



Memorandum

Date: July 26, 2012

From: Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology (005)

Subj: Section 508 Compliance Enforcement for Software and Application

1. Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was enacted to eliminate barriers in information technology, open new opportunities for people with disabilities, and encourage development of technologies that will help achieve these goals. The law applies to all Federal agencies when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology. Under this law, agencies must give disabled employees and members of the public access to information that is comparable to access available to others.
2. Since 2001, the Section 508 Program Office has provided Section 508 validation testing on thousands of IT products to validate their conformance against the Section 508 technical standards. In the past, the Section 508 Program Office has allowed products to be deployed as non-conformant, provided a schedule for remediation was submitted to the Section 508 PO by the PM. However, as we strive to do better for our Veterans and the public, we must do more to adhere to the letter of the law.
3. Accordingly, the following requirements shall be implemented:
 - 1) All waivers of compliance to Section 508 are cancelled effective January 1, 2013. All IT products in operation at that time must comply with Section 508.
 - 2) All Information and Technology (IT) software and applications developed, maintained, used, or procured by the VA must comply with Section 508 as determined by the United States Access Board's accessibility standards by January 1, 2013.
 - 3) No new IT programs or software will be allowed to be deployed unless Section 508 compliance has been validated, or an Authority to Operate (ATO) is signed by the VA Section 508 PO.
 - 4) Effective immediately, all requests for Section 508 compliance waivers must be approved by the Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology.

Section 508 Compliance Enforcement for Software and Application Development.

4. Recently, the VA Section 508 Program Office (PO) acquired several software tools which, when applied to the development environment, can dramatically increase the access to applications and content for disabled VA employees and Veterans. Project Managers, developers, and content providers can meet Section 508 accessibility standards by using these tools or by utilizing our checklists found at http://vaww.section508.va.gov/Section_508_Checklist_and_CVS.asp and correcting accessibility issues manually.
5. The Section 508 Section 508 Program Office will continue to audit VA's Section 508 compliance for VA's application development and report its findings to the Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology on a monthly basis. The VA Section 508 Program Office is prepared to provide assistance in identifying Section 508 violations, meeting compliance standards through its training office, providing access to Section 508 software tools, and providing technical support. For more information contact Patrick Sheehan Director Section 508 Program Office at 202-461-5207 or pat.sheehan@va.gov.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Roger W. Baker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Roger W. Baker