

Equitable Outreach: Making the message accessible for all users

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Equitable outreach

- Meet people where they are.
- Give people information how they want to receive it.
- Use a strategy that fits the specific project and audience needs.

The three c's of equitable outreach

- Community – defining who we're talking to.
- Channels – strategy on how we're going to reach them.
- Content – knowing what we want people to take away.



Tools for answering the three c's

- Community:
 - [Social equity index map](#).
 - Social equity lens.
- Channels:
 - Equitable engagement guide.
 - [Equitable Engagement Compensation Program \(EECP\)](#).
 - Community Based Organizations (CBO).
- Content:
 - Make sure material is accessible to the community.



ODOT Expectations

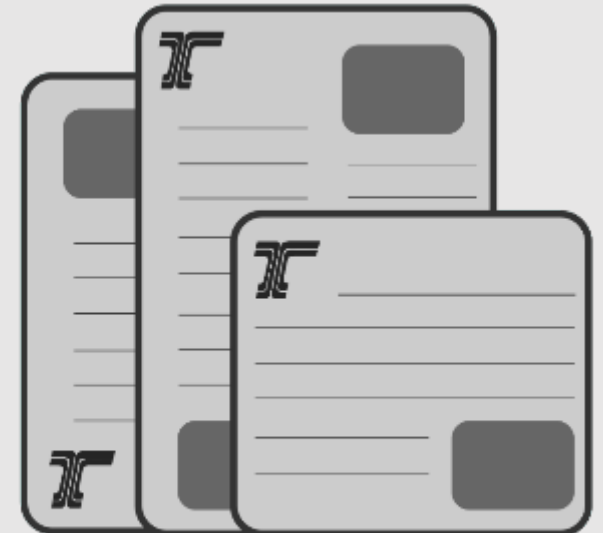


Follow our brand and style guides

Resources:

- [Publication guide.](#)
- [Style guide.](#)
- [Communication standards.](#)

A consistent look and feel helps build credibility and trust with our communities and partners.



Brand and publications guidelines



- Logo usage and expectations.
- Font settings and styles.
- Color palettes.

Communications guide to style

- Plain language requirements.
- Guidance for common phrases or words.
- Exceptions to the AP style guide.

ODOT Communications Guide to Style

- *The Associated Press Stylebook* is the primary style guide for ODOT publications that are intended for the public. <http://www.apstylebook.com/online/>
- Strunk & White is an additional helpful resource, www.bartleby.com/141.
- Also, use Merriam Webster's online dictionary, <http://www.m-w.com/>.
- This style guide (with the exception of plain language) does not apply to technical papers aimed at other subject matter experts, research/white papers, reports written for other agencies (not the public) and legal documents. (See [Oregon's plain language law](#).)
- Questions or need resources? Contact your [Communications Section representative](#).

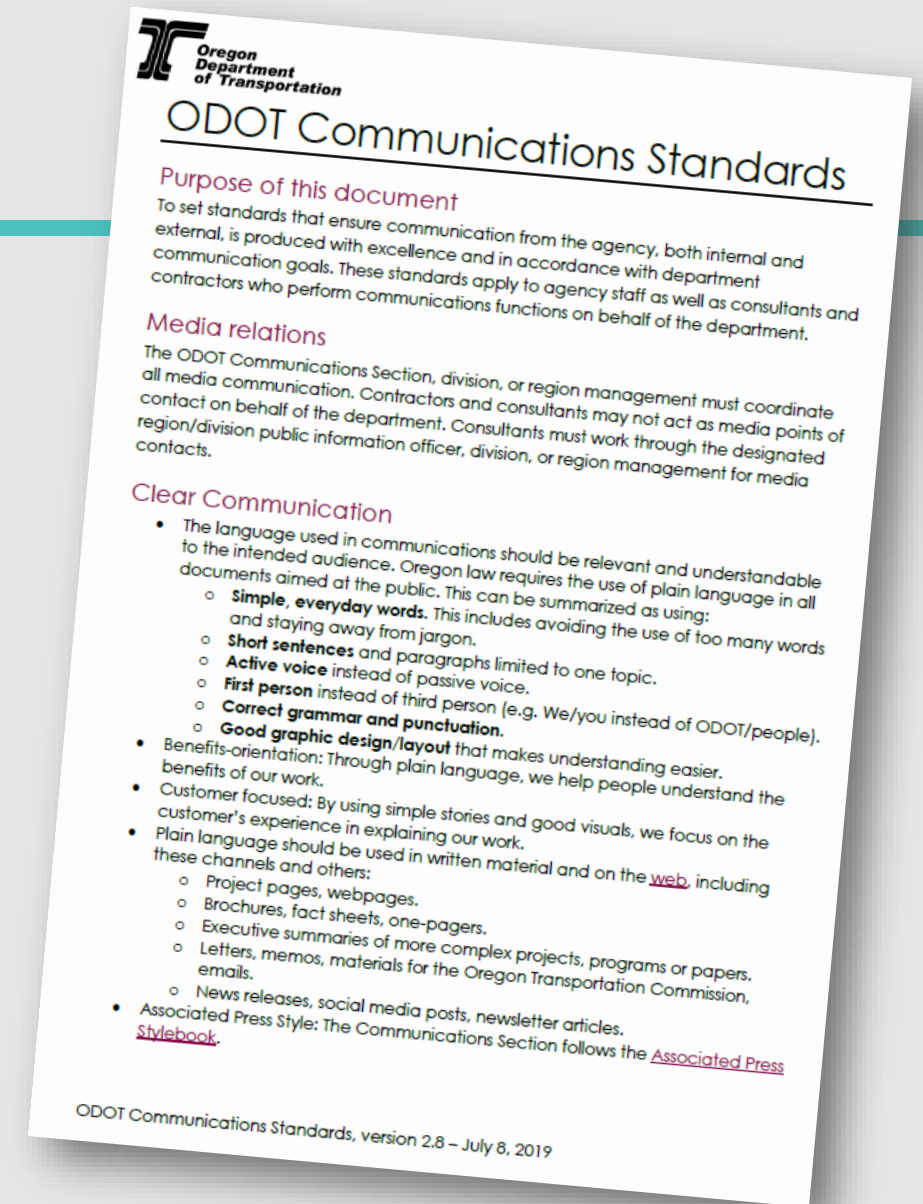
(Last update: January 2020)

