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NASA Procedural Requirements

NPR 2800.2A

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2025**COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY FOR NASA EMPLOYEES**

Information and Communication Technology Accessibility

Responsible Office: Office of the Chief Information Officer

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Preface

P.1 Purpose

This document establishes procedural requirements for providing accessible Information and Communication Technology (ICT) with special emphasis on implementation of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 794d (Section 508). Section 508 requires Federal agencies' ICT be accessible to individuals with disabilities and that NASA accommodate the needs of employees and program participants.

P.2 Applicability

- a. This directive is applicable to all civil servants and contractors at NASA Headquarters and NASA Centers, including Component Facilities and Technical and Service Support Centers (Agency-wide).
- b. In this directive, all mandatory actions (i.e., requirements) are denoted by statements containing the term "shall." The terms: "may" or "can" denote discretionary privilege or permission, "should" denotes a good practice and is recommended, but not required, "will" denotes expected outcome, and "are/is" denotes descriptive material.
- c. In this directive, all document citations are assumed to be the latest version unless otherwise noted.
- d. This document does not apply to ICT acquired, developed, or maintained by contractors solely to be used by contractors in developing products or services for NASA and which has not been procured under Government contract.

P.3 Authority

- a. Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Pub. L. 93-112, 29 U.S.C. § 791.
- b. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Pub. L. 105-220, 29 U.S.C. § 794(d).
- c. Assistive Technology Act of 1998, 29 U.S.C. § 3001 et seq.
- d. Telecommunications for the Disabled Act of 1982, Pub. L. 97-410, 47 U.S.C. § 610.
- e. Hearing Aid Compatibility Act of 1988, Pub. L. 100-394, 47 U.S.C. § 610.
- f. Rehabilitation Act, 29 CFR § 1614.203.
- g. NPD 2800.1, Managing Information Technology.
- h. Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Pub. L. 104-104.

P.4 Applicable Documents and Forms

- a. Telecommunications Act Accessibility Guidelines, 36 CFR pt. 1193.

- b. Information and Communication Technology Standards and Guidelines, 36 CFR pt. 1194.
- c. Market Research Policy, Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), 48 CFR pt. 10.
- d. Acquisition of Electronic and Information Technology, FAR, 48 CFR § 39.2.
- e. Special Categories of Contracting, Major System Acquisition, NASA FAR Supplement (NFS), 48 CFR pt. 1834.
- f. Special Categories of Contracting, Acquisition of Information Technology, NFS, 48 CFR pt. 1839.
- g. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Standards and Guidelines, 83 FR 2912, January 22
- h. NPR 2081.1, Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted and Conducted Programs.
- i. NPR 2210.1, Release of NASA Software.
- j. NPR 7120.7, NASA Information Technology and Institutional Infrastructure Program and Project Management Requirements.

P.5 Measurement and Verification

Compliance with this policy is verified by Agency and Center Section 508 Program Managers, in accordance with 29 U.S.C. § 794(d).

P.6 Cancellation

NPR 2800.2, Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility, January 26, 2011.

Chapter 1. Overview of Section 508 Accessible ICT

1.1 Background

In 1986, Congress added Section 508 to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 thereby establishing guidance for ICT accessibility. In 1998, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 was signed into law, which included the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. These amendments expanded information technology (IT) accessibility requirements and called on Federal agencies to implement the guidance.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 The scope of this document includes both procurement of goods and services, as well as any ICT development by NASA or its contractors for the use by NASA employees, employees of other Federal agencies, and the public. This includes Government-developed/provided software (e.g., E-Government products, in-house development), Web-based content/applications, and other ICT that, even if not procured, are obtained from sources other than NASA and its contractors (e.g., if a university develops in conjunction with NASA, but at no cost to NASA, a Web-based survey requesting information from NASA civil servants, the survey will comply with the requirements of this document). Additional information regarding Section 508 as it pertains to NASA can be found at <https://www.nasa.gov/accessibility/section-508-home>.

