

# Is your website ADA compliant?

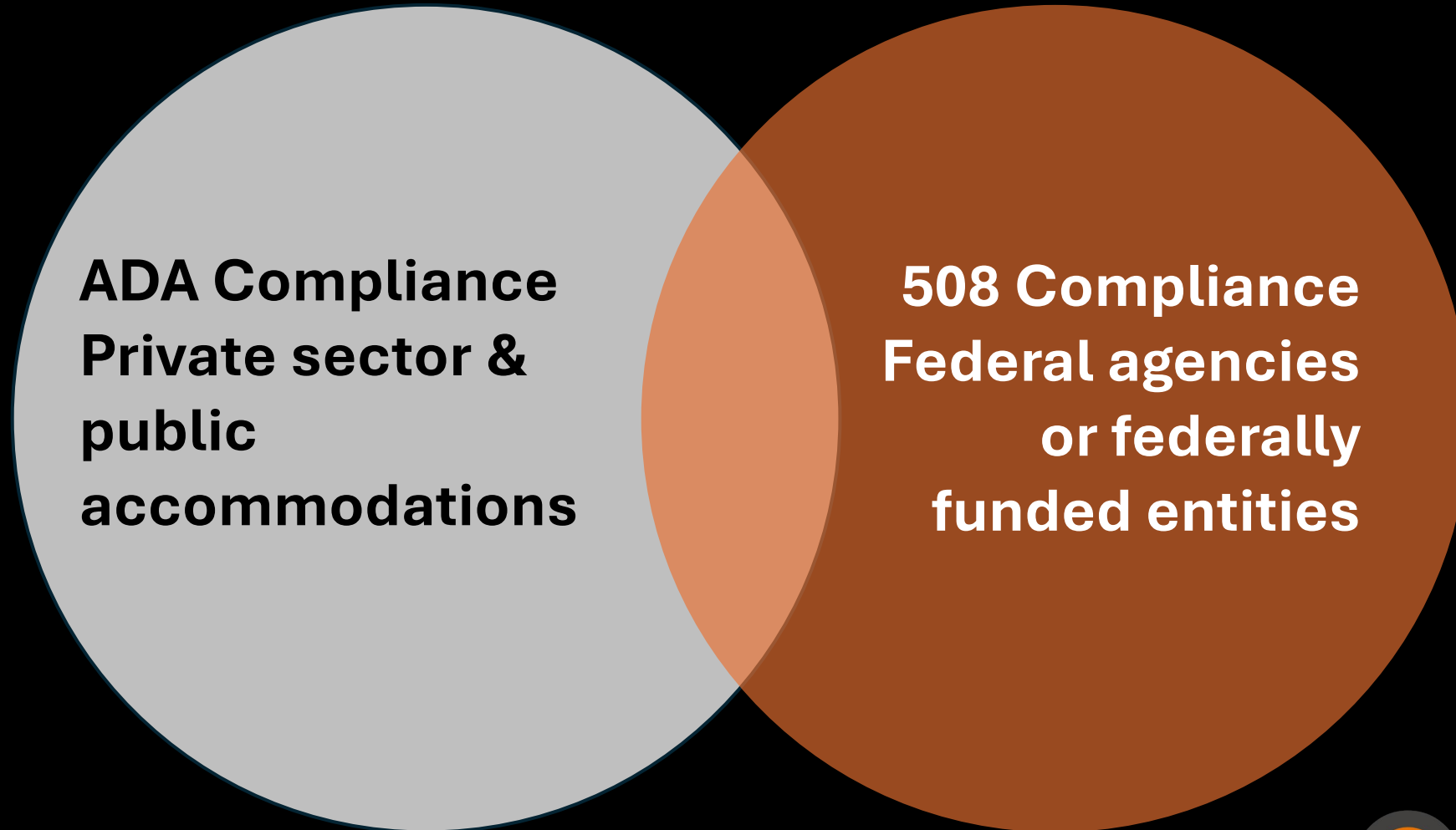
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*Should it be?*

# What is ADA or 508 Compliance?

**Online ADA compliance** means that your company's **digital content is accessible to people with disabilities** — including your **website, job applications, and internal employee portals**. All users should be able to access, understand, and use your site.

