**ActionLine Writing Guidelines**

**Query (Optional):**

**Queries welcomed:** As an author, you may send an email query (article proposal) to any editor of ActionLine (see list of editors and contact information on the committee directory located on the committee website) if the article is not yet written.

**Query Contents:** Include in the query the title, author, summary of article, approximate length of article (i.e. usually between 1,000-3,000 words) and timing of submission. If you wish the article to be published in a particular issue (spring, summer, fall or winter), please state. Also include your contact information. The editor will contact you upon receipt to discuss the article.

**Article Submission:**

**Purpose.** Articles are submitted by Section members to educate and inform on recent laws, cases, and regulations of interest to Section members. Also, articles may be submitted by Section members that relate to professional activities and events involving the Section and its members.

**Quality:** The editorial board has discretion to approve or disapprove articles submitted. Analysis and opinions as to the current state of the law or regulations should be clear and concise. Practical considerations and solutions to assist Section members in their practice are encouraged. Articles are judged and edited for structure, grammar, syntax, clarity, and thoroughness, as well as significance of topic and practical advice. Articles previously published or simultaneously to be published with the same or similar content must contain a statement to that effect. Such articles may be rejected or may be considered for re-work if the topic discussed is of great significance. Please refer to the Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation for aid in writing: <http://www.grammarbook.com/>.

**Submission Requirements:** When submitting an article (whether or not a query was previously sent), note the following:

* Completed ActionLine Magazine Article Cover Sheet available for download in the ActionLine Committee website must be included.
* Articles are to be submitted in Word format along with the cover sheet to one of the ActionLine editors via email. Do not submit in PDF format.
* Articles should be clean and without comments or redline edits made in track changes.

**Article Format:**

* Use Calibri font. Title – 14-point font; Text of article – 12-point font; Endnotes – 10-point font.
* Print title at the top of the article. Please keep the title as short as possible. Titles should be in all initial caps (the first letter in each word is capitalized), for example: “In 2016 A New Ruling Came Out And Changed Florida Law”
* The “by line” should appear with the author(s) name, the law firm, and city and state (spelled out)
* Articles should be fully justified, so the text is even between the margins.
* Titles may be in bold and should be in initial caps, including articles and prepositions. The title, byline, and text should not be underlined. (Exception is any in-text links.)
* Byline should be in regular 12-point font – no bold, italics, or underline.
* Citations should be endnotes, not footnotes. Footnote numbers should be Arabic, not Roman Numerals.

**Mechanics:**

* The phrase “Attorney’s Fees” is usually always written as singular possessive, as shown.
* Avoid contractions in formal articles, Roundtables, and Case Summaries.
* The “c” in “court” is only capitalized when referring to the Supreme Court.
* Always capitalize “w” in “Ward”
* Always capitalize “S” in “Section” when referring to the RPPTL Section.
* Periods always go inside quotes and inside endnote marks. When a quote ends with an endnote, the period belongs inside the end quotation mark. The end quotation mark is inside the endnote. Ex: “Periods belong inside the quotation mark.”[[1]](#endnote-1)

**Emphasized Words and Phrases.** Please show emphasis to words and phrases sparingly. Too many emphasized words detract from the emphasis and is redundant. Please only use italics when placing emphasis on a word. Do not underline the word, and do not show the word in all caps or bold type within the text. Subheadings may be in bold type.

* **Length.** Articles should be no longer than 3,000 words (3 magazine pages) or shorter than 1,000 words. Deviation from that may be waived by the editorial board as necessary.
* **Content and Endnotes:**
* Start with an anecdotal quote or blurb to be used as a header (optional).
* Include a paragraph towards the beginning that summarizes the essence of the article (optional).
* Add endnotes when citing laws, cases, regulations or other references, as necessary.
* Any repetition of citations or names should be abbreviated on any subsequent mention within the article. Please do not write out citations within the text of the sentence as a reference. Document with an endnote citation.
* For statutory references in the body as well as in all endnotes, please use the following style:
  + Fla. Stat. § \_\_\_\_\_.\_\_\_\_\_ (20\_\_\_\_)
  + For example: Fla. Stat. § 57.105 (2016)
* Articles should be edited in-house and polished before submission.

