

JCAHO Banned Abbreviations List 1

Official “Do Not Use” List

Do Not Use	Potential Problems	Use Instead
U (unit)	Mistaken for “0” (zero), the number “4” (four) or “cc”	Write “Unit”
IU (International Unit)	Mistaken for IV (intravenous) or The number 10 (ten)	“Write International Unit”
Q.D., QD, q.d, qd (daily) Q.O.D., QOD, q.o.d, qod (every other day)	Mistaken for each other. Period after the Q mistaken for “I” and the “O” mistaken for “I”	Write “daily” Write “every other day”
Trailing zero (X.O mg)* Lack of leading zero (.X mg)	Decimal point is missed	Write X mg Write O.X mg
MS	Can mean morphine sulfate or Magnesium sulfate	Write “morphine sulfate” Write “magnesium sulfate”
M _{SO4} and MgSO ₄	Confused for one another	

1 Applies to all orders and all medication-related documentation that is handwritten (including free-text computer entry) or on pre-printed forms.

*Exceptions: A “trailing zero” may be used only where required to demonstrate the level of precision of the value being reported, such as for laboratory results, imaging studies that report size of lesions, or catheter/tubes sized. It may not be used in medication orders or other medications-related documentation.

Additional Abbreviations, Acronyms and Symbols

(For possible inclusion in the Official “Do Not Use” List)

Do Not Use	Potential Problem	Use Instead
> (greater than) < (less than)	Misinterpreted as the number “7” (seven) or the letter “L”; confused for one another	Write “greater” Write “less than”
Abbreviations for drug names	Misinterpreted due to similar Abbreviations for Multiple drugs	Write drug names in full
Apothecary Unit	Unfamiliar to many practitioners Confused with metric units	Use Metric Units
@	Mistaken for the number “2” (two)	Write “at”
cc	Mistaken for U (Units) when poorly written	Write “ml” or “milliliters”
ug	Mistaken for mg (milligrams) resulting in one thousand-fold overdose	Write “mcg” or “micrograms”

Traveler Signature: _____

Date: _____

Fax to: 866-252-3667

