

# Is Your Website ADA Compliant?

*A Simple Guide to Understanding  
Website Accessibility and ADA Compliance*



VISUAL



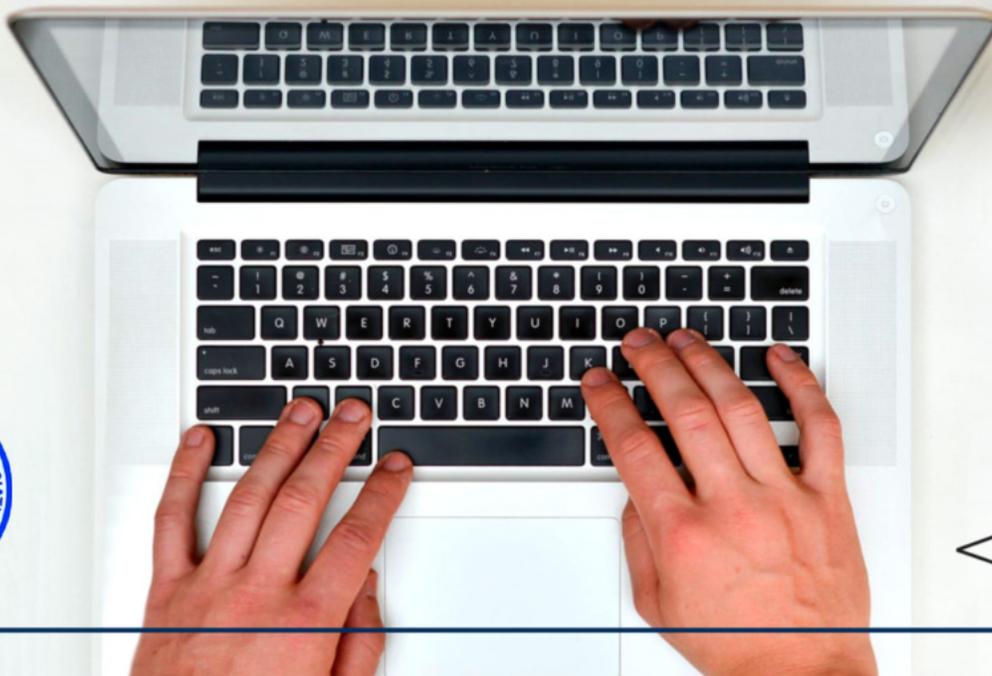
AUDITORY



MOBILITY



COGNITIVE



## What is ADA Website Compliance?

More than 54 million Americans are disabled, and almost 10 percent of the online population has a disability. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was introduced in 1990 to help those with a disability have accessibility to public places and protect against discrimination. With the web becoming more relevant in our daily lives, ADA requirements should apply to websites as well.



ADA Web accessibility guidelines are designed to promote access by individuals with various disabilities, including mobility impairments, visual and hearing impairments; epilepsy and cognitive impairments that make working with computers a challenge. Individuals with disabilities may need to use a different browser, a voice browser or a different operating system to use a website.

Not only does having an ADA compliant website follow good business practices and keep your medical practice ahead of the curve, it will also improve your website's search engine optimization and website usability.

## What Makes a Website ADA Compliant?

Here are the basic guidelines that must be followed to make a website ADA compliant:

- Website can be read by screen reading technology for the visually impaired
- Website can be navigated in multiple ways, i.e. using a keyboard
- Website does not contain intrusive content (flashing lights, automatically playing video or audio)
- Website uses the latest markup standards (proper use of tags and html code)

## Why Have an ADA Compliant Website?

Testing your website and making it ADA conformant helps to:

- Provide access to the majority of web users with disabilities
- Improve usability for all web users
- If relevant, may expand opportunities with government agencies
- Reduce exposure to potential legal complaints or lawsuits

## Who does ADA Compliance Affect?

Any business that is considered a “place of public accommodation” is required to provide equal access to services under the nondiscrimination requirements of Title III of ADA. This includes medical practices, healthcare facilities, hotels, entertainment venues, legal and accounting firms, retail stores, and virtually every business that is not a private club, including businesses that exist solely on the web.