1.2.2 NASA will identify the needs of users with disabilities when it procures, develops, maintains, or uses ICT. This will include a determination of how users with disabilities will perform the functions supported by the ICT and how the ICT will be developed, installed, configured, and maintained to support users with disabilities.

Chapter 2. Requirements

2.1. Procurement of ICT

2.1.1 In acquiring, developing, maintaining, and using ICT, NASA Program/Project Managers shall comply with the provisions of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. These provisions state that individuals with disabilities, either Federal employees or members of the public, will have access to and use of information that is comparable to those without a disability. Software applications and operating systems; Web-based information, systems or applications (Internet, Intranet, or Extranet); telecommunications products; video and multimedia products; self-contained, closed products; and desktop and portable computers developed, procured, or maintained on or after June 25, 2001, are required to be Section 508 compliant.

2.1.2 Special Categories of Contracting, Acquisition of Information Technology, NASA FAR Supplement, 48 CFR, pt. 1839 provides guidance to NASA in the procurement of both ICT supplies (such as computers, telephones, etc.) as well as services (e.g., development of a computer system for NASA use, publishing information on a NASA Web site).

a. Maintenance and support for legacy systems, purchased or developed prior to January 18, 2018, falls under the “safe harbor” provision for existing (i.e., legacy) ICT. Unaltered, existing ICT that complies with the original June 2001 508 standards does not require conformance to the current January 2018 508 standards.

b. Patches to fix software errors on a system that is not near the end of its life expectancy, and system upgrades that could not operate with software that meets the technical provisions of the United States Access Board's standards

(<https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/communications-and-it/about-the-ict-refresh>), would not require that the system become conformant. However, system owners should make every reasonable effort to address conformance with the technical standards. If a system is near the end of its life expectancy, the purpose of the 'maintenance' is to significantly upgrade and update the system, and the resources are available for such an upgrade, the relevant technical 508 standards apply.

c. This safe harbor applies on an element-by-element basis to each component or portion of the existing ICT, with each component or portion assessed separately. Existing, unaltered ICT that did not comply with the original 508 standards as of January 18, 2018, are required to be compliant with the Revised 508 standards.

2.1.3 It is the responsibility of the requiring office to ensure all products procured comply with Section 508 prior to deployment. Relying on vendor assurances alone is not sufficient. Requiring offices may perform conformance testing or may rely on analyses of Section 508 conformance performed by other NASA offices; guidance from the Center Section 508 Program Manager; NASA contractors who did not develop the product or service; other Federal, state, or local agencies; independent testers such as universities, accessibility advocacy groups; and other parties not directly involved with the development/sale of the product or service who may be relied upon for a conformance determination.

2.2 Technical and Functional Criteria for Compliance with Section 508 of ICT Developed, Maintained, and Used by NASA

The development, maintenance, and use of all NASA ICT will comply with the technical or functional criteria set forth in the Section 508 Final Rule published by the Access Board in the Federal Register (Information and Communication Technology Standards and Guidelines, 36 CFR pt. 1194) and effective as of January 18, 2018. The accessibility standards apply to ICT developed and maintained both by NASA civil

servants and NASA contractors for use by NASA employees, employees of other Federal agencies, and/or the public.

2.3 Special Topics

2.3.1 Electronic Content

2.3.1.1 Public Facing. NASA will ensure that all electronic content that is made available to the public, such as web pages, blogs and social media, conforms to Section 508 standards.

2.3.1.2 Agency Official Communication. NASA shall ensure that electronic content used for official agency communications, including such content posted to the agency Intranet, conforms to Section 508 technical standards. This requirement applies, but is not limited, to the following types of official agency communications:

- a. An emergency notification;
- b. An initial or final decision adjudicating an administrative claim or proceeding;
- c. An internal or external program or policy announcement;
- d. A notice of benefits, program eligibility, employment opportunity, or personnel action;
- e. A formal acknowledgement of receipt;
- f. A survey questionnaire;
- g. A template or form;
- h. Educational or training materials;
- i. Intranet content designed as a Web page.

