



**DESIGNERS SHOULD  
ALWAYS KEEP THEIR  
USERS IN MIND.**

ONLY THEN CAN YOU CREATE TRULY INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS.

# Accessible Document Resource Guide

Please note this document was created as a resource to support Northumberland County staff and third-party suppliers in building accessible documents.

While every effort has been made to incorporate guidance that aligns with best practice and with standards for accessible documents as outlined in *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, readers should note that **the County makes no guarantees that documents created following these guidelines will meet every requirement of applicable legislation.**

Third-party suppliers have final responsibility for ensuring that all documents and other materials supplied comply with *AODA*, the integrated accessibility standards, and all other requirements.

It is recommended that external organizations using this resource also independently review and understand the *AODA* and related standards to ensure their organization's fulfillment of any requirements for accessible documents – particularly those intended for distribution online.

## Northumberland County's supplier commitment to accessibility

Northumberland County is committed to providing accessible documents, including all documents produced by third-party suppliers on behalf of the County.

**All suppliers producing documents on behalf of the County must agree to the County's accessibility requirements:**

"The Supplier covenants and agrees to ensure that the Deliverables provided hereunder are consistent with the *Ontario Human Rights Code ("OHRC")*, the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 ("ODA")* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 ("AODA")* and their respective regulations in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Supplier covenants and agrees to comply with the County's accessibility standards, policies, practices and procedures, as same may be in effect during the term of the Agreement and apply to the Deliverables to be provided hereunder by the Supplier."

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# What is an accessible/compliant document?

Accessible documents support the dignity, independence and inclusion of people of all abilities. They allow all residents to easily view, read and understand our content, as well as access our information in a digital format that is compatible with assistive technology.

## Requirements for County documents

Section 14 of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)* under the AODA requires that all public sector websites – including online content such as council agendas, minutes, reports, studies, and other PDF documents, forms, images and videos – must be compliant with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA, with the exception of success criteria 1.2. 4 (live captions) and 1.2. 5 (audio descriptions).

This requires all public documents to be designed with accessible design practices and formatting in mind, such as:

- Inclusive visual design and colour usage
- Proper tag structure for all content including headings, lists and tables
- Proper alt-text on graphics, charts and other visual elements, to ensure the document can be read by all users
- Logical reading order, hierarchal heading structure and navigation



## What does this mean as a supplier for the County?

All documents/materials produced by external suppliers on behalf of the County that are intended for distribution to County Council or the public must be supplied to the County in an accessible format that complies with requirements outlined in the *IASR*– specifically those requirements specified under WCAG 2.0 Level AA and County accessibility requirements.

If the supplier cannot meet these requirements, the documents/materials may be remediated by an external accessibility specialist at the cost of the supplier.

# I want to create accessible documents. How do I get started?

While this guide provides some helpful resources and information to help you double-check your work while creating and remediating accessible documents, this guide is intended only as a helpful resource and is not an extensive training program or a step-by-step guide guaranteed to produce an accessible document.

Reference should be made to applicable legislation, policies and standards including but not necessarily limited to *AODA*, *IASR*, *OHC*, and WCAG 2.0 as required to ensure compliance with all legal requirements.

## Am I prepared and equipped to produce accessible documents?

Creating accessible documents can be a very technical and complex process that includes many manual checks and considerations to ensure compliance.

Producing an accessible document requires an understanding of document accessibility as well as the individual document's intended use; therefore, each document may require unique approaches and solutions to meet compliance.

In addition to reviewing the resources and materials provided in this guide,

**we highly recommend taking a hands-on training or educational course** to get a better understanding of how to create accessible documents and materials.

### **Please remember:**

In addition to the wide-range of complexity and unique requirements related to each individual document, there are a wide variety of tools available in the marketplace to assist with remediation work that may differ from the process outlined in this guide. Please also refer to any training provided by your remediation software provider.



# Accessibility principles and requirements



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

[ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11](http://ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11)

The AODA is intended to reduce and remove barriers for people with disabilities so that Ontario can become more accessible and inclusive for everyone. This act develops, implements and enforces accessibility standards with respect to goods and services—including information and documents—as well as facilities, accommodation, employment, building standards, structures and premises.



## ***Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)***

[ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110191](http://ontario.ca/laws/regulation/110191)

This regulation under AODA, 2005 establishes accessibility standards for information and communication, employment, transportation, the design of public spaces and customer service.



## **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0**

[w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag](http://w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag)

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, released on December 11, 2008, introduces the international standard that defines requirements on how to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities. These guidelines have been adopted by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*, which means we must comply with these standards to a Level AA with the exception of success criteria 1.2. 4 and 1.2. 5.



## **Accessibility Principles**

[w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-principles](http://w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-principles)

This resource developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) outlines the principles for web accessibility requirements for sites, applications, browsers and other tools.



## **How People with Disabilities Use the Web**

[w3.org/WAI/people-use-web](http://w3.org/WAI/people-use-web)

This resource provides information on how people with various disabilities, including age-related impairments, access information on the web. Although this has been directed towards the website, the same will apply for documents.

# Courses and online training resources

There are many courses about accessible design and documents available online and at educational institutions in Ontario. Here are some resources to help you get started:



## Online training resources

**Toronto Metropolitan University's Digital Accessibility Teaching and Learning Resources**

[de.ryerson.ca/wa](https://de.ryerson.ca/wa)

**City of Peterborough's AODA Training Program**

[peterborough.ca/en/city-hall/aoda-training-program.aspx](https://peterborough.ca/en/city-hall/aoda-training-program.aspx)

**LinkedIn Learning - 'Creating Accessible PDFs'**

[linkedin.com/learning/creating-accessible-pdfs](https://linkedin.com/learning/creating-accessible-pdfs)

**Adobe Accessibility Resources**

[adobe.com/accessibility](https://adobe.com/accessibility)

**DPA Communications**

[dpac.com](https://dpac.com)

**Eliquo, Inc.**

[eliquo.ca](https://eliquo.ca)



## Continuing education courses in Ontario

**Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) University  
Inclusive Design for Digital Media - CSDM-N153 or  
Inclusive Design (MDes)**

[ocadu.ca](https://ocadu.ca)

**George Brown College**

**Creating Accessible Documents - LIBA 9367**

[georgebrown.ca](https://georgebrown.ca)

**Seneca College**

**Creating Accessible Digital Media - IDB121**

[senecacollege.ca](https://senecacollege.ca)

**Humber College**

**Creating Accessible Documents and Communications  
Training Workshop**

[mediaarts.humber.ca](https://mediaarts.humber.ca)

# Accessible and inclusive writing



## Accessible writing style

[aoda.ca/accessible-writing-style](https://aoda.ca/accessible-writing-style)

This online resources provides grammar, formatting and organization tips that will help you achieve an accessible writing style that is easily readable and understood by as wide an audience as possible.



