



CURRENT NEWS FROM THE UNITED STATES ACCESS BOARD

# ACCESS CURRENTS

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## Board Releases New Draft of ICT Rule for Public Comment

The U.S. Access Board has released for public comment a second Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) that includes a revised **draft** of updated accessibility requirements for information and communication technology (ICT) covered by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. This latest version includes changes made in response to public feedback received on an earlier draft issued last year.



The draft rule jointly refreshes the Board's Section 508 standards and its Section 255 guidelines which address access to computer hardware and software, websites, media players, electronic documents, telephones and cell phones, PDAs and other ICT products. The Board is updating these requirements according to recommendations from an advisory body it chartered, the Telecommunications and Electronic and Information Technology Advisory Committee.

The Board released a previous draft of the rule in March 2010 and received almost 400 comments from the public, including industry, disability groups, consumers, government entities, research and trade organizations, accessibility consultants, and others. In response to this input, the Board has simplified and streamlined the document for greater usability. The revised draft further harmonizes the rule with other guidelines and standards and eliminates redundancy by referencing the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG). In addition, revisions have been made to clarify the relationship between performance and technical criteria, coverage of electronic content, and clearer requirements for ICT with closed functionality.

The released draft includes a discussion that explains these and other changes and highlights other topics where public comment is sought. The deadline for comments is March 7. During the comment period, the Board will hold public hearings in Washington, D.C. on January 11 and at the annual CSUN Conference in San Diego on March 1. The Board will follow-up with a proposed rule based on the input received that will provide an additional round of comment before the rule is finalized.

The draft rule and related information are available on the Board's [website](#). This information is also posted on the [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) website which allows visitors to submit or view comments. For further information, contact Tim Creagan at [creagan@access-board.gov](mailto:creagan@access-board.gov), (202) 272-0016 (v), or (202) 272-0074 (TTY).

### *Public Hearings on the Draft ICT Rule*

January 11, 9:00 – Noon  
 Access Board Conference Center  
 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 800  
 Washington, DC

March 1, 1:00 – 3:00  
 27th Annual CSUN conference  
 Manchester Grand Hyatt

One Market Place  
San Diego, CA

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### **Comment Period Extended for Proposed Rights-of-Way Rule**

The Access Board has reopened the comment period on its proposed guidelines for accessible public rights-of-way to February 2, 2012. The original comment deadline was November 23. This action is being taken in response to requests from interested parties, including government and trade associations, for additional time to submit comments on the rule, as indicated in a published [notice](#). The proposed [guidelines](#) address access to public streets and sidewalks, street crossings, on-street parking, and other components of public rights-of-way. Comments can be submitted or viewed through the [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Further information on this rulemaking is available on the Board's [website](#).

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### **Board to Release Draft Standards for Medical Diagnostic Equipment**

In coming weeks, the Board plans to release for public comment draft standards for accessible medical diagnostic equipment, including examination tables and chairs, weight scales, radiological equipment, and mammography equipment. The draft document will include technical criteria for the various types of equipment covered and solicit input from the public on specific topics. The Board is developing these standards in coordination with the Food and Drug Administration under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010. Those interested in this rulemaking can [sign up](#) to receive further updates.

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### **Board Hosts International Forum on Standards Development**

On November 8, the Board hosted an international forum on standards development that featured representatives from the European Union, Canada, and U.S. The event provided an opportunity for government agencies and standard-setting organizations to share information on the development and implementation of accessibility requirements covering the built environment, transportation systems, and information and communication technology.



Representatives from the European Commission presented information on how accessibility requirements are developed by the European Standards Organizations through Commission mandates. A member of the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario provided an update on the development and implementation of access standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

U.S. representatives conducted briefings on how accessibility design requirements are developed in Federal and private sectors. Presenters included representatives from the Department of Justice, the Department of Transportation, and the Federal Communications Commission, as well as the American National Standards Institute, the International Codes Council, and the National Fire Protection Association.

"It is very helpful to know how other countries and international organizations address accessibility," notes David Capozzi, the Board's Executive Director. "The Board welcomes opportunities for such exchanges as the approaches and lessons learned by others can be especially enlightening."

For further information, contact Capozzi at [capozzi@access-board.gov](mailto:capozzi@access-board.gov).

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### **Access Board Webinars**

The next scheduled webinars in the Board's free monthly series will cover accessible golf courses (January 5) and courthouses and courtrooms (February 2). The webinars, which are scheduled

from 2:30 – 4:00 (ET), are made available in cooperation with the national network of ADA Centers. For more information, including registration instructions, visit [www.accessibilityonline.org](http://www.accessibilityonline.org). Archived copies of previous webinars can be accessed on this site.

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