2.3.2 Laboratory Equipment

In the case of the procurement of laboratory equipment, any ICT that is included in the procurement as part of the laboratory equipment, regardless of whether the ICT is the end product of the procurement or the principal function of the laboratory equipment, will conform to Section 508 requirements. ICT may be included in the procurement of the laboratory equipment either as embedded in the equipment or as a separate component. For example, full-featured oscilloscopes available in the marketplace today often include an embedded microprocessor that may have an operating system or user interface; be remotely controlled by a touch screen, keyboard/mouse, or other external interface; have Internet connectivity; and run a myriad of software applications, including e-mail. Such an oscilloscope is ICT and subject to Section 508, though not all of the Section 508 standards may be applicable. Each type of laboratory equipment will be addressed individually and have a determination made by the local Requiring Office via market research or following the methods prescribed in 2.1.3. Compliance with Section 508 requirements when procuring laboratory equipment shall be undertaken in conjunction with the Agency's Supply Chain Risk Management efforts, as required by Section 514 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018.

2.4 Application and General Exceptions

2.4.1 Application. ICT that is procured, developed, modified, maintained, or used by agencies after January 18, 2018, shall conform to the revised standards of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Pub. L. 105-220, 29 U.S.C. § 794(d) (Section 508) unless governed by exceptions noted below.

2.4.1.1 General Exceptions. ICT is exempt from compliance with the Revised 508 Standards to the extent specified below:

- a. **Legacy ICT.** Any component, portion, or function of existing ICT that complies with an earlier standard issued pursuant to Section 508, and that has not been altered on or after January 18, 2018 (legacy ICT), will not be required to be modified to conform to the revised Section 508 standards.
- b. **National Security Systems.** The Revised 508 Standards do not apply to ICT operated by agencies as part of a national security system as defined by Public Buildings, Property, and Works, Applicability to National Security Systems, 40 U.S.C. § 11103(a).
- c. **Federal Contracts.** ICT acquired by a contractor incidental to a contract is not required to conform to the Revised 508 Standards.
- d. **ICT Functions Located in Maintenance or Monitoring Spaces.** Status indicators and operable parts for ICT that is located in spaces frequented only by service personnel for maintenance, repair, or occasional monitoring of equipment are not required to conform to the Revised 508 Standards.
- e. **Undue Burden or Fundamental Alteration.** Where NASA determines conformance to requirements in the Revised 508 Standards would impose an undue burden or would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the ICT, conformance is required only to the extent that it does not impose an undue burden, or result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of the ICT.
- f. **Best Meets.** Where ICT conforming to one or more requirements in the Revised 508 Standards is not commercially available, NASA will procure the ICT that best meets the Revised 508 Standards consistent with the agency's business needs.

2.5 Requesting Exceptions to Technical Standards

2.5.1 Exceptions to Section 508 standards shall be granted in accordance to each Center's implementation process for Section 508 enforcement. The exception request shall include a justification for the exception claimed, to be reviewed and approved as part of the Center Section 508 enforcement process.

2.5.2 Undue Burden. The exception for Undue Burden is only applicable to the specific functions or features of an ICT product that cannot be made accessible without imposing significant difficulty or expense on the agency or component of the agency that will use the ICT. The NASA CIO in coordination with the requesting Center CIO is responsible for making the final determination whether conformance to specific requirements of the Revised 508 Standards would impose an undue burden on the agency. This determination will be in writing and will include an explanation of the basis for the decision, including why and to what extent conformance to specific requirements would result in an undue burden on the agency.

2.5.3 Fundamental Alteration. The Center Section 508 Program Manager is responsible for reviewing requests for and making a determination that conformance to Section 508 standards would fundamentally alter the nature of a specific ICT product. This determination shall be in writing and shall include an explanation of the basis for the decision, including how conformance would fundamentally alter the nature of the product.

