FDOT Research Final Report Style Guide

Section 508 Compliance

In order to ensure accessibility, all final reports must be compliant with the Section 508 standards. This includes:

- **Document Properties:** PDF Document properties are filled out: a) Title b) Author c) Subject d) Keywords. This information is machine readable metadata that speaks to the authenticity of the document.
- **Searchable Text:** A document that has images of scanned text is not accessible because screen readers cannot read a picture of text. Users need to be able to select the text to be read with a screen reader or magnified.
- **Identified Document Language:** Specifying the document language in a PDF enables some screen readers to switch the current speech synthesizer to the appropriate language, allowing correct pronunciation of content in different languages.
- **Readable fonts:** The fonts in an accessible PDF must contain enough information for Acrobat to correctly extract all of the characters to text. Acrobat extracts characters to Unicode when you read a PDF with a screen reader or the Read Out Loud tool, or when you save as text for a Braille embosser. This extraction fails if Acrobat cannot determine how to map the font to Unicode characters.
- **Navigational aids:** Bookmarks, headings, and a table of contents assist all users in navigating the document.
- **Document Structure Tags and Proper Reading Order:** To read a document's text and present it in a way that makes sense to the user, a screen reader or other text-to-speech tool requires that the document be structured. Document structure tags in a PDF define the reading order and identify headings, paragraphs, sections, tables and other page elements. The tags structure also allows for documents to be resized and reflowed for viewing at larger sizes and on mobile devices.
- **Tagged Headings:** Heading tags match document headings and follow the visual outline. The tags follow the visual/logical order of the document
- **Alternative Text Descriptions for Non-Text Elements:** Images and figures cannot be understood by the user of a screen reader unless there is alternative text associated with that image. Alternative text for images can aid many users, including those with learning disabilities. When screen reads encounter alternate text, they can interpret the element and read its alternate text description aloud.
- **Color Contrast:** Use of color combinations that provides a sufficient degree of contrast and no reliance on color or sensory characteristics alone to convey meaning. Meaning of color or other sensory characteristics is duplicated in text. Text passes the Color Contrast Analyzer.
- **Tagged Lists:** Lists have a parent tag and have one or more nested list item tags.
- **Identified Data Tables:** Tables are identified with a "Table" tag. Table header cells have a "TH" tag and data cells have a "TD" tag.
- **Matching Reading Order:** Tab order and reading order matches the visual/logical order of interactive elements.
- **Link Names:** Link names describe destination/purpose or describe context.

For more information on Section 508 Accessibility standards, please visit the [National Transportation Library LibGuide on Accessibility](#) and the [Section508.gov Guide to Creating Accessible PDFs](#).

Format

Reports shall follow these general formatting guidelines:

- Use standard US paper size (8.5x11) for all reports. Larger page sizes can be used when deemed necessary for a particular table, figure, or appendix.
- Use one-inch margins on all sides.
- Use a consistent type face and font size for body text; 12 point is recommended.
- Use consistent capitalization, hyphens, headings, titles, and bullets.
- Left justify the report. Full justification can create irregular spacing.
- Single-space the body of the report; double space between paragraphs.
- Begin each section of the report, including front matter, chapters, references, and appendices on a new page.
- Do not include blank pages in the report.
- Avoid widows and orphans, i.e., single lines of a paragraph at the bottom or top of a page.
- Define abbreviations and acronyms on their first occurrence in the abstract, executive summary, and main body of the report. A list of abbreviations is helpful when they are numerous, but does not substitute for in-text definition.
- Ensure subject-verb agreement.
- In the text, write out numbers if they are nine or less; use numerals if they are 10 or more or associated with a scientific unit.
- Tables that continue for more than one page must have a continuation title and header row.
- Figures that continue for more than one page must have a caption on all pages on which the figure appears.
- Capitalize only proper nouns. Do not capitalize methods, theories, generic equipment names, etc. Do not capitalize for emphasis. It is not necessary to capitalize a phrase defined with an acronym.