## Clear writing principles

[righthat.com/perspectives/clear-writing-principles](https://righthat.com/perspectives/clear-writing-principles)

This resource demonstrates how to write in clear, plain language that assists everyone.



## What is plain language?

A communication is in plain language if the language, structure and design are so clear that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information. Plain language avoids the use of industry jargon or complex words, grammar or sentences, whenever possible.



## The Ultimate Guide to Writing Alt-Text

[axesslab.com/alt-texts](https://axesslab.com/alt-texts)

This resource provides information on how to effectively write and use alt-text for images and icons.

# Inclusive visual design



## AccessAbility

[rgd.ca/resources/accessibility/access](http://rgd.ca/resources/accessibility/access)

AccessAbility 2 is a Practical Handbook on Accessible Graphic Design produced by the Association of Registered Graphic Designers (RGD). The handbook includes information about how graphic designers can make the design of digital and physical media more accessible.



## CNIB Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines

[cnib.ca/en/accessibility-cnib](http://cnib.ca/en/accessibility-cnib)

Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines created by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) outlines how to create accessible print materials.



## Colour Contrast Analyzer

[tpgi.com/color-contrast-checker](http://tpgi.com/color-contrast-checker)

This desktop application for macOS and Windows can be used to analyze the colour contrast of any elements that appear on a computer screen. It provides WCAG 2.1 compliance indicators, as well as a colour blindness simulator.



## WebAIM

[webaim.org](http://webaim.org)

WebAIM offers complete web accessibility services, and their website also provides practical articles and unique research on the subject. They also offer a web-based colour contrast analyzer.



## Sim Daltonism

[michelf.ca/projects/sim-daltonism](http://michelf.ca/projects/sim-daltonism)

This color blindness simulator lets you visualize colors as they are perceived with various types of color blindness. Use the camera on your iOS device, or use the Mac app to filter a region of the screen.

# Remediating a document

There are many digital tools, software and services available to help you remediate a document.

## Remediate documents yourself using digital software

If you would like to remediate documents yourself, you will need access to a digital remediation software. There are many software options available in the market, with varying platforms and features targeted toward different skill levels and purposes.

Our *Accessible Document Checklist* (see Appendix B on page 36) provides some information about how to use Adobe Acrobat Pro Accessibility tools to remediate a document, however we recommend researching all options in the market to see which remediation tool may be best for you.



## Get documents professionally remediated for you

If you would prefer to have a professional accessibility expert remediate your document for you, there are also many service providers that can remediate your document for a fee.

If you are using a service provider based outside of Ontario, please ensure the service provider is familiar with requirements outlined in the *AODA* and *WCAG 2.0* Level AA, and confirm that they are able to provide an accessible document that meets this compliance criteria.

# Checking the accessibility compliance of a document

## Digital checkers

There are digital tools available that will alert you of accessibility errors/warnings in your document to help you check your work and produce a more accessible document; however, **please note a clean accessibility report using a digital checker does not guarantee that the document is fully compliant.**

## Manual checks

Digital accessibility checkers are not able to check for all areas of accessibility compliance; therefore, your document will still require manual accessibility checks, in addition to a clean digital accessibility report.

In addition to the digital check, you will need to manually check for:

- Logical reading order
- Proper heading structure (heading styles/tags used only as proper headings—not as stylization tool, placed in proper hierarchical order, etc.)
- Accurate and descriptive alt-text on all images, diagrams and graphs
- Sufficient colour contrast
- An appropriate and cleanly formatted document title


# **Appendix A:**

## **Northumberland County's**

### **Guide to Accessible Documents**

This resource provides an overview of best practices for designing accessible source documents, such as a Microsoft Word document.

Please note: If a document is intended to be converted to PDF prior to distribution, additional remediation steps indicated in our 'Accessible Document Checklist' for PDFs (or remediation using alternative software) will also be required to ensure compliance after the file conversion process.



# Guide to Accessible Documents

# Guide to Accessible Documents

This document was created as a resource to support Northumberland County staff in building accessible documents.

While every effort has been made to incorporate guidance that aligns with best practice and with standards for accessible documents as outlined in Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), readers should note that **the County makes no guarantees that documents created following these guidelines will meet every requirement of applicable legislation.**

It is recommended that external organizations using this resource also independently review and understand the AODA and related standards to ensure their organization's fulfillment of any requirements for accessible documents – particularly those intended for distribution online. Third-party suppliers will be obligated to independently review all applicable accessibility standards and are ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance.

This guide was updated in July 2022.

Adapted with permission from City of Peterborough Guide to Accessible Documents (2018).

## Produced by

Northumberland County Accessibility Coordinator and Northumberland County Communications Department

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# Background

## Accessible documents support the **dignity, independence and inclusion** of people of all abilities.

The AODA is the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, passed in 2005. This Act is meant to create accessibility for all Ontarians with disabilities on or before January 1, 2025.

### Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

The IASR (Ontario Regulation 191/11) is a broad regulation under the AODA that applies to every person or organization in the public and private sectors of the Province of Ontario, and it consists of general requirements and 5 Standards:

- Information and Communications Standards
- Employment Standards
- Transportation Standards
- Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment) Standards
- Customer Service Standards

### Commitment

The County of Northumberland is committed to ensuring that people of all ages and abilities enjoy the same opportunities as they live, work, visit and invest in our community. The County is guided by the four core principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity, and supports the full inclusion of persons as set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the AODA.

The Information and Communications Standard tell us that the County must provide information in an accessible format and communication supports, upon request, to help people with disabilities access information. The information will be provided in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular price.

We must also ensure that our website and any documents posted on the website are accessible to everyone.

### More than compliance

Accessibility is not just a matter of legal compliance. With little effort, we are in a position to do even better. Creating universally accessible documents means more people can access our information.

This Guide to Accessible Documents aims to produce website ready and user-friendly documents for all customers and staff, including people with disabilities, including emails, reports, advertising, signage, program guides, infographics and websites.

# Document properties

## Adding a **title, author and tags** in the document properties makes it easier to locate the file.

For documents posted to online spaces, assistive technology uses the document properties to search for titles, authors and tags associated with the document.