**ADA → private sector & public accommodations**  
**508 → federal agencies / federally funded entities**



# Rehabilitation Act of 1973

- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act establishes requirements for electronic and information technology developed, maintained, procured, or used by the Federal government. Section 508 requires Federal electronic and information technology to be accessible to people with disabilities, including employees and members of the public.
- An accessible information technology system is one that can be operated in a variety of ways and does not rely on a single sense or ability of the user. For example, a system that provides output only in visual format may not be accessible to people with visual impairments, and a system that provides output only in audio format may not be accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Some individuals with disabilities may need accessibility-related software or peripheral devices in order to use systems that comply with Section 508.

# Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

***Title III*** - No individual may be discriminated against on the basis of disability with regards to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, or accommodations of any place of public accommodation by any person who owns, leases, or operates a place of public accommodation. Public accommodations include most places of lodging (such as inns and hotels), recreation, transportation, education, and dining, along with stores, care providers, and places of public displays.

# Some identified impairments

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## Hearing Impaired

*15% US Adults  
40 million people*

Anything that can be heard... Videos, Sound Bites, etc. must have a written description.



## Visually Impaired

*12% US Adults  
32 million people*

Screen Reader Software reads the visual parts of your website... pictures and buttons must have descriptions added in the code.



## Physically Impaired

*13-14% US Adults  
34 million people*

If a user is unable to use a mouse, website navigation must be possible using 100s of keyboard shortcuts. such as Page Up and Page Down.

Who should be  
compliant?

- **Healthcare Providers and Hospitals**
  - They serve the public, often under federal funding (Medicare/Medicaid), which triggers Section 504 and 508 compliance.
- **Banks, Credit Unions, and Financial Institutions**
  - They provide essential public services regulated by federal law (FDIC, CFPB).
- **Colleges, Universities, and Trade Schools**
  - They are bound by Section 504 and 508 if they receive federal funding
- **Employers with Public-Facing Job Applications or Employee Portals**
  - Title I & III of the ADA apply when a company's website includes job postings, benefits enrollment, and training content
- **Hospitality & Travel Companies**
  - They serve the public and must make booking and information accessible to all. Think hotels, resorts, restaurants, airlines, cruise lines



## Target Corporation

**Case:** *National Federation of the Blind v. Target Corp.*

**What happened:** Blind customers alleged that Target's website was not accessible (e.g. missing alt text, poor navigation, form barriers), preventing them from shopping independently.

**Outcome:** Target settled the class action and agreed to make its website accessible.

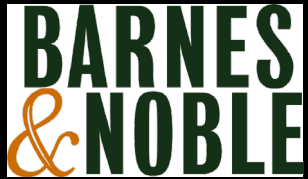
## 2. Barnes & Noble

**What happened:** Barnes & Noble (book retailer) is frequently listed in ADA website accessibility enforcement tracking and is cited by legal blogs as among the major consumer brands that have been targeted.

**What the claims often include:** Issues like images without alt text, poor keyboard navigation, form and link labeling problems, missing page titles, and more.

## 3. Domino's Pizza

**What happened:** Domino's has been involved in ADA web accessibility litigation. Courts have held that websites of companies offering goods or services to the public should comply with accessibility standards. (Domino's litigation is often cited in legal analysis of ADA web cases.)



# Why should you care?

## **Hiring Accessibility (Title I ADA)**

If job applications or assessments aren't accessible to screen readers or keyboard users, you may be excluding qualified candidates with disabilities — a direct violation of Title I of the ADA. Accessible recruiting tools ensure equal opportunity and reduce legal exposure.

## **Employee Experience**

Accessibility extends beyond hiring. Benefits enrollment, training, and time-tracking tools must work for all employees. Inaccessible systems limit independence and can create compliance issues and morale problems.

## **Legal & Reputational Risk**

Lawsuits are increasingly targeting employers for inaccessible job portals and HR platforms. Beyond fines, the PR fallout can damage recruiting and brand trust. Accessibility protects both your workforce and your reputation.

# What do you need to do to be compliant?

Follow the 61 guidelines laid out in Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 to get to the AA or AAA level.

It's not as bad as it seems. Your site probably meets many of the rules and can easily be brought up to compliance.