Pagination

All pages except the cover page shall contain a visible page number. The cover page is considered page "i"; however, numbering is suppressed on the cover page. Front matter, i.e., pages prior to the Introduction, should be enumerated with lowercase Roman numerals (i.e., "ii," "iii", etc.). Numbering for the remainder of the report shall use Arabic numerals, beginning with "1" on the first page of Chapter 1, Introduction, and continuing sequentially to the last page of the report. Do not use a separate numbering system for appendices.

Elements of the Report

Draft final reports and final reports shall include and be organized in the following order:

- Cover Page (required)
- Disclaimer Page (required)

- Metric Conversion Chart (optional)
- Technical Report Documentation Page (Form DOT F 1700.7) (required)
- Acknowledgements (optional)
- Preface (optional)
- Executive Summary (required)
- Table of Contents (required)
- List of Figures (required)
- List of Tables (required)
- List of Abbreviations and Acronyms (optional)
- Body of Report (required)
- Introduction/Chapter 1 (required)
- Chapters (required)
- References (required)
- Appendices (optional)

Front Cover Page (Required)

The cover page of the report **must** bear the following information:
- Title of the project exactly as it appears on the FDOT contract
- FDOT contract number in correct format, e.g., BDV00-977-00
- Month and year of publication of the draft final report or final report. The month and year printed on the final report should not precede the date of approval of the draft final report.
- "Draft Final Report" or "Final Report," as appropriate

The cover page may include other optional identifying information such as:
- the name and address of the principal investigator (contractor) and project manager (FDOT)
- an official FDOT logo. Other logos are permitted only for Florida universities.

Disclaimer Page (Required)

The draft final report and final report must include a Disclaimer Page. The Disclaimer Page should be the first page inside the cover of the report and use the following language:

"The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Florida Department of Transportation."

The USDOT disclaimer is required if any University Transportation Center (UTC) funding is used for the project. In such cases, the following USDOT disclaimer must be used:

"The contents of this report reflect the views of the authors, who are responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the information presented herein. This document is disseminated under the sponsorship of the Department of Transportation's University Transportation Centers Program, in the interest of information exchange. The U.S. Government assumes no liability of the contents or use thereof."

In the event FDOT does not concur with the findings and conclusion presented in the Final Report, the following language should be used in place of the above:

"The Florida Department of Transportation does not concur with the findings and conclusions of this research."

Metric Conversion Table (Optional)

The metric conversion page is optional for all projects. However, for those projects employing extensive metric units of measurements, the draft final report and final report must include a metric conversion table and must follow the Disclaimer Page. A metric conversion table is available at http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/aaa/metricp.htm. Please ensure that it includes all the units of measurement used in the report, e.g. kip, psi, etc.

Technical Report Documentation Page (Required)

The draft final report and final report must include the Technical Report Documentation page following the Metric Conversion Table or Disclaimer Page, as appropriate. The Technical Report Documentation Page is available at https://www.fdot.gov/docs/default-source/content-docs/research/program_information/DOT1700-7.doc and must be completed as identified in the example below. The description of the problem, the objectives, the findings, the conclusions, and benefits identified in Section 16 must be written concisely and not cause the form to exceed one page in length.

Technical Report Documentation Page

1. Report No. *FHWA Report #, if applicable*	2. Government Accession No. *Leave blank*	3. Recipient's Catalog No. *Leave blank*
4. Title and Subtitle *The title must be listed exactly as it appears on the FDOT contract. Changes to the title during the course of the project must be approved in advance of final report submission.*		Report Date *Month and year Final Report is produced. Date should not precede date of approval of draft final.*
		Performing Organization Code *Leave blank*
Author(s) *Name(s) of author(s) of the report in the same order as listed on the title page.*		Performing Organization Report No. *Contractor report number, if applicable*
Performing Organization Name and Address *Organization* *Address* *City, State, Zip Code*		Work Unit No. (TRAIS) *Leave blank*
		Contract or Grant No. *FDOT Contract Number*
Sponsoring Agency Name and Address Florida Department of Transportation 605 Suwannee Street, MS 30 Tallahassee, FL 32399		Type of Report and Period Covered *Draft Final or Final Report* *Period covered by report*
		Sponsoring Agency Code *Leave blank*
Supplementary Notes *Provide additional information as appropriate (e.g., names of additional reviewers).*		
Abstract *Provide a brief (250 words or less) factual summary of the most significant information contained in the report. An abstract should state the purpose (a statement of goals), methods (experimental techniques or the means by which results were obtained), results (findings), and conclusions (implications of the findings and how they tie in with studies in related fields) of the research effort.*		
Key Word *This is a listing of terms that identify the major concepts of the research. Identify key words or short phrases, including those that may not appear in the report title or abstract that libraries may use to catalog and index the report.*	Distribution Statement No restrictions.	
Security Classif. (of this report) Unclassified.	Security Classif. (of this page) Unclassified.	No. of Pages *Total number of pages*	Price

