



# Integrated Accessibility Standards

## Information and Communications Procedure

Department: Clerk's Department

Section / Function: Accessibility Procedure No.: A-002

Approval Level: Senior Management

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Revision: N/A

### 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This Procedure implements, in part, the Township's Accessible Customer Service Policy and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy (HR13-01).
- 1.2 This Procedure provides direction to Township employees on how to create, notify, receive and provide information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities. The intent of this Procedure is to assist people with disabilities to access sources of information and communications that they rely on every day.
- 1.3 This Procedure assists in the requirements to comply with sections 11 to 14 and section 19 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11, made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

### 2.0 Application

- 2.1 This Procedure applies to every Township employee that will create, notify, receive and provide information and communication to the public.
- 2.2 This Procedure does not apply to:
  - (a) Products or product labels, unless otherwise stated;
  - (b) Unconvertible information and communications; and
  - (c) Information and Communications that the Township cannot control.

### 3.0 Definitions / Acronyms (as required)

**Accessibility** – Equal access to goods, services and/or facilities for all people.

**Accessible Formats** – Formats that are an alternative to standard print and are accessible to persons with disabilities. Accessible formats may include, but are not limited to: large print, recorded audio, electronic formats such as DVD's and CD's, Braille and other formats usable by people with disabilities. This term is also known as "alternative formats".

**Agent** – A person or business providing goods, services and/or facilities on behalf of the Township of Essa through a contract or agreement.

**Township** – The Corporation of the Township of Essa, its agencies, boards, commissions and advisory committees.

**Township Representative** – An employee, elected or appointed official, agent, or volunteer. Individuals who provide or act on behalf of the Township.

**Communication Supports** – Methods of accessing information that people with disabilities may need. Some examples include plain language, sign language, reading the information to the individual making the request, adding captioning to videos or using written notes to communicate.

**Communications** – The interaction between two or more people or organizations (or any combination of them) where information is provided, sent or received.

**Conversion Ready** – An electronic or digital format that assists conversion of information into an accessible format (ie: Braille, large print, audio cassettes, CD's, DVD's, etc.).

**Disability** – as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code means:

- (a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- (b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- (c) A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- (d) A mental disorder; or
- (e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

**Goods, Services and/or Facilities** – means any one or more of supplies, personal property, construction materials, construction services, insurance, employee benefits, construction of assets and maintenance and service contracts. “Facilities” means a building or place that provides a particular good and/or service.

**Information** – includes data, facts and knowledge that convey meaning and that exists in any format such as text, audio, digital or images.

**Unconvertible Information** – Information that is not technically feasible to convert, or the technology to convert the information is not readily available.

**Website** – A set of web pages that are available to the public and contain a collection of related text, images, videos, audio and other digital assets. It is accessible through an internet address known as a Uniform Resources Locator (URL).

**Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)** – An international standard for making websites and web content accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities.

**WCAG 2.0 Level A and Level AA** – Different conformance levels in WCAG Version 2.0. To meet conformance Level A, all Level A success criteria must be met. To meet conformance Level AA, all Level A and Level AA success criteria must be met.

## **4.0 Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

### **4.1 Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

The Township shall:

#### **(a) Create Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

Township representatives will ensure that information is formatted to comply with the Township's "Guide to Accessible Documents" (see Appendix 1). Information formatted to meet the Township's "Guide to Accessible Documents" will most often result in an appropriate accessible format and communication support. For example, the information will be compatible with screen reading software, which means that a document can be emailed to a person with vision loss and used with their own assistive technology.

There may be instances when information formatted to meet the "Guide to Accessible Documents" does not result in an appropriate accessible format and communication support. In these instances, an alternative will be provided, upon request. Formatting a document to the guide will ensure it is conversion ready for the recipient.

#### **(b) Notify the Public of Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

The Township shall provide notification to the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports on the Township's website. If a member of the public requires information in an accessible format, they can be advised to contact the Clerk's Office, and the Clerk's Office will communicate with the person making the request so as to determine the best alternative method for the requestor.

#### **(c) Receive Requests for Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

A person who requires information in an accessible format may email [accessibility@essatownship.on.ca](mailto:accessibility@essatownship.on.ca) or can contact the Clerk's Office directly to make the request.

