

chicago style for environmental impact statements citation

chicago style for environmental impact statements citation is a critical aspect of academic and professional writing, particularly for research and documentation related to environmental projects and policy. Ensuring accuracy and adherence to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) guidelines for citing these complex documents is paramount for credibility and avoiding plagiarism. This comprehensive guide will delve into the intricacies of properly formatting citations for Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) within the Chicago style framework, covering both the Notes-Bibliography and Author-Date systems. We will explore the nuances of citing various components of an EIS, such as the main report, appendices, and related public comments, and provide practical examples to illustrate correct application. Understanding these specific citation practices is essential for researchers, students, and professionals working with environmental assessments.

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Understanding the Importance of EIS Citations in Chicago Style

Properly citing Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) within the Chicago Manual of Style is not merely a matter of following rules; it is fundamental to academic integrity and the scientific rigor of any research that relies on such documentation. EIS documents are often lengthy, complex, and contain crucial data, analysis, and decision-making frameworks that underpin environmental policy and project approvals. Misrepresenting or failing to acknowledge the source of this information can lead to significant misunderstandings, invalidate research findings, and damage the credibility

of the author and their work. Chicago style, with its detailed approach to bibliographic information, ensures that readers can locate and verify the original sources, fostering transparency and allowing for further scholarly engagement.

The Chicago Manual of Style offers two primary systems for citation: the Notes-Bibliography system and the Author-Date system. Both require meticulous attention to detail when citing an EIS, as these documents can vary in their publication format and authorship. Whether you are citing a federal EIS produced by a government agency or a state-level environmental assessment, understanding the specific elements to include in your citation is key. This includes identifying the issuing agency, the title of the document, the date of publication, and any relevant report numbers or identifying information. Failing to provide this granular detail can make it difficult, if not impossible, for your audience to access the primary source material.

The comprehensive nature of EIS documents often means they are available in multiple formats, including print, digital archives, and agency websites. The citation should ideally reflect the format through which the author accessed the document. Moreover, EISs are frequently accompanied by a range of supporting materials, such as environmental analyses, public hearing transcripts, and comment letters, all of which may also require citation. Effectively managing and citing these diverse components is a hallmark of sophisticated research and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the environmental review process. This article will provide a detailed roadmap for navigating these complexities within the Chicago style framework.

The Chicago Manual of Style: Core Principles for Citing EIS Documents

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS) emphasizes clarity, accuracy, and completeness in bibliographic citations. When dealing with documents as multifaceted as Environmental Impact Statements, these core principles become even more critical. CMOS recognizes that source types can be varied, and thus, it provides flexible guidelines that can be adapted to unique documents like EISs. The fundamental goal is to provide enough information for a reader to confidently identify and retrieve the cited material, irrespective of its origin or publication format. This involves capturing essential bibliographic data such as the author (often an agency or organization), the title of the work, the publication details, and any unique identifiers.

For EIS documents, the concept of "author" can be complex. It is frequently a government agency (e.g., the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a state Department of Transportation) rather than an individual. CMOS provides guidance on how to treat corporate authors and government entities in citations. The title of the EIS is usually descriptive and may include terms like "Environmental Impact Statement," "Environmental Assessment," or

specific project names. The publication date is crucial, as EISs often go through multiple drafts and revisions. Locating the specific version being referenced is essential for accurate citation.

Furthermore, EISs are often part of a larger administrative or legal process. This context might necessitate including information such as the project name, the jurisdiction under which it was prepared, or even docket numbers if applicable. The Chicago style's flexibility allows for the inclusion of such contextual details within the citation to enhance its specificity. Whether using the Notes-Bibliography or Author-Date system, the underlying principle remains the same: provide sufficient information to guide the reader back to the source material accurately and efficiently.

Citing Environmental Impact Statements in the Notes-Bibliography System

The Notes-Bibliography system, a cornerstone of Chicago style, uses footnotes or endnotes for citations within the text and a comprehensive bibliography at the end of the work. This system is particularly well-suited for historical research, humanities, and extensive scholarly works where frequent referencing is required. When citing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in this system, the goal is to provide detailed information in the note to help the reader locate the specific passage or information, and then a slightly more condensed, alphabetized entry in the bibliography.

Basic Structure for Notes and Bibliography Entries

The fundamental structure for citing an EIS in the Notes-Bibliography system involves identifying the issuing agency as the author, followed by the official title of the EIS, publication details, and specific locational information (like page numbers) in the note. The bibliography entry will generalize this information for alphabetization.

