

WEB DOCUMENTS

Giving NECC Website Visitors the Best Experience

A web page containing content intended for the web is a more effective means of online communication than a PDF document. This enables us to give our website visitors the best possible online experience. Most content on our website should be web pages or Wufoo forms. Consider using this before deciding to use a PDF document.

PDF Files: (Other document types should not be uploaded due to compatibility issues.)

- Always ask, "Is a PDF the best way to deliver the information you're posting?"
- Users without the acrobat plugin and anyone relying on screen readers may not be able to access the information contained within the PDF.
- PDF documents do not always show properly on mobile devices and can be hard to read and slower to load.
- Presenting the information in HTML *is ideal*.
- PDFs are best suited for printing and archiving. Unlike webpages that look different depending on the operating system and browser in which they are displayed, a PDF keeps its color, layout, and font settings very consistent across any computer or printer. That means posting a PDF online for printing or saving is appropriate – but not as a means of providing the site visitor with content.

Web Accessibility Guidelines for Documents

File Size

The maximum file size allowed for documents uploaded to the NECC website is 4MB. Large documents may take too long to load and may frustrate users.

File Format

Documents are required to be provided for posting in *at least* a basic web accessible format.

The best way to format a pdf is to start with a well-structured document.

Basic PDF Accessibility Formatting Guidelines

- Documents should be text (not graphical or scanned).
- Heading styles should be used and ordered using the appropriate hierarchy (i.e. heading 1, heading 2, heading 3) and should not be used out of order.

- Documents should be structured with tags.
- The language should be defined in the document.
- The document properties; title, author, description, and keywords, need to be filled out.
- Images that are essential to content should have an ALT tag describing the image (especially if there is no a caption or text explanation.) More complex graphical elements like graphs need further explanation.
- Tables should only be used for data, and should be simple with a top row of headers that will repeat if the table is broken onto another page. The left column should be headers also. Do not make a visual table using tabs. Use appropriate web accessible formatting & structure. *Tables in Excel are defined as tables—just entering data into cells does not make it a table. It is best to have one header for one row: if you must use a header for multiple rows the empty header cells should be merged with the header.
- PDF forms are not always the best options on the web. Please consider all your options. Forms can be very difficult for screen readers to read if they are not properly formatted in the correct structure with labels and tooltips. Forms should only be created using the proper *Forms* tool in the software, and they should have appropriate labels. DO NOT use underscores. If you have not added tooltips to the form fields for vision impaired users you will need to provide a document with the appropriate tooltips to be added. The use of a signature field must be considered carefully. Please tell the user how to sign the document.
- Reading order needs to be arranged so that assistive technologies can read the document in the correct order.
- Use the accessibility checker in your software to check and fix the document before completion.

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