

Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities Website “Look and Feel” Standards

February 2011 (updated February 2012)

Purpose

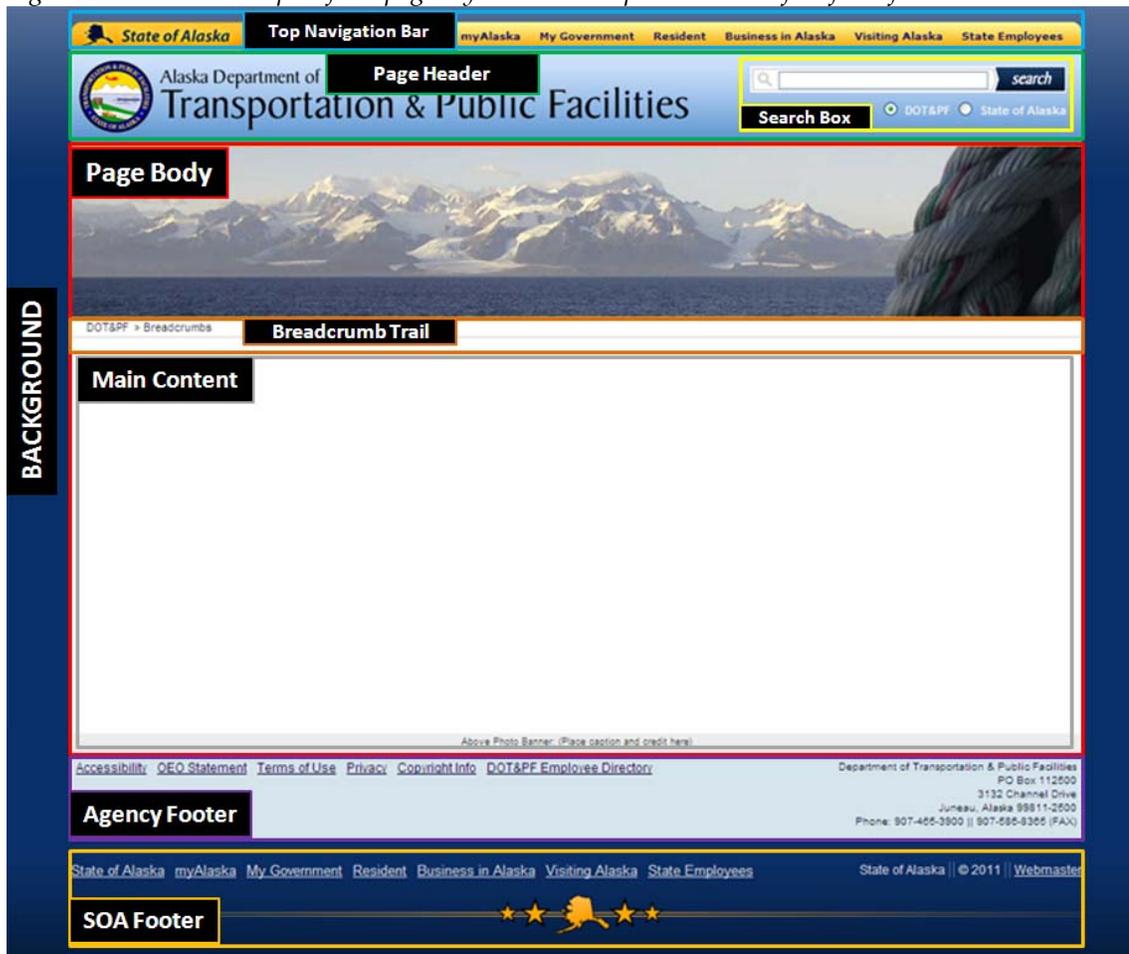
The Governor’s Office has mandated that the State of Alaska’s public-facing Internet website in the executive branch will have a uniform look and feel and must meet standards as specified by the State. These requirements are set forth as the standards for management of the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT/PF) public website. The State of Alaska’s public-facing Internet website is defined as all publicly accessible pages providing official State of Alaska information by departments, their divisions, programs and all sub-pages including subcontracted sites that represent official business; commissions, authorities, institutes, corporations, boards and councils created by the state which have websites that are hosted on state servers, and/or are supported by state funds.

