

The 10-Minute ADA Compliance Checklist

For Business Website Owners

Why this matters: Companies across all industries are being sued over website accessibility. Average settlements run \$5,000-\$20,000 plus attorney fees. In 2024, there were ~8,800 ADA Title III lawsuits filed, with website cases making up about 28% of that total. Use this checklist to protect your business.

Step 1: Test Your Site (Do This Today)

- ☐ **The Tab Test:** Put your mouse down. Close your eyes. Hit Tab through your entire website. Can you reach every button? Can you tell where you are? If not, you have keyboard navigation issues.
- ☐ **Run WAVE Scan:** Go to wave.webaim.org and enter your URL. Look for red error icons. Those are your lawsuit triggers.
- ☐ **The Zoom Test:** Zoom your browser to 200%. Does everything still work? Can you still read text and click buttons? If it breaks, you need to fix it.

Step 2: Fix These First WEEK 1

- ☐ **Alt Text on All Images:** Every image needs a description for screen readers. This is the #1 violation in lawsuits. Check linked images and buttons especially.
- ☐ **Label Empty Buttons & Links:** Any button or link without text is unusable for screen reader users. Add descriptive labels or aria-labels.
- ☐ **Fix Color Contrast:** Text must have 4.5:1 contrast ratio with background (3:1 for large text). Use webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker to test. 83% of websites fail this.
- ☐ **Add Form Labels:** Every input field needs a proper label so screen readers know what goes where. Check your contact forms, quote requests, and checkout flows.

Step 3: Fix These Next WEEK 2

- ☐ **Fix Heading Structure:** Don't skip heading levels (H1 → H2 → H3). Screen readers use headings to navigate your site.
- ☐ **Improve Link Text:** Replace "Click here" and "Read more" with descriptive text like "View pricing details" or "Download product guide."
- ☐ **Remove Redundant Links:** Don't have two identical links right next to each other pointing to the same page.

Step 4: Ongoing Protection

- ☐ **Add Accessibility Statement:** Post a statement showing your commitment to accessibility and provide a way for users to report issues.

Copy this prompt into ChatGPT or Claude to generate your accessibility statement:

"Create an accessibility statement for my business website. My company name is [YOUR COMPANY]. Our website is [YOUR URL]. We are committed to making our website accessible to people with disabilities and conform to WCAG 2.1 Level AA standards. Include: (1) our commitment to accessibility, (2) the standards we follow (WCAG 2.1 AA), (3) how users can report accessibility issues to us at [YOUR EMAIL], (4) a statement that we will address reported issues promptly, and (5) the date this statement was created. Keep it professional but human-readable, under 300 words."

- ☐ **Schedule Annual Audits:** Test your site every year (or when you make major updates) to catch new issues.
- ☐ **Train Your Team:** Make sure anyone updating your website knows basic accessibility rules. Don't rely on widgets alone.

Quick Reference Tools

WAVE Tool: wave.webaim.org (free accessibility checker)

Contrast Checker: webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker

WCAG Guidelines: w3.org/WAI (official web accessibility standards)

Keyboard Testing: webaim.org/articles/keyboard