Policy and Procedure Language and Tone Tips

Review these tips before you begin to write.
Then, when you have finished your document, compare your work to the checklist.

- ☐ Write to the reading level of the document users.
  If necessary, use only numbers, graphics, and photographs.

- ☐ Use short sentences with familiar English words and with
  one thought or concept per sentence.

- ☐ Use must or will if something is mandatory.
  Avoid ambiguous words such as may or shall.

- ☐ Use plain words that are commonly understood rather than
  jargon. If you must use specialist terms, explain them in the
  text and in your glossary section.

- ☐ Use terms consistently throughout your documents.

- ☐ Write the full name for acronyms when you first use them.

- ☐ Remove extra words. For example, use to instead of in order to.

- ☐ Use positive and inclusive language. Their, not he or she
  (gender-neutral), worker not workman (gender-inclusive).

- ☐ Use active voice rather than passive voice. For example, you must
  wash the dishes. (Active). The dishes must be washed. (Passive)

- ☐ Use present tense. When you finish your shift, you lock the cabinets.

- ☐ Use headings that clearly identify the content of each section.

- ☐ Use evergreen contact and referral information as much as possible.
  info@contoso.com rather than the phone and email address
  of a specific individual.