Standard Components

The standard look and feel for State of Alaska websites can be broken down into the following components: state-issued cascading style sheets (CSS), State of Alaska top navigation bar, skip navigation link, page background, statewide navigation bar, agency header, search box, page body, breadcrumb trail, agency footer and State of Alaska footer. Examples of the standard components are located at <http://web.dot.state.ak.us/admsvc/webmaster/>.

Figure 1. Page Layout and Page Components.

Figure 1 shows an example of the page layout with components identified for reference.



Cascading Style Sheets

The state-issued CSS will dictate top statewide navigation bar and statewide footer font styling, search bar location, and background theming.

Skip Navigation Link

The first standard component should be a hidden link to allow screen readers to skip to the main content of the page. This is built into the templates.

Page Background

The page background surrounds the page body (header, footer, and content areas) and contains no text. The page background uses:

- The state-issued background color and graphics.
 - A 15-pixel space between the top of the statewide navigation bar and the top of the browser webpage display window (see Figure 1).
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Page Width

The page width is 960 pixels. Statewide navigation bar, agency header, any horizontal navigation, page body, and footers will all operate within this width.

Statewide Navigation Bar

The statewide navigation bar is the first visible component of state web pages. The navigation bar uses:

- The state-issued navigation bar graphic and color.
- A height of 27 pixels (to meet accessibility standards, the height may increase proportionally to accommodate increased font sizes).
- The state-issued State of Alaska home page link image as the left-most item.
- A state-issued list of links aligned 15 pixels from the right edge and styled to match state-issued CSS.

The DOT&PF website utilizes a centrally controlled server-side include for this piece.

Agency Header

The agency header is located immediately below the statewide navigation bar. It contains the agency name and related logo graphic as well as the site search bar. The agency header uses:

- A width of 960 pixels wide and a height of 90 pixels tall.
- An agency logo or the Seal of the State of Alaska. It will be positioned as follows:
 - A minimum of 15 pixels from the left-hand edge of the header.
 - A minimum of 15 pixels from the agency identifier text on the right-hand side.
 - A minimum of 10 pixels from the top and bottom edge of the header.
- Header text uses: (see Figure 2 and 3).
 - A graphic to display text.
 - Adobe Baker Signet™ font, normal weight.
 - A font size of 18 points for the *Secondary Agency* or *Subtext* line ("Alaska Department of" / "department or division").
 - A font size of 30 points up to 48 points for the *Primary Agency*.

- A 100-pixel spacing from the left-hand edge of the header.
- Vertically-centered text lines.
- A high contrast/brightness value from the header background to allow for readability and accessibility.

Figure 2. Department-Level Example:



Figure 3. Division-Level Example:



Search Box

The search box is located within the right-side of the agency header. It provides both agency and statewide search options. The search box uses:

- The state-issued graphic with the option to change the color of the button and text.
- The following positioning:
 - 15 pixels from header’s right-hand edge.
 - 15 pixels from header’s top edge.
- A text line below the search box that provides options to search the state or agency, It will:
 - Be a single line, aligned to the right edge of the search box.
 - Use radio buttons.
 - Be styled to match state-issued CSS.

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Figure 4. Search Box Example:



Breadcrumb Trail

The breadcrumb trail is located below the agency header and before the main content area. It shows the site hierarchy to help users know where they are. The breadcrumbs are optional on agency home pages. The breadcrumb trail uses:

- Left-aligned/left-justified positioning.
- A “greater than” (>) symbol as a separator between breadcrumb items.
- Breadcrumbs are optional on agency home pages.

Page Body

The page body, located below the agency header, includes global navigation, breadcrumb trail, main content area and any other content areas. Layout and organization of the page body is at the discretion of the agency. The page body uses:

- A background color of white (#FFFFFF).
- Text based headers (H1 – H6) and style sheets rather than graphics to provide for accessibility.
- Headers that provide sufficient contrast for accessibility.

Agency Footer

The optional agency footer, is located below the page body, includes information and links about the agency and website. The following footer links are recommended:

- Copyright,
- Privacy,
- Accessibility,
- Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) statement,
- Terms of use,
- Additional footer links can be determined by each agency.

The DOT&PF website utilizes a centrally controlled server-side include for this piece.