Under the document properties complete:

- Title
- Author
- Tags/keywords
- Comments

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Word interface with the 'Info' tab selected. The document title is 'Guide to Accessible Documents-2021'. The left sidebar contains navigation options: Home, New, Open, Info (highlighted), Save, Save As, Save as Adobe PDF, Print, Share, Export, Transform, Close, Account, Feedback, and Options. The main area displays document information and actions:

- Protect Document**: Control what types of changes people can make to this document.
- Check for Issues**: A button to check for document issues.
- Inspect Document**: Before publishing this file, be aware that it contains:
  - Comments
  - Document properties, author's name, related dates and cropped out image data
  - Footers
  - Characters formatted as hidden text
  - Custom XML data
  - Content that people with disabilities are unable to read
- Version History**: View and restore previous versions.
- Manage Document**: There are no unsaved changes.

On the right, the **Properties** section is circled in red, showing the following details:

- Size**: 1.79MB
- Pages**: 26
- Words**: 3921
- Total Editing Time**: 1 Minute
- Title**: Guide to Accessible Documents 2...
- Tags**: accessibility, guide, documents
- Comments**: training guide
- Related Dates**:
  - Last Modified: Today, 12:20 PM
  - Created: Today, 12:20 PM
  - Last Printed: 2020-09-11 9:55 AM
- Related People**:
  - Author**: Northumberland County (Add an author)
  - Last Modified By**: Nicholson, Andrea

A link to [Show All Properties](#) is located at the bottom of the Properties section.

# Styles tool

Use ‘**Styles**’ to create a reference structure and help users navigate the document.

## Smart headings and paragraphs

Use the Microsoft Office “Styles” tool on the ‘Home’ tab to quickly apply formatting choices to headings and paragraphs. Benefits are:

- Everyone, including people who use screen readers, can identify and navigate sections.
- A table of contents with links to document sections can be automatically generated, as formatted in this document.
- Formatting is consistent throughout the document.

Do not use the “Title” style to identify headings as it will not be reflected in the document structure. Use Heading 1 for title, Heading 2 for main headings, Heading 3 for sub-headings, etc. Each heading must be unique.

Each document should have only one Heading 1.

Headings must be nested, that is, a Heading 2 can only go under a Heading 1, and a Heading 3 can only go under a Heading 2.

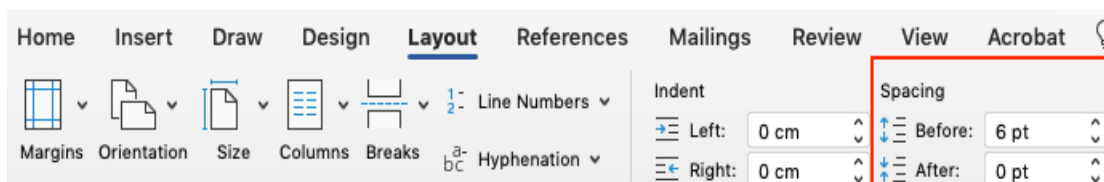


## Paragraph spacing

Do not use hard returns (or use the enter key) to create spacing between lines or paragraphs.

If you hit “enter” twice, a screen reader will interpret the second “enter” as a new paragraph with no text. The screen reader will read the word “blank” out loud for every blank line.

Instead, use paragraph spacing tools to adjust the spacing before (above) or after (below) a paragraph. To adjust the spacing throughout the entire document, modify the paragraph spacing of your ‘Normal’ paragraph style in your Styles tab.

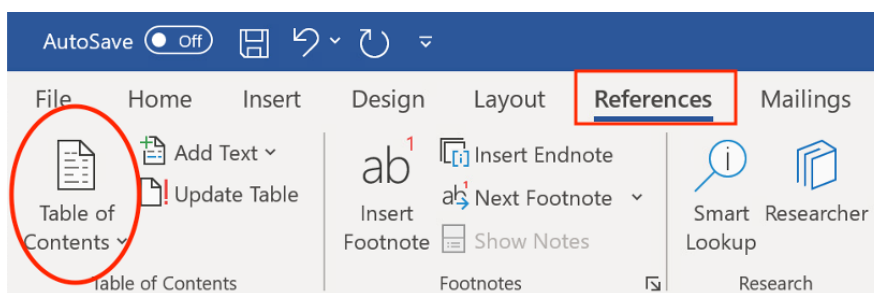


# Document navigation

## Automatically generate a **Tables of Contents** using 'Headings'.

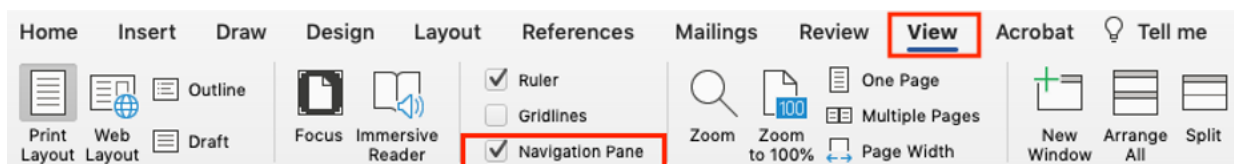
Use the Microsoft Office tool to automatically generate a Table of Contents, rather than creating one manually. Office uses the headings built into your document to create the Table (see page 6 for how to build accessible headings into your document).

Access the Table of Contents tool on the 'References' tab. Select 'Table of Contents'.

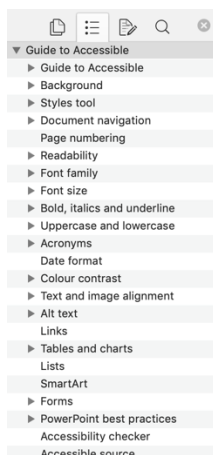


## Navigation pane

To review the document navigation and to ensure each header level is accurately tagged, open the navigation pane by checking the 'Navigation Pane' box under the 'View' tab.



## Example of 'Document Map' tab in Navigation Pane



# Page numbering

## Add **automatic page numbering** using the header and footer tools.

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 Guide to Accessible Documents uses the automated page numbering feature available in Microsoft Office.



# Readability

**Clear content** that is simple and organized will be more readable to a broader audience.

## Clarity

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

## Organization

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

## Plain language

Where possible, **aim for a Grade 3 to 6 reading level** so the greatest number of people will get the message.

- Write for your audience – use language the intended audience will understand.
- 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 level 10.9)** – Residents who have limbs and debris from privately owned trees are asked to use the County’s landfill and transfer stations for their disposal needs.

**Plain Language (grade level 6.2)** – The County accepts leaf and yard waste at all landfill and transfer stations. Use this service to dispose of limbs and debris from trees on private property.