The following provides guidance for some of the repeated challenges we face in writing for the public. If you have suggestions, questions, or corrections for this guide, please contact Shelley Snow, shelley.m.snow@odot.state.or.us

Plain Language Requirement	
	We are required to follow the ODOT plain language standard for all materials aimed at the public. If you are writing for the web, review our Writing for the Web intranet site . <i>All resource materials are available on the Communications Section intranet.</i>
News Releases and Meeting Notices	
	- Dateline: Putting a dateline (city of news release's origin) is optional but if you do it, make it all caps and <i>don't put the state</i> . SALEM – Today, ODOT announced... - Meeting notice? Make sure you have the required accessibility statements (samples are included in the Meeting Notice template on Gov Delivery). - Construction project? Make sure you have the required accessibility statements (samples are included in the Meeting Notice template on Gov Delivery). NOTE: One space between sentences, not two. (That's from the good ole' days of typewriters!)
Contractors and Consultants Should Know...	
	- Our Branding and Publications Guide identifies correct use of logo, fonts and colors. - Our contracts clearly lay out expectations aimed at making sure materials are produced that follow all our guidelines (printing, media relations, social media, etc.).
Alphabetical Listing of Common Conundrums	
abbreviations and acronyms	Avoid creating "alphabet soup," which occurs when too many acronyms appear in a document or on a page. Instead, spell out the name of organization or program every time you use it in order to avoid confusion. Or, see examples below for how to use acronyms so they don't confuse your reader. The ONLY time you can use an acronym without spelling it out on first use is if it is universally known to designate that organization/program, such as DMV. Here are some examples of correct acronym usage:

Communication standards

- Our voice.
- How to communicate clearly.
- Our communication goals.



Accessibility



Why does accessibility matter?



It's the right thing to do.



It expands your audience.



It's the law.



It builds trust.

**Accessible
content is:**



Usable

Anyone can access and understand it.



Versatile and Convertible

Easy to update and adapt to other formats.



Compliant

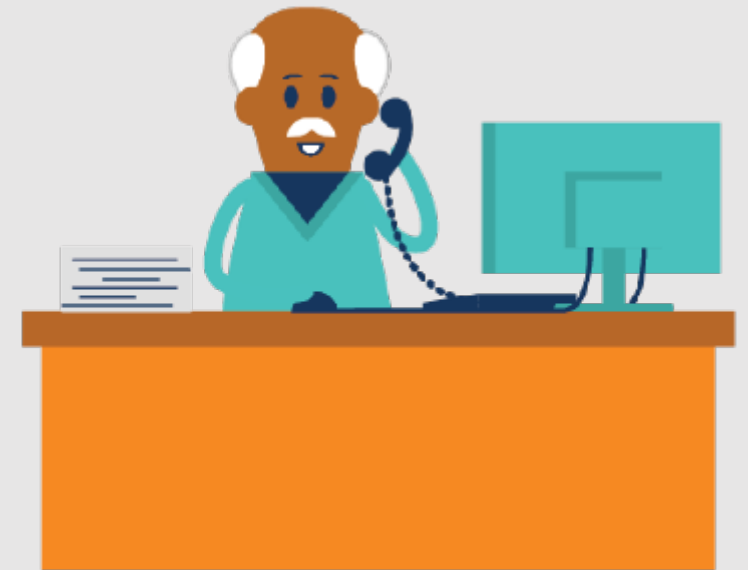
Reduce your risk!

