



# OSU Minimum Web Accessibility Standards (rev. 06/30/2004)

<http://www.wac.ohio-state.edu/standards/>



**Standard 14 -- Forms.** When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.

**Examples:**

**14.1 -- Form controls have text labels adjacent to them and keyboard access to control functionality.**

**14.2 -- Form elements have explicitly associated labels in the markup (i.e. the *id* and *for*, HTML elements).**

**14.3 -- Dynamic HTML scripting of the form does not interfere with assistive technologies.**

## Forms -- Dos and Don'ts

Do	Don't
Include a label for each form element.	Make long labels with detailed instructions.

**Why:** Well-meaning designers often error on the other side of accessibility: adding too much information. Be aware that users with disabilities want to use the web in the same way as other users: they want to access information and perform necessary tasks quickly and easily. Adding verbose directions only adds to the clutter of a site. If the directions are important, put them in the main body of the form, where everyone can see them and benefit from them.

**How:** Create a label that describes the function of the element or the required information and is as short as possible.

Good label: `<label for="textbox1">First Name:</label>`

Too much information label: `<label for="textbox1">Begin this form by entering your First Name:</label>`

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Do	Don't
Place label as close to the form element as possible.	Separate labels and elements with dividers or by putting them in separate cells.

**Why:** Older versions of assistive technology software may still be unable to associate form controls with their

labels requiring users to first read the label, then find the form control.

**How:** Place labels immediately adjacent to form elements. If you use tables to layout the form, put both the form label and element in the same cell.

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Do	Don ' t
Explicitly associate form labels with form elements.	Put label information next to or near the form element without connecting them using code.

**Why:** Form elements without explicitly associated labels will be read as "blank." Finding out which information belongs in which "blank" box is difficult, at best.

**How:** Use the "for" attribute in the label and the "id" attribute in the element.

Example HTML code: `<label for="textbox1">First Name:</label><INPUT type="text" id="textbox1">`

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Do	Don ' t
Create a logical tab order for navigating the form.	Assume users will "click" in the boxes and form elements they want to change.

**Why:** Users of assistive technology frequently fill-out forms out-of-order (that is, not top-down, left-to-right). Specifying a tab order helps insure that all form elements can be accessed with a keyboard and that keyboard users can navigate the form in a logical way.

**How:** Use the "tabindex" attribute in the element. You must specify a tabindex for each element in your form.

Example HTML code: `<INPUT type="text" tabindex="1">`

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Do	Don ' t
Assign access keys for form elements, particularly buttons, to insure form is accessible to keyboard users.	Use elements that require a mouse to activate.

**Why:** JavaScript events, such as the "OnClick" don't always work for keyboard users. Access keys establish keyboard shortcuts for frequently used or important functions of the form or page.

**How:** Use the "accesskey" attribute in the element.

Example HTML code: `<INPUT tabindex="2" type="submit" name="submit" accesskey="S">`



**Get more help with forms, visit [WebAIM's "Creating Accessible Forms."](#)**



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