**Author Bio and Head Shot:**

* Submission of an author bio and/or head shot is optional. If you do not wish to include an author bio and/or head shot, please state this in the submission email. If you intend to submit an author bio and/or head shot, please do so with the submission, or as soon as possible prior to the submission deadline.
* Please attach headshot photo in jpg format, preferably in color and preferably over 1 MB (1,000 KB), and please keep the bio limited to 100 words.
* Articles of 1500 words or less may include only a headshot or a bio as preferred by the author. If the article is 1500 words or less and contains more than one author, then the authors may choose whether to include all bios or all photos.
* If the article is over 1500 then both bios and photos may be included.
* **Special Note:** **Articles on RPPTL legislative issues:** The ActionLine position on articles regarding legislative reforms that are working or have worked their way through RPPTL committees and the section (but await passage) is to generally wait and write about them once passed, unless there is a compelling reason to publish prior to passage.

**ActionLine Editing Guidelines**

**General Publication Information:**

**Time Frame.** The submission deadlines are shown below. Authors should strive to submit their articles prior to the submission deadline to allow time for the editors to edit the articles prior to the articles being forwarded for layout in the magazine at the end of the following month. Articles are published online approximately 45 days after the submission deadline and in hardcopy three weeks thereafter. There are only 30 days to edit articles after the submission deadline and before the magazine layout deadline so promptness is requested and expected.

**Procedure and Approvals.** The article should be sent to the editor that solicited the article or if none, to the email address shown on the cover sheet. If the content is approved, the author will be contacted and the article will be reviewed and corrected, as necessary, for punctuation, grammar and minor changes in syntax. It may be sent back to the author if corrections are required for content, flow or other substantial changes.

All articles are subject to approval by editorial staff as to content and placement even after it has gone through some of the editing process. The author will be contacted if the article cannot be placed in the upcoming issue despite a previous approval.

**Submission/Closing Dates.**

Spring 1/15

Summer 4/15

Fall 7/15

Winter 10/15

**Post Publication.** An author who submits an article to ActionLine keeps his/her copyright but upon submission grants a license to ActionLine for exclusive original publication and may re-publish his/her article but only after the Section members have received the hardcopy issue containing the article and such re-publication must include a statement as follows:

***This article was originally published in the …[state season], 20….., issue of ActionLine, a Florida Bar Real Property and Trust Law Section publication.***

ActionLine staff does not provide individual copies of articles to authors.

**Editor’s Guidelines**:

***Take 5 minutes to read this before starting the editing process for each issue to refresh your memory and/or make a hard copy & use as a checklist during editing. Pick a time when there will not be any distractions.***

**General Guidelines (for redline and magazine edits).**

* **Proofreading**: This involves all the following: format**,** grammar**,** spelling,punctuation**, diction,** syntax, and proper use of endnotes. Instead of crowding an article with citations, e.g. if you see a “See Sec. 734.01, F.S.” within the article, that probably belongs in an endnote. To enhance clarity of meaning and avoid wordiness be sure you do not change the intent of the author’s meaning if you edit the content more heavily.
* **Do not change words within quotes**. Designations of “s.” for Section and use of lower case when it should be capitalized, etc., if within quotes, must remain the same way in the text. This cannot be altered if it is a quoted item. Any missing or misspelled words should be added in brackets. If the author has added bold font to several words to emphasize, make sure that is either how it appears on the original quote or add at the end “[bold added for emphasis].”
* Quotes that are indented due to their length do not require quotation marks.
* Quotes that are longer than 40 words or so (use judgment) should be indented.
* Whenever an author just says “Supreme Court” – please add “Florida” if applicable
* “Court” is only capitalized when referring to the Supreme Court. Otherwise, it is lowercase.
* Refer to the Florida Bar Legal Citations manual online for assistance if required

Link: [Florida Bar Legal Citations](https://www.floridabar.org/DIVCOM/PI/RHandbook01.nsf/1119bd38ae090a748525676f0053b606/26a1a275888e9f94852568bd0053fa04!OpenDocument)

* **Use “Find” in Word of PDF cautiously for repeated words.**  If a word is repeated several times throughout the article, make sure it is standard or correctly spelled, as applicable, throughout the article.
  + Examples: subcommittee OR sub-committee - Sec. OR § - Committee OR committee -

Court of Appeal OR Court of Appeals

Use “find” in Word or PDF to locate the word throughout the article. However, for example, be careful as the same word may be capitalized or not depending on usage.