Creating usable content

- Plain language – clear and concise text.
- Clear visuals.
- Screen reader friendly – easy to navigate.

Easy to understand language

- Use active voice.
- Write in first person.
- Keep language simple:
 - Aim for a sixth to eighth grade reading level – or lower!
- Remember, it's not only a federal law but also a state law: HB 2702 and ORS 183.750.




Hemingway Editor

Helpful [online tool](#) to review text for plain language.

This existing steel through pony truss bridge with concrete girders was constructed in 1922 and was part of the highway transportation system replaced by OR 68 Route Caribbean Highway. The bridge crosses the Deep River and the Big Meadow State Park entrance is located just south of this historic bridge. The Big Tree Road is a primary route and means of transportation for farming vehicles traveling between parcels of land owned on the north and south side of the bridge. The bridge is rated in poor condition and has urgent maintenance recommendations including active corrosion and column scour repair. Rehabilitation is more cost effective than replacement and will preserve the history of the existing bridge; the proposed work will include seismic retrofit, scour repair, bridge strengthening, cleaning and painting, reseal joints, repair spalls, and seal deck.

Write Edit

Readability 

Post-graduate

Poor. Aim for 9.

Words: 136

Show more stats ▾

1 adverb. Aim for 0 or fewer.

3 uses of passive voice. Cut to 1 or fewer.

0 phrases have simpler alternatives.

1 of 5 sentences is hard to read.

4 of 5 sentences are very hard to read.

Making the information easier to understand

We built the historic Deep River Bridge in 1922. It is on Big Tree Road, the main route for farming vehicles and near to the entrance of Big Meadow State Park. The bridge is in poor condition and needs repairs.

Improving the bridge instead of replacing it will save money and time. These improvements include:

- Making it stronger so it can survive an earthquake.
- Cleaning and painting it.
- Fixing cracks in the concrete and sealing the driving surface.
- Repairing erosion on the bridge piers.

This work will preserve the bridge's history and make it safe for years to come.

Write Edit

Readability



Grade 5

Good.

Words: 100

Show more stats ▾

0 adverbs. Well done.

0 uses of passive voice. Nice work.

0 phrases have simpler alternatives.

0 of 10 sentences are hard to read.

0 of 10 sentences are very hard to read.

Word Hippo Thesaurus

Helpful [online tool](#) to
look up synonyms.

What is another word for **deterioration**?



*Need **synonyms** for **deterioration**? Here's a list of **similar words** from our **thesaurus** that you can use instead.*

Noun

Physical or structural deterioration

decay

degeneration

decline

dilapidation

breakdown

decomposition

disintegration

rot

putrefaction

descent

atrophy

decaying

corruption

collapse

weakening

withering

ebbing

enfeeblement

crumbling

debilitation

perishing

corrosion

degradation

fading

declension

spoliation

rotting

break-up

falling apart

falling down

falling to pieces

more >

Public-friendly project description cheat sheet

Public-friendly project description cheat sheet

There may be times when using the 'plain language definition' is more appropriate than the 'plain language equivalent'. Think of who the audience is and how much context might be needed.

