

508 CERTIFICATION MADE EASY: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

What is 508 certification?

508 certification is a term used in reference to the assessment by a Section 508 compliance consultant of how an information and communication technology (ICT) product or service is based on the [accessibility hardware](#) standards. It involves auditing and documenting how the various aspects of an ICT product or service conform to Section 508 compliance requirements.



Contrary to the norm where a certificate is issued in testimony of a certain certification and the entity receiving the certification is charged by the body issuing the certification, 508 certification does not involve the issuance of certification, and neither is there any awarding entity or organization.

Section 508 certification essentially summarizes an ICT product or service's level of compliance with the revised Section 508 compliance requirements. A 508 certification could take the form of a Statement of Accessibility, a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) Statement, or a Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Conformance Claim, which are all underpinned by the established and ever-dynamic 508 accessibility standards.

What are Section 508 accessibility standards?

Section 508 accessibility standards are part of the Federal Acquisition Regulations aimed at ensuring access for people with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. The revised 508 standards became effective in 2018 and incorporate WCAG 2.0, which is an international standard.

The standards address cognitive, language, and learning disabilities; are organized by functionality and not product type; include operating systems and authoring systems; and require software and operating systems to interoperate with assistive technologies, such as screen magnification and refreshable Braille

displays. The standards adopt WCAG 2.0 at Levels A and AA for websites, electronic content, tools, and apps.

How to get 508 certified

Getting 508 certified begins with ensuring that you meet all the requirements of ADA Section 508 compliance and conducting regular accessibility assessments that enable you to make necessary accessibility adjustments. It is also advisable that you have a clear and well-documented accessibility policy in place and provide accessibility training for your employees, including designers and developers of your products and services.

Here are the trusted ways you can get your ICT product or service certified for ADA Section 508 compliance:

- ***Use of Section 508 compliance testing tools***

Section 508 compliance testing tools can help you get 508 certified. The tools can be used to scan your product or service, e.g., website or app, for free, identify the present accessibility issues, and provide you with specific, easy-to-understand instructions on how to fix the identified issues. All you need to do is insert the page URL of the product or service you want to scan, and the tool will do the rest for you.

While it is advisable to take advantage of the existing high-volume ADA Section 508 compliance testing tools, you should be aware of their limitations. The tools cannot apply human subjectivity to [Hardware accessibility testing](#) and therefore either produce excessive false positives or, when configured to eliminate false positives, test for only a small portion of the Section 508 compliance requirements.

When using 508 compliance-testing tools, ensure that you select tools that test using the document's native format. That is because a number of these tools often convert files into HTML before testing, which often reduces the fidelity and accuracy of the conformance testing. It may therefore be helpful that you deploy multiple scanning tools to cover multiple content types to enhance the quality of your 508 certification.

- ***Perform a manual evaluation of your products or services***

You can get 508 certified by contracting an ADA Section 508 compliance expert to perform a manual evaluation of your ICT product or service. That involves looking for potential accessibility barriers in your product or service and making the necessary adjustments.

Professional 508 certification consultants usually document the 508 assessments they perform on products and services and use them to inform any necessary updates to the product or service as well as their development processes, so as to ensure continued compliance with Section 508. 508 certification professionals may decide to conduct user testing with individuals who have disabilities so as to obtain feedback on the accessibility of the product or service.

A quick guide to conforming to 508 accessibility standards

Here is a quick guide to enable you to easily conform to the Section 508 accessibility standards and get 508 certified:

Create a consistent 508-compliance design concept

Ensure that the concept you create as the basis for your ICT product or service is clean, concise, and remains uncluttered. Asking yourself key 508 accessibility questions, such as whether a section of an ICT product or service's intended customers may struggle to access the product or service described in the concept, can help create or develop products or services that are accessible.

Choose the right colours

Be mindful of the colour contrast you use in your product or service. That is because many of the intended users of the product or service who are colour-blind can see clearly, but colours appear different from what you may see.

Be mindful of font sizes

For 508-compliant products and services, pay attention to the font size of your design. Don't go too small. You could either add the option for users to change the font size or use a minimum font size of 12pt or above.

Provide easy navigation with keystrokes

Keep in mind that for some users or your product or service, it could be difficult to navigate with a mouse. To achieve 508 compliance, ensure that your product or service can be accessed using a keyboard only.

Need help getting your product or service 508 certified?

Don't let 508 certification be an afterthought in your business or operations. Embrace the ideas in this article to make a difference for all users of your ICT products or services while fulfilling your ADA Section 508 compliance obligations. You can get help to make your products and services accessible and inclusive right from the start.

If you have any questions or would like to see a demo of how to get 508 certified, please feel free to reach out to ADACP by calling (626) 486-2201 today to schedule a free consultation on how to get 508 certified.

Website : <https://adacompliancepros.com/>