State of Alaska Footer

The State of Alaska footer, located below the agency footer, is the last visible component on the page. The State of Alaska footer uses:

- State-issued background graphic.
- State-issued links to be placed on the left-hand side.
- "State of Alaska copyright [date] [Agency Webmaster Email link]" on right-hand side.
- Text styled to match state-issued CSS.

The DOT&PF website utilizes a centrally controlled server-side include for this piece.

Figure 5. State of Alaska Footer Example:



Accessibility/Usability

ADA Accessibility

All web pages must meet accessibility standards as specified by the State of Alaska. This may include requirements as specified under Titles I, II, and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 and Section 508 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as well as the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Additional information may be obtained from the State of Alaska's ADA Coordinator or most Internet Services Functional Work Group (IS FWG) members.

Mobile Devices

Alternate style sheets to accommodate mobile devices or other user agents may be used.

Bandwidth & File Size

In the interest of bandwidth usage, when posting any document on the public DOT/PF website, it is vital to practice posting files of a responsible size. The DOT/PF website is a shared resource and we must practice conservative bandwidth.

We are responsible for providing accessible content to everyone. We must consider not only the “target audience,” but all users. Because we are a government agency, we must consider everyone from legislators with very fast connections to residents in the bush relying on much slower connections (accessibility studies show some slower connections may experience a time-out when accessing files **8M** or larger!).

Media files (such as audio & video) should be offered in the most common format and be kept to a lower resolution; file size may not exceed 8M unless an additional, smaller version is also offered. If you must post high resolution photos, also offer them in smaller, lower resolution versions.

PDFs and other documents may need to be broken up into chapters. Individual document file sizes should not exceed 5M (unless offered in an alternate format). Be prepared to offer mailed CDs if smaller downloads are not available. (Use a simple statement such as “Need a hard copy of a publication? Contact Joe at joe.doe@alaska.gov”)

Document Accessibility

It is strongly recommended that editable documents such as Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents not be posted for obvious security reasons. Whenever possible, these documents should be converted to PDF or a web page. There are occasional needs to make these document types available, so when posting these document types, always save them so they are accessible by 2 previous versions of their original program. Also, in order to alert the user to the type of document that will be viewed, the proper document image and file size (if over 200K) shall be listed next to the linked title. Example:

[2011 Expenditure Report](#)  3M

With the prevalence of PDF documents offered on websites, users should be well informed of their presence and the importance of having Adobe Reader on their systems in order to access them. A standard statement with the applied font styles and appropriate graphics, has been created and should be inserted on your website. The preferable location of this statement is below the site’s main navigation on the right side of the page. See the website resources page for more information.

Cross-Browser Compatibility

All public-facing State of Alaska Internet web pages must be usable and functional in commonly used browsers.

Best practices would dictate that you not design web pages or applications to function only in one browser or client agent, but strive for universal compatibility or equal functionality as much as possible.

Exemptions

Exemptions are located on the State of Alaska Wiki site: <https://wiki.state.ak.us/x/oAABAg>.

Look and Feel as applied to Web Applications:

Externally visible web content, including applications, that is not authenticated will be fully compliant with the SOA Look and Feel standards for web pages.

Some externally visible web content, including applications, that is authenticated may use a light version of the SOA Look and Feel standards for web pages. The content that falls underneath the “light” SOA Look and Feel is that content that is part of a multi-page process. Some examples are filling out all of the pages for a permit application, PFD application form, and other similar multi-step processes. Many authenticated pages must retain the full SOA Look and Feel; these pages include, but are not limited to the landing page and applications consisting of one to two page processes.

The light SOA Look and Feel standard will start with the standard SOA Look and Feel and do exactly the following:

- Remove the navigation links in the statewide navigation bar and statewide footer. The State of Alaska graphic and link must remain in the statewide navigation bar, but the text and links to myAlaska, My Government, Resident, Business in Alaska, Visiting Alaska and State Employees will be removed. In the statewide footer, it is recommended that an email/contact link be retained.
- Departmental elements are at the discretion of the department IT standards.
- For the colored “department header banner.”
 - Shrink to exactly 45px in height.
 - Replace the search bar/radio buttons components with authenticated user information and a logout button. For example in the PFD online application it might say “Welcome Joe Smith, if this is not you please [logout].”

