



Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act

In 1998, Congress amended the Rehabilitation Act to require Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. Inaccessible technology interferes with an individual's ability to obtain and use information quickly and easily. Section 508 was enacted to eliminate barriers in information technology, to make available new opportunities for people with disabilities, and to encourage development of technologies that will help achieve these goals. The law applies to all Federal agencies when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology.



The standards define the types of technology covered and set forth provisions that establish a minimum level of accessibility.

The application section outlines the scope and coverage of the standards. The standards define electronic and information technology, in part, as “any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment, that is used in the creation, conversion, or duplication of data or information.” They provide criteria specific to various types of technologies, including:

- Software applications and operating systems;
- Web-based information or applications;
- Telecommunication products;
- Video and multimedia products;
- Self contained, closed products (e.g., information kiosks, calculators, and fax machines);
- Desktop and portable computers.

The Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP), in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs), was established to eliminate employment barriers for people with disabilities. CAP helps eliminate those barriers by providing assistive technology and services at no cost to the agency. To assist with Section 508 compliance, CAP provides:

- Technical assistance to all DoD and partner agencies;
- Demonstrations of assistive technology and accessible environments at the CAP Technology Evaluation Center (CAPTEC) in the Pentagon;
- Assistance to the DoD CIO community in understanding Section 508 requirements;
- Assistance to acquisition organizations in learning accessibility requirements; and
- Assistance to office automation organizations to ensure help desk understanding of accessibility requirements and compatibility issues.

DoD participates in an interagency technical assistance effort that provides valuable and timely information regarding Section 508 requirements, standards, training opportunities, and related resources. In order to receive the most updated information, access www.section508.gov for information related to Section 508 requirements.