Township of Huron-Kinloss Accessibility Communication Plan

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Background

In fulfilling our mission, the Township of Huron-Kinloss stives at all times to provide our services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. We are committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way. We achieve our commitments by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting our accessibility requirements under Ontario's accessibility legislation.

The Township of Huron-Kinloss is committed to providing accessible information and communication to all and recognizes that persons with disabilities may require information in accessible formats.

All documents required by regulation are available upon request and are subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). When providing these documents, or the information contained in these documents, we will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports upon request.

If you require information from the Township of Huron-Kinloss in an accessible format, please contact us using the method that best suits you and let us know which format is preferable to you.

Legislation

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service became law on January 1, 2008, and municipalities must comply under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The Government of Ontario developed standards in accordance with this legislation and it is the goal of these standards to make Ontario barrier free by 2025. All websites, internal and external were to be in compliance by 2021.

Support for You

This Guide provides the Township of Huron-Kinloss standards to ensure a consistent look with respect to the production of all written internal and external communications material, including: websites, brochures, flyers, posters, advertisements, display units, public directories, etc. and to ensure they meet the required accessibility standards.

Consideration and Tips

- Accept multiple ways of communicating from individuals with communication disabilities (e.g. displays, communications assistant, devices,

etc.)
- Never assume an individual has trouble understanding what you are trying to communicate.
- Always be aware that some individuals have communication challenges.
- Individuals with a communication disability may need more time to communicate.
- Find a quiet place with minimal distractions, so you are able to focus on the conversation.
- Speak directly to the individual, not the caregiver or person who is accompanying them.
- Speak clearly, using your normal tone and volume.
- Ensure text information is in formats that the person can access and understand.
- Individuals may want information in enlarged font, plain language, electronic formats, Braille, or may require assistance reading and understanding documents.

Accessible Written Information

Accessible documents need to be created so they can be converted to alternate formats or accessed by persons using assistive devices.

1) Corporate Identity

To ensure continuity across the corporation, use established templates and do not edit font, spacing, etc.

   a) E-mail signatures
      - Format with Segoe UI 12 font and corporate logo
   b) Reports
      - Use eScribe Report Template for all agendas

   c) Policies and Procedures
      - Use corporate templates
   d) Letters
      - Corporate letterhead
      - Left aligned
      - At least 12 point, Segoe UI font

   e) Additional Communications
      - Go through the Communications Coordinator for external communications including newspapers ads, newsletters, website, press releases, posters, and brochures.

2) Clear Print Guidelines

Clear print is a design approach which considers the needs of people with visual impairments. A clear print document will find a broader audience. The guidelines

proposed here focus on basic design elements to help make the Township of Huron-Kinloss communications pieces more accessible.

- Black and white is most readable
- Use "Bold" with filled boxes
- Keep text large, between 12 and 14 characters
- Use upper and lower case characters
- Do not use ALL CAPS
- Do not use *italics*
- Do not use text boxes
- Do not <u>underline text</u> or use contrasting text colour
- Ensure there is white space in document
- Use contrasting colours
- Use matte or non-glossy finish

a)   Font Size

The size of the font is a fundamental factor in legibility. A recommended font size between 12 and 14 point is ideal for main body text in a document; a font size smaller than 10 point is inaccessible.

b)   Font Styles

Sans-Serif fonts are the most accessible. Avoid highly stylized fonts, such as those with decorative or cursive handwriting styles.

c)   Italics and Underlining

Italicizing and underlining font should be avoided. These font styles are difficult for the visually impaired to read. To emphasize a certain word or heading, bold the text.

d)   Numbers

Choose a font which clearly identifies the numbers. Readers with sight problems can easily misread 3, 5, 8 and 0.

e)   Dot Leaders

The use of dot leaders should be avoided. Dot leaders are commonly used in Tables of Contents.

f)   Contrast

The better the contrast between the background and the text, the more legible the text will be. White text on black or black text on yellow are good examples of good contrast. Red or blue text on black are examples of contrasts that are not good for people with low vision.

g)   Alignment

Align body text from the left. Justifying text should be avoided; uneven word

spacing can make reading more difficult.

h)   Columns

If you have a simple list, choose "Columns" to make parallel columns and reduce the amount space taken up by the list. Make sure the margin between columns clearly separates them.

i)   Setting Point

Avoid setting text over images or textures, unless there is sufficient contrast.

j)   Creating Accessible Forms

Ensure there is sufficient space for filling out information on all Township of Huron-Kinloss forms to accommodate individuals who have difficulty writing.

k)   Printing

There are a few options for printing. Glossy brochures make attractive marketing pieces; however, they are difficult for some people with low vision to read. If you decide to create a glossy brochure, an accessible version must be available upon request.

3) Clear Writing Principles

Plain language is text that the intended audience can read and understand the first time they read it. Language that is clear to one reader may not be plain to another. A grade 3 - 6 reading level is the generally accepted level; however, it is important to know your audience and write to their level of understanding.

Quick Tips:
- Keep your intended audience in mind.
- Use an active voice. (Example: "John built the house" rather than passive, e.g. "The house was built by John.)
- Keep sentences short; avoid unnecessary words.
- Use common everyday words; write as you would talk.
- Eliminate bureaucratic jargon and unnecessary words.
- If using acronyms, ensure it is spelled out once on every page.
- Use a simple sentence structure and grammar.
- Material should be easy to read, understand and use.

4) Creating Structure in Word Documents

a.   Headings

Headings organize your content for individuals who use assistive devices, such as screen readers, and help readers to quickly skim and scan your content. Use built-in Word styles to format each heading. Generally, there is one Heading 1 to each page of content followed in logical sequential order by Heading 2, Heading 3, etc.

b.   Paragraphs

Use built-in Word Styles and "modify" the "Normal Style" to suit your document; e.g., space between paragraphs. Use the "space before" and "space after" style properties to create extra space between paragraphs. Do not use Enter to create space.

c.   Alternative Text for Pictures and Images

Tags describe the picture so readers can hear the same image we see. Use an Alt Description that is less than 75 characters in length, and include enough information for a visually-impaired reader to easily understand what the image is showing. Do not use "image of" or "picture of" as most screen readers will already state this. If there is text in the image, include it in the description.

d.   Tables

Use tables conservatively and primarily to represent tabular data. Keep tables simple by avoiding merged cells and dividing complex data sets into smaller tables, where possible. Identify header rows and select Repeat Header Rows to help interpret other cells in the table. Add Alt Text to the table to describe it (not necessary if converting to a PDF, since it will not carry forward and will need to be added manually). Do not leave blank cells.

Use the Convert to Text tool to use a table for layout purposes. Choose tabs to keep the formatting of your table.

e.   Bulleted/Numbered Lists

Introduce your list by stating how many are in the list; e.g., 5 bullets, or numbers 1 to 10. Use built-in Word Styles to format the spacing between each line of the list and the bullet/number style.

f.   Descriptive Links

Every hyperlink in a Word document needs to be accessible for all readers. Using proper Link text with all hyperlinks helps achieve accessibility. Link text is the actual wording you see and click to view or open a link; e.g., "More information is contained on the [Township of Huron-Kinloss"](#) website. Do not use words such as "click here" or "for more information" as your link text.

g.   Borders/Shading

Use shading to differentiate between rows in a table. Use "Borders" to delineate or set out text instead of text boxes or a line.

h.   Headers/Footers

The header or footer contains the page number, the corporate logo, and other information consistent with the corporate look of documents.

Accessibility Check

Once you've completed a document perform an accessibility check (and make any corrections identified by the check. The accessibility check can be done in both Word and PDF.

Accessibility Statement

Please include the following text in all your public information pieces:

"Alternative formats of this publication available upon request."

Additional Helpful Resources

Canadian Hearing Society

Canadian National Institute for the Blind

Ministry of Community and Social Services

CNIB's Clear Print Guideline

Accessibility in Ontario