Citing the Main EIS Report

When citing the primary Environmental Impact Statement report, you'll need to identify the responsible agency, the full title, the publication date, and any relevant report numbers. For notes, you'll also include specific page numbers referenced. For the bibliography, you'll provide a more complete citation suitable for alphabetization.

Note Example:

1. U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *Final Environmental Impact Statement: Interstate 95 Expansion Project* (Washington, D.C.: FHWA, 2018), 152.

Bibliography Example:

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. *Final Environmental Impact Statement: Interstate 95 Expansion Project*. Washington, D.C.: FHWA, 2018.

Citing EIS Appendices

Environmental Impact Statements often include extensive appendices containing supporting studies, technical data, and public comments. Citing these requires specificity to indicate which appendix is being referenced.

Note Example:

2. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed XYZ Chemical Plant Development* (Chicago: EPA Region V, 2020), Appendix C, "Air Quality Modeling Report," 45.

Bibliography Example:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed XYZ Chemical Plant Development*. Chicago: EPA Region V, 2020. Appendix C, "Air Quality Modeling Report."

Citing Public Comments on an EIS

Public comments are a critical component of the EIS process and often included as appendices. Citing these requires indicating the commenter and the context of their submission.

Note Example:

3. Jane Doe, "Comments on the Draft EIS for the XYZ Chemical Plant Development," letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, October 15, 2020, in *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed XYZ Chemical Plant Development* (Chicago: EPA Region V, 2021), Public Comments Volume II, 188–190.

Bibliography Example:

Doe, Jane. "Comments on the Draft EIS for the XYZ Chemical Plant Development." Letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, October 15, 2020. In *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed XYZ Chemical Plant Development*, Chicago: EPA Region V, 2021. Public Comments Volume II.

Citing Supplementary Environmental Documents

Sometimes, a full EIS may not be required, or supplementary documents may be produced. These require careful identification and citation.

Note Example:

4. California Department of Fish and Wildlife, *Initial Study and Negative Declaration: Proposed Willow Creek Housing Development* (Sacramento: CDFW, 2019), 33.

Bibliography Example:

California Department of Fish and Wildlife. *Initial Study and Negative Declaration: Proposed Willow Creek Housing Development*. Sacramento: CDFW, 2019.

Citing Environmental Impact Statements in the Author-Date System

The Author-Date system in Chicago style is favored in many scientific and social science disciplines. It uses parenthetical in-text citations (Author Year) and a reference list at the end of the document, alphabetized by author's last name. This system is efficient for authors and readers who need to quickly locate the source of information directly within the text.

Basic Structure for In-Text Citations and Reference List Entries

In-text citations in the Author-Date system are brief, typically including the author's last name and the year of publication. The corresponding reference list entry provides the full bibliographic details necessary for retrieval. For EIS documents, the "author" is usually the issuing agency.

Citing the Main EIS Report (Author-Date)

When citing the main body of an EIS, the in-text citation will include the agency name and the year of publication. The reference list entry will provide the full publication details.

In-Text Example:

(U.S. Department of Transportation 2018, 152)

Reference List Example:

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. 2018. *Final Environmental Impact Statement: Interstate 95 Expansion Project*. Washington, D.C.: FHWA.

Citing EIS Appendices (Author-Date)

Citing appendices requires including information about the appendix within the in-text citation if directly referencing its content, and then fully detailing it in the reference list.

In-Text Example:

(U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2020, Appendix C, 45)

Reference List Example:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2020. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed XYZ Chemical Plant Development*. Chicago: EPA Region V. Appendix C, "Air Quality Modeling Report."

Citing Public Comments on an EIS (Author-Date)

Citing public comments, which are often compiled within a larger EIS document, requires careful attribution of the commenter and the specific location within the published comments.

In-Text Example:

(Doe 2020, in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2021, Public Comments Vol. II, 188–190)

Reference List Example:

Doe, Jane. 2020. "Comments on the Draft EIS for the XYZ Chemical Plant Development." Letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, October 15, 2020. In *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed XYZ Chemical Plant Development*. Chicago: EPA Region V.

Common Challenges and Best Practices for Chicago Style EIS Citations

One of the most frequent challenges in citing Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) is accurately identifying the "author." Many EISs are published by

government agencies, which can be listed with varying levels of detail or as different sub-departments. The best practice is to use the most specific governmental body that is clearly responsible for the document's content and publication. If the document is available online, noting the URL and access date is also crucial, especially if it is a less stable online source.