## Obtain a Website Conformance Certification

An accessibility certification will summarize the level of compliance with the Section 508 standards or WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) 2.0 guidelines on a particular date. SMB Networks recommends updating your website certification once a year to keep up with version updates and additional content / changes on a website.

### SMB Networks offers three types of accessibility solutions:

1. **WCAG 2.0 Audit** – this audit will explore your website to document all templates, functions and content used (including Flash, JavaScript and WAI-ARIA). The audit will select a sample of pages and will identify any areas that do not conform to Section 508 and WCAG 2.0 level AA. SMB will provide a report with the findings, along with detailed recommendations on how to fix any issues. Your website developers can then fix the accessibility issues on the pages included in the audit and on all other pages in the site.
2. **Level 1 Statement of Accessibility** – this is a written document summarizing the types and features and level of compliance achieved based on a review of both a representative sample and random sample of pages on the site. The statement will include a list of the pages, sections and / or types of pages included and the date of the assessment. Because we are not reviewing every page on the site, this statement would provide a reasonable confidence that it conforms to the accessibility standards and guidelines.
3. **Level 2 WCAG 2.0 Conformance Certification** – A certification by SMB under WCAG 2.0 means that every page that is included in the claim meets the WCAG 2.0 success criteria at either A or AA level of compliance. To make a WCAG 2.0 Conformance Certification, there must be no content which violates the Success Criteria. This certification involves a comprehensive review of every page that you would like included in the conformance claim. This is the highest level of



certification and the most recommended for compliance. This certification is also included in all websites developed through SMB Networks that require ADA accessibility. You can see a comprehensive list success criteria required for Level 2 WCAG 2.0 at <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/>.

To schedule an audit and / or to seek a conformance certification by SMB Networks, contact us at:

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## ADA Compliance Checklist

To be fully compliant, WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) A and AA standards must be met. Below is a list of A and AA standards.

### Level A Compliance

Level A items comprise basic guidelines for website accessibility:

- ✓ **Images have alternate text that can be read by screen reader software.**  
*Alternate text tags allow users to interpret page content without seeing images.*
- ✓ **Recorded video content includes captions.**  
*Text captions are an alternative to audio and allow the hearing impaired to use content.*
- ✓ **Video or audio-only content is accompanied by text transcript or description.**  
*A text description can also communicate what a video or audio clip is about. This can be in the form of a paragraph around the video.*
- ✓ **Links are provided to media players required to view content.**  
*If a media player like Flash Player is needed to use content, there should be a link to where the software can be downloaded.*
- ✓ **Headings are presented in logical order.**  
*Main headings (h1) come before smaller subheadings (h2, h3 and so on).*
- ✓ **"b" and "i" tags are replaced with "strong" and "em."**  
*Strong" and "emphasis" tags specify more to web browsers.*
- ✓ **There are no empty links or heading tags.**  
*Empty links and headings can confuse users of screen reading software.*
- ✓ **Presentation does not rely solely on color.**  
*Presentation that relies solely on color is inaccessible to the visually impaired. Information should be conveyed using broad, easily-interpreted techniques.*
- ✓ **Automatically-played audio does not occur or can be stopped.**  
*It is strongly recommended that audio does not play automatically. However, if audio plays, a keyboard user should be able to stop it.*
- ✓ **The keyboard can be used to navigate the site.**  
*Keyboard access is crucial for visually-impaired users. The keyboard should be capable of meeting all functionality on the site.*

