



## CMS Section 508 Program Tip #8: Images and Alternative Text



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

Accessible images, depending on the type, typically carry a “high impact” consideration and should be addressed during development/remediation.

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

If images lack or have insufficient descriptions, or when necessary, are not tagged to be ignored by assistive technology, blind/low vision users will be unable to ascertain the purpose of an image. This was especially problematic when images convey meaning for completing a task.

### WHAT TO DO

1. Use alternative text specified through the alt attribute (alt=“XXX”) to define a description for an image that conveys meaning critical to the task being performed or the content being consumed.
2. Ensure image descriptions are detailed. Adopt the mindset that including alt text via the alt attribute and the alt text inadequately describes the image is the same as having no alt text at all.
3. For images that are decorative/convey no meaning, use an empty or “null” alt attribute. I.E. alt=“”
4. Try to avoid the use of images of text. If images of text are used, the alternative text should clearly reflect the text displayed in an image.

### MORE INFORMATION

For more information on images and alternative text and related techniques, please visit the WCAG 2.0, [Guideline 1.1, Keyboard Accessible](#).

#### Disclaimer

In accordance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, (29 U.S.C. 794d), CMS Section 508 Program team is committed to ensuring that the content is accessible to all viewers. Send feedback or concerns related to the accessibility of this website to the CMS Section 508 Program team at [CMS Section 508 General Resource Mailbox](#).