



# Accessible Print Materials

## Formatting Guidelines to Accommodate All Audiences

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Health messages should be designed for diverse audiences, including people with disabilities. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) in adherence with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that members of the general public with disabilities have communication access that is equally effective as that provided to people without disabilities.<sup>1</sup> The MDPH Healthy Aging/Health and Disability Unit has developed guidelines for accessible printed health communications. These guidelines contain MDPH policies, recommended standards, and suggested websites for accessible design and print information. Additional resources for alternative communication services are also included.

**Developed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health,  
Healthy Aging & Health and Disability Unit, 2007**

## **Content of Health Promotion Materials**

Materials should reflect your target audience. Materials should be culturally and linguistically appropriate. The target population should be inclusive of individuals with disabilities.

### **Make sure that:**

- Materials identify disability as a risk factor for health conditions where appropriate.
- During all phases of the material development process, including initial discussions, concept testing, and focus groups, the target audience sample should include people with disabilities, unless the target audience is so specific it can be documented that people with disabilities would never be a member of that audience.

## **Contrast / Paper Finish**

Use dark lettering over a light colored background on non-glossy paper.

### **Make sure that:**

- Light yellow or off-white non-glossy/matte paper is used for print. It can be difficult to manipulate and read from glossy paper.
- Dark text is used on a light background and light text is used on a dark background. Print material is most readable in black or white text. See examples of effective print legibility at:

**[http://lighthouse.org/print\\_leg.htm](http://lighthouse.org/print_leg.htm)**

- Color text is used primarily for headlines and titles where a larger font size can be applied. A high contrast (70 percent) between text and background is best. See examples of effective color contrast at:  
<http://www.lighthouse.org/accessibility/effective-color-contrast/>

## **Text / Fonts**

Use simple fonts without excessive special formatting.

### **Make sure that:**

- Font selection is simple. Do not use compressed (**Print Example**), condensed (Print Example), complicated (**Print Example**), decorative (*Print Example*), or cursive (*Print Example*) fonts.
- Materials display standard serif or sans-serif fonts, with familiar, easily recognizable characters. Serif refers to fine lines that project from the letter type. Note that some font styles are naturally smaller than others. The examples below show different font styles in 14-point size.
  - Serif: Times New Roman, Bookman, Courier New
  - San-serif: Arial, Century Gothic, Verdana
- Font size is no smaller than 12 point. When possible use 14 point font. Large print materials use between 16 and 18 point. See font size examples below:
  - 12 point, 14 point, 16 point, 18 point

- Formatting codes such as *italics*, **bold**, and *oblique*, are used sparingly. Avoid writing in this format for entire sections and documents.
- Underlining does not connect with the letters being underscored.
- Text is not written completely in all upper case lettering.

### **Design Layout**

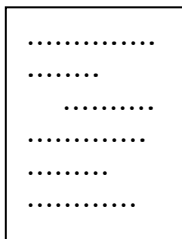
Materials should be designed with clear margins and spacing for ease in finding the beginning of the next line.

#### **Make sure that:**

- The gutter margins (the adjoining margins in two facing pages) are a minimum of 7/8 of an inch and the outside margins are at least half an inch. The space between any columns is at least half an inch.
- Spacing between lines of text is at least 25 percent of font size. MS Word documents automatically type in single space (0 percent).
  - To edit line spacing, select the Format tab in the tool bar and then the Paragraph tab.
  - In the drop-down box for line spacing you can select options such as 1.5 line spacing (50 percent of font size) or Double-Spacing (100 percent of font size).

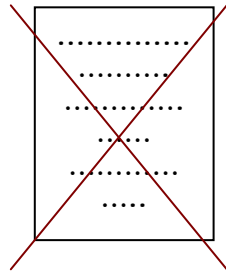
- Select “Multiple” in the line-spacing drop down box. In the next box labeled “At”, type in 1.25 percent (25 percent) to meet minimum recommended standards.
- The main text is left aligned. Right margins are ragged, not justified, because centered and right aligned text is difficult for some people to track.

✓ Use



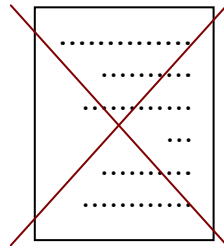
**Left aligned**

✗ Do not use



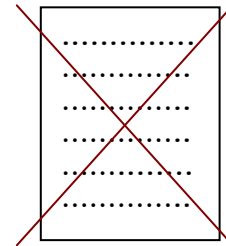
**Centered**

✗ Do not use



**Right aligned**

✗ Do not use



**Justified**

- Each line of text is no longer than six inches (50-60 characters per line). Avoid excessively short text lines and hyphenations at the end of lines.
- Hyphenation can be turned off in MS Word by selecting the Format tab, then under Paragraph, Line and Page Breaks, checking the “Don’t Hyphenate” box.
- Bound documents are flexible, preferably allowing the publication to lie flat. Spiral binding is recommended for lengthy documents.

## Use of Images

Health promotion materials should use images representing the target population including people with disabilities. Images should have sufficient resolution and significant color contrast for easy viewing.

### Make sure that:

- Images have a wide range of **color contrast** or **gray-scale** variation.
- Labels are used for each image with at least 12 point font.
  - See examples below from Active Living By Design (1,2) <http://www.activelivingbydesign.org/index.php?id=335> and
  - (3) Northeast Passage <http://www.nepassage.org>



1. Couple Walking



2. Friends relaxing



3. Adaptive Sled Hockey

- Line drawings or floor plans are clear and bold, with limited detail and a minimum 12-point font.
- Graphics such as watermarks are not used over or behind any other images, photographs, graphics, or text.