Common Project Terms	Plain Language Equivalent	Plain Language Definition
A lane, B lane, C lane	Left lane, middle lane, right lane	A is left lane, B is middle lane, C is right lane
AC	Asphalt	AC stands for asphalt concrete
ADA improvements	Be specific & describe what the improvement is. Ex: We're installing ADA compliant curb ramps.	Americans with Disabilities Act Improvements
ADT / Average Daily Traffic	Daily traffic	Average number of vehicles using the road each day. Don't use the acronym.
Aggregate	Crushed stone or rock mixture	Mixture of rock, gravel, sand or other materials, used to create the foundation of a road
Anchor bolts	Bolts	Used to secure things like signs or barriers to the ground
Approach slabs	Road connects to bridge	Flat structure at ends of bridges where they meet the road providing a smooth transition
Attenuator	Collision cushion, impact absorber	Safety device to cushion a crash, like a shock absorber. Often placed at the end of a barrier or in front of bridge supports or signs
Backfill	Filling, refilling	Material used to refill a dug-out area such as a trench or hole, typically to restore or support the surrounding structures
Chip seal	Protective coating, road surface repair	Process of spreading oil over a paved road and then covering the oil with a thin layer of small gravel – helps extend road life
Wearing course	Driving surface	Surface layer of a pavement that takes the wear of traffic
Crack seal	Crack repair, filling cracks in the road	Applying a material into the cracks on a road surface to prevent further damage
Bituminous	Asphalt	Material that contains bitumen, a sticky substance derived from crude oil
Bridge bent	Bridge support	Vertical posts/columns that provide support to the bridge surface and help distribute weight
Channelization	road markings, paint, barriers, cones, barrels, signs	Traffic guidance
Conduit	Pipe or channel	a pipe or tunnel for water or electrical wires to pass through
Continuously reinforced concrete pavement (CRCP)	Concrete with steel	Concrete reinforced with steel or rebar to strengthen the road and help prevent cracking
Curve correction	Realign or widen road	Adjustments to a curved section of road to make it safer and more comfortable for drivers
Deck / Bridge deck	Bridge surface or driving surface	Portion of bridge that people or vehicles drive on
Deck overlay	Apply new driving surface	Enhance durability and extend its life
Delamination	Road is damaged/ cracking / breaking down	Layers of materials, such as concrete or asphalt, start to come apart or peel away from each other
Delineators	Road markers or traffic guides	Markers to define the edges of a road, like reflective posts
Footings	Foundation support or base structures	Base component of a structure that bear the load and provide support

Helpful and easy to understand visuals

- Technical language: crossover.
- Plain language: traffic shifts.
- Include a graphic to help explain in a visual way.

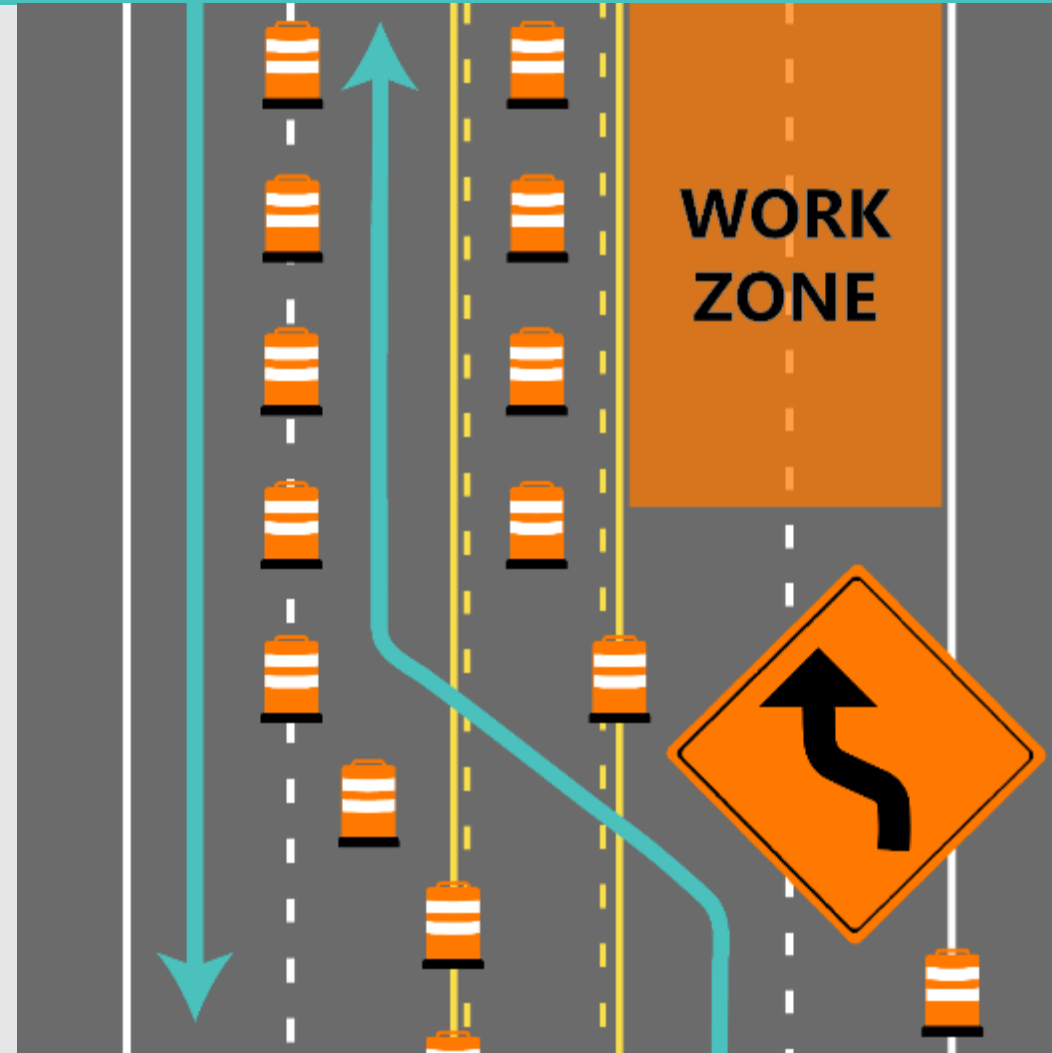
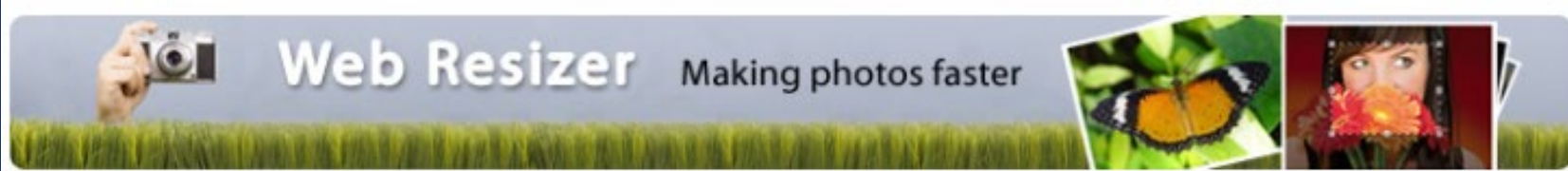


