

CMS Section 508 Quick Reference Guide – MS Word 2013

Document Layout and Formatting

Element	Description	Quick How To
Bookmarks and Table of Contents	Use Bookmarks or a Table of Contents (TOC) for documents over 9 pages. Create using Word's Bookmark or TOC feature. Check that Bookmark or TOC entries hyperlink to the correct locations in the document.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To create bookmarks, click "Insert" then "Bookmark." To create a TOC, click "References" then "Table of Contents." Select a TOC style.
Bullets and Numbering	Use the automatic list formats available in Word. Do not manually type lists preceded by special characters, such as hyphens or asterisks. Wingdings are not acceptable bullets.	Click "Home" then the "Bullets," "Numbering" or "Multilevel List" icon.
Color Contrast	Text must be easy to read in comparison to the background. Use very dark-colored lettering on a white or light-colored background.	Test color contrast by printing in grayscale or by using one of the color contrast analyzer tools found online.
Color Emphasis	Do not use color for emphasis without providing an alternative method of emphasizing text (e.g., bold, italics, or both); do not use color alone.	Example: Use the provider directory to find a list of doctors in your area.
Comments and Tracked Changes	Remove all comments from the text. Accept or reject tracked changes and turn off Track Changes.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Right click on comment then select "Delete Comment." Click "Review" then "Accept" or "Reject" changes.
Flashing, Flickering, or Animated Text	Do not use flashing, flickering, or animated text.	--
Fonts	Use recommended fonts: Times New Roman, Verdana, Arial, Tahoma, Helvetica, or Calibri.	See "Style Elements" below. You can modify a style to change the font.
Footnotes	Create footnotes using the Footnotes linking tool.	Click "References" then "Insert Footnote."
Page Breaks	Use page breaks instead of hard returns to move text to the next page.	Click "Insert" then "Page Break." Or click "Page Layout" then "Breaks."
Page Numbering	Use automatic page numbering fields.	Click "Insert" then "Page Number."
Paragraph Spacing	Use paragraph spacing instead of hard returns or tabs to increase spacing between paragraphs.	Select one or more paragraphs. Click "Page Layout," then under "Spacing," adjust space "Before" and "After."
Print Preview	View the document in Print Preview and check to see if it flows correctly from page to page. Look out for image placement, table format, and stray ("orphaned" or "widowed") lines and characters.	Click "File" then "Print." A preview of the document automatically appears on the right-hand side of the screen.
Style Elements	Create a hierarchical structure using Word's style formatting. Use Style elements (e.g., Heading 1, Heading 2) or a Multilevel List (e.g., Heading 1 to Heading 2 to Body Text).	Click "Home" then select desired style from the "Styles" ribbon. Or click "Home" then the "Multilevel List" icon.
URLs and E-mail Links	All Web citations (URLs) and e-mail addresses must be correct, complete, and linked to an active Web or e-mail destination.	Example: http://www.cms.gov not www.cms.gov Example: Jane.Doe@cms.hhs.gov

Images

Element	Description	Quick How To
Alternative Text (Alt Text)	Provide alternative text descriptions ("alt text") for all images, graphics, grouped images, and non-text elements that convey information. Do not provide alt text for images that are purely decorative.	Right click on image. Select "Format Picture" then "Alt Text."
Background Images or Watermarks	Do not use background images or watermarks.	Click "Page Layout." Select "Watermark" then "Remove Watermark."
Descriptive Text	Provide descriptive text near a complex image such as a chart or graph.	In a paragraph right above or below the image, describe the information the image is intending to convey.

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Element	Description	Quick How To
Grouping Images	Individual images, objects, or graphics on a page that make up one combined graphic image must be grouped as one object.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Click on each object one at a time. Select “Page Layout” then “Wrap Text.” Make sure that “In Line with Text” isn’t selected. 2. Hold the Shift key and click on each object. 3. Click “Group” then “Group” again.
In-Line with Text	Image layout must be set to “In Line with Text” for all images.	Click on image. Next, click “Page Layout.” Select “Wrap Text” then “In Line with Text.”
Text Boxes	As a general rule, do not use text boxes for graphics or floating text.	Exception: Text boxes are okay if the final format will be PDF or HTML.

Tables

Element	Description	Quick How To
Avoid Tabs or Spaces	Do not use tabs or spaces to create a table-like structure. Instead, use Word’s table formatting.	Click “Insert” then “Table.”
Blank Cells	Avoid blank cells.	--
Descriptions and Labels	All tables should be described and labeled. Exception: In some cases labeling a table may not be appropriate. For example, a small data table in a presentation may not need a label.	Click “References” then “Insert Caption.” Insert a title or short description after the table number.
Logical Reading Order	Use a logical reading order from left to right, top to bottom.	--
Merged Cells	As a general rule, avoid merged cells.	Exception: Merged cells are okay if the final format will be PDF or HTML.
Row and Column Headers	Provide a descriptive heading for each row and column in a data table, starting with the first left-hand column.	--
Row Page Break	In Table Properties, uncheck “Allow row to break across pages” (no matter if your table fits on one page or spans multiple pages).	Right click within last table row on page. Select “Table Properties” then “Row.” Uncheck “Allow row to break across pages.”
Table Header Row	In Table Properties, check “Repeat as header row at the top of each page” (no matter if your table fits on one page or spans multiple pages).	Right click within the top table row. Select “Table Properties” then “Row.” Check “Repeat as header rows.”

File Name

Element	Description	Quick How To
Be Concise	The file name must be concise, clear, and generally no more than 30 characters in length.	Example: 508QuickReference-Word2010.docx
Spaces and Special Characters	Do not use spaces or special characters in file names. Hyphens (-) are acceptable in file names.	Example: CommonElements.docx or Common-Elements.docx

Document Properties, Complex Content, and PDF Conversion

Element	Description	Quick How To
Complex Content	If there is no other way to make the content accessible, provide a separate accessible version.	Example: Organizational charts are often complex. Provide a separate full-text version that is 508-compliant.
Converting to PDF (if you have Adobe Acrobat Professional)	Convert documents to PDF by using the Acrobat add-in on your toolbar (preferred method) or by clicking “File,” “Save as Adobe PDF.” Do not use “Print,” “Printer,” “Adobe PDF.”	If the Acrobat add-in on your toolbar doesn’t convert all of the formatting elements in your original document, try “File,” “Save as Adobe PDF.”
Document Properties	Fill out Title, Author, Subject (description), and Tags (keywords). Note: Author must be a government organization (e.g., CMS).	Click “File,” “Info,” “Properties.” Choose item in “Properties” you wish to update.