## Readability

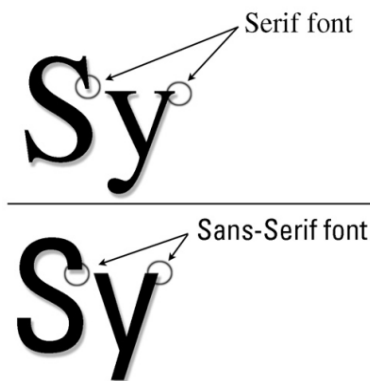
- Printed material should have a matte finish, not glossy.

# Font family

Use sans-serif fonts. 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>



## Font availability

It is also important to note that some fonts are not available on all computer systems. It is best to use standard system fonts such as Arial and Calibri when sharing editable source documents to prevent font substitution.

## Approved fonts

There are two primary accessible fonts that are suggested for use in Northumberland County materials:

Calibri

Aa

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
(!@#\$\$%^&\*) 0123456789

Arial

Aa

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz  
(!@#\$\$%^&\*) 0123456789

# Font size

## Make text large enough, preferably between 12 and 18 points.

The size of the font is a fundamental factor in legibility. Font size 12 is the recommended standard for main body text. A minimum font of size 16 is the recommended 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	<b>Recommended standard for main body text</b>
Font Size 14	Recommended standard for main headings
Font Size 16	Recommended standard for large print

### Font size within font families

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	Recommended 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

### Font size for materials viewed at a distance

When creating displays for events (such as Public Information Centres), ensure text size is an appropriate font size for the reading/viewing distance.

Character height relative to viewing distance

Minimum character height, mm	Maximum viewing distance, mm.
200	6000
150	4600
100	2500
75	2300
50	1500
25	750

# Bold, italics and underline

**Use bold for emphasis, avoid italics and use underlining for links only.**

## Italic fonts

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

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.northumberland.ca](http://www.northumberland.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 – for everyone.

# Uppercase and lowercase

Use a **combination of uppercase and lowercase letters**. Avoid sentences in all uppercase letters.

Lowercase letters are easier to read.

Lowercase letters provide word shape. The shape of a word provides mental reading clues to speed up the process of reading. A sentence written with a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters is easier to read.

CAPITALS DON'T GIVE CLUES.  
Different shapes give clues.

## Communicating sound

The use of ALL CAPS is often interpreted as shouting. 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.

## Exceptions

It may make sense to use all upper-case in some instances, such as acronyms, 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.

# Acronyms

## Spelling out the acronym provides an explanation for the reader.

When using acronyms, spell out the full term followed by the acronym in parenthesis for the first time you mention the term. For subsequent times, use the acronym.

### Example

The Ontario Agri-Food Venture Centre (OAFVC) is a small batch fruit and vegetable processing facility located in Colborne. At the OAFVC, farmers and local foodies can access a variety of services.

### Exceptions

Some acronyms don't need to be spelled out because the acronym has become the common term (Examples: modem, URL, scuba).

**Note:** Periods are not required between the letters in acronyms. Periods can make the acronym harder to read for sighted readers and does not always provide added value to those using screen readers.

# 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 the date. For example, use “April 2, 2022” or “2 April 2022”. 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, 2022 should be noted as “2022-04-02”.

# Colour contrast

Use a **minimum 4.5:1 colour contrast ratio** between the background and the foreground.

## What does a 4.5:1 colour contrast ratio mean?

A 4.5:1 colour contrast ratio means that the foreground (text) is 4.5 times lighter or darker than the background. The higher 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.

test number	contrast ratio
<b>Test 1</b>	21:1
<b>Test 2</b>	21:1
<b>Test 3</b>	19.56:1
<b>Test 4</b>	15.27:1
<b>Test 5</b>	14.73:1
<b>Test 6</b>	10.37:1

test number	contrast ratio
<b>Test 7</b>	7:1
<b>Test 8</b>	4:1 (fail)
<b>Test 9</b>	4:1 (fail)
<b>Test 10</b>	3.04:1 (fail)
<b>Test 11</b>	2.18:1 (fail)
<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. Contrast testing tools are also available, which allow you to test colour combinations to determine the exact contrast ratio.

### Colour Contrast Analyzer (CCA):

<http://tpgi.com/color-contrast-checker>

**Note:** Fonts larger than size 18 and fonts formatted to be bold have lesser requirements than a 4.5:1 contrast ratio. Adequate contrast is required only for objects that are intended to be read.

# Text and image alignment

## Align text to the left margin.

### Aligning text

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

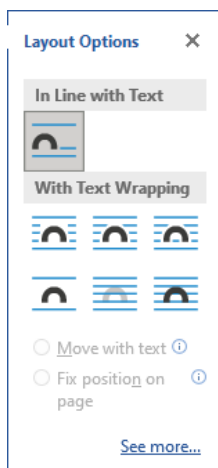
**Centre alignment** is not accessible.

For example, a person with vision loss who has their computer display set to zoom in closer than the average display size, may have difficulty finding words that are located in the middle of the document. These users rely on left alignment to find the starting point of a line.

Justified alignment is not accessible. When you align the text to both edges of the document, it often causes uneven spaces between words. This makes the document harder to read because the eye cannot move smoothly along the sentence and has to search for the start of each word.

### Aligning images to the left (preferred)

Where images are used with text, align the image to the left of the page with the text directly above or below.



### Aligning images to the right

In some cases, to enhance the design of the document, images may be aligned to the right of the page using the 'Square' text wrapping option; however, please note this alignment option will require a manual check and remediation of the final document (for example, using Equidox to remediate the final PDF file) to ensure proper reading order.

# Alt text

## Add a **short description** to all graphics inserted into a document by using the alt text feature.

An “Alt text”, 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 vision loss or other 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.

Alt text should provide the same information to a non-sighted reader as the image or graphic provides to a sighted reader. Alt text should:

- Be succinct
- Present the content, context, and function of the image
- Avoid phrases such as “image of...” or “graphic of...”.

For example, the images to the right of this text have the following alt text:



**Northumberland County Logo**



**Northumberland County headquarters building with trees, a bench and a decorative stone structure in front.**

## Best practices when using images

- Use high quality images (300 dpi for print and 72 dpi for the screen).
- Use copyright free images or get permission to use the image from the owner and provide credit to the creator.
- Avoid reshaping or stretching images in a way that distorts the image.

# Links

## Meaningful hyperlinks provide users with **direction**.

Some screen readers can scan documents for links, so informative text to help describe the link is helpful. It's best to use the title of the webpage as the linked text in the document. For example, if you are linking to the County's Accessibility webpage, the link text should say "Accessibility".