Photo resizer

Helpful [online tool](#) to
resize photos and
graphics.



Original Image



Size : 54.7KB
Width : 200 pixels
Height : 300 pixels

Optimized Image



Size : 17.6KB **(68% smaller)**
Width : 200 pixels
Height : 300 pixels

Upload your image below and click "Resize" to Resize, Rotate, Flip, or Crop your image!

Meaningful alt tags and captions



Alt tag = road

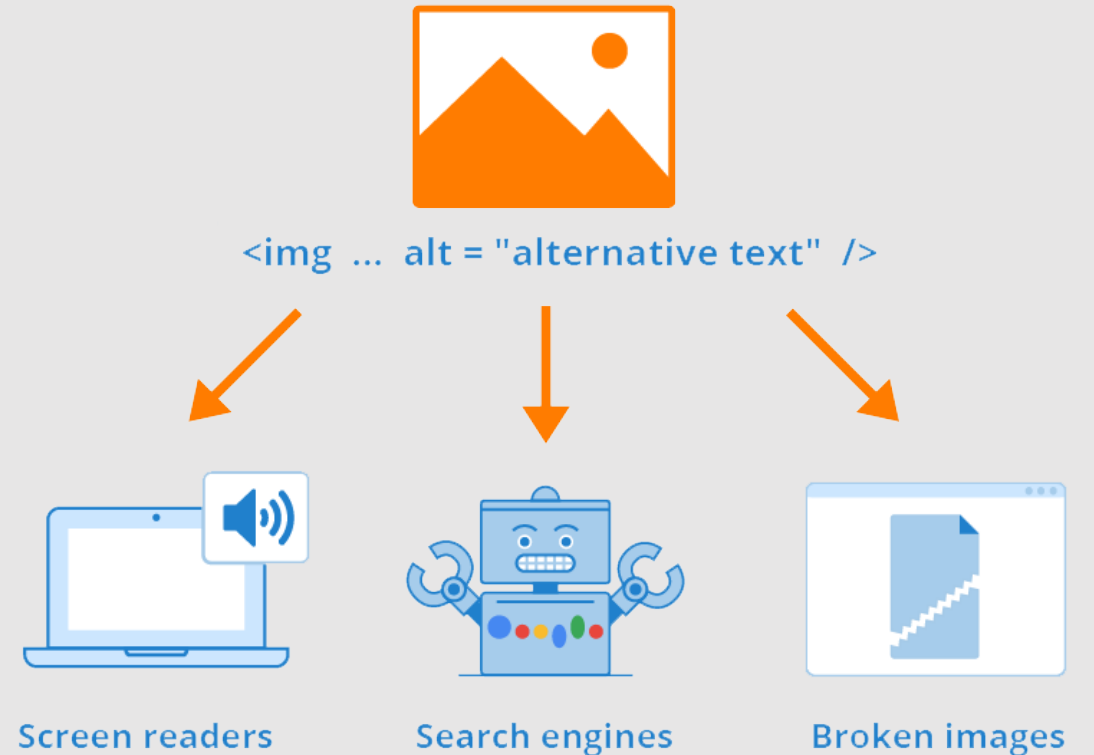


Alt tag = nighttime work zone with automated flagger

Caption = Crews working during the night to make safety improvements on U.S. 20 between Albany and Corvallis

Digital accessibility

- Alt tags.
- Link descriptions.
- Reading order.
- Correct format for tables.
- Limited text in images.



