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*Issued by the EPA Chief Information Officer,
Pursuant to Delegation 1-19, dated 07/07/2005*

ACCESSIBLE ELECTRONIC AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

1. PURPOSE

This Policy establishes the Environmental Protection Agency policy for accessible Electronic and Information Technology (EIT).

2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all EPA organizations and personnel that procure, develop, maintain, or use EIT.

3. AUDIENCE

The audience for this Policy includes the Senior Information Officials (SIO), Information Management Officers (IMO), approving officials for EIT, purchase card-holders, and any EPA employee involved in procurement, development, maintenance and use of electronic and information technology.

4. BACKGROUND

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended (29 U.S.C. 794d) mandates the development, procurement, maintenance and use of EIT that is accessible to people with disabilities. Each Federal agency must ensure – unless it would impose an undue burden to do so – that its EIT allows individuals with disabilities, both Federal employees and members of the public, access to and use of information and data comparable to that available for people without disabilities.

The United States Access Board (“Access Board”) issues the Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards (36 CFR part 1194) for Section 508 and defines “accessibility” for EIT.

5. AUTHORITY

A. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794d), as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220), August 7, 1998.

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B. Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards (36 CFR part 1194).

C. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 48 CFR Subpart 39.2 (2005).

6. POLICY

It is EPA's policy to make its EIT accessible to all people, including people with disabilities, in accordance with federal law.

- A. EIT (including internal and external components residing on systems, networks, Web sites, and facilities) covered by this order that EPA provides to:
1. the *public* shall comply with the [Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards](#) unless one or more of the exceptions apply.
 2. its *employees* shall comply, or be capable of complying, with the [Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards](#) unless one or more of the exceptions apply.
 3. *its employees with disabilities* to perform their jobs –regardless of when the EIT was purchased – shall be compatible with employees' assistive devices and with Agency systems and networks, or be capable of becoming compliant with Section 508 should an employee need such an accommodation (Order 3110.21 A1 [Providing Reasonable Accommodations for EPA Employees and Applicants with Disabilities](#)).
- B. All Agency acquisitions of EIT purchased through contract actions (including purchase orders, purchase cards, etc.) awarded on or after June 21, 2001 must be in compliance with Section 508 unless one or more exceptions apply. (See the Accessible Electronic and Information Technology Standards, Procedures, and Guidance document Section 2. Section 508 Exceptions Standards.)
- C. Unless one or more exceptions apply, all EIT that is developed, maintained, or modified after June 21, 2001 must be in compliance with Section 508. For example, this policy also applies to software upgrades or modifications to systems after June 21, 2001, even if the software or system was procured or created before June 21, 2001.
- D. When developing, maintaining, procuring, or using EIT, EPA offices and personnel shall ensure that its information can be accessed by the user using more than one perceptual sense. For example, vision alone should not be necessary to access information through the Agency's Web pages, and hearing alone should not be necessary to access information through Agency telecommunications equipment.
- E. To implement compliance with Section 508, the Agency shall adhere with the Accessible Electronic and Information Technology Standards, Procedures, and Guidance document which includes the following:
1. [Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards](#) (36 CFR part 1194)
 2. Section 508 Exceptions Standards
 3. EPA EIT Approval Procedures
 4. EPA Section 508 Undue Burden and Class Undue Burden Procedures
 5. EPA EIT Procurement Contract Procedures
 6. EPA Section 508 Complaint Procedures
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7. EPA Section 508 Training Guidance

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Section 508 Web site
http://www.section508.gov/](http://www.section508.gov/)

[United States Access Board 508 Web site
http://www.access-board.gov/508.htm](http://www.access-board.gov/508.htm)

[Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards
http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/standards.htm](http://www.access-board.gov/sec508/standards.htm)

[EPA Accessibility Web site
http://intranet.epa.gov/accessibility/](http://intranet.epa.gov/accessibility/)

[Delegation of Authority 1-84 Information Resources Management
http://intranet.epa.gov/rmpolicy/ads/dm/1-84_534.htm](http://intranet.epa.gov/rmpolicy/ads/dm/1-84_534.htm)

[Order 3110.21 A1 - Providing Reasonable Accommodations for EPA Employees and Applicants with Disabilities
http://intranet.epa.gov/rmpolicy/ads/orders/3110-21.pdf](http://intranet.epa.gov/rmpolicy/ads/orders/3110-21.pdf)

[EPA Information Management and Information Technology Policies
http://intranet.epa.gov/oei/imitpolicies.htm](http://intranet.epa.gov/oei/imitpolicies.htm)

[EPA Acquisition Regulation clause 1552.211-79, Compliance with EPA Policies for Information Resources Management
http://www.epa.gov/oamrfp12/ptod/epaar.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/oamrfp12/ptod/epaar.pdf)

[EPA Procurement Policy Information
http://intranet.epa.gov/oamintra/policy/](http://intranet.epa.gov/oamintra/policy/)

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

EPA’s Chief Information Officer: In addition to being responsible for the Office of Environmental Information, the CIO is responsible for reviewing and approving/disapproving class-based undue burden justifications and for reviewing class undue burden justifications every three years. This authority can be re-delegated in accordance with Delegation of Authority 1-84 Information Resources Management.