Avoid attaching hyperlinks to nondescriptive text such as "click here" and typing out the full URL in digital materials.

For printed documents, include the full URL but use short friendly URLs when possible.

# Tables and charts

**Avoid tables and charts** where possible. If they are needed, format them to be accessible.

Sometimes tables and charts are needed to make a large amount of information clear to readers. Use the accessible document rules in this guide, such as font size, to make them accessible. Also, avoid merged cells and use formatting options to create different types of lines or apply textures rather than colours.

## Four simple steps to make a table more accessible

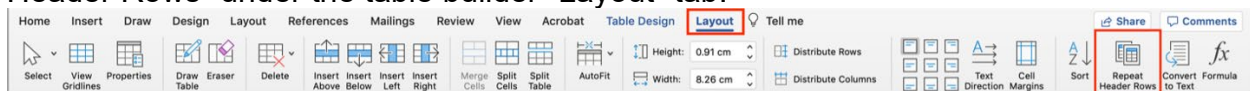
**Step 1:** Add header row to the columns (and rows if needed). In a cell that is a header or if both rows and columns are headers, add content to the cell where the rows and columns meet. For example:

	Population
Township of Alnwick/Haldimand	6,869
Municipality of Brighton	11,844

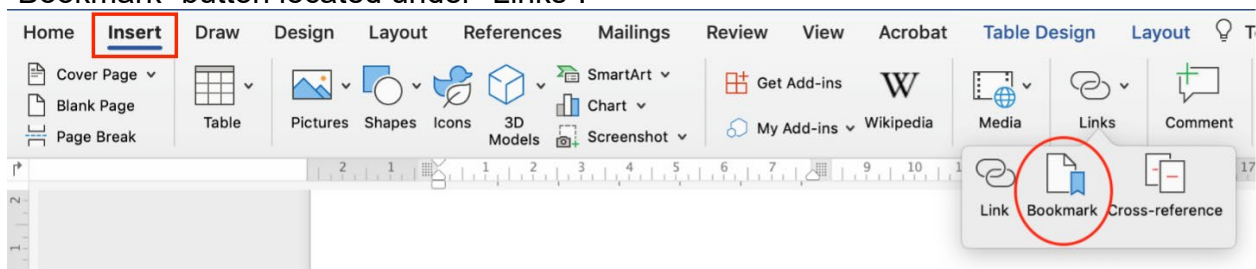
**Step 2:** Check the “header row” box in the “Table Design” tab to recognize header cells exist.



**Step 3:** Set the “header row” to repeat at the top of each page by clicking “Repeat Header Rows” under the table builder “Layout” tab.



**Step 4:** Add a bookmark to the table by navigating to the “Insert” tab and clicking the “Bookmark” button located under “Links”.



# Lists

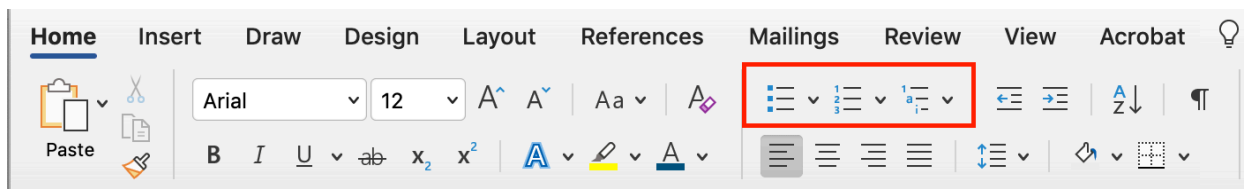
## Format lists using automatically generated bullets or numbering systems.

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.

A screen reader will announce the information as a list.

Use:

- **Numbered lists** if the information is sequential.
- **Bulleted lists** if the information is a related set of points.



# SmartArt

## Avoid using SmartArt.

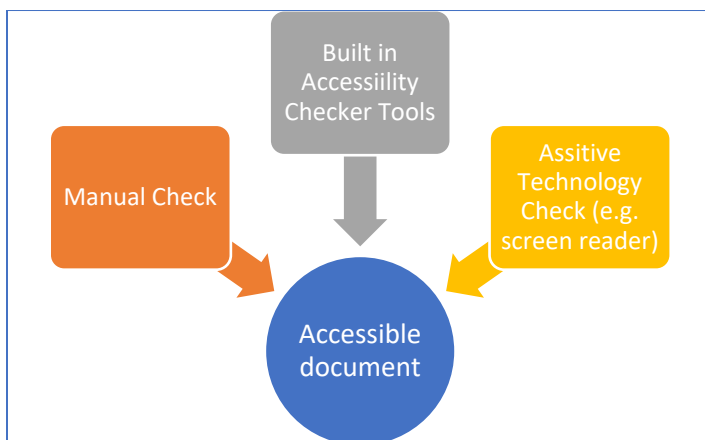
SmartArt is not accessible because:

- Text content is not read by a screen reader
- Auto generated color palettes may not meet the required colour contrast ratios for web publication, or for sighted users
- Text sizes generated may be too small to read, particularly when used in presentations projected on a screen.

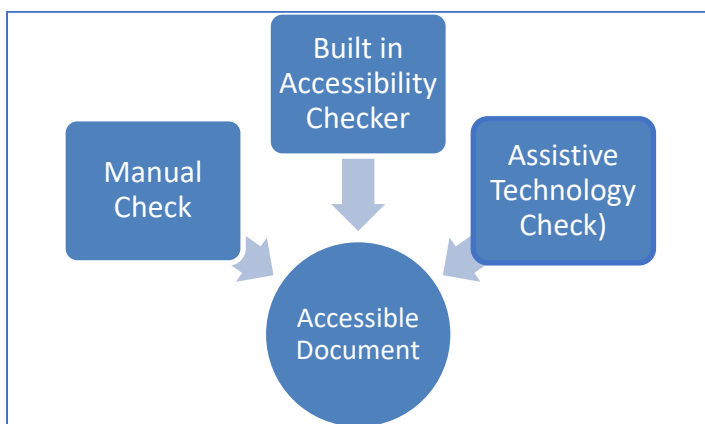
Look for other ways to display the information such as bulleted or numbered lists.

If using SmartArt ensure that:

1. **Text size** and **colour contrast** meet accessibility requirements and
2. **Alt text** is included to describe the SmartArt image



Example 1: Poor contrast, small text size, missing alt text (not accessible)



Example 2: Improved colour contrast, increased text size and added alt text

# Forms

**All forms uploaded to the County website should be accessible and **fillable**, or created using Form Builder.**

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

When uploading forms to our websites, our best practice is to use web-based forms whenever possible, such as the Form Builder tool on websites hosted by eSolutions. If a form cannot be created using a web-based form tool, the form must be created as a fillable PDF.

