



IS YOUR BUSINESS ADA-COMPLIANT FOR 2020?

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ADA requirements have been in place for years since the act was originally signed in the 1990s. However, it's constantly being updated each year based on additional needs and changing work environments.

If you own a business, it's important to know what these changes are so you can make sure you're always ADA-compliant.

In 2020, the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act focus both on physical limitations and obstacles, as well as digital ones. Many of the [2020 ADA requirements](#) are targeting business websites and how they, too, need to be compliant.

Let's look at some of these rules and regulations that you'll need to know in order to make sure your business remains compliant in the new year and beyond.

Double-Checking Those Easily Overlooked Issues

Even if your business isn't new, it's not uncommon for established locations to make mistakes when considering ADA compliance. There are some frequently overlooked regulations that get businesses in trouble or hit with hefty fines, and they can be easily remedied by doing a self-audit or looking over the new rules and regulations each year.

For starters, make sure everything is properly labeled at your place of business. Tactile warning surface products can be a big help to those with disabilities, as can graphic warning plates that let people know what to expect. No warning signs or labels means that you're not

letting employees and/or customers know what could potentially be ahead of them, which may put them in danger.

Little things like the weight of your doors and the slope of your wheelchair ramps can also cause problems, and they're often overlooked. Many business owners think that just because they're following the basic regulations, it means they're safe. Yet, if the things you're putting in place aren't usable or accessible by those with a disability, they're doing more harm than good.

So, don't be afraid to look over the physical regulations if you have a brick and mortar business. Refreshing yourself on what they consist of each year will help you to get better and make more changes to be compliant.

Making Your Website Accessible

Even if your business is run mostly (or solely) online, you still have to follow ADA regulations. Everyone tends to think about wheelchair ramps and proper signage when it comes to ADA compliance, but, due to advancements in technology, it's important to consider businesses that operate digitally too.

That being said, there currently aren't any specific regulations in place for websites by the Department of Justice, other than the fact that websites have to be accessible for all people.

It's unlikely that there will be new regulations introduced for websites in 2020, but there are some basics that are important to follow. The DOJ has overwhelmingly agreed that websites need to be accessible. The problem is, they aren't sure which regulations to put in place to make that happen since sites vary so greatly.

So, what can you do to make sure your website is safe while making it accessible for people with disabilities?

How to Make Your Website “ADA-Compliant”

Though there aren't official regulations in place under the ADA, there are Web Content Accessibility Guidelines that are widely accepted as the standard by which websites should operate. Whether you have to start from scratch with your website or just make a few changes, keep these solutions in mind to make sure your site is inclusive and accessible for all:

1. **Choose your graphics carefully.** Graphics can be an important part of any website since they draw people's attention quickly. However, if you have flashing, colorful graphics, you could risk triggering a seizure for someone who is prone to them. You shouldn't have a flashing image more than three times on the same screen. If you do have graphics, make sure any text that goes along with them is

easily readable for the vision-impaired. If they can't see it, it should be able to be easily read by someone going through the site with them.

2. **Add alt-text to all of your images.** This allows people with vision problems to use site readers that can describe the image audibly.

3. **Use easy-to-read fonts in colors that remain in focus.** (In other words, don't use a dark font with a dark background.)

4. **Make sure your site is predictable.** Websites are designed to operate in certain ways, and people have come to rely on that predictability. Things like labels over areas of content or site maps can help someone to navigate through your website for the first time. Having some of these standard practices in place can make a big difference.

5. **Make your site keyboard-friendly.** Some people with mobility issues or those who have problems gripping a mouse rely on keyboards to browse through a website. So, make sure your site allows users to move at their own pace. That means no automatic scrolling or videos that play on their own. Allowing users to navigate with a keyboard and "pause" things so they have time to view them will make it easier for a lot of people with grip issues.

Staying Up to Date

Perhaps the best thing you can do for your business this year and beyond is to keep yourself as educated as possible on the rules and regulations of the ADA.

Technology will continue to change, and so will ADA standards. If you have a website for your business, it's important to focus just as much on its accessibility as it is to focus on having wheelchair ramps for a brick and mortar store. Official regulations on websites might not happen this year, but, as digital businesses become more popular and prominent, it's an issue the Department of Justice can't ignore forever.

So, build your website the right way, now, and stay up-to-date with changing rules and regulations. By the time the DOJ *does* vote to officially include websites within their rules and regulations, you'll already be one step ahead.

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