Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines for Lions Club Communications

---

These guidelines reflect Lions' commitment to dignity, independence, and inclusion. They ensure our communications are accessible to members, partners, and the public we serve. Designed to support the creation of clear, inclusive print and electronic materials, these guidelines enhance readability and help ensure correspondence meets the needs of all individuals.

Contrast

High contrast between text and background is essential for readability, particularly for individuals with vision loss.

- **Do**: Use dark text on light backgrounds.
- **Avoid**: Low-contrast colour combinations or patterned backgrounds.

Font Style

Simple, standard fonts are easier for everyone to read and recognize. Whenever possible, use clear, widely available fonts such as **Arial, Verdana, Calibri, or Times New Roman**. Avoid decorative or overly complex fonts, as they can reduce readability.

Font Size

Larger text improves readability for all readers, especially those with vision impairments.

- Use a **minimum of 12-point font** for body text.
- **14–18 point** font is preferred where space allows.
- Consider your audience and adjust font size as needed.

Margins and Columns

A clean, well-organized layout reduces eye strain and improves navigation.

- **Do:** Align text to the left for easier reading.
- **Do:** Use a maximum of two columns to reduce excessive eye movement and reliance on peripheral vision.
- **Avoid:** Multi-column layouts in electronic documents unless they are properly tagged for screen-reader accessibility.

For printed materials, use wide binding margins or spiral bindings and ensure pages lie flat to accommodate vision aids such as magnifiers.

Leading (Line Spacing)
Adequate line spacing (leading) helps readers follow text more easily.
- Use **1.25-to-1.3-line spacing** in most word processors.
- Heavier typefaces may require slightly more spacing.
- Avoid lines that overlap or are too close together, as they hinder readability.

Paper Finish
Paper choice affects readability.
- Use **matte or non-glossy paper** to reduce glare and eye strain.
- Avoid watermarks or complex background designs that interfere with text clarity.

Distinctive Colours
Distinctive colours can improve navigation and help differentiate materials.
- Use colour, size, or shape variations to make materials easy to identify.
- Colour-coded folders or covers can help readers quickly locate items.
- Avoid uniform, monochromatic materials that may blend together.

Making Photos and Graphics Accessible
Accessible visuals ensure all members, including those with vision impairments, can understand and engage with content.
- Use high-contrast images with clear distinctions between elements.
- Provide **alternative text (alt text)** that clearly and concisely describes the purpose and meaning of each image or graphic.
- In most applications, selecting an image will display the option to **edit alt text**.
- Keep graphics simple and uncluttered, and ensure all embedded text is large and legible.

Electronic Correspondence Considerations
While these guidelines focus primarily on print materials, many principles also apply to electronic communications. Digital documents should be designed with accessibility in mind, particularly for individuals using assistive technologies.
Do:
- Use accessible PDF formats and simple, consistent layouts.
- Structure content with clear, logical headings for screen-reader navigation.
- Include alt text for all images.
- Use descriptive link text that clearly explains the destination.
- Maintain high colour contrast and readable fonts, following the same guidelines used for print.
- Use the **Check Accessibility** feature in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and PDFs:
  - Select **Review** from the top ribbon
  - Choose **Check Accessibility**
  - Review errors, warnings, and tips shown in the task pane

Avoid:

- Vague link text such as *"click here."*
- Overusing emojis, acronyms, short forms, or abbreviations that may be difficult for screen readers to interpret.
- Complex layouts that rely heavily on visual formatting to convey meaning.

By following these guidelines, Lions help ensure our communications reflect our shared values of respect, inclusion, and service.