Military Community and Family Policy

PDF Requirement Checklist for 508 Compliance

The following checklist should be used departmentwide by Military Community and Family Policy staff to verify that PDFs meet the requirements established by MC&FP. The checklist includes compliance with Section 508, in addition to other MC&FP requirements.

For guidance specific to a requirement, refer to the Requirement Guidelines section of this document or to the Military Community Outreach Office of Strategic Outreach Programs.

Document information

Document title:	
Reviewer/tester name/signature:	
Review/testing date:	

ID	1.0 Basic elements	Pass	Fail	N/A
1.1	A visual check has confirmed no hidden data from Word is present.	○	○	○
1.2	All comments, sticky notes and reviews have been removed.	○	○	○
1.3	The file name does not contain spaces or special characters.	○	○	○
1.4	The file name is concise, generally limited to 30 characters or less.	○	○	○
1.5	The file name makes the file content clear.	○	○	○
1.6	Fonts used are recommended ones or are readable by screen readers.	○	○	○
1.7	Document properties (Title, Author, Subject, Keywords) are applied.	○	○	○
1.8	A table of contents or bookmarks are included in documents more than nine pages long.	○	○	○

1.9	Hyperlinks contain the correct and fully qualified URL.	○	○	○

ID	2.0 Document layout and formatting requirements	Pass	Fail	N/A
2.1	The document has been tagged for accessibility.	○	○	○
2.2	The document has a logical reading order.	○	○	○
2.3	The document language has been set.	○	○	○
2.4	Any bookmarks and/or table of contents function correctly.	○	○	○
2.5	An Adobe full accessibility report shows that no errors are present.	○	○	○
2.6	The contrast ratio between text and its background is at least 4.5:1 (3:1 for large text).	○	○	○
2.7	Color is not the only means by which information is conveyed, and instructions do not rely upon shape, size or visual location.	○	○	○
2.8	Link names should describe the destination/purpose or describe content. All names should be unique.	○	○	○
2.9	Tag and tab order must match the visual and logical order of the interactive elements.	○	○	○
2.10	Heading tags should be used for headings and must be used in proper order.	○	○	○
2.11	All document functionality is available using the keyboard.	○	○	○
2.12	Form input elements (e.g., text boxes) have tool tips that identify their purpose and match the associated text label.	○	○	○

ID	3.0 Document image requirements	Pass	Fail	N/A
3.1	All images and nontext elements have alternative text descriptions. All images of text, or images that include text (e.g., logos), have the text in the description.	○	○	○
3.2	The document is free of scanned images of text.	○	○	○
3.3	Descriptive text is provided for complex images such as charts.	○	○	○

3.4	Multiple associated images on the same page are grouped as one object.	○	○	○
3.5	Multilayered objects have been flattened into one image.	○	○	○
3.6	Are all decorative images tagged as artifact/background?	○	○	○

ID	4.0 Document table requirements	Pass	Fail	N/A
4.1	Data tables have row and column headers.	○	○	○
4.2	Tables (not tabs or spaces) are used to create a tabular structure.	○	○	○
4.3	Data tables have a logical reading order from left to right, top to bottom.	○	○	○
4.4	Data cells in tables are logically associated with row/column header elements.	○	○	○
4.5	Tables have names and descriptions.	○	○	○
4.6	Are all header cells tagged as TH? Are all data cells tagged as TD?	○	○	○

Noncompliant element tracking

The following table should be used to document any elements of the asset that failed or were identified as being noncompliant. Identify each failed/noncompliant element of the asset by ID number and include a description of the reason why the element failed or is noncompliant.

ID	Description of failure/noncompliance

Requirement guidelines

The following guidelines have been established for PDF files by MC&FP and MCO Office of Strategic Outreach Programs to meet Section 508 compliance requirements.

1.0 Basic elements

1.1 A visual check should be performed on the document to ensure that no hidden data from Word (or other applications used to create the original document) is present in the resulting PDF file.

1.2 All Acrobat comment and markup items must be removed from the document. The presence of comment and markup items will adversely affect the screen reader's ability to correctly interpret the document.

1.3 The document file name must not contain spaces or special characters (!,;:?{}@/\=+&). However, dashes ("-") should be used to separate words.

1.4 The document file name must be concise, generally limited to 20 to 30 characters. Additional characters may be used if necessary to satisfy element 1.5.

1.5 The file name accurately represents the content in the context in which it is presented.

1.6 Use Open Type fonts, or Base 14 fonts (installed as a part of the Adobe Acrobat installation): Open Type and Base 14 fonts add little size to your document and include options such as the Helvetica, Times, Verdana and Courier standard font families (regular, italic, bold, bold italic), as well as Symbol and Dingbats. Base 14 fonts don't need to be fully embedded, which can significantly reduce file size. Bullets and other special characters should also be picked from these fonts.

TIP: Avoid extra bold, black or heavy font variations: Such styles can cause text to appear multiple times in the tagged document.

