



PRIVACY & CIVIL LIBERTIES OVERSIGHT BOARD

Plain Writing Act Compliance Report

April 23, 2025

I. Senior Official for Plain Writing:

The Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (“PCLOB”) has designated the General Counsel as the Senior Official for Plain Writing. Since the PCLOB is a small agency, there are no other Plain Language Coordinators.

II. Accomplishments

PCLOB leadership continues to be committed to the use of plain language and has expressed a commitment to implementing plain writing principles in all written communications.

The PCLOB supports plain writing program by communicating:

- the importance of using plain language in its oversight reports and advice;
- best practices and helpful tips; and,
- the Board’s interest in and support of plain writing.

III. Explain what specific types of agency communications you have released by making them available in a format that is consistent with the Plain Writing Guidelines.

Type of communications of document or posting.	Who is the intended user and approximate number of potential users	What has changed by using Plain Writing
Agency Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2024	The PCLOB provides its Agency Financial Report to enable the President, Congress, and the American public to assess the agency’s fiscal accountability.	In its Agency Financial Report, the PCLOB uses plain writing to explain its activities in a clear, concise manner.
Semi-Annual Report issued August 28, 2024.	The PCLOB must file Semi-Annual Reports under its enabling statute. These reports inform the President, Congress, and public about the Board’s activities.	In its Semi-Annual Reports, the PCLOB uses plain writing to explain its activities in a clear, concise manner.

<p><u>Report on the National Counterterrorism Center</u></p>	<p>The PCLOB issues oversight reports on actions by the executive branch relating to efforts to protect the nation from terrorism. PCLOB’s oversight reports inform the public, and are used by Congress in weighing statutory reauthorization of surveillance authorities.</p>	<p>In the “NCTC Report,” the PCLOB uses plain language to explain in a clear, concise manner the NCTC’s access to and handling of datasets containing non-terrorism information. The PCLOB also uses plain language to propose various changes to the NCTC’s information collection and oversight.</p>
<p><u>Assessment and Recommendations: Authorities Addressing Foreign Racially Motivated Extremism & Privacy Civil Liberties Impacts</u></p>	<p>The PCLOB issues oversight reports on actions by the executive branch relating to efforts to protect the nation from terrorism. PCLOB’s oversight reports inform the public, and are used by Congress in weighing statutory reauthorization of surveillance authorities.</p>	<p>In this assessment (a.k.a., “Section 824” report), the PCLOB uses plain language to discuss the privacy and civil liberties impacts to U.S. persons from the use or recommended use of certain federal laws, regulations, and policies to counter threats posed by foreign racially motivated violent extremist (RMVE) organizations.</p>
<p><u>Report on the Terrorist Watchlist</u></p>	<p>The PCLOB issues oversight reports on actions by the executive branch relating to efforts to protect the nation from terrorism. PCLOB’s oversight reports inform the public, and are used by Congress in weighing statutory reauthorization of surveillance authorities.</p>	<p>In the “Watchlist Report”, the PCLOB uses plain language to explain its review of the Terrorist Screening Database. The PCLOB also uses plain language to discuss recommendations on how the accuracy of the Watchlist may be improved, and redress procedures strengthened.</p>

<u>PCLOB Letter Confirming Closure of Passenger Name Records Oversight Project</u>	The PCLOB issues oversight reports on actions by the executive branch relating to efforts to protect the nation from terrorism. PCLOB's oversight reports inform the public, and are used by Congress in weighing statutory reauthorization of surveillance authorities.	This letter, written by the Board to Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and posted on the PCLOB's website, uses plain language to inform CBP of the closure of the PCLOB's review of CBP's use of Passenger Name Records.
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IV. Inform agency staff of Plain Writing Act's requirements

This past year, the General Counsel has:

- a. Ensured that PCLOB employees receive plain writing training; and
- b. Reviewed PCLOB documents for compliance with the Plain Writing Act.

V. Training

When new employees join the PCLOB, they take plain writing training. Board employees also complete plain writing training on an annual basis around the end of the fiscal year.

VI. Ongoing compliance

Under its enabling statute, the PCLOB must inform the public of its activities. The General Counsel reviews Board reports and other public documents prior to their release in order to ensure compliance with the Plain Writing Act.

VII. Agency's plain writing website

The PCLOB's plain writing website is accessible at <https://www.pclob.gov/Legal/PlainWriting>. The website provides a summary of the Plain Writing Act's requirements, identifies the General Counsel as the Senior Official for Plain Writing, and contains links to various documents and websites related to plain writing. The PCLOB website also provides a contact email address for comments on plain writing.

VIII. Conclusion

The PCLOB utilizes plain writing in its reports and other public documents. Please send any comments or questions regarding plain writing to info@pclob.gov.