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Creating Accessible Word Files Checklist

FHWA-HAD-20-002

This checklist is a companion to "[Creating Accessible Word Files.](#)" See that documentation for detailed discussion on any checklist item.

Document Properties

- The document title is descriptive of the document.
- Author is FHWA.
- Default language is correct.
- Document is saved as the file type docx.

Structure

Styles

- The Title style is used once for the title of the document and based on the normal paragraph.
- All visual headings and subheadings are styled. The heading structure matches an outline of the document.
- Spacing between elements is styled. Blank paragraphs are not used to create this space.
- Page breaks are used to force content onto the next page instead of blank paragraphs. Line breaks are used to force a break within a paragraph.
- All custom styles are based on the appropriate style.

Formatting

Use built-in tools to create:

- Lists.
- Tables.
- Columns.
- Table of contents.
- Footnote and /or endnotes.
- Symbols are inserted as their proper symbols.

Links

- Linked words are unique and are not generic like 'click here,' 'read more,' etc.
- Linked words or surrounding text is descriptive of the links' purpose.

- Links are easily identifiable as links.
- Where links are identified by a different color only, maintain a minimum contrast between the link color and body text color as well as the required contrast against the background. In addition, provide an additional non-color visual cue on hover or on focus.

Fonts

- Font colors against a background pass minimum contrast.
- Except for captions and images of text, can be resized and read when zoomed to 200% without assistive technology.

Movement

- No content flashes or blinks.

Language of Parts

- The proper language is set for words or phrases that are in languages other than the default.

Text as Text

- Text is rendered as text, not as an image.

Text Boxes

- Text boxes are in line with text.

Background Information

- All vital background information is duplicated in the body of the text at the start of the related information.

Logical Order

- Content reads in logical order when read linearly.

Graphics

- A graphic composed of two or more parts is grouped.
- Graphics are placed in line with text.
- Meaningful images have alternative text.
- Alternative text does not repeat the caption or other surrounding text.
- Alternative text does not start with "this is an image of."
- The alternative text describes the meaning of the image fully in as few words as possible.
- Figures that do not provide meaningful information contain ' ' in the description.

Embedded Media

- Audio only: Complete transcript.
- Video only: text description.
- Multimedia: Synchronized captions and audio descriptions.

Sensory Characteristics

- Content is not referenced solely by color, shape, size, sound, or location.
- Color alone does not convey information. This applies to content including text, links, and graphs/charts.
- Text on a background needs to meet minimum color contrast requirements.

Tables

- Tables are used to display data only.
- Tables are regular with no missing cells. Blank data cells are ok.
- Every column has a header.
- Every row has a header.
- Everything in a column is associated with the header(s).
- Everything in a row is associated with the header(s).
- Header cells are not blank.
- Each item is in its own cell.
- Only data is in the table, no titles, captions, or notes.
- “Header Row” and “First Column” are checked on the “Table Style Options” group of “Design” tab under the “Table Tools” tab.
- Rows do not break across pages.
- The header row(s) repeats at the top of each page.
- Do not put two tables side-by-side or one after the other to save space.
- Long tables are not wrapped.
- If a table is necessary for layout instead of displaying data, confirm that the tab order corresponds to the logical reading order. Use tables for layout purpose very sparingly. Avoid if possible.

Forms and Macros

- The document is free of forms and macros, which are beyond the scope of this checklist.