



## CMS Section 508 Program Tip #9: Keyboard Accessibility



This Monthly Tip Series falls under the Program Pillar of Policy and Program Administration.

One of the most important aspects of Section 508 compliance/accessibility is ensuring software and web content is keyboard accessible. Essentially, all functions that can be performed with a mouse must also be executable via a keyboard. Keyboard accessibility carries a “high impact” consideration and must be prioritized during development.

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

As some nondisabled computer consumers are keyboard-only users, and blind/low vision users of screen readers cannot use a mouse, keyboard accessibility must be provided. Addressing keyboard accessibility will meet the needs of both user groups.

### WHAT TO DO

1. Ensure all interactive elements (links, buttons, fields, ETC.) can be accessed through pressing the tab key.
2. Ensure a focus trap doesn't exist. This means when tabbing, a user's focus must not become trapped in a field/ location with the user unable to progress further. Users must be able to enter and exit any user interface element.
3. All rich, interactive features such as modal dialogs, dropdown menus, carousels and similar controls should meet the WAI-ARIA 1.0 Authoring Practices for keyboard operability from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C).
4. Visible focus should be easily discernible. Thus, as the user tabs, an obvious focus indicator should be provided so that users easily understand which field has focus.

### REFERENCE

For more information on keyboard accessibility and related techniques, please visit the WCAG 2.0, [Guideline 2.1, Keyboard Accessible](#).

#### Disclaimer

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