Non-authenticated content will continue to use the IS-FWG Look and Feel waiver process. Authenticated content & associated non-authenticated content will have a waiver process that is similar to the IS-FWG look and feel waiver process, but will be managed by a group made up of the IS-FWG Chairperson, ENT-FWG Chairperson, and an ETS Representative. The IS-FWG and ENT-FWG Chairperson’s may involve their FWG if they deem a need. Any appeals would conform to the SOA IT Governance procedures for appeals.

Web Application Defined:

A “Web application” for the purposes of this document has been defined by the IS FWG and eGovt FWG as:

...a software application that is accessible using a web browser or HTTP user agent and is characterized by three properties:

- a. it establishes a unique session and relationship with each and every visitor in order to keep track of the last-known or current status of an application or a process (stateful).
- b. it allows users to create, manipulate, and permanently store data.
- c. Navigation within a web application is to be controlled.

For an application to be considered a web application, it must include a server-side response dependent on user input. The application may be spread over multiple presentations.

Graphics Usage

Use graphics when it visually contributes to the content meaning. Remember that too many graphics may slow the viewing of the page and could tax the patience of the user. Avoid using the height and width tags to resize graphics as distortion will most likely occur. Instead resize and save it in a graphics program in a size and format appropriate for website use. See the DOT&PF Website resources page for a current list of common images.

Recommended Image Size

The recommended maximum file size for a standard web image should be 75K or less. Optimize your images as much as possible. For large images, you can use a thumbnail size image (usually around 80x80 pixels) which links to a larger image.

Common Images

See the DOT&PF website resources site for icons to use when extra graphic emphasis is needed to accentuate information on your site. Don't forget to include descriptive Alt tags (for ADA Compliance).

Linking Outside of DOT/PF's website

In order to avoid the appearance of favoritism to a commercial organization, restrict your links outside of DOT/PF to other government entities, State or DOT/PF approved contractors and sole-source permittees, publicly funded or non-profit organizations.

When linking to an outside entity set the non-State site to open in a new browser window by altering the target="_blank" to the href (link) statement. Also, next to the text link add the image (see DOT&PF website resources page for standard image) which indicates a user is exiting the DOT&PF website.

File Name Conventions

The following naming conventions apply to all documents displayed on the website; web pages, .pdf documents, word documents, excel documents, etc.

- Whenever possible, use all lower case for file names and URLs to help eliminate errors, confusion and frustration on the part of our website users. Some servers (including the DOT/PF Unix web server) are case sensitive
- Save your web pages with the .shtml extension. The SSI technology does not respond consistently to files with the .html or .htm extensions.
- Filenames should accurately represent the content of the page
- Do not use special characters in filenames; #, &, e.g., &, \$, *, %, etc. (example: land&water.htm). You may use dashes (-) and underscores (_), although try to limit the use of dashes in application file names. Even though most web servers will handle them, they are difficult to read in a URL address and may conflict with some web applications
- Do not use spaces between words (example: [landsales.htm](#) **not** [land sales.htm](#)) as their associated URLs display badly, if at all, in browsers
- Use the name "index" (index.cfm, index.shtml, etc.) in a directory to name your home page. That way the web address will end with the directory name. For example: [www.dot.alaska.gov/pic](#) (nice and short) versus [www.dot.alaska.gov/pic/homepage.shtml](#) (too long).

Language Use

Here are some tips to keep in mind when writing for the web:

- Use the clearest and simplest language appropriate for content
- Even though our department's main target audience is made up of Alaska residents and businesses, keep in mind that the World Wide Web is international. Try to keep the use of idioms to a minimum for readers who use English as a second language
- When using an acronym, spell it out the first time and follow with the acronym in parenthesis
- General content should be kept to a 12th grade reading level whenever possible

Respect Copyrights

If you are using photographs, graphic elements or any other type of original work, the best way to start is simply to ask the owner for permission. Always be sure to credit properly. For more information on copyrights, visit the U.S. Copyright Office at www.copyright.gov.

Contractors

Websites developed and maintained by contractors off the DOT&PF server must utilize templates without the four common server-side includes (SOA Top Nav bar, Search, both footers). A contractor package with templates will be made available. Contractors must be aware that they will be responsible for making timely updates to the Top Nav Bar, Search component and footers when requested by the DOT&PF or SOA webmasters.

dot.alaska.gov/contactor_dotpf_website_package.zip

Contact Information

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DOT&PF Website Development Resources:

<http://web.dot.state.ak.us/admsvc/webmaster/>