## Policy Statement Regarding Public Announcements and Accommodations

The following statement and symbols are required on all Massachusetts Department of Public Health publicity.

- To address how accommodations for a person with a disability or someone who is deaf or hard of hearing may be arranged, all materials advertising public events sponsored and/or coordinated by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) should include the following statement:
  - "If you are deaf or hard of hearing, or are a person with a disability who requires accommodation, please contact [**Name** of organization or individual responsible for making arrangements] at [**Telephone Number**], [**Fax Number**], [**Email Address**] or [**TTY Number**] by [**Date**]."
- Along with the accessibility statement, include these five access symbols which may be found on "Healthnet", the MDPH website at <http://www.mass.gov/dph/fch/ohd/policystatement.htm>



1



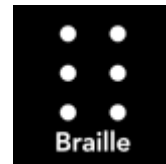
2



3



4



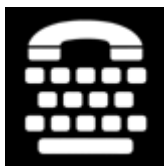
5

- The access symbols are described next according to the Graphics Artist Guild at:  
<http://www.gag.org/resources/das/php>



### **1. Symbol for accessibility.**

The wheelchair symbol should only be used to indicate access for individuals with limited mobility including wheelchair users. For example, the symbol is used to indicate an accessible entrance or bathroom, or that a phone is lowered for wheelchair users. Remember that a ramped entrance is not completely accessible if there are no curb cuts, and an elevator is not accessible if it can only be reached via steps.



### **2. Symbol for Telephone Typewriter.**

This device is also known as a text telephone (TT), or telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD). A TTY symbol indicates a device used with the telephone for communication with and between deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired and/or hearing persons.



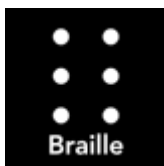
### **3. Symbol for Sign Language Interpretation.**

This symbol indicates that Sign Language Interpretation is provided for a lecture, tour, film, performance, conference or other program.



### **4. Symbol for Volume Control Telephone.**

This symbol indicates the location of telephones that have handsets with amplified sound and/or adjustable volume controls.



### **5. Symbol for Braille.**

This symbol indicates that printed material is available in Braille, including exhibition labeling, publications and signage.



## **Interpreter, Translation, and Transcription Services**

Programs may contact the following offices for assistance with accommodations.

- To request **interpreter services** for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing contact:

**MA Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH)**  
Interpreter/ CART (Communication Access Real Time Translation) Referral Service. MCDHH is a state agency under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

Address: 150 Mt. Vernon Street, Fifth Floor, Boston, MA 02125  
Phone: 617-740-1600 or 800-882-1155  
TTY: 617-740-1700 or 800-530-7570  
Fax: 617-740-1880

Visit <http://www.mass.gov/mcdhh> for more information on how to request any of the following:

- an emergency interpreter 800-249-9949 TTY/Voice,
- a CART provider, or
- information for interpreters.

- To request **interpretation for spoken language and translation of written material** into other languages contact:

**The Office of Multicultural Health (OMH) at MDPH.**

Address: 250 Washington Street, Fifth Floor, Boston, MA 02108  
Phone: 617-624-6063

OMH must be contacted prior to the final approval of written documents in English that will be translated into other languages. Translation guidelines and related forms may be found at <http://www.mass.gov/dph/omh/omh.htm>

- To request **transcription of written material into Braille** contact: **MA Commission for the Blind (MCB)**.

MA Commission for the Blind (MCB) is a state agency under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. MCB subcontracts with Fergusson Industries for the Blind to provide Braille transcription services.

For more information on MCB services visit the MCB website at:  
**<http://www.mass.gov/mcb>**

or contact:

**The MCB Office of Information Services**

Address: 48 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116  
Phone 617-727-5550, Fax: 617-626-7685,

**OR**

**Fergusson Industries for the Blind**

Address: 11 Highland Avenue, Malden, MA 02148  
Phone: 781-324-0800, Fax: 781-324-3111 or

- Material to be transcribed should be submitted in Word, Word Perfect, or ASCII plain text file (.txt).

**Example of Braille Transcription Price Guide from Fergusson**

Setup Fee (per file) - \$5.00

Small Binding (less than 1" spine - \$2.00

Editing (other than minor fix-up) - \$10.00/hr

Double Sided (8 1/2" X 11") Page - \$0.75

Large Binding (1" spine or larger) - \$4.00

For more information and other publications, including:

- Planning Accessible Meetings and Events
- Plan for Promoting the Health of People with Disabilities

Please contact:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Healthy Aging & Health and Disability Unit  
250 Washington Street, 4<sup>th</sup>Floor, Boston, MA 02108  
Phone: 617-624-5070  
TTY: 617-624-5992

To access our website, please copy and paste entire link below into your web browser:

[http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2terminal&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Government&L2=Departments+and+Divisions&L3=Department+of+Public+Health&L4=Programs+and+Services+A+-+J&sid=Eeohhs2&b=terminalcontent&f=dph\\_com\\_health\\_health\\_disability\\_c\\_about&csid=Eeohhs2](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2terminal&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Government&L2=Departments+and+Divisions&L3=Department+of+Public+Health&L4=Programs+and+Services+A+-+J&sid=Eeohhs2&b=terminalcontent&f=dph_com_health_health_disability_c_about&csid=Eeohhs2)

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<sup>i</sup> Department of Justice Nondiscrimination on the Basis of State and Local Government Services Regulation, 28 C.F.R. Part 35, § 35.160 (2005). Available at [www.ada.gov/reg2.html](http://www.ada.gov/reg2.html).

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