#### **(d) Respond to requests for Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

Township staff shall provide accessible formats and communication supports for people with disabilities upon request, and shall:

- Consult with the person making the request to make sure the appropriate format or support is provided. For example, not all people who are blind use Braille. Information provided in large print format may be acceptable to the person making the request.
- Provide information in a timely manner that takes into account the person's needs due to their disability. It will not take significantly longer than requests for the same information available in standard format.

- Provide information at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to others.
- If it is not possible to provide information in an accessible format, provide an explanation to the person making the request, and provide a summary of content related to the unconvertible information.
- Forward the customer's contact information to the Clerk's Office in the event that further assistance with the response to the request is required. A member of the Clerk's Department will consult with the customer to find a suitable alternative solution.

#### 4.2 Feedback

Township staff that create feedback forms or receive and respond to feedback shall:

- Ensure that the process is accessible to people with disabilities.
- Provide accessible formats and appropriate communication supports upon request.

#### 4.3 Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information:

The Township of Essa shall:

- Provide emergency procedures, plans or public safety information that is available to the public in an accessible format or provide them with access to appropriate communication supports, upon request, as soon as practicable. (\*This procedure does not apply to real-time public safety information used during an actual emergency such as an evacuation.)
- Determine what information is to be made available to the public. This may include incidents that threaten life, property, operations or the environment. This also includes information governed by legislation such as, but not limited to:

**Fire Code** – All buildings required to have a fire safety plan as per 2.8.1.1 of Ontario's Fire Code, must keep the plan in an approved location in the building.

**Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act** – requires the Township to have a publicly-shared all-hazards Emergency Plan.

#### 4.4 Accessible Websites and Web Content

The Township of Essa shall make its website accessible to people with disabilities by conforming to the international standards for website accessibility.

Content Providers and Content Approvers will:

- Ensure that new content published after January 1, 2012 conforms to WCAG 2.0 Level A;
- Ensure that new websites conform to WCAG 2.0 Level A by January 1, 2014; and
- Ensure that website(s) and all new content posted conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA by January 1, 2021.

#### 4.5 Public Libraries

The Essa Public Library shall:

- Provide or arrange for people with disabilities to obtain accessible formats of library materials in the library's collections, where the materials exist.
- Provide public information about the availability of accessible materials and communication supports. Provide the public information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request (ie: post the information on their website, library posters, promotional materials, etc.)
- Consider accessibility when procuring new library materials, so that collections are accessible to the widest range of people.

#### 5.0 Pertinent Resources

*Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)*

*Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07)

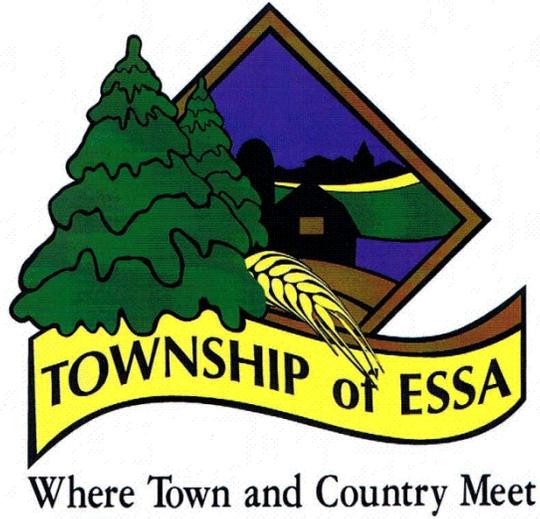
Integrated Accessibility Standard (Ontario Regulation 191/11)

Ontario's Fire Code

Attachment:

Appendix 1 – Guide to Accessible Documents

'Appendix 1 to Information and Communication Procedure'



## **Guide to Accessible Documents**

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## Background

A.O.D.A. is the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, passed in 2005.

This Act is meant to create accessibility for all Ontarians with disabilities by January 1, 2025.

### Legislation:

There are three Standards under the A.O.D.A.:

- Customer Service Standards
- Integrated Accessibility Standards (I.A.S.)
- Built Environment Standard

The I.A.S. was made law as **Ontario Regulation 191/11**. This regulation contains accessibility requirements related to Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and the Design of Public Spaces.