## Tips when creating forms

- Organize the fields chronologically.
- Ensure forms are keyboard accessible.
- Use descriptive form field tooltips.
- 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.

# PowerPoint best practices

**PowerPoint slides should follow the best practices for accessible documents outlined in this guide as well as the [additional steps](#) below.**

## Templates and formatting

It is important to use clean, consistent formatting with proper colour contrast in your presentations. Use one of Microsoft PowerPoint's accessible pre-formatted templates and slide layouts to ensure consistent formatting throughout your presentation.

Northumberland County also offers branded templates for staff to use when creating external presentations and templates for presentations to County Council. Please contact the Communications team for more information.

## Font size

All fonts in the presentation should be an appropriate size for the viewing distance. The best practice is to use a font size of 24-32 points or larger for slide content. Slide titles may be larger.

## Slide titles

Each slide in the deck must have a unique title. If you have two slides covering the same content, you can add "continued" in the title or 1 of 2 and 2 of 2.

# Accessibility checker

## Check your work with built-in accessibility checkers.

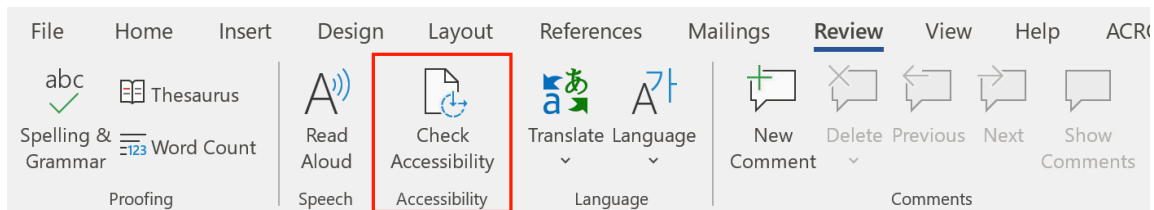
There are three methods to check document accessibility. Using all three methods together creates the strongest check.

1. **Manual check**

A visual inspection or scan of the document for readability, white space, colour contrast, font/heading size, logical reading order.

2. **Built-in accessibility checkers**

Microsoft Office 365 applications have built-in accessibility checkers which can check for common errors. These checkers can be found under the “Review” tab.



The built-in accessibility checkers will identify errors, warnings and tips.

- An **error** is for content that makes a file very difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to understand. Errors must be corrected.
- A **warning** is for content that in most cases (but not all) makes a file difficult for people with disabilities to understand. Warnings should be corrected.
- A **tip** is for content that people with disabilities can understand, but that might be better organized or presented in a way that would improve their experience. Tips should be considered to improve document accessibility.

3. **End-user technology check**

Use a screen reader to check the document.

# Accessible source document checklist

This checklist provides an overview of the guidelines in this document. These guidelines will ensure source documents (Microsoft Office files) are created using best practices for accessible documents.

Please refer to the Northumberland County Accessible Document Checklist for a full list of steps on how to create accessible documents from start to finish, including the process of converting a document from a source file to PDF format.

- ☐ Complete document properties
- ☐ Use smart heading styles
- ☐ Automatic paragraph and spacing tools
- ☐ Proper table of contents formatting
- ☐ Automatic page numbering
- ☐ Clarity, organization, plain language and readability
- ☐ Appropriate font family
- ☐ Appropriate font size
- ☐ No italics or underlining for emphasis
- ☐ No sentences with all upper-case letters
- ☐ Define acronyms
- ☐ Proper date format
- ☐ Sufficient colour contrast
- ☐ Align text and images to the left
- ☐ Alt text on images
- ☐ Use hyperlinks that convey meaning
- ☐ Proper formatting for tables and charts
- ☐ Automatic lists
- ☐ Avoid SmartArt
- ☐ Create accessible forms
- ☐ Use best practices for PowerPoint
- ☐ Perform manual and built-in accessibility checks

## **Appendix B:**

# **Northumberland County's Accessible Document Checklist**

This resource provides an overview of best practices for creating accessible PDF documents, from the source document stage through to the remediation of the final PDF file using Adobe Acrobat Pro software.

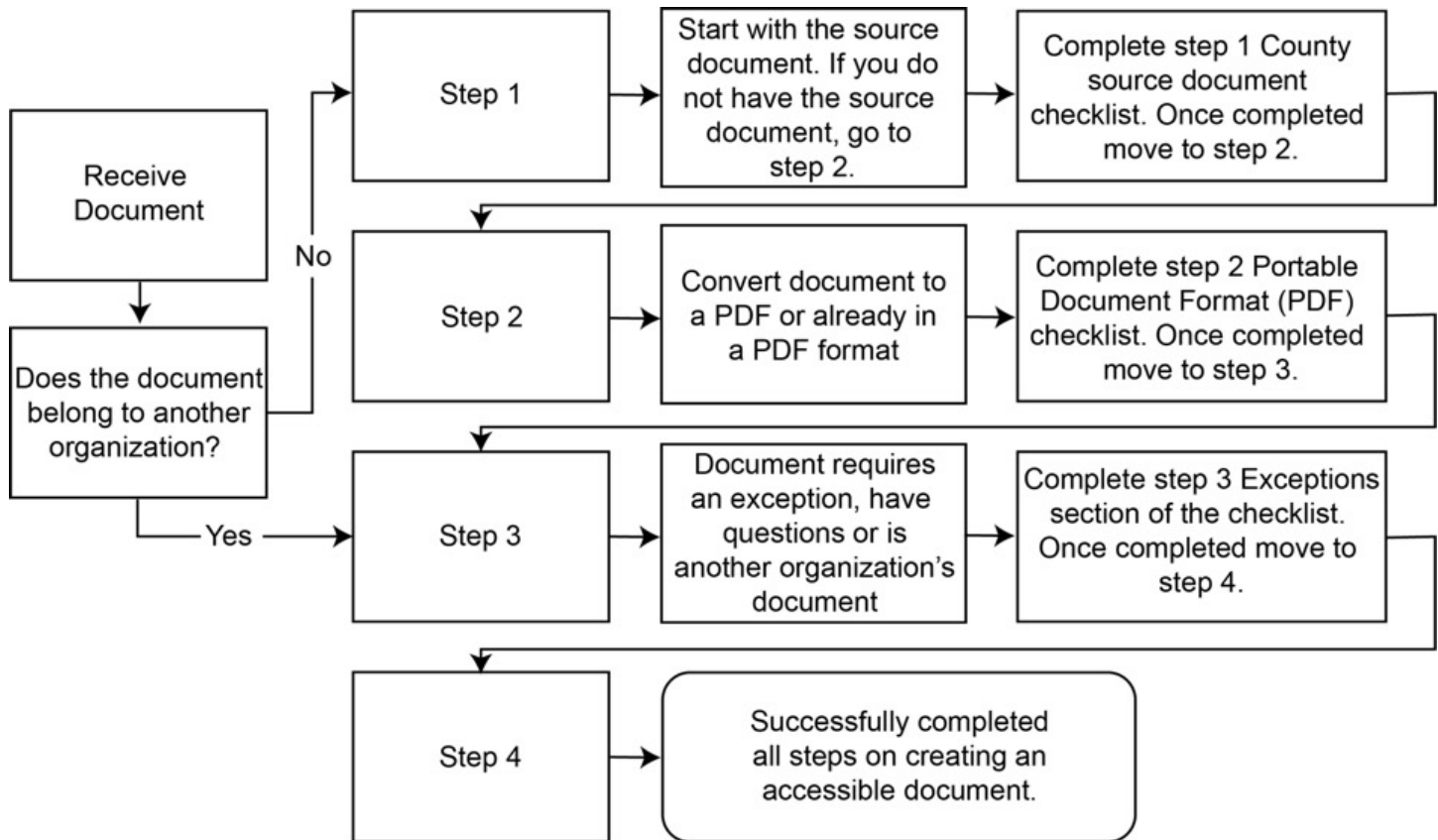
Please note some steps in this checklist may not be applicable if you are using a different remediation software. Please use the checklist as a guide only and apply this checklist in addition to independent considerations of your unique document and its intended use.