- ✓ **Keyboard focus is never stuck on one particular page element.**  
*When proceeding through a website using the keyboard, keyboard focus should not get locked to any position. Focus should keep moving with each tap.*
- ✓ **Time limits provide notifications to the user.**  
*If a user has limited time to do something, they should be warned before time expires. This can be in the form of a pop-up or other notification.*
- ✓ **Automatically scrolling or blinking content can be stopped.**  
*Any page element that automatically moves or changes should be able to be stopped in a certain position.*
- ✓ **No strobe effects or rapidly flashing colors occur on the site.**  
*Flashing colors are generally considered to be bad practice as they are very disruptive, especially for users with epilepsy.*
- ✓ **"Skip navigation" functionality allows keyboard users to quickly access content.**  
*"Skip to content" functionality is often accessed with the Tab key and allows a user to skip to the main body of a page. Especially useful with screen reading software, it ensures the user does not have to move keyboard focus through the full length of every page.*
- ✓ **Page titles clearly and succinctly describe page content.**  
*Page titles usually appear in the top of the browser window and communicate the main idea of a page. They should be of reasonable length, closer to a sentence or less.*
- ✓ **Buttons and links are clearly and logically named.**  
*Buttons and links are "action items" the user can interact with, causing something to happen. The action that occurs should be predictable, clearly communicated, and never a surprise.*
- ✓ **The language of each page is identified in code.**  
*Language code in the header of each page marks what language the code is written and meant to be read in.*
- ✓ **Elements receiving focus do not change content in a substantial way.**  
*Sometimes, keyboard focus changes the appearance of a page element. For example, hovering a mouse over a link might change the link's text color, or make it larger. This change should not significantly affect the layout or readability of the page.*
- ✓ **Invalid form input is identified to the user.**  
*If the user enters invalid information into a form control, they should be notified of the issue. For example, when filling out an email address form, an email address must be entered. If an invalid email address is entered, the user should know of the problem.*

- ✓ **Forms have labels and legends that can be read by screen reader software.**  
*Every form input should have a label to describe what type of information should be entered into it. Additionally, a legend can be used to group multiple form inputs.*
- ✓ **There are no major validation errors.**  
*The website passes W3C HTML validation with no major problems.*

## Level AA Compliance

Level AA is the second level necessary for full ADA compliance and is more advanced than Level A compliance:

- ✓ **Live video or audio content includes captions.**  
*Live streaming video or audio is accompanied by captions or ongoing text descriptions.*
- ✓ **Contrast ratio between text and page backgrounds is at least 4.5-to-1.**  
*Color contrast between readable and background elements should be sufficient for reading.*
- ✓ **Text on pages can be resized to 200% while still maintaining form.**  
*When zooming in on a page and enlarging text, page elements must accommodate the new sizing. Text resizing cannot drastically change page layout or negatively affect usability*
- ✓ **Images are not used where text can achieve the same purpose.**  
*Text is highly accessible and should be used whenever text can successfully communicate an idea. Images should only be used where necessary.*
- ✓ **Pages on the site can be accessed in multiple ways.**  
*A user looking for a page should be able to find that page in more ways than one. For example, the navigation bar, site map, and search function can all move users through the site.*
- ✓ **Keyboard focus is visible and clear.**  
*As keyboard focus moves down the page, highlighted elements should appear noticeable enough such that the user knows where they are focused.*
- ✓ **The language of content is identified in code with any language changes.**  
*Any section of a page presented in a language other than the site's primary language should identify the language of that section.*
- ✓ **Menus and buttons are used consistently regardless of the user's location in the site.**  
*Menus and buttons should appear with the same presentation and order no matter where*

*the user is on the site. This consistency is especially critical for main navigation areas.*

- ✓ **Users are given suggestions on how to solve input errors.**  
*Form input errors the user receives should be shown with a useful suggestion on how to resolve the error.*
- ✓ **An error prevention technique is used whenever the user is entering sensitive data.**  
*Forms transmitting sensitive information such as financial or legal data should have some degree of error prevention. This means either: the form submission can be reversed; data is checked and returned to the user if anything is found to be invalid; or a final confirmation is offered.*
- ✓ **Underlined text that does not provide a link is removed.**  
*Underlined text universally suggests "this is a link." Therefore, underlined text that does not link is misleading and should be removed. Italics can be a great alternative.*
- ✓ **Redundant links on the same page are eliminated or minimized.**  
*Multiple links to the same location from the same page make screen reading software read the links multiple times. Often a page can be restructured such that a link is not needed more than once.*