

Accessible Communications Do's & Don'ts

A Quick-Reference Guide from Capital City Communications
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DO	DON'T
✓ Write at or below Grade 6 reading level.	✗ Assume your audience reads at the same level as your internal team.
✓ Spell out every acronym on first use in all public-facing content.	✗ Use unexplained acronyms, jargon, or technical terms without definition.
✓ Add descriptive alt text to every image — social media, PDFs, web pages, and emails.	✗ Use "image.jpg" or leave alt text blank — screen readers will skip it.
✓ Tag all PDFs for screen reader accessibility and verify with an accessibility checker.	✗ Scan a document and save it as a PDF — scanned PDFs are not accessible.
✓ Use proper heading structure (H1, H2, H3) — headings convey hierarchy.	✗ Use bold or large text to simulate headings — screen readers ignore them.
✓ Book two qualified RID-certified interpreters for all public events and press conferences.	✗ Book one interpreter for long events — single interpreters fatigue and accuracy drops.
✓ Pin or spotlight both interpreters throughout all virtual meetings.	✗ Leave it to attendees to find interpreters in a participant panel of hundreds.
✓ State accommodation request process clearly in all materials with a specific contact and 72-hour lead time.	✗ Bury accommodation information in fine print or omit it entirely.
✓ Have translated materials reviewed by a community member, not just machine-translated.	✗ Rely on Google Translate alone — cultural appropriateness matters as much as grammar.
✓ Conduct post-event debriefs to document what worked and what did not.	✗ Move immediately to the next event without capturing lessons learned.

Ready for a full assessment? Request your free Communications Diagnostic — 36 questions across six domains — when you book a free consultation at capitalcitycomms.com.