# **Northumberland County Accessible Document Checklist**

If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact the Accessibility Coordinator at [accessibility@northumberland.ca](mailto:accessibility@northumberland.ca) or 905-372-3329 ext. 2327.

# Process in creating an accessible document



# Step 1 – Source Document

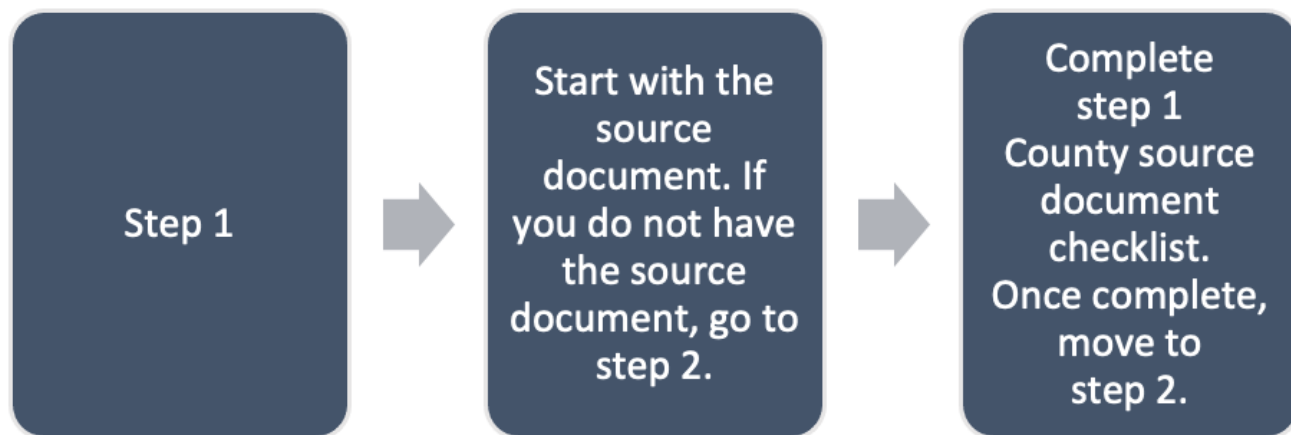
This checklist is for any County documents being created in the source format (program in which it was created). For example, Microsoft Word, Adobe InDesign, Microsoft Excel. This checklist replaces any previous checklists provided.

Northumberland County documents (including documents created by consultants) are required to be accessible.

This checklist is a summary of steps to making a document accessible. For more information, see the Guide to Accessible Documents (Guide).

If you only have the PDF version, skip to step 2.

## Step one: Creating an accessible source document



1. Document properties set as listed below.
  - a) Description
    - **Document title** is understandable to someone outside Northumberland County.
    - **Author** (Northumberland County, Department name-department or individual name is optional).
    - **Keywords** in the document preferably are placed at the beginning. If someone was searching for the document on Northumberland.ca, what words would they type in to find the document?
2. Reading order is correct, if required in the program being used. Some programs such as Microsoft Word will read it in the correct order if the guidelines for accessible documents have been used.
3. Font – sans serif font (Arial) minimum 12 point font as per the Northumberland County Guide to Accessible Documents.
4. Margins are a minimum of half an inch and space between columns is sufficient. For more information and an example of the margin width, see the 'Readability' section of the Guide.
5. Paper size is something you want to consider. Most individuals will only have letter size paper.

6. Design guidelines have been used. For more information review the Guide.
7. Sufficient visual white space (areas of the page without text or imagery) is used to help visually organize information and create a visual flow.
8. Plain language is used where possible. For more information see the 'Readability' section of the Guide.
9. Colour contrast passes the colour contrast ratio analyzer, see the 'Colour contrast' section of the Guide.
10. Colour is not used as the only means of communication.
11. Images are flattened in design files. If you will be sending or posting your document in the source format, images will need to be in line with text.
12. Acronyms and abbreviations are spelled out the first time seen. In addition, consider a glossary for large documents. For more information on these, see the 'Acronyms' section of the Guide.
13. Use built-in styles. Modifying the built-in styles is preferable over making changes in the Home tab. For example, creating space after the Heading 1 by modifying the Heading 1 Word style is better than adding extra returns. For more information see the 'Styles tool' section of the Guide. Do not use the "Title" style to identify headings as it will not be reflected in the document structure. Use Heading 1 for titles, Heading 2 for subtitles, etc.
14. Headings are present (in sequential order).
15. Lists are used correctly. For example, an unordered list uses bullets, an ordered list uses numbers and a list paragraph uses neither bullets nor numbers. For more information on lists see the 'Lists' section of the Guide.
16. Alternative text on all images or graphics. See the 'Alt text' section of the Guide.
17. Hyperlinks have a description that makes sense out of context. For more information on hyperlinks, see the 'Links' section of the Guide.
18. Tables have:
  - a) A table summary.
  - b) A header row. For more information see the 'Tables and Charts' section of the Guide.
  - c) Are not used for formatting purposes. Can the information be displayed without using a table?
  - d) Have no merged or split cells.
  - e) Have no empty cells.
19. Maps are flattened and tagged as an image and include alternative text.
20. Text boxes are not used, except in programs such as Adobe InDesign.
21. Run **Full accessibility checker** within the program.
22. Correct any errors and warnings.