# WGAC has three levels

- **Level A** = basic accessibility; prevents major blockers (e.g., can't use keyboard). All websites
- **Level AA** = the *industry standard*; addresses most barriers that real users face. Businesses, employers, government, public-facing sites
- **Level AAA** = ideal but not always practical for all content types. Universities, accessibility-first brands

*Level A as making your doors wide enough, Level AA adding automatic openers, and Level AAA is adding a greeter who can assist anyone who walks in.*

# To meet AA, a website must:

- Maintain at least **4.5:1 contrast ratio** for normal text (3:1 for large text).
- Provide *alt text* for all meaningful images.
- Ensure all functionality works via keyboard.
- Provide *visible focus indicators* for links/buttons.
- Include *captions for videos* and *transcripts for audio*.
- Use clear, descriptive link text (“Read more about our benefits,” not “Click here”).
- Structure pages with headings (H1, H2, etc.) that match the content hierarchy.
- Label all form fields properly (so screen readers can identify them).
- Avoid color-only indicators (don’t use “fields in red are required”).
- Give users control over time limits or moving/sliding content.

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# Accessibility score: 74 / 100 (approx.)

<https://www.infirmarhealth.org/locations/thomas-hospital/>

**Compliance level:** *Partially compliant* (below AA threshold).

## Recommendations

1. Add descriptive alt text for all images.
2. Improve color contrast (darken gray text, lighten backgrounds).
3. Correct heading order (one <h1>, logical nesting).
4. Make the accessibility toolbar fully keyboard-operable.
5. Give repetitive links unique labels (e.g., “View Profile: Dr. Andrews”).
6. Test zoom and reflow on mobile and desktop.

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# Infirmary Health – Thomas Hospital

## ▲ AA Compliance Issues

Category	Example	Impact
<b>Color Contrast</b>	Light gray text on white backgrounds, text over photos	Fails 1.4.3 (contrast ratio < 4.5:1)
<b>Alt Text</b>	Award and provider images lack descriptive alt tags	Fails 1.1.1
<b>Heading Hierarchy</b>	Inconsistent <h1>/<h2> levels	Fails 1.3.1
<b>Keyboard Navigation</b>	Accessibility menu not fully tab-navigable	Fails 2.1.1
<b>Link Context</b>	Links like “View Profile” repeated without unique context	Fails 2.4.4
<b>Responsive Reflow</b>	Text overlaps on zoom >200%	Fails 1.4.10

# 12 things you can do to get started

- Use headings correctly to organize the structure of your content
- Include proper ALT text for images, name your images something useful
- Give your links unique and descriptive names
- Be careful with color
- Build your forms for accessibility
- Don't use tables for design
- Ensure all content can be accessed with the keyboard alone
- Use ARIA roles and landmarks
- Make dynamic content accessible
- Description of data represented on charts, diagrams, and illustrations
- Brief descriptions of non-text content such as audio and video files
- Labels for form controls, input, and other user interface components
- Don't use blinking, scrolling text.

Check your website using <https://www.siteimprove.com/toolkit/accessibility-checker/>



# As an added bonus...

## 1. Alt text = Image SEO

When you add descriptive alt text for accessibility, you're also feeding Google context about your images. That improves visibility in image search and supports overall page relevance.

## 2. Proper heading structure = Better indexing

Screen readers and search engines both rely on logical heading order (<h1>, <h2>, <h3>). A clean hierarchy helps users *and* Google understand what each section of a page is about — which boosts SEO clarity and snippet performance.

## 3. Descriptive links = Higher relevance

“Click here” means nothing to a screen reader *or* to Google. Clear link text like “View our industrial safety training courses” improves both accessibility and keyword association.

## 4. Video captions & transcripts = Searchable content

Transcripts and captions don't just serve the hearing-impaired — they give Google crawlable text for video content, increasing visibility and engagement.

## 5. Faster, cleaner code = Better rankings

Accessible sites are usually lighter, better structured, and more mobile-friendly — all ranking factors Google values under its Core Web Vitals.

# Accessibility isn't optional — it's a legal, operational, and financial requirement.

“Compliance protects your organization, reduces risk, and keeps your digital doors open to everyone.”



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