Form DOT F 1700.7 (8-72)   Reproduction of completed page authorized

Acknowledgements (Optional)

If the author includes an Acknowledgments section, it must follow the Technical Report Documentation Page. On the Acknowledgments page, the authors recognize the individuals and organizations that funded or significantly contributed to the research project. It should be no longer than one page.

Preface (Optional)

If the author includes a Preface, it should follow the Technical Report Documentation Page or Acknowledgments, as appropriate.

Executive Summary (Required)

The draft final report and final report **must** include an Executive Summary. This element must follow the Acknowledgments or Preface, as appropriate, and immediately precede the Table of Contents. The Executive Summary should provide a concise synopsis of the research issue, the main findings or results, conclusions, the significance of the research, recommendations, and the projected or actual benefits of implementing the research. The Executive Summary should be able to stand alone as a brief summary of the research project.

Table of Contents (Required)

The draft final report and final report **must** include a Table of Contents following the Executive Summary. The Table of Contents should identify all report elements and their page numbers including front matter (beginning with the disclaimer page), list of figures, list of tables, list of abbreviations/acronyms, chapter titles, references, and appendices. The Table of Contents itself should not be listed in the Table of Contents. Titles for each chapter should read exactly as in the report body. Tables of Contents should reflect the hierarchy of chapters and sections.

List of Figures (Required)

A List of Figures should follow the Table of Contents and begin on a new page. The List of Figures should include the titles of the figures exactly as they appear in the report. Figures in the Executive Summary and Appendices must also be numbered and listed.

List of Tables (Required)

A List of Tables should follow the List of Figures and begin on a new page. The List of Tables should include the titles of the tables exactly as they appear in the report. Tables in the Executive Summary and appendices must also be numbered and listed.

Body of Report (Required)

The body of the report should open with an Introduction (Chapter 1), which should provide a detailed description of the problem, identify the objectives for addressing the problem, and introduce the research approach (i.e., tasks). An overall, coherent project goal should be provided that correlates to the identified problem. The remainder of the report will be defined by, and in relation to, the problem, objectives, and approach presented in the Introduction.

Segment the main body of the report into chapters numbered sequentially beginning with Arabic numeral 1. Subheadings should be distinguished by numbered subsets and/or through indentations. Begin each chapter on a new page.

Figures placed within the body of the report should be identified with a number and a descriptive caption placed under the figure, centered. Tables placed within the body of the report should be identified with a number and a descriptive caption placed above the table, centered. Figures and tables should appear proximate to the text describing them. All figures and tables must have a reference in the text. Figures and tables should illustrate or exemplify a point or otherwise provide assistance in presenting the subject material. Figures and tables should use two identifying numbers: the first is the chapter number, and the second is the consecutive order of the figure or table within the chapter, e.g., Figure 1-1, Figure 1-2, Table 1-1, Table 1-2, etc.

References (Required)
Authors must follow the methodology of a standard style manual (e.g., APA, Chicago, IEEE) to document and present in-text citations, endnotes or footnotes, and referenced works. References can be placed in a separate section at the end of the report or at the end of each individual chapter.

Appendices (Optional)
Appendices may be included to provide additional material to complement information presented in the body of the final report (e.g., glossary, details of equipment or procedures). Appendices should follow the References section. Appendices should be identified by letter, A, B, C, etc., and all appendices must have a descriptive title.