* Verify the citations of all statutes and cases.
* Change all footnotes to endnotes in numerical order and make sure the endnotes appear in Arabic numbering, not Roman numerals.
* Verify that the endnotes correspond to the referenced text.
* Do a final spell check and grammar check in Word but do not rely on either one.
* If the author has underlined a line, sentence or paragraph for emphasis, unless within a quote, remove the underline and italicize it. Emphasis should be used minimally.

**Editing Articles before Layout**.

You will be assigned articles to edit. After editing, please provide to the Editor in Chief (EIC) a redline and clean version for further review. The clean line version should be converted into single space prior to sending to the EIC should it be received by you in double space. Please be detailed so as to avoid as much as possible an extensive edit after it is inserted into the magazine. If reviewing digitally, zoom in to view in words and punctuations clearly. If reviewing on hard copy, use a ruler or other method to focus on one line at a time.

If not edited fully before it goes into the magazine, the design/layout person then receives numerous bullet points and this makes the editing process less efficient.

**Editing Articles after Layout.**

Please provide a visual mark-up edit along with the edits in bullet point format. See instructions below. If reviewing digitally, zoom in to view words and punctuations clearly. If reviewing on hard copy, use a ruler or other method to focus on one line at a time.

**Case Law Editors.**

Call both Division fellows (as appointed for the current year) and let them know for what issue they will be expected to prepare the case summaries and the deadlines. Pick one of the fellows to work with from the newly appointed fellows for the upcoming issue.

You and the fellow should both review current DCA or Florida Supreme Court cases of great importance (have the fellow choose them and go over them with him/her to make sure they are good picks & consider others you may have run across to possibly use) and both of you decide on which cases (pick 5-6) will be summarized with sufficient time for the fellow and you as his/her editor to meet the deadlines. Keep monitoring the work of the fellow until the cases are turned in for you to edit. The case editor then reviews and edits the cases working with the fellow to **correct and clarify any wording,** **citation** AND **confirming proper format** (see prior ActionLine issues). If the case is not yet in So.3d, use the FLW cite. Once the case reviews are finalized, send to EIC.

Keep monitoring the cases (by yourself or with the help of a fellow) until just before the articles are sent to design/layout to make sure none of the cases have been overturned, re-heard, or a So.3d citation added. This has happened on a number of occasions and may require another emergency edit.

If any other staff member comes across an important case, send it to the case law editors for consideration as soon as you discover the case. Additional guidelines can be found in the “Case Law Summaries – Fellows Guidelines”

**Roundtable Editing by ActionLine Division Vice Chairs.**

* **Two Section Members (preferably ALMS) are to take down minutes during the Roundtable.** The two members are to be told that one of them will be also doing the highlights for the magazine – on rotation.They are to first review the magazine Roundtable to view the type of information and format of the highlights so crucial information is not missed.The raw minutes are to be forwarded to the ActionLine Division Vice Chair for review.
* **Division Vice Chair to review minutes.** The Division Vice Chair who should also be attending the Roundtable, should review the raw minutes and make any appropriate annotations or deletions for purposes of the highlights.
* **One highlight editor to be picked on rotation.** The Division Vice Chair is to pick one of the minutes reporters and that reporter will prepare the highlights following the guidance from the Division Vice-Chair and the format of the magazine.
* **Review of Highlights for typos and format.**  The Division Vice-Chair is to review the highlights before sending it to EIC. Any typo, formatting, or incorrect information should be corrected.

**Some tips for the Roundtable highlights:**

* **Make sure the name of the committee is correct.**  Recheck this with the name online at the Section website.
* **Review the prior issues for format and other standards.**  Make sure that you have the standard format, italics, bold font as applicable, and no underlines.
* **Always include the sponsor at the beginning.**
* **Correct speaker.** Sometimes it is not the chair of the committee that speaks at the Roundtable. Make sure you have the correct name of the speaker(s) and whether Chair, Vice-Chair, subcommittee chair, etc.
* **Double check the information.** For example, if the minutes indicate a certain statute or case cite, make sure you quote the correct statute number or case cite.
* **Only highlights.** Do not include a standard committee report.
* **Review by Division Directors.** Once EIC receives the highlights and does a second edit, as or if necessary, the highlights are sent to the Division Directors for any edit they may have.

