

3.3 Formatting Procedure Steps

Use the guidelines in this module to format the steps of your procedures. Begin your steps immediately after your heading and procedure overview. The easiest way to format procedures is in a step-by-step list format.

1. Insert a line break between your procedure overview and steps.
2. Place each step in chronological order, with each step occurring on a separate line.
3. Number or bullet each step. You will use either bulleted or numbered steps depending on the order and type of steps in the procedure (See Table 5).

Table 5. Procedure List Formats

Step Format	Example
Fixed-order steps. These steps must be presented in a certain order. Format fixed-order steps into vertical, numbered lists.	1. Step 1 2. Step 2 3. Step 3
Variable-order steps. These steps can be completed in any particular order. Format variable-order instructions into vertical, bulleted lists.	• Step 1 • Step 2 • Step 3
Alternate steps. When two or more ways exist to complete a particular task, use a bulleted list with OR inserted between the alternatives, or a lead-in indicating that alternatives are about to be presented.	• Step 1 • Step 2 OR • Alternative Step 1 • Alternative Step 2
Nested steps. To indicate steps within steps, use the format a, b, c, d, etc. and indent further.	1. Step 1 2. Step 2 a. Substep 1 b. Substep 2 3. Step 3

Source: McMurrey, David A. "Online Technical Writing: Instructions." 24 October 2007. <<http://www.io.com/~hcexres/textbook/instrux.html>>.