Another common issue is the sheer volume and complexity of EIS documents. They often consist of a main report, multiple appendices, technical reports, and public comment volumes. Each of these components may need to be cited individually, depending on the information you are using. The key is to be as precise as possible. If you are referencing a specific technical study within an appendix, your citation should clearly point to that study. When using the Notes-Bibliography system, this means including appendix titles and page numbers. In the Author-Date system, the reference list entry should be detailed enough to reflect these components.

Furthermore, EISs are often subject to revisions and updates. It is imperative to cite the specific version of the EIS that you consulted. This might be a draft EIS, a final EIS, or a supplemental EIS. Clearly indicating the version and its publication date in your citation helps prevent confusion and ensures that readers are referencing the same information. Always consult the most recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* for the most up-to-date guidelines, as citation standards can evolve.

When in doubt, err on the side of providing more information rather than less. This includes:

- The full official title of the EIS.
- The name of the issuing agency or agencies.
- The specific publication date of the version you are citing.
- Any report numbers or unique identifiers.
- Specific page numbers or section references for the information used.
- If accessed online, the URL and the date of access.

Following these best practices will enhance the clarity, accuracy, and credibility of your research, ensuring that your use of EIS documentation is properly acknowledged according to Chicago style standards.

FAQ

Q: How do I cite an Environmental Impact Statement prepared by a specific government agency in Chicago style?

A: In Chicago style, the issuing government agency is typically treated as the author. For example, in the Notes-Bibliography system, a note might start with "U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, ..." and the bibliography entry would follow suit. In the Author-Date system, the in-text citation would be (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Year) and the reference list entry would begin with the agency's name. Always use the most specific agency name provided on the document.

Q: What is the best way to cite an appendix within an Environmental Impact Statement using Chicago style?

A: When citing an appendix, you should include the appendix identifier (e.g., Appendix A, Appendix C) and its title, along with the main citation details of the EIS. For instance, in a note: "U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *Environmental Assessment for the Meadowbrook Wildlife Refuge* (Portland: USFWS, 2015), Appendix B, 'Avian Species Study,' 15." In the reference list: "U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2015. *Environmental Assessment for the Meadowbrook Wildlife Refuge*. Portland: USFWS. Appendix B, 'Avian Species Study.'"

Q: How do I cite public comments included as part of an EIS in Chicago style?

A: Citing public comments requires identifying the commenter, the date of their comment, and where those comments appear within the published EIS. For example, in a note: "John Smith, letter to the City Planning Department, October 20, 2019, in *Final Environmental Impact Report: Downtown Redevelopment Project* (City of Metropolis, 2020), Public Comments Volume III, 210." For the reference list: "Smith, John. 2019. Letter to the City Planning Department, October 20, 2019. In *Final Environmental Impact Report: Downtown Redevelopment Project*. City of Metropolis."

Q: Can I cite an online version of an Environmental Impact Statement in Chicago style?

A: Yes, you can cite an online EIS. When using the Notes-Bibliography system, include the URL and the date you accessed the document. In the bibliography, also include this information. For the Author-Date system, the reference list entry should include the URL and access date. Example reference list entry: "National Park Service. 2017. *Final Environmental Impact Statement: Yellowstone Grizzly Bear Management Plan*. Washington, D.C.: NPS.

<https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/management/eis.htm> (accessed October 26, 2023)."

Q: What if the Environmental Impact Statement has no identifiable author, only an issuing body?

A: In such cases, the issuing body (e.g., a department, commission, or committee) serves as the author. Chicago style guidelines for corporate authors apply. For example, if the document is from "The State Environmental Agency," that would be your author entry.

Q: How do I distinguish between a draft and a final Environmental Impact Statement in my Chicago style citation?

A: It is crucial to clearly indicate whether you are citing a draft, final, or supplemental EIS in your citation. The title of the document itself usually includes this designation (e.g., "Draft Environmental Impact Statement," "Final Environmental Impact Statement"). Ensure this designation is accurately transcribed in your note or bibliography entry, or in-text citation and reference list entry.

Q: What information should I include if an EIS has a specific report number?

A: If an EIS has a report number, it should be included in your citation for greater specificity. This is often placed after the title or publication information. For example, a note might read: "Environmental Protection Agency, *Environmental Impact Statement for the Lakeview Dam Project* (Region VII, 2016), EPA-700/1-16-001, 78." In the reference list: "Environmental Protection Agency. 2016. *Environmental Impact Statement for the Lakeview Dam Project*. Region VII. EPA-700/1-16-001."

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