## Step 2 – Portable Document Format (PDF)

Once you have made your source document accessible, it will likely need to be converted to a PDF if it is intended to be attached to a Council agenda or posted online. This checklist outlines the steps to convert your document to a PDF. If you only have the PDF version, skip to number 2 on the following PDF checklist.

### Step two: Creating an accessible PDF



1. Converting to a PDF
  - a) Using Adobe Pro
    - Select the tab called **Acrobat**
    - Select first icon **create PDF**
  - b) Using Adobe Reader or Standard
    - Select **File**
    - Select **Save**
    - Select **PDF**
  - c) **Do not use the print to Adobe PDF option**
2. If the source document is not accessible, return it to creator to make it accessible. If you only have the PDF version complete steps (3-11).
3. Check that document properties are set. If the document properties were set in the source document, you may not need to complete these steps.
  - a) Description
    - **Document title** is understandable to someone outside Northumberland County.
    - **Author** (Northumberland County, Department if desired).
    - **Keywords** are in the document, preferably at the beginning of the document, what words would they type in to find the document?
  - b) **Initial view** is set to **Document title**.
  - c) **Language** is set to **English or en-CA**.

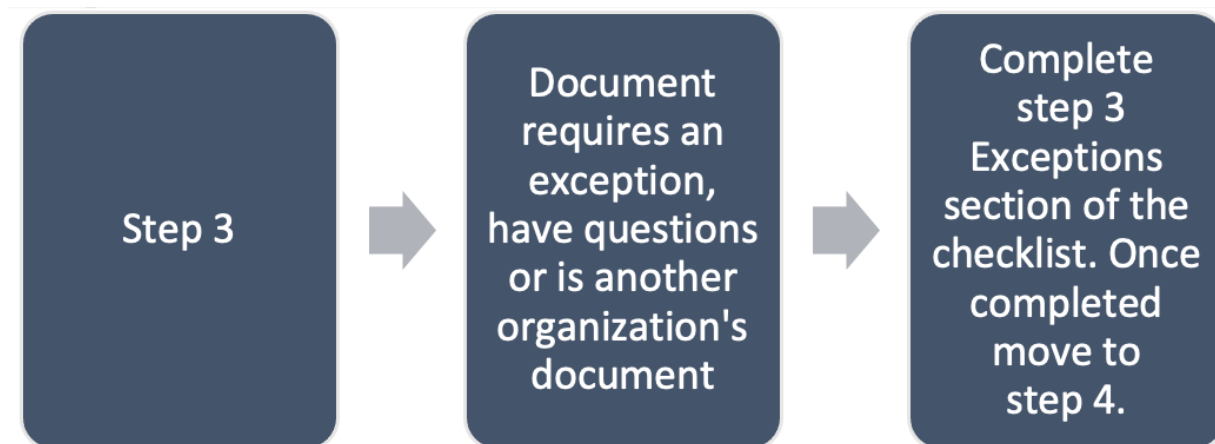
4. Page properties. Ensure the **Use Document Structure** radio button is selected.
5. Bookmarks. If you have used headings in the source document, the bookmarks will automatically generate in the PDF. If there were no headings you will need to manually create bookmarks.
6. Reading Pane.
  - a) Reading order is correct. If you have created your source document with accessibility in mind, the reading order should be correct. Complete each step listed below.
    - Open the **Touch up reading order**-Adobe XI (reading order-Adobe DC) and select **page content order** under show page content groups
    - Ensure the **Display like elements in a single block** is not selected.
    - Headers and footers are not automatically tagged when converted to a PDF. Manually tag any information that is required. Repeated information can be tagged as an artifact.
    - Are the reading order numbers in the same order as you would read the document?
    - Delete any empty tags – in the reading order it will automatically tag the empty tags as an artifact.
    - All images and graphics have an alternative text.
    - All tables have a table summary.
    - Images and graphics for decorative purposes are tagged as an artifact.
    - Hyperlinks have a description that makes sense out of context.
7. Content Pane.
  - a) Ensure the content order matches the reading order.
  - b) Annotations are any interactive element such as a link. They automatically display first at the top of each page. Ensure the links are in the correct order.
  - c) All empty containers are tagged as an artifact.
  - d) All elements missing a container will either need to have a container created or tag as an artifact.
  - e) Paths will need to be created as an artifact. A path is any shading or borders (including lines in a table).
8. Tags Pane.
  - a) Tags order matches the reading and content order.
  - b) Your document has at least one Heading 1, even in a one page document.
  - c) Headings are present and are in sequential order. For example the first heading needs to be a Heading 1 and the next level of subheading should be a Heading 2.
  - d) Delete empty tags in the tags panel.

- e) All tables have a header row.
  - f) Tables are not tagged as an image.
  - g) Tables with merged or split cells tagged accordingly.
  - h) Where tables used for formatting purposes, retag as text and delete table.
9. If you have not flattened the charts you will need to remove tags from charts, re-tag as an image, and add alternative text.
  10. If you have not flattened your maps, you will need to retag maps as images and add alternative text.
  11. Run the **Full accessibility checker**.
  12. Correct any errors.
  13. Tables with merged or split cells, tag appropriately.

## Step 3 – Exceptions

Only the following reasons are allowed as an exception. All other documents must meet AODA requirements.

### Step three: Exceptions required



Times where an exception may be required include:

1. Complex diagrams or drawings such construction drawings and maps
2. Document was created by another organization. Go back to step 1 and either have the consultant create it in an acceptable format, or the consultant will be required to pay for remediation by a third-party.

**Note:** If the document was created by a consultant on behalf of Northumberland County, it is considered a Northumberland County document.

3. **Handwritten documents** – For any handwritten documents, each page should be tagged as an image. The alternative text will indicate that it is a scanned handwritten document, provide details of what the document is about, and County contact details for more information.

*Please note: While every effort has been made to be comprehensive, Northumberland County does not guarantee or warrant that following the steps above will meet all legislated accessibility standards and requirements. Third parties relying on this document remain responsible for ensuring compliance with all accessibility requirements.*