DON'T USE SMALL CAPS: Using small caps can cause text to appear as a mix of capitals and lowercase characters in tags and cause the screen reader software to "stutter."

1.7 The document properties for title, author, subject/description and keywords should be properly completed. Author fields should not contain an individual's name or the name of a vendor.

1.8 All documents that are more than nine pages in length must have bookmarks or a table of contents.

1.9 Every hyperlink must contain the correct and fully qualified URL (https://www.militaryonesource.mil and not www.militaryonesource.mil) necessary to take the reader to the intended web destination.

2.0 Document layout and formatting

2.1 Acrobat accessibility tags must be properly applied to the document. Acrobat accessibility tags that are added to the document as part of a conversion process should be visually verified. The Document Properties/Description tab should have "Yes" selected for "Tagged PDF." Headings should be properly tagged as headings, without skips in heading levels (for example, skipping from Heading 1 to Heading 3 with no Heading 2 in between). Vital information in headers, footers and watermarks is duplicated in the text as tagged content.

2.2 The document should have a logical reading order. It should be checked for correct reading order using a screen reader.

2.3 The document language should be specified. The Document Properties/Advanced tab should have the language set to "English," "English U.S." or possibly "Spanish."

2.4 If the document contains a table of contents or bookmarks, they must function correctly.

2.5 A full accessibility report must be run on the document using Adobe Acrobat Professional 8 or higher showing that no errors are present.

2.6 The visual presentation of text and images of text has a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1, except for the following: large-scale text and images of large-scale text (at least 3:1). Large text is text with at least an 18-point font size

(14 point if bold). There is no minimum contrast requirement for: text or images of text that are part of an inactive user interface component that are pure decoration, not visible to anyone or that are part of a picture that contains significant other visual content; and text that is part of a logo or brand name.

2.7 Information may not be conveyed through color differences in an image (or other nontext format) only. Information provided by color must also be conveyed through another visual means to ensure users who cannot see color can still perceive the information. Instructions must not rely upon shape, size or visual location (e.g., “Click the square icon to continue” or “Instructions are in the right-hand column”).

2.8 Link names should describe the destination/purpose or describe content. All names should be unique.

2.9 Tag order must match the visual and logical order of the interactive elements.

2.10 Heading tags should be used for headings and must be used in proper order.

2.11 All functionality of the content (i.e., all processes and outcomes achievable through user action) must be operable through a keyboard interface without requiring specific timings for individual keystrokes. If keyboard focus can be moved to a component of the page using a keyboard interface, then focus can be moved away from that component using only a keyboard interface. If keyboard functionality requires more than unmodified arrow or tab keys or other standard exit methods, the user must be advised of the method for moving focus away.

2.12 In fillable forms: Form input elements such as text boxes, checkboxes and radio buttons must have tool tips that identify their purpose and match the associated text label. (A tool tip is a small information box that appears when hovering over the element.) Tab order must match the visual and logical order of the form fields.

3.0 Document images

3.1 All document images, grouped images or nontext elements, such as charts and graphics, must have alternative text associated with them.

3.2 The document must be free of scanned images of text. Screen readers are unable to accurately interpret scanned images of text. One alternative is to use Adobe Acrobat to rescan the document to text with optical character recognition activated.

3.3 Complex images such as charts, graphs, flowcharts, etc., must have descriptive text.

TIP: Following are some ways to incorporate descriptions when descriptive text is too lengthy for image alternative text: Use a caption; hide the descriptive text behind the image; put the descriptive text on the slide and apply a color identical to that of its background; incorporate the text into the slide text or the text of surrounding slides. As a last resort, the description may be placed in the Notes area. If notes for screen-reader users are included in the Notes area, screen-reader users must be notified that the slide deck contains such notes.

3.4 All multilayered objects must be flattened into one image and have one alternative text for the image.

3.5 Multiple associated images must be grouped as one object. Grouping the images together will deflect possible errors when tested by a screen reader.

3.6 Are all decorative images tagged as artifact/background?

4.0 Document tables

4.1 Documents containing data tables should have readily identifiable row and column headers that are tagged as such.

4.2 Tables should be used to organize information in a tabular format. The use of tabs or spaces to create tabular data will adversely affect screen readers and should not be used.

4.3 Data tables should have a logical reading order from left to right and top to bottom. This is the table structure that screen readers are designed to follow, and any other format will adversely affect its ability to correctly convey the information. They should not be used to lay out nontabular content that should be set up with tabs within the content. Add tables to display lists or other nontabular content.

4.4 Table cells should be logically associated with the row/column header — there should be a logical, one-to-one association from the data to the information in the row/column header.

4.5 Tables should be named, have a table number (if applicable) and have a description. This will allow screen readers to identify each table and allow the user to recognize the information being presented.

4.6 All cells within a data table that are not part of the header row must be designated as “data cells.”

TIP: Tables that are not data tables are not required to have descriptions or labels. Small data tables for which the purpose is immediately clear are not required to have labels.