Versatile and convertible content

Accessible



Proper
Color
Contrast



Easily
adaptable
to other
formats

Accessibility guides

Helpful [printable cards](#) made by the Minnesota Office of Accessibility.

The image displays six Microsoft Office accessibility quick cards arranged in a row. Each card features the application's icon at the top, followed by a title and a list of best practices. The cards are: Outlook, PowerPoint, Excel, Lync, Acrobat, and Microsoft Word. The Word card is the largest and most prominent, showing the title 'Microsoft Word® Accessibility Quick Card' and a list of 10 best practices.

Outlook

Follow these best practices to help ensure your Outlook emails are accessible. For more information on Outlook email accessibility, visit [mn.gov/mnit/accessibility](#).

- **Use HTML**
Avoid using features that may not be compatible with screen readers. Do not use the File > Send To > Email Recipient(s) option to send emails.
- **Fonts and Colors**
Choose sans serif fonts for greater readability. Use the default font size of 11 or Verdana at 10.
- **Add alt text**
All graphics (including screenshots) require alt text to be accessible to a screen reader. Use a task, be sure to use a keyboard shortcut.
- **Adding attachments**
Dragging and dropping attachments or appointments into Outlook may not work in older versions of Outlook. Use the ribbon to add attachments.
- **Use styles**
When writing emails, use styles such as Normal, Bulleted List, and Paragraph.

PowerPoint

Follow these best practices to help ensure your presentations are accessible. For more information on PowerPoint accessibility, visit [mn.gov/mnit/accessibility](#).

- **Add alt text**
This includes SmartArt graphics and embedded objects. Use clear, concise terms. For example, "Person in wheelchair on ramp" may suffice rather than "Smiling woman in wheelchair posing on ramp."
- **Use simple table structure**
Avoid using nested tables, merged or split cells, or blank cells for formatting.
- **Ensure each slide title is readable by people with screen readers**
- **Check slide order**
People who use screen readers will read text, shapes, and images in the order they appear on the slide. Test your document.
- **Name your links**
Your link should reflect the link destination or subject, rather than simply saying "click here."

Excel

Follow these best practices to help ensure your workbooks are accessible. For more information on Excel accessibility, visit [mn.gov/mnit/accessibility](#).

- **Give all sheets a name**
Sheet names are used to navigate between sheets. Avoid using blank sheets.
- **Enter titles in tables**
You may merge cells in a table, but you must enter a title for each cell.
- **Include tab names**
When displaying a table, include the tab name to help locate it directly.
- **Specify row and column headers**
Check that table column and row headers are clearly labeled.
- **Use color contrast**
High contrast variations in text and background colors. Test your document.
- **Hide unused content**
This prevents screen readers from reading unnecessary content.

Lync

It's always best to use the Lync desktop application as you build your Lync information. For more information on Lync accessibility, visit [mn.gov/mnit/accessibility](#).

- **Use Paragraph Styles**
Paragraph styles are used to format text in your document.
- **Use Character Attributes**
Use Character attributes with the Font Tags in your document.
- **Create Layer**
Using a mini toolbar, text makes it easier to format.
- **Reading Order**
Both the Article and Reading Order affect reading order.

Acrobat

It's always best to use the Acrobat Pro desktop application to create PDF documents. For more information on Acrobat accessibility, visit [mn.gov/mnit/accessibility](#).

- **Use the Accessibility Checker**
This built-in tool identifies accessibility issues in your document. Use the tool to identify and fix issues.
- **Convert scanned documents to searchable PDF**
Make sure that scanned documents are searchable. Use the software to include true text in the document.
- **Set the document to be accessible**
Setting the document to be accessible enables some appropriate features.
- **Check alt text**
Make sure that alt text is present in descriptions.
- **Use color contrast**
Make sure that text has a 4.5:1 ratio readability. Use points of interest to help users navigate.

Microsoft Word® Accessibility Quick Card

Follow these best practices to help ensure your documents are accessible. For more information on Word® document accessibility, visit [mn.gov/mnit/accessibility](#).

- **Use document styles**
Use heading and paragraph styles to structure the document.
- **Add alt text to images and objects**
This includes pictures, clip art, charts, shapes, SmartArt graphics and embedded objects. Use clear, concise terms. For example, "Person in wheelchair on ramp" may suffice rather than "Smiling woman in wheelchair posing on ramp."
- **Use short titles in headings**
Keep headings short (fewer than 20 words or one line long). This makes it easy for readers to quickly navigate your document.
- **Name your hyperlinks appropriately**
Your link should contain meaningful text that reflects the link destination or subject, rather than simply saying "click here."
- **Use simple table structure**
Avoid using nested tables, merged or split cells, or blank cells for formatting.