### Action:

A requirement of the Information and Communications section of the I.A.S. Regulation is to provide information in an accessible format, upon request, to help people with disabilities access information.

The Township of Essa will communicate with all customers in a way that is accessible to everyone. The information will be provided in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than regular price. In addition to in-person communication, this includes written documents, reports, brochures, forms and extends to multi-media tools, such as the Township's website.

## More than Compliance

Accessibility is not just a matter of legal compliance.

The A.O.D.A. requires the Township to provide accessible formats for people with disabilities, upon request. With little effort, we are in a position to do even better.

Implementing Accessibility Standards will facilitate inclusiveness and enhance access to municipal goods, services and facilities in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

This Guide to Accessible Documents aims to produce website ready, user-friendly documents for all customers and staff, including people with disabilities.

**Readability** should be the first step in making administrative documents accessible to everyone.

## Use Appropriate Font Family

Avoid complicated, decorative or handwriting fonts.

Choose “Sans-Serif” fonts such as Arial. These fonts have easily recognizable upper, lower-case and numerical characters. Narrow versions of these fonts should be avoided.

Arial	This font is accessible
Garamond	This font is not accessible
<i>Monotype Corsiva</i>	<i>This font is not accessible</i>



The Township’s standard font family is **Arial**.

## Use Appropriate Font Size

Make text large, preferably between 12 and 18 points.

The size of the font is a fundamental factor in legibility. Font size 12 is the Township’s standard for main body text. A minimum font of size 16 is the Township’s standard for presentation documents. A font size of 10 point and smaller is not accessible and should be avoided where possible.

Font Size 10	Size 10 or less is not accessible
Font Size 12	Township standard for main body text
Font Size 14	Township standard for main headings
Font Size 16	Township standard for large print

Note: Font size varies between font families. This guide is based on the Arial font. If using sans-serif fonts other than Arial, use Arial as the base for determining appropriate font size. For example:

Arial, font size 12	Township standard for main body text
Calibri, font size 14	Calibri 14 is similar in size to Arial 12
Verdana, font size 11	Verdana 11 is similar in size to Arial 12

## Use Bold for Emphasis, Not Italics or Underlining

Avoid *italics* and underlining, to improve readability.

**Italic fonts** are more difficult to read than regular fonts, mainly due to the output of angled characters on a digital screen that has poor resolution. There may be exceptions to using italics, such as when required to meet standard formatting (for example, citation in legal documents). Keep in mind, if the font is very large, italics may be more legible, but as a general rule, avoid italics where possible.

**Underlining** interferes with lower case letters and should be avoided for emphasis. Only use underlining when describing links, such as email addresses and web pages. In this application, use the international standard of a blue font. For example, [www.essatownship.on.ca](http://www.essatownship.on.ca) Microsoft Office products typically recognize email addresses and web page links and automatically apply this format.

When following these simple rules, we not only comply with the requirements of the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005**, we make documents easier to read.

## Avoid Sentences in all Upper Case Letters

A sentence written with a combination of upper and lower case letters is easier to read.

The ascenders and descenders found in lower-case letters provide word shape, causing mental reading clues to speed up the process of reading. Sentences written in all upper case do not benefit from these clues and are more difficult to read.

### CAPITALS DON'T GIVE CLUES.

Different shapes give clues.

It may make sense to use all upper case in some instances, such as short headings, titles with a maximum of two words or when text is used as a graphic image and not intended to be read. In these examples, there is no benefit to having the mental reading clues. However, upper case can give the impression of shouting at the reader and therefore should be avoided where possible.

If the intent is to convey a shout, an exclamation point may be better. Screen readers generally do not read text differently if it is in all upper case letters, so listeners will not know that the author is shouting. Screen readers do change the voice inflection with exclamation points.

Also, upper case acronyms should have periods to allow screen readers to properly interpret the text as an acronym and not a word. For example, A.O.D.A. is more accessible than AODA.

## Use Appropriate Text Alignment

Align text to the left margin.

**Aligning text to the left margin** makes it easier to find the start of the next line and keeps spacing between the words even.

### Centre alignment is not accessible.

For example, a person with vision loss who has their computer display set up to zoom in at five times the normal display, will have difficulty finding words that are located in the middle of the document. They would rely on left alignment to find the starting point of a line.

