

## STYLE MANUAL AND AUTHOR GUIDELINES

**International Business Law Services (IBLS) readers are overwhelmingly business executives in organizations of all sizes and kinds around the world. While attorneys and other legal professionals also subscribe and use the summaries, the practical nature of the issues and information require that plain language be used throughout the summary.**

- The summary should concisely address a succinct legal issue encountered by businesses using the Internet in local and/or trans-border business transactions.
- The summary must include practical questions that illustrate how to apply the law to the business issue and suggest practical real-world implications and solutions.
- The summary must be unbiased and reflect professional objectivity. [See the author contract regarding disclosure if the author is involved in litigation or similar matter that would impair objective treatment of the subject, or have received compensation of any type for writing the summary.]
- The first time that an abbreviation, mnemonic or acronym is used the summary should spell out the word.
- A summary should be significantly less than 1,000 words in length. Any summary that deserves longer treatment will probably be sufficiently complex to justify being broken into two or more summaries on discreet topics.
- The summary should cite applicable law (constitution, code, statute, act), judicial case (opinion, decision), regulation, international treaty (protocol, compact), etc.

\*Each summary **must** include the following elements:

1. A title that is brief, specific and descriptive of the summary's content.
2. An abstract or synopsis the abstract will be the first thing that a subscriber sees, and will be the sole basis of the subscriber's decision whether to read the summary.  
IBLS wants the subscriber to immediately perceive and understand the subject of the summary, such as the industry and the law applied, and be able to determine whether the issue relates to the subscriber's business – at a glance. The abstract should be seventy-five (75) words or less.
3. The issue (text) itself, written in plain language, complete with citations to the relevant law source(s), and

4. Up to 5 questions and answers, and

5. Conclusion or recommendation of appropriate action to avoid problems.

- Submissions are encouraged by electronic means. IBLS has devised an on line summary submission form for this purpose.
- IBLS evaluates each summary for appropriateness, significance and clarity. If accepted, summaries may be edited for clarity of expression, to remove any ambiguities, and for stylistic consistency. If extensive revisions are indicated, summaries may be returned to authors for approval of changes and additional author corrections or additions before uploading.
- IBLS editors are available to assist summary authors in effectively communicating their ideas.
- IBLS may commission summaries from a particular author, or send out a list of summary topics desired by the subscribers to current authors who may respond with a prospective summary.
- IBLS also welcomes suggestions for improvement, new ideas, etc., to better serve the needs of IBLS subscribers and network partners.

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## **SAMPLE SUMMARY SUBMISSION:**

This sample reflects the summary submission form on the IBLS Internet site.

Title, Abstract, Issue, Question(s), Answer(s), Conclusion, URL Type and URL Description are part of the summary submission form and they should not be included in the text of the summary.

**. Title (must be in CAPITALS)**

INTERNET SELLERS MUST MEET FTC DELIVERY DEADLINES OR FACE FINES

**. Abstract**

This summary discusses Federal Trade Commission (FTC) rules setting out delivery deadlines for catalogue and mail order sales. These rules apply to Internet sales. The discussion includes penalties in the form of fines for violations of the FTC rules.

## **. Issue**

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) rules mandating delivery deadlines for catalogue and mail order sales now apply to Internet sales of most merchandise. Generally, a seller must ship goods within the time stated in an advertisement or within 30 days of receiving the order (50 days if the order includes an application for credit). Violators are subject to fines.

For example, Kbkids.com was hit with a \$300,000 fine when it did not fill its holiday 1999 orders in a timely manner. The FTC "mail order" or "30 day" rule was adopted in 1975. It was extended to include Internet sales in 1994.

## **. Question**

*What if the seller cannot meet a deadline?*

### **. Answer**

A seller who cannot meet the deadline must:

1. Notify the customer of the delay and give an estimate of when the customer will receive the merchandise. The notification can be made in any way, including telephone, mail, and email. Sellers should document that they have given notice by keeping copies of letters and emails or by maintaining telephone call logs.
2. Give the buyer the option of canceling the order and receiving a refund.
3. Give a reason for the delay if the seller cannot give a definite time for delivery.

## **. Question**

*What if the customer does not reply to the seller's communication?*

### **. Answer**

1. If the new shipping date is 30 days or less, silence by the customer means that the customer agrees to the delay.
2. If the new shipping date is more than 30 days, silence by the customer requires cancellation of the order and a prompt refund.

## **. Question**

*What if the seller cannot meet the second or subsequent shipping dates?*

### **. Answer**

1. The seller must do everything described above, with the exception that, if the customer does not respond, the seller must always make a full refund.

## **. Question**

*What merchandise is excepted from the Rules?*

### **. Answer**

The following categories of merchandise are excepted from the FTC rules:

1. Magazine subscriptions and other serial deliveries except for the first shipment.
2. Seeds and growing plants.
3. Services.

## **. Conclusion**

Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu, nisi intellectu ipse. In anno domini, etc. etc.

When you complete you summary on line, you'll be required to fill out an on line source of the law/regulation submission form.

**. Type**

Laws

**. Description**

Text of the Federal Trade Commission's Rule: 16 C.F.R. part 435 et seq.

**. URL**

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buspubs/mailordr/mailrule.htm>

To add an additional source press on **add more**:

**. Type**

Sample Court Documents

**. Description**

U.S. v. Southdale Kay-Bee Toy, Inc., et al. – Complaint

**. URL**

<http://www.ftc.gov/os/2000/07/kbkidscmp.htm>

To add an additional source press on **add more** :

**. Type**

Explanatory Publications

**. Description**

A Business Guide to the Federal Trade Commission's Mail or Telephone Order Merchandise Rule

**. URL**

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buspubs/mailordr/>

To add an additional source press on **add more**:

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Organizations

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**. URL**

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