Print accessibility

- Color contrast.
- Font size.
- Text spacing.



Color Blindness Simulator


Helpful [online tool](#) to
check your graphics.

Trichromatic view: Anomalous Trichromacy: Dichromatic view: Monochromatic view:

Normal Red-Weak/Protanomaly Red-Blind/Protanopia Monochromacy/Achromatopsia
 Green-Weak/Deuteranomaly Green-Blind/Deuteranopia Blue Cone Monochromacy
 Blue-Weak/Tritanomaly Blue-Blind/Tritanopia

Use lens to compare with normal view: No Lens Normal Lens Inverse Lens

[Reset View](#) [Open simulated image in new window](#)

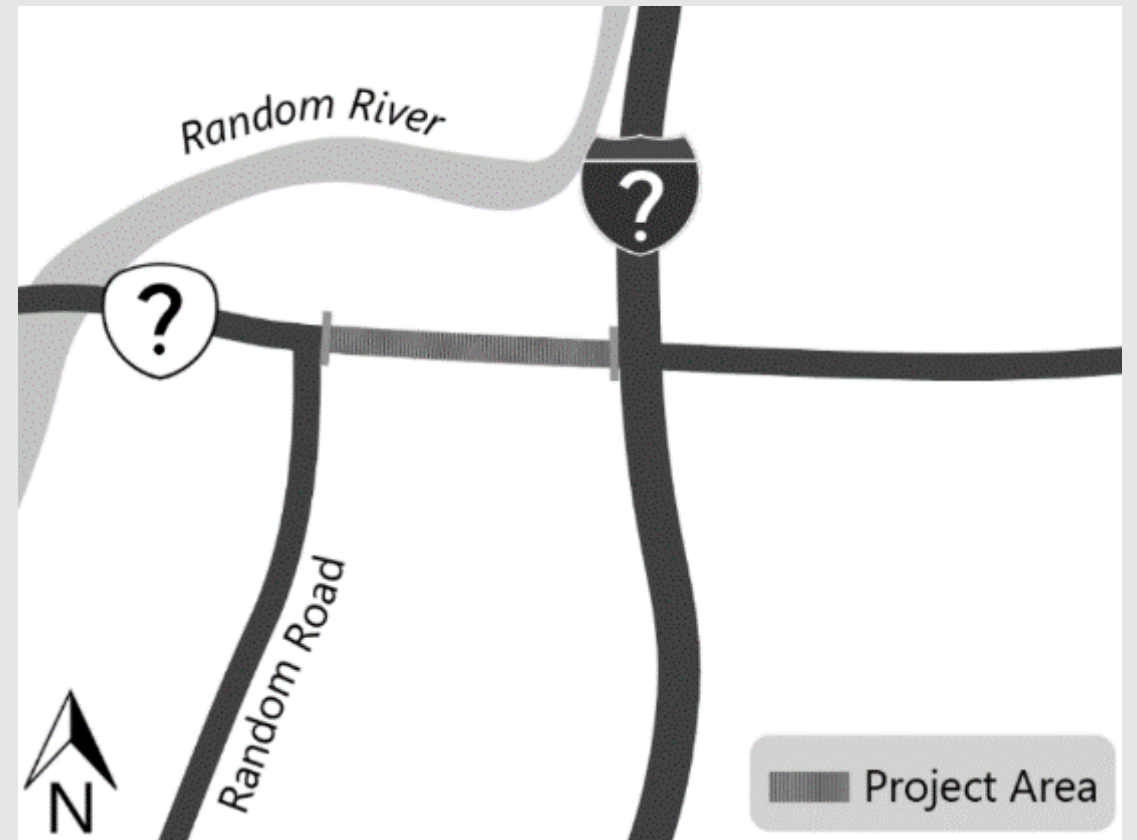


Random River

Random Road

Project Area

Making graphics accessible with color and texture



WebAIM

Helpful [online tool](#) to check color contrast.

Foreground

Hex Value
1C355E

Color Picker Alpha
1

Lightness

Background

Hex Value
FFFFFFFF

Color Picker

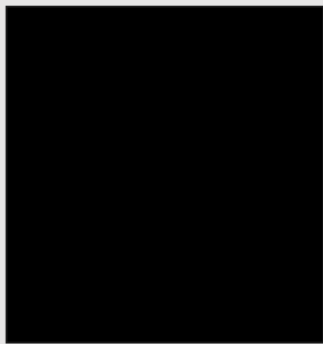
Lightness

Contrast Ratio
12.2:1

[permalink](#)

Color palette

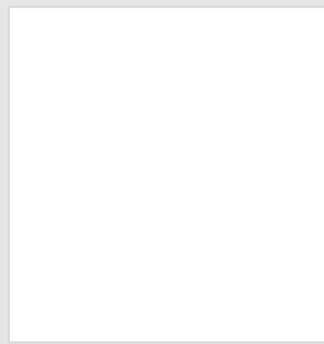
- Follows brand guidelines.
- Helps you create accessible color combinations.