**Full and right alignment (justified)** is not accessible. It causes uneven spaces between words. It is more difficult to read because the human eye cannot move smoothly along the sentence and has to search and jump to the start of each word.

Where images are used with text, align the image to the left of the page with the text directly above or below. Alternatively, align the image to the right of the page with the “Square” text wrapping option and keep the text aligned left.

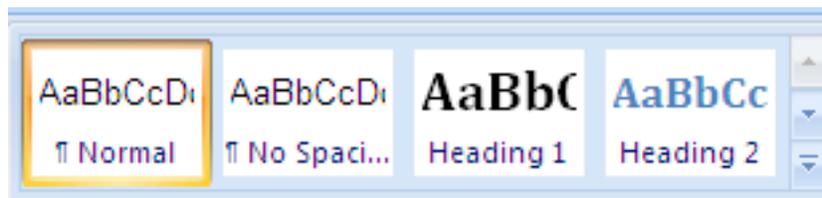


## Use Standard Navigational Aids

Use navigational aids to organize information and make documents easier to understand.

When using Microsoft Office, use the “Styles” tool to quickly apply a set of formatting choices to document headings and body. Benefits include:

- Increased readability
- Screen readers can identify and navigate sections
- A table of contents with links to document sections can be automatically generated.
- Formatting is consistent throughout the document.



## Use High Contrast

Use a minimum 7:1 colour contrast ratio between the background and the foreground.

### What does a 7:1 colour contrast ratio mean?

The better the contrast between the background and the foreground, the more legible the document will be. Black text on a white background provides the best contrast, but is not the only option.

	Contrast Ratio		Contrast Ratio
<b>Test 1</b>	21:1	<b>Test 7</b>	7:1
<b>Test 2</b>	21:1	<b>Test 8</b>	4:1 (fail)
<b>Test 3</b>	19.56:1	<b>Test 9</b>	4:1 (fail)
<b>Test 4</b>	15.27:1	<b>Test 10</b>	3.04:1 (fail)
<b>Test 5</b>	14.73:1	<b>Test 11</b>	2.18:1(fail)
<b>Test 6</b>	10.37:1	<b>Test 12</b>	1.43:1 (fail)

A good way to check contrast is to print in black and white and check if the document is legible. Online contrast testing tools are also available, which allow you to test colour combinations to determine the exact contrast ratio.

[www.snook.ca/technical/colour\\_contrast/colour.html](http://www.snook.ca/technical/colour_contrast/colour.html)

Note: Fonts larger than size 18 and fonts formatted to be bold have lesser requirements than a 7:1 contrast ratio. Adequate contrast is required for only objects that are intended to be read.

## Use Alt Tags for Graphics

Add a short description to all graphics inserted into a document.

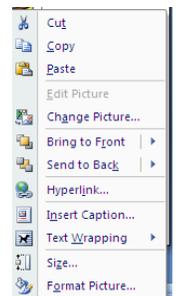
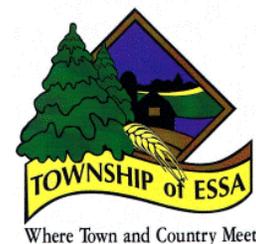
An “Alt tag”, or alternative text, is a brief description of any graphic inserted into a document. It can be read by a screen reader to allow someone with a vision disability to understand what the graphic is.

It is also displayed in place of the image when software does not support the display of images or when the user has chosen not to view images. As an added bonus, it can be read by search engines.

For example, the image to the right of this text has the following alt text:

“Township of Essa Where Town and Country Meet”

If reading this document in a pdf format on your computer, place your cursor over the image and see for yourself!



## Aim for a Clear, Organized, Readable Document

Clear print that is organized will be readable to a broader audience.

Use the following guidelines to make documents more accessible:

### Clarity:

- Do not provide too much information.
- Use bullet point summaries, rather than dense text.

### Organization:

- Do not place text over cluttered backgrounds.
- Use wide margins (minimum 0.5 inches).
- Use larger line spacing.
- Leave larger spaces between sections than between paragraphs.

### Readability:

- Printed Material should have a matte finish, not glossy.

