using the corresponding titles for females:

Traditional: Dra. Concepcion Reyes  
Suggested: Dr. Concepcion Reyes

- d. Using the title of the job or group in letters to unknown persons

Traditional: Dear Sir  
Suggested: Dear Editor, Dear Credit Manager, Dear Colleagues

## NON-SEXIST LANGUAGE TIP SHEET

Here is a selected list of terms that should be avoided because either they are sexist, exclude women, or are demeaning, most often to women and girls. Alternatives include sex-specific terms and gender-neutral plural forms. It is good to remember that while gender-neutral terms avoid sexism, they can keep women invisible. In cases where the use of a word has reinforced a perception that only men perform a task role, sex specific alternatives to it are noted.

Actress	Actor
Aged (elderly)	Older women, older men, older adults, senior citizens, elderly
Airline stewards/esses	Flight attendants
Anchorman	Anchor
Bachelorette, spinster	Single or unmarried woman
Barren	Infertile
Bellboy	Bellhop
Blacks (N. American)	African American women/girls African American men/boys African American
Broken home	Single-parent family; restructured family
Brotherhood of man	Humanity
Busboy	Waiter's assistant
Businessman	Businessman, businesswomen, entrepreneur, business community
Cameraman	Camera operator, photographer, videographer
Comedienne	Comedian
Chairman	Chairperson
Chambermaid	Hotel worker
Janitress	Cleaners
Congressman	Congressional Representatives and members of Congress
Craftsman	Craftswomen, artisans
Doorman	Doorkeeper
Early man	Early peoples, early men and women
Effeminate	Delicate, feeble, soft, affected

Female lawyer	Lawyer
Firemen	Firefighters
Fishermen	Fishers, fishing trade/community,
Fishwives	Fisherfolk, Fish sellers
Forefathers	Ancestors
Foreman	Supervisor
Gentleman's agreement	Unwritten agreement
Girl Friday	Personal assistant
Handyman	Repairer, maintenance worker
Heroine	Hero
Hooker	Prostituted person
Lady doctor	Doctor, physician
Lady guard	Guard, security guard
Layman	Non-expert, non-specialist
Layman's language	Lay as opposed to religious clergy Conversational, not technical
Lumberjack	Lumberman, lumberwoman, lumber cutters, dockers
Maid	Household worker/helper, domestic worker
Mailman	Mail carrier
Male nurse	Nurse
Man, mankind	Humanity, human species, humans, humankind, human beings, peoples
Man a project	Staff a project, hire personnel
Man-hours	Work hours, labor time
Manhood	Adulthood
Man and wife	Husband and wife, wife and husband
Man-made	Artificial
Manpower	Human resources, labor force, personnel
Man-sized	Big, huge
Middleman	Intermediary, agent
Newsman/newshen	Reporter, journalist, male or female
Mediaman	Journalist
Ombudsman	Ombud, protector, representative
Policeman	Police officer, constable
Pressmen	Press operators

Repairmen	Repairers
Salesman/girl	Salespeople, sales representatives, salesperson
Servant	Household worker, domestic worker
Seaman	Mariner, sailor, seafarer
Seamstress	Sewer, mender
Spokesman	Spokesperson
Statesmen	Diplomats, political leaders
Statesmanship	Diplomacy
Stockman	Stockworker
Unmarried/unwed mother	Single mother, solo parent
Ushette	Usher
Waitress	Waiter
Watchman	Guard, security guard
Weatherman	Weather reporter, meteorologist
Workmen's compensation	Worker's compensation
Whore	Prostituted person
Woman driver	Driver
Woman engineer	Engineer
Woman writer	Writer

Gender-Fair Media Guidebook, Revised Edition  
December 2017