2.5.4 Best Meets. The NASA Program/Project Manager from the requiring organization shall document in writing:

- a. The non-availability of conforming ICT, including a description of market research performed and which provisions cannot be met; and
- b. The basis for determining that the ICT to be procured best meets the requirements in the Revised 508 Standards consistent with the agency's business needs.

2.5.6 Alternative Means. When NASA makes a determination that an exception to the Section 508 standards is appropriate, NASA shall provide access to the information and data to people with disabilities by alternative means. Program/Project Managers shall identify in advance the needs of people with disabilities affected by each exception and implement a plan to meet these needs through alternative means.

Chapter 3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)

3.1.1 The NASA Chief Information Officer (CIO) shall:

- a. Be responsible for implementation of Section 508, including the establishment of Agency requirements documents and designation of a NASA Agency Section 508 Program Manager.
- b. Be responsible for the submission of reports and/or surveys related to Section 508 compliance.
- c. Ensure uniform technical standards are applied Agency-wide.
- d. Review and approve all undue burden determinations.
- e. Maintain knowledge of Section 508 Technical Standards and accessible ICT solutions in their respective disciplines.
- f. Ensure that the needs of users with disabilities are identified when NASA procures, develops, maintains, or uses ICT. This includes performing determinations of how users with disabilities will perform the functions supported by the ICT and how the ICT will be developed, installed, configured, and maintained to support users with disabilities.

3.2 Agency Section 508 Program Manager

3.2.1 The Agency Section 508 Program Manager shall:

- a. Ensure compliance with this NPR.
- b. Provide guidance to the Center Section 508 Program Managers regarding implementation of the requirements and standards of Section 508.
- c. Establish and maintain policy(ies) and website(s) regarding NASA's implementation and adherence to Section 508 standards.
- d. Provide guidance to Agency-level organizations regarding the resolution of Section 508 issues.
- e. Represent NASA as the Federal point of contact for Section 508.
- f. Coordinate and assess needs for Agency-wide ICT accessibility training. Develop or refine training plan as needed, accordingly.
- g. Chair the Section 508 Program Manager Working Group or designate a Center Section 508 Program Manager to chair the Section 508 Program Manager Working Group.
- h. Maintain knowledge of Section 508 technical standards and accessible ICT solutions.

3.3 Center Directors

3.3.1 The Center Directors shall:

- a. Ensure implementation of an effective Section 508 program at their Center.
- b. Maintain knowledge of Section 508 Technical Standards and accessible ICT solutions in their respective disciplines.

3.4 Officials-in-Charge of Headquarters Offices and Managers of NASA Mission Directorates and Managers of NASA Center Directorates and Program/Project Managers

3.4.1 Officials-in-Charge of Headquarters Offices and Managers of NASA Mission Directorates and Managers of NASA Center Directorates and Program/Project Managers shall:

- a. Ensure execution of this NPR within their respective organizations and/or programs/projects.
- b. Maintain knowledge of Section 508 Technical Standards and accessible ICT solutions in their respective disciplines.

3.5 Center Chief Information Officers

3.5.1 The Center CIOs shall:

- a. Ensure adherence to this NPR within stipulated timeframes through their interfaces with the NASA CIO, Center Section 508 Program Managers, and Program/Project Managers.
- b. Maintain knowledge of Section 508 Technical Standards and accessible ICT solutions in their respective disciplines.
- c. Designate a Center Section 508 Program Manager.

3.6 Center Section 508 Program Managers

3.6.1 The Center Section 508 Program Managers shall:

- a. Advise and/or provide guidance to Center customers on technical and policy matters regarding Section 508 and ICT. Provide Section 508 training to Center customers, as required. Center customers include but are not limited to the Office of Procurement, requirements initiators and developers, contract specialists, and contracting officers.
- b. Participate in Agency Section 508 working groups and training workshops.
- c. Assess and report on the state of Section 508 compliance at their Center at the request of Center officials or the Agency Section 508 Program Manager.
- d. Maintain knowledge of Section 508 Technical Standards and accessible ICT solutions in their respective disciplines.
- e. Review, modify, and/or concur/non-concur, as needed, on exception requests. Coordinate these activities with requiring offices including, but not limited to, the Office of Procurement, Office of the General Counsel, and the Office of the Chief Counsel.

f. Develop and maintain Center Section 508 implementation and program management plans.