## Use Appropriate Leaders

Avoid Dot leaders that are often used in a Table of Contents.

### What is acceptable?

Dot leader.....	No
Solid line leader_____	Yes
No leader	Yes

Note: A table of contents with no leaders is only acceptable when there is a generous spacing between lines.

## Use Standard Date Format

The international standard for date format is yyyy-mm-dd.

Dates are formatted differently around the world which may confuse readers and cause misunderstandings.

The simplest way to write dates is to spell out the month portion of that date. For example, use “April 2, 2013” or “2 April 2013”. The moment the month is spelled out, the date is no longer misinterpreted.

If the month is not spelled out, use the international date format of yyyy-mm-dd for consistency and ease of reference. For example, April 2, 2013 should be noted as “2013-04-02”.

## **Use Plain Language**

Aim for a Grade 7 or 8 reading level so the greatest number of people will get the message.

Plain language is a way of organizing the presenting information so that it makes sense and is easy to read the first time. Information is written in plain language when the intended audience understands it. Where possible, strive to make information available in plain language.

### **Plain Language Tips:**

- Write for your audience.
- Use short sentences and paragraphs.
- Use simple sentence structure and grammar.
- Use simple everyday words instead of technical jargon.
- Use full words such as “Street” instead of abbreviations such as “St.”
- Use a positive tone.
- Use the active voice.

### **Example:**

Original (grade 11.6) – Township residents who have limbs and debris from privately owned trees are asked to use the County’s Leaf and Yard Waste program for their disposal needs.

Plain Language (grade 5.9) – The County has a Leaf and Yard Waste program. Use this system to dispose of limbs and debris from trees on private property.

## **Use Page Numbering**

Add automatic page numbering using the Header and Footer tool.

Numbering the pages of a document helps readers to effectively navigate and reference the contents.

Microsoft Office products have a variety of page numbering templates that can be automatically inserted into documents.

This document uses the automated page numbering feature available in Microsoft Office.

## **Use Accessible Tables and Charts**

Avoid tables and charts where possible.

There are times when using tables and charts are the most efficient way to express a large amount of information, making the information more understandable for most

readers. When using tables and charts, ensure they are formatted to be as accessible as possible to all readers.

All of the basic accessibility considerations that are applied to documents must also be applied to tables and charts. For example:

- Use appropriate font size
- Add alternative text
- Use appropriate text alignment

Additionally, ensure tables include column headings and where possible, just one row of headings. Keep tables simple by avoiding merged cells. If tables split across pages, set the header to show at the top of each page.

When creating charts, use formatting options to create different types of lines or apply textures rather than colours to differentiate information for users who are colour blind.

## Use Real Lists

Format lists as “real lists” by using automatically generated bullets or numbering systems.

When creating lists, it is important to format them as a “real list”. Otherwise, assistive technologies such as screen readers will interpret the list as a series of short separate paragraphs instead of a coherent list of related items. Microsoft Office products have a variety of automatically generated list options.

Use numbered lists if the information is sequential and use bulleted lists if the information is a related set of points. A screen reader will announce the information as a list.



## Use Accessible Forms

All forms placed on the Township website should be fillable.

Using fillable forms allows users to complete the information digitally without having to print the form and write it by hand.

Tips when creating forms:

- Organize the fields chronologically.
- Ensure forms are keyboard accessible.
- Make sure label and field locations are easy to use.
- Make sure the information asked is short and basic.
- Avoid using asterisks (\*) to indicate required fields.
- Offer standard entry fields for phone numbers.
- Where signature is required, ensure there is sufficient space.

## Accessible Document Checklist

- Font Size
- Font Family
- Bold (no italics or underlining for emphasis)
- Upper Case letters (no sentences with all upper case)
- Text alignment (align to the left)
- Navigational Aids
- Contrast
- Alt Tags
- Clarity, Organization, Readability
- Table of Contents Leader
- Date Format
- Plain Language
- Page Numbering
- Tables and Charts
- Lists
- Accessible Forms

Contact the Clerks Department if you require more information on any of the above topics.

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705-424-9770 ext 101 or [jmarshall@essatownship.on.ca](mailto:jmarshall@essatownship.on.ca)