Assistant/Regional Administrators (AA/RA): Responsible for ensuring that all EIT (including components residing on systems, networks, Web sites, and facilities) within their offices complies with Section 508 and this policy. This authority can be re-delegated in accordance with Delegation of Authority 1-84 Information Resources Management.

Office Director for the Office of Information Analysis and Access (OIAA) in the Office of Environmental Information: Responsible for developing and maintaining this policy on EIT accessibility.

Office Director for the Office of Acquisition Management (OAM) in the Office of

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Administration and Resource Management (OARM): Responsible for implementing the procurement elements of this policy.

Senior Information Officials (SIO): When delegated by the AAs or RAs, the SIO is responsible for reviewing and approving all EIT procurements, including undue burdens for his/her program or regional office and, as appropriate, for re-delegating approval authority down to the information management officials (IMO), division directors, and branch chiefs. When delegated by the AA or RA, the SIO is responsible for keeping AA or RA records of undue burden justifications.

Information Management Officers (IMO), Division Directors and Branch Chiefs: When delegated by the SIO, responsible for reviewing and approving all EIT procurements in his/her area of purview except for undue burden and undue burden class determinations which cannot be delegated below the SIO level.

Office of Technology Operations and Planning (OTOP) in the Office of Environmental Information: Provides technical guidance and expertise as requested by EPA Offices and Regions.

Office of Civil Rights (OCR) in the Office of the Administrator: Provides guidance and civil rights expertise as requested by Program Offices. OCR is responsible for handling EPA Section 508 complaints.

Agency Section 508 Coordinator and Assistant Section 508 Coordinator in the Office of Information Analysis and Access (OIAA) in the Office of Environmental Information: Serve as the Agency's focal points for Section 508 information.

Agency/Regional Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (RAC): Serve as the Agency's focal points for reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities which fall under the purview of Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

9. DEFINITIONS

These definitions were taken from the Electronic and Information Technology Standards CFR 1194.4.

Alternate formats. Alternate formats usable by people with disabilities may include, but are not limited to, Braille, ASCII text, large print, recorded audio, and electronic formats that comply with this part.

Alternate methods. Different means of providing information, including product documentation, to people with disabilities. Alternate methods may include, but are not limited to, voice, fax, relay service, TTY, Internet posting, captioning, text-to-speech synthesis, and audio description.

Assistive technology. Any item, piece of equipment, or system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is commonly used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Electronic and information technology. Includes information technology and any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment, that is used in the creation, conversion, or duplication of data or information. The term electronic and information technology includes, but is not limited to, telecommunications products (such

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as telephones), information kiosks and transaction machines, World Wide Web sites, multimedia, and office equipment such as copiers and fax machines. The term does not include any equipment that contains embedded information technology that is used as an integral part of the product, but the principal function of which is not the acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. For example, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) equipment such as thermostats or temperature control devices, and medical equipment where information technology is integral to its operation, are not information technology.

Information technology. Any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment, that is used in the automatic acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. The term information technology includes computers, ancillary equipment, software, firmware and similar procedures, services (including support services), and related resources.

Operable controls. A component of a product that requires physical contact for normal operation. Operable controls include, but are not limited to, mechanically operated controls, input and output trays, card slots, keyboards, or keypads.

Self Contained, Closed Products. Products that generally have embedded software and are commonly designed in such a fashion that a user cannot easily attach or install assistive technology. These products include, but are not limited to, information kiosks and information transaction machines, copiers, printers, calculators, fax machines, and other similar types of products.

Telecommunications. The transmission, between or among points specified by the user, of information of the user's choosing, without change in the form or content of the information as sent and received.

Undue burden. Undue burden means significant difficulty or expense. In determining whether an action would result in an undue burden, an agency shall consider all agency resources available to the program or component for which the product is being developed, procured, maintained, or used.

10. WAIVERS

For exceptions to Section 508 requirements for accessible electronic and information technology, please refer to the Section 508 Exceptions Standards found in the Procedures document (see Item 11 Related Procedures and Guidelines).

11. RELATED PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

In order for the Agency to comply with Section 508, the Accessible Electronic and Information Technology Standards, Procedures, and Guidance document is available and includes the following:

1. [Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards](#) (36 CFR part1194)
2. Section 508 Exceptions Standards

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3. EPA EIT Approval Procedures
4. EPA Section 508 Undue Burden and Class Undue Burden Procedures
5. EPA EIT Procurement Contract Procedures
6. EPA Section 508 Complaint Procedures
7. EPA Section 508 Training Guidance

12. MATERIAL SUPERSEDED

EPA Order 2100.1 Accessible Electronic and Information Technology

13. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information on this policy, contact the EPA Section 508 Coordinator,
<http://intranet.epa.gov/accessibility/>.



*Linda A. Travers, Acting Assistant Administrator
and Chief Information Officer
Office of Environmental Information*