

# Accessible Microsoft Word Documents

## Quick Guide v2.0

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Microsoft Word is a word processor used to create text documents. This quick guide provides recommendations to help make your Word documents accessible. If the recommendation does not apply to your document, then skip it.

Items in this quick guide are classified as follows: **Required** (R), **Encouraged** as best practice (E), **Optional** with limited or no impact on accessibility (O), **Discouraged** but allowed (D), **Not Allowed** (N).

Contact the TWC Accessibility Team ([accessibility@twc.state.tx.us](mailto:accessibility@twc.state.tx.us)) if you have any questions about this guide or its use.

Use the built-in features when creating any Word document.

### Formatting and Layout

- Use structures such as headings, lists, and columns to define elements. (R)
- Control white space with styles, not with the enter key. (E)
- Use Word's page numbering feature (Insert > Page Number); do not manually type page numbers. (E)
- Create footnotes through Word's footnote linking (References > Insert Footnote). (R)

## **Text, Headings, and Lists**

- Use a recommended font. The agency is adopting Verdana 12 for body text in most cases. (E)
- Use styles to control formatting. Do not use the formatting toolbar buttons to style text. (E)
- Use proper hyphenation. Do not use hyphens to separate words across lines of text. (E)
- Use heading styles to organize and segment sections of content. (R)
- Use headings and subheadings correctly: Heading 1 is the top level; Heading 2 is a subheading to Heading 1; Heading 3 is a subheading to Heading 2, etc. (R)
- Ensure headings are shown in the Navigation pane (Productivity > Doc. Nav.). (R)
- Use the Bullets or Numbering features to create bulleted or numbered lists. Do not manually type characters. (R)
- Create the table of contents with the Table of Contents command in Word, not by manually typing it. (R)
- Do not use text boxes, Quick Parts, WordArt, background images, watermarks, drop caps or flickering, flashing, or animated text. (N)

## Columns

- Use the Column tool (Productivity > Columns) to set up columns. Do not use spaces and tabs to create the look of columns. (R)
- Use the Column Break feature (Productivity > Breaks > Column) to manage where one column breaks into another column. (O)

## Tables

- Avoid using tables for page layout. (E)
- Use column or row headings in data tables. (R)
- Ensure a logical reading order in tables: from left to right, top to bottom. (R)
- Set the Table Properties (select the top row of table > right click > Table Properties). (R)
  - With only the column header row highlighted, select “Repeat as header row at the top of each page.”
  - Select the entire table and unselect “Allow row to break across pages.”

- Add a bookmark to your table (click in cell A1 of the table > Productivity > Bookmark). (E)
  - Ensure title bookmarks are unique if multiple data tables are used (for example use Title\_Department\_Expenses, Title\_Office\_Supply\_Expenses, and Title\_Printing\_Expenses instead of 3 tables bookmarked Title\_Expenses).
  - Table with both row and column headers: Add the bookmark **Title** then the table name (e.g., Title\_Expenses) in the cell where row and column headers meet.
  - Table with only row headers: add the bookmark **RowTitle** then the table name (e.g., RowTitle\_Administrative\_Expenses) in any cell containing the row headers.
  - Table with only column headers: add the bookmark **ColumnTitle** then the table name (e.g., ColumnTitle\_Travel\_Expenses) in any cell containing the column headers.
- Do not use complex tables (tables with two or more header levels). (E)
- Do not use the tab key or an indent to format tabular data. (N)

## Links

- Ensure hyperlinks have titles describing the link's purpose or target. Do not use "Click here" or "more" as link titles. (E)
- Use a fully qualified URL (e.g., <http://www.google.com>, not [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)). (E)

## **Color**

- Convey information by a means other than only color (font color and highlighting). (R)
- Ensure colors provide good contrast (Colour Contrast Analyser AA). (R)

## **Non-Text Elements (Illustrations & Objects)**

- Use alternative text descriptions (select item > Productivity > Alt Text) to convey the same information that the image conveys. Ask “what does the reader need to know from this image?” (R)
- Use descriptive text directly above or below a complex image (e.g., chart or graph). (R)
- Set the wrapping style of non-text elements as “In Line with Text” (select item > Productivity > Layout > In Line with Text). (E)

## **File Names and Document Properties**

- If possible, name the file in a way that anyone can infer what the document is (for example, instead of “A-22,” use “A-22 Telephone Request Form”). (E)
- Use a concise file name, generally limited to 20-30 characters, and make the contents of the file clear. (E)
- Fill out the document properties such as:
  - Title (R)
  - Subject, Author, Language, Keywords (O). We recommend using the organization’s name or acronym (e.g., TWC) and not a person’s name for the Author.