



## CMS Section 508 Program Tip #6: Focus Indicator



This Monthly Tip Series falls under the Program Pillar of Policy and Program Administration.

Focus indicators carry a “high impact” consideration and must be prioritized during development and/or remediation. They provide critical guidance on where focus is among interactive elements so that it is clear to any user what element/block of text currently has prominence.

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

Lack of visible focus or a “focus indicator” is an issue for all users, but it significantly impacts keyboard-only users, low vision users and users who may be cognitively (attention/short-term memory limitations, etc.) disadvantaged. Simply, where focus is on a page must be easily discernible by all users. Consider when a user is tabbing through a form, a visual indicator (e.g. \* in a text field, color change for interactive controls or enhanced background color for links) will ensure a user is never lost in a process or has to make a guess as to their location on a page.

### WHAT TO DO

1. Using CSS, determine your default focus for the application, ensuring the chosen color and style has adequate contrast.
2. Ensure focus is never lost or interrupted as users tab through a page. Thus, visible focus must be discernible whether navigating links, buttons, dialogues, widgets or forms.
3. Assign a background color (must meet contrast requirements) to focused links to avoid CSS reset stylesheet elimination of a browser’s native dotted border for links.
4. Ensure that it is visually obvious which field in a form has focus, and that the entire form isn’t seemingly targeted as a whole.
5. Use custom focus indicators for elements when the globally used default is insufficient. I.E. Making an input field standout.

### Disclaimer

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## **MORE INFORMATION**

For more information on focus indication and related techniques, please visit the WCAG 2.0, [Guideline 2.4.7, Focus Visible](#).

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