3.7 Agency and Center Offices of Procurement

3.7.1 The Agency and Center Offices of Procurement shall:

- a. Ensure acquisitions procured on or after June 25, 2001, adhere to Electronic and Information Technology, FAR Subpart 39.2.
- b. Ensure required Section 508 exception approval documentation is included in the contract file for any instance when NASA is unable to comply with Section 508.
- c. Review the Section 508 technical standards with assistance from the Center Section 508 Program Manager and modify and/or concur/non-concur, as needed, on requiring activity's determination which Section 508 Accessibility Standards (Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Final Standards and Guidelines, 36 CFR pt. 1193 and Telecommunications Act Accessibility Guidelines, 36 CFR pt. 1193) apply to the specific ICT product or service being procured.
- d. Conduct market research, in accordance with Market Research Policy, FAR Part 10, to determine the commercial availability of products and services that meet the technical provisions. In accordance with NASA FAR Supplement 48 CFR pt. 1839.203, include market research documentation received from the requirements initiator in the contract file, including approvals for all determinations of compliance, non-compliance, and partial compliance; commercial non-availability determinations; and undue burden exceptions.
- e. Ensure that the requirements documentation, including the NF1707 form, received from the requirements initiator as part of the acquisition package addresses Section 508 and is included in any solicitation to procure ICT as specified in in Electronic and Information Technology, FAR Part 39, Subpart 39.2, as applicable.
- f. Review exception requests, as needed, for Section 508 compliance and forward such requests to the Agency Office of Procurement for information. After concurrence/non-concurrence by the Center Section 508 Program Manager, place a copy of such exception requests in the contract file and send an information copy to the Agency Office of Procurement.

3.8 Agency Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity and Center Offices Responsible for Equal Opportunity Programs

3.8.1 The Agency Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ODEO) and Center offices responsible for equal opportunity programs shall:

- a. Advise individuals with disabilities within NASA on policy matters regarding Section 508, as described in NPR 3713.1C Reasonable Accommodations Procedures for Individuals with Disabilities.
- b. Serve as the liaison between individuals with disabilities and those involved with the implementation of Section 508.
- c. Track NASA compliance with Section 508 requirements and technical standards as it relates to

employment-related matters.

- d. Investigate complaints alleging a failure to comply with Section 508 and track complaints via the internal ODEO complaint process as described in NPR 2081.1, Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted and Conducted Programs.
- e. Develop policy and implementation plans regarding the Section 508 complaint process.
- f. Evaluate the effectiveness of the internal Section 508 complaint process.
- g. Maintain knowledge of Section 508 Technical Standards and accessible ICT solutions in their respective disciplines.

3.9 Office of the General Counsel and Center Offices of Chief Counsel

3.9.1 Office of the General Counsel (OGC) and Center Offices of Chief Counsel shall:

- a. Review for concurrence any undue burden exceptions to ensure that they meet Section 508 requirements.
- b. Maintain knowledge of Section 508 legal requirements and advise whether ICT solutions meet the legal requirements.

3.10 Requiring Office

3.10.1 The Requiring Office shall:

- a. Ensure that authors/developers are creating ICT solutions which conform to Section 508 Technical Standards and performing necessary actions in support of the Agency's compliance with Section 508, including exercise of responsibilities specified in paragraph 1.8.2 of NPR 2210.1, Release of NASA Software.
- b. Maintain knowledge of Section 508 Technical Standards and accessible ICT solutions in their respective disciplines.
- c. Provide guidance to the Office of Procurement at their local Center regarding procurement of ICT to ensure Section 508 compliance of new acquisitions.