**Editing assigned pages in the magazine:**

* Review the pages assigned to you in the magazine for:
* Header
* Author name & firm & on behalf of a committee (if applicable) all as stated in original article
* Number of and size of paragraphs (nothing missing or incorrectly placed)
* Format of subtitles
* Any words in bold
* Paragraph indents
* Photos and bio of author (the bios are provided by separate chart – photos are in the directory or usually online in case you don’t know the author)
* Typos
* Small mechanical/grammatical errors (At this point we shouldn’t be making major editorial changes as it greatly affects layout. Edits should be minor.)
* **Bullet Point Format & Shortest Route**. Please provide your edited pages in bullet point fashion and use the shortest route:

For example:

Use: Page 10, left column, 2nd full paragraph from bottom, **2nd line** from bottom, change “were” to “where”

Not

Page 10, left column, 4th paragraph, **18th line**, change “were” to “where”

* **Visual mark-up.** Please show your edits in a visual mark-up, either by printing, marking by hand using recommended proof marks from the Chicago Manual of Style or APA Style, then scanning and emailing. If you have the ability to clearly mark electronically in Adobe, you may use that method to mark the text. A visual reference along with the bullet list further helps with accuracy in the copyediting and layout stage.
* **Do not use redline edits.** When writing the bulleted list, please indicate what you are adding or deleting, not just a strikeout/new language so that it is clear to the design/layout person what he/she is required to strikeout and/or add. For example:
  + Do not state: Page 10, left column, 4th paragraph, 2nd line from bottom:(where this can be confusing on a bullet point edit especially with a few more words or punctuation added or deleted and the bar staff does not have the time to guess if a mark-up is missed)
  + Instead state: Page 10, left column, 4th paragraph, 2nd line from bottom, change “were” to “where”
  + Another example: Page 10, left column, 4th paragraph, 3rd line, add commas on either side of “however” as follows: “….decided, however, the following….”[In this example, I’ve shown the design/layout person not just where to add the commas but also where to add the spaces in between.]

Use your best judgment to make it as clear as possible. Both the visual and bulleted list serve as a double-check for editorial staff, as well.

* **Be confident in your editing.** Edit the text in bullet point fashion as indicated. Do not ask EIC questions on whether the edit is right or wrong. Use The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation if you have a question on grammar, syntax, etc. You can find the free online version at <http://www.grammarbook.com/>. If EIC disagrees, the edit will be changed or deleted. A request for advice within an edit indicates you are passing the research to the EIC and gives the EIC additional work to delete the question and change the wording in order to send to design/layout. If you want to clarify or express an opinion because there are alternatives or the correction is not self-explanatory do so after the standard edit in bracket fashion which is easier to delete before sending to design/layout.

e.g. Page 10, left column, 2nd full paragraph, 3rd line, change “suspects” to “knows” [The case reviewed specifically stated that the plaintiff knew not that he suspected.]

* **Table of Contents** **as assigned page.** If you are assigned the Table of Contents, you must make sure that ALL the articles & the photo spread are shown on the Table of Contents and ALL the links work to the correct article.
* **Table of Contents from assigned page**. If you are reviewing assigned pages, check the Table of Contents to make sure your article is listed and the correct page is indicated.
* **Orphans and widows.** Point out orphans or widows so that design/layout can adjust the pages to avoid this problem
* **Hyphens.** Hyphens within a word should not be used where the rest of the word goes to another page or another column.
* **Top and bottom of page.** Make sure the correct article is on the banner on top and the correct “continued...” page # is at the bottom when the article skips a page or two
* **Ads or Announcements –** if an announcement or ad on your assigned pages will be stale by the time the magazine is printed (takes about 3 weeks from online publication), notify the EIC in the bullet points.
* **Links:** Check all the links to internet sites and make sure they are working properly.

**Photos:**

* **EVERY STAFF MEMBER:** Review the pages on the two-page photo spread to make sure all the names and other words are spelled correctly and match the photo. What one person misses, the other may not.
* **Features Editor:** If reporting on an event (other than the Section meeting), please collect the photos from that event to then select for the magazine.
* **Cover Photo:** Every staff member is required to vote on the photo for the cover. If any staff member has a favorite photo on or not on the Section’s Flickr accounts for the event being covered and wishes to submit it, please submit before EIC announces that the photos are ready for a vote.

**Review other documents in the ActionLine Committee website.** The ActionLine Committee website “Staff Library” contains valuable information to further assist you in preparing a quality article.

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)