

Accessible Document Guidelines: For Web and eDocuments



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Contents

Introduction	2
Guidelines	3
Links	3
Document Properties	3
Keyboard Navigation.....	3
Forms	4
Appendix A: Accessible Document Checklist - For Web and eDocuments	5

Introduction

All documents that are made publicly available are required to meet the accessibility requirements set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Specifically, all final documents shall comply with the accessibility standards set out in Guidance on Applying WCAG 2.0 to Non-Web Information and Communications Technologies (WCAG2ICT). <https://www.w3.org/TR/wcag2ict/>

The WCAG standard is built on 4 principles:

- Perceivable (e.g. alt text, structure, reading order, contrast, etc.)
- Operable (e.g. navigation, titles, headings, links, etc.)
- Understandable (e.g. language, labels, etc.)
- Robust (e.g. compatible with assistive devices, passing the accessibility check, etc.)

This guideline is intended to assist LSRCAs in reaching WCAG accessibility compliance and incorporates accessibility best practices.

Documents must be formatted to address the Accessible Document Guidelines: Advanced Accessibility and address these additional WCAG elements including:

- Links
- Document Properties
- Keyboard Navigation
- Forms

Refer to the Accessible Document Guidelines: Advanced Accessibility for additional requirements for printed and electronic documents.

Refer to *Appendix A* for a checklist and quick reference of the requirements outlined in this Guide.

Guidelines

For web and eDocuments, please adhere to the following guidelines.

Links

Screen reader users often scan or search for hyperlinks, so it is important to make sure these links make sense without their surrounding content. Links are more accessible when the link text briefly describes the destination. Avoid non-descriptive link phrases such as “here”, “click here”, “read more” or “learn more”.

Documents with the potential to be printed should include the full URL in a footnote, appendix or in brackets after the live link. The standard visual representation for a link is:

- Underlined text.
- Blue for a link not visited (HEX #0000FF, RGB 0-0-255).
- Purple for a visited link (HEX #800080, RGB 128-0-128).

Document Properties

Many screen reader applications support multiple languages and can switch on-the-fly between supported languages, using the appropriate voice and rule set for the current language. Screen readers are not able to determine what language a document is written in. Ensure that the correct language is identified in the document properties.

Keyboard Navigation

Some users may be unable to use a mouse and might be using the keyboard to navigate through a document. There are techniques that can be employed to ensure that a document is navigable by keyboard only, without the use of a mouse.

All links and controls can be accessed using the Tab key on the keyboard.

You can use the arrow keys to scroll, the tab key to move between clickable elements and other shortcuts. This should be possible with and without a screen reader.

Be aware that the document contains no keyboard traps for components (i.e. a user can use the keyboard to get into something but can't use the keyboard to get out). This is primarily an issue for webpages and forms.

When users focus to a component (like a button) with a keyboard, they should be able to focus out of it using the keyboard (mostly the tab key) without needing to use mouse.

Forms

Ensure that forms have a defined tab order. Test this using a keyboard and screen reader.

Provide instructions at the beginning of a form. Indicate required or optional fields.

Include with the label any format restrictions (may include character limits, acceptable characters and minimum/maximum values).

Provide interactive form controls (The types of PDF form controls are: text input field, check box, radio button, combo box, list box, and button.)

Ensure that interactive form controls in PDF documents allow keyboard operation.

If the form is not meant to be fillable by anyone, like an archived form, then it doesn't need interactive form controls.

Provide labels for interactive form controls

Include name, role and value information for form fields.

The "Name" and "Tooltip" and other properties have to be filled out in a way that makes sense to screen reader users when they tab directly into the field.

Provide submit buttons, if applicable to the form, using the submit-form action

Provide a mechanism that allows users to explicitly request a change of context using the submit-form action.

The intended use of a submit button is to generate an HTTP request that submits data entered in a form.

Notify a user when a required field in a form has not been completed (error identification).

The info about labels and instructions was provided above. Error messages should offer guidance on how to correct the error (error suggestion).

Indicate when user inputs falls outside the required format or values When user input to a field requires a specific format (e.g., date fields), notify the user that it was not submitted in that format (e.g., 12/2/16).

Provide confirmation after a user submits a form.

Appendix A: Accessible Document Checklist - For Web and eDocuments

Links

- Ensure links are descriptive
- Ensure full URLs are provided

Document Properties

- Ensure the correct language is set for document properties

Keyboard Navigation

- Ensure that the document is navigable using the arrow and tab keys
- Review document to ensure there are no keyboard traps

Forms

- Include instructions at the top of the document
- Review tab order
- Provide interactive form controls
- Ensure notifications are set up (e.g. when a field is not complete, when there is an error, when submission is confirmed, etc.)