Black
#000000



ODOT Orange
#FF7900



White
#FFFFFF



ODOT Blue
#1C355E



Greenie
#097881



Scooter
#4BC1BE

Black text
#000000
Aa

ODOT Orange text
#FF7900
Aa

White text
#FFFFFF
Aa

ODOT Blue text
#1C355E
Aa

Greenie text
#097881
Aa

Scooter text
#4BC1BE
Aa

Scooter background
#4BC1BE

Aa



Aa



Greenie background
#097881



Aa



ODOT Blue background
#1C355E



Aa

Aa



Aa

White background
#FFFFFF

Aa



Aa

Aa



ODOT Orange background
#FF7900

Aa



Aa



Black background
#000000



Aa

Aa



Aa

Be compliant – it's in your contract!

- Right thing to do for our communities.

Inaccessible documents create barriers for people with vision, hearing, mobility, cognitive and other disabilities and can prevent their participation in discussion, decision making, training and other duties.



Things to keep in
mind...



Required ADA language

- In-person events:
 - Accommodations will be provided to people with disabilities and material can be made available in alternative formats. Please call (your meeting contact person) at (phone #) or call statewide relay at 7-1-1 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.
- On printed materials:
 - ODOT is an EEO/AA Employer.
 - Information is available in alternative formats upon request. Please call (your contact person) at (phone #) or call statewide relay at 7-1-1.
 - ODOT does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission or access to our programs, services, activities, hiring and employment practices. Questions: 1-877-336-6368 (EEO-ODOT) or call statewide relay at 7-1-1.
- For outreach that includes work zones:
 - Pedestrians, including those with disabilities, will have access through or around work zones.

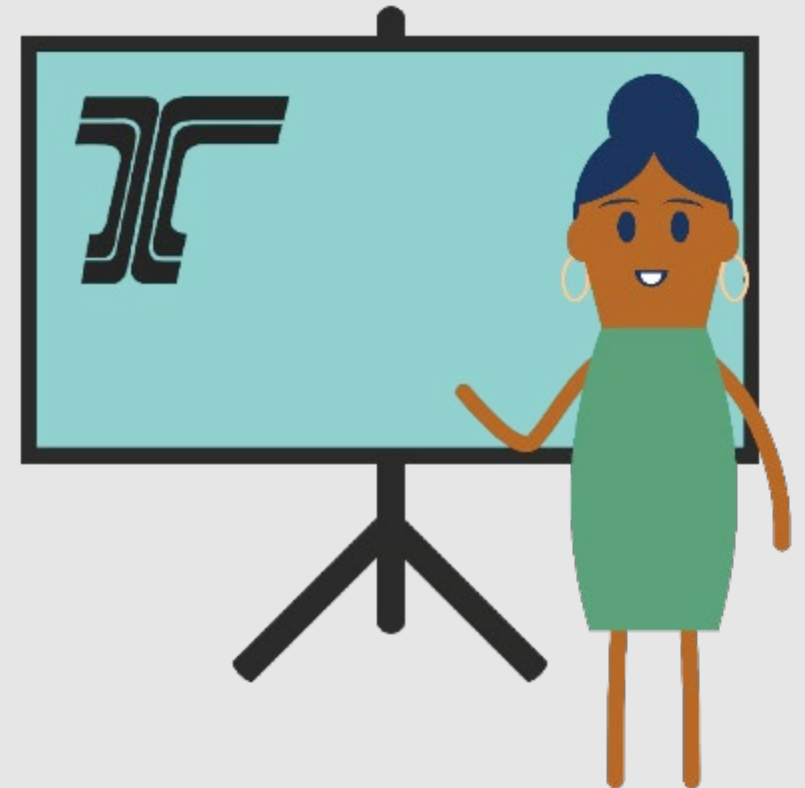
Provide information online

- Know your community – make information available in a way that works best for them.
- Learn more by checking out the [Section 508 site](#).
- We design materials to be mobile friendly – check that online content works well on a smartphone!



Meeting guidelines – section 508

- For in-person meetings:
 - Make sure the venue is accessible.
 - Note accessible parking and entrance locations on the invitation and outreach materials.
 - Note if there are transit options near the venue.
 - Provide meeting accommodations.
 - Make sure interactive features are accessible.
- Make content available online as well.



Questions?

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 See our brand and style guides by checking out our [web toolkit](#).