U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Creating Accessible Excel Files Checklist

FHWA HAD-21-006

This checklist is a companion to "Creating Accessible Excel Files." See that documentation for a detailed discussion on any following checklist item.

Properties

- The title is descriptive of the document.
- The author is FHWA.
- The default language is correct.
- The file contains only content in the default language.
- The file is saved as an xlsx.

Structure

- The reading order is logical, typically left to right, top to bottom, starting with cell A1.
- Each worksheet tab has a descriptive and unique name.
- Use heading styles in hierarchal order to give the content structure.
- Use styles to indicate the cell's purpose.

Tables

- Tables are formatted as a table.
- The table name is descriptive and unique.
- Header row and first column (if needed, it usually is) are checked.
- For each table, ensure:
  - Each table has a descriptive caption.
  - Column and row headers contain descriptive content.
  - There are no row or column spans.
  - There is only one level of row and column headers.
  - There are no nested tables.
  - Data and headers are in separate cells.

Other Considerations

- Linked words are descriptive and unique. Do not use "click here," "read more," etc., for the links.
- Symbols are inserted as their proper symbol.

Text as Text

- Text is rendered as text, not as an image.

Background Information

- Ensure vital information is duplicated in the first cell of the worksheet.

Graphics and Objects

- Individual graphics are grouped to create one graphic.
- The alt text describes the meaning of the image fully in as few words as possible.
- Figures that do not provide meaningful information contain "" alt text.
- Alt text does not repeat the caption or other surrounding text.
- Alt text does not start with "this is an image of" since that is assumed.
- Provide an alternate keystroke combination for items like buttons used to perform an action that does not interfere with the standard Excel or assistive technologies keystrokes.

Sensory Characteristics

- Avoid references to shape, size sound, color, or location.

Use of Color

- Color alone does not convey information. This applies to content including text, links, and graphs/charts.

Color contrast

- Text on a background meets minimum color contrast requirements. This includes graphics where an image of text is unavoidable.

Zoom

- Except for captions and images of text, text is resizable and readable when zoomed to 200% without assistive technology.

Movement

- There is no content that blinks or flashes.

Forms

- See "Creating Section 508 Conformant Forms."

Embedded Media

- See "Creating Section 508 Conformant Multimedia."