Appendix A. Definitions

Access Board. The Access Board is an independent Federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities. Created in 1973 to ensure access to Federally funded facilities, the Board is now a leading source of information on accessible design. The Board develops and maintains design criteria for the built environment, transit vehicles, telecommunications equipment, and electronic and information technology. It also provides technical assistance and training on these requirements and on accessible design and continues to enforce accessibility standards that cover Federally funded facilities.

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. This may include screen readers, which allow persons who cannot see a visual display to either hear screen content or read the content in Braille.

Business Impact Assessment. Identifies exposure to sudden loss of critical business functions and supporting resources. Involves assessing both financial and non-financial (i.e., customer service) costs during business disruption and business restoration periods.

Information and Communication Technology. ICT is defined as any technology, equipment, or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment for which the principal function is the creation, conversion, duplication, automatic acquisition, storage, analysis, evaluation, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, reception, or broadcast of data or information. ICT includes, but is not limited to:

- Software programs;
- Web based Intranet or Internet information and applications;
- Telecommunication products;
- Information kiosk and transaction machines;
- Websites;
- Multimedia (including video and pictures);
- Office equipment, computers, copiers and fax machines; and
- Electronic forms and documents.

Electronic Content. Electronic content is defined as electronic information and data, as well as the encoding that defines its structure, presentation, and interactions, such as content in emails, documents (pdf, doc, etc.), Web pages, social media, etc.

Fundamental Alteration. An exception that applies to a change in the fundamental characteristic or purpose of the product or service that is not merely a cosmetic or aesthetic change. For example, an agency intends to procure pocket-sized pagers for field agents of a law enforcement agency. Adding a large display to a small pager may fundamentally alter the device by significantly changing its size to such an extent that it no longer meets the purpose for which it was intended, that is to provide a communication device that fits in a shirt or jacket pocket. For some of these agents, portability of electronic equipment is of paramount concern. Generally, adding access should not change the basic purpose or characteristics of a product in a fundamental way.

Market Research. A process used to collect, organize, maintain, analyze, and present data for the purpose of maximizing the capabilities, technology, and competitive force of the marketplace to

meet an organization's needs for supplies or services.

Official Communication. Supports the Agency's mission and is limited to those communications that contain information necessary for Federal employees to perform their job functions; or, when communicated to a member of the public, are necessary for them to conduct official business with NASA as defined by the Agency's Mission.

Program. A strategic investment by a Mission Directorate or Mission Support Office that has a defined architecture and/or technical approach, requirements, funding level, and a management structure that initiates and directs one or more projects. A program defines a strategic direction that the Agency has identified as critical.

Reasonable Accommodation. Any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions. Reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and privileges in employment equal to those of employees without disabilities. Requiring Office. The office from which a development project or procurement originates.

Undue Burden. Significant difficulty or expense. In determining whether an action would result in an undue burden, the Agency considers the difficulty and/or expense of compliance, and all Agency resources available to its program or component for which the product or service is being developed, procured, maintained, or used.

Appendix B. Acronyms

CAD	Computer-Aided Design
CCA	Clinger-Cohen Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIO	Chief Information Officer
COTS	Commercial Off-the-Shelf
FAC	Federal Acquisition Circular
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulations
FTP	File Transfer Protocol
GOTS	Government Off-the-Shelf
GSA	General Services Administration
HTTP	Hyper-Text Transfer Protocol
HVAC	Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
NFS	NASA FAR Supplement
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer
ODEO	Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity
OGC	Office of General Counsel
PIC	Procurement Information Circular
PLM	Product Life-Cycle Management
VPAT	Voluntary Product Accessibility Template

Appendix C. References

- a. Public Buildings, Property, and Works, Applicability to National Security Systems, 40 U.S.C. 11103(a).
- b. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Final Standards and Guidelines, 36 CFR pt. 1194.
- g. Federal Acquisition Circular (FAC) 97-27, Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility.