

Alternative Formats Guidelines

According to the Alberta Premier’s Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, approximately 17% of Albertans have a disability. People with disabilities are entitled to the same rights as everyone else, including the right to access public information.

This includes material containing essential or important information affecting health, safety and well-being. Many people with disabilities, particularly those with sensory (visual and hearing) disabilities, require “alternative” formats beyond conventional print and video to access information.

This document will assist Calgary Health Region staff in ensuring that information, particularly health information, is accessible to all persons, including persons with disabilities by providing them with 1) a checklist to evaluate the accessibility of print material, 2) guidelines for providing alternative formats for persons with visual disabilities, and 3) guidelines for providing alternative formats for persons with hearing disabilities.

Checklist for Evaluating the Accessibility of Print Material

Use this checklist will help you evaluate your documents to ensure important health information is accessible to all persons, including persons with disabilities. Circle your responses and consider taking corrective action for those areas where your response was “no” or “not applicable”.

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|---|-----|----|-----|
| 1. The typeface is a minimum 14 point (16 – 20 is preferable). | Yes | No | N/A |
| 2. The font is Serif or Sans Serif – Helvetica regular, Univers 55 or Century book. | Yes | No | N/A |
| 3. There are 35-60 characters per line. | Yes | No | N/A |
| 4 The line spacing is 15 – 20% of the type size line spacing or leading to make the lines easier to scan. | Yes | No | N/A |
| 5. <u>Underlining</u> or boldface is used in preference to <i>italics</i> . | Yes | No | N/A |

6. A combination of upper and lower case letters is used.	Yes	No	N/A
7. The alignment is left flush, ragged right, with no hyphenation.	Yes	No	N/A
8. The print is black type on white or light colours.	Yes	No	N/A
9. The paper is non-glossy, no bright colours, uncoated (reduces glare), smooth (maximizes print quality), opaque (print does not show through), medium flexibility (ease of handling).	Yes	No	N/A
10. The language is plain, clear and simple language is used.	Yes	No	N/A
11. The readability level of the text has been evaluated and it is at a maximum of Grade 6 readability.	Yes	No	N/A
12. Inclusive language is used. For information see: http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/diversity/diversity_resources/research_publications/2007_inclusive_language.pdf	Yes	No	N/A
13. Text has not been placed over patterns, screens, textures, or illustrations.	Yes	No	N/A
14 Visuals include a description of the visual components (e.g., charts, photographs, graphs, etc.), especially if required for a complete understanding of the text.	Yes	No	N/A
15. The standard promotional statement appears in the document: “ _____ ” (name of document) is available in alternative formats by contacting HealthLink: phone: 403-943-5465, TTY: 403-943-1552	Yes	No	N/A

Guidelines for Providing Alternative Formats for Persons with Visual Disabilities:

- Braille, diskette, CDs, and audiocassette formats are considered the minimum alternative formats that should be provided.
- Braille:
 - Consult the Canadian Braille Authority, which is considered the authority for Braille standards.
 - Grade 2 Braille is standard.
 - Braille documents can be internally produced, but they must be proofread.
- Diskettes and CDs:
 - The user can access the information through a computer connected to a Braille printer, voice synthesizer, large print monitor or other systems.
- Audiocassette:
 - Audiocassettes are a reasonable substitute for Braille, however Braille is the only appropriate format for deaf-blind.
- For longer documents, only the executive summary may need to be made available in alternative formats.

Guidelines for Providing Alternative Formats for Persons with Hearing Disabilities

- Captioned films or videos:
 - The spoken words are repeated in written text on the bottom of the screen (as in subtitles).
 - “Open” captions can be seen by everyone, “closed” captions are visible only through a special decoder.

- Real time captioning:
 - This is a good alternative to using an American Sign Language Interpreter only if the person or persons has/have a good command of English.
 - Often most appropriately used in a presentation situation where Deaf or hard of hearing persons may be in the audience.
 - The spoken word is converted by a typist to written text that is displayed on a large screen.

- Signed films and videos:
 - The spoken word is transferred to sign language on screen.

- TTY (teletype):
 - A telecommunications device for people who cannot use a regular telephone.
 - Conversations appear in written text on a printout or an electronic screen.