

# Website Accessibility for Christmas Tree Farms

**Making sure every customer  
— no matter their ability —  
can find and visit your farm  
online.**

**For help assessing your website and  
getting it fixed...**

**<https://navigate tomorrow.com/ada>**



# What Is Website Accessibility?

Accessibility means **making your website easy to use for everyone** — including people with disabilities.

Think of it like a ramp at your farm stand. You wouldn't block someone in a wheelchair from coming in. Your website should work the same way.

**The current standard is WCAG 2.1 AA Title III**



ADA.gov



## Guidance on Web Accessibility and the ADA

Guidance on how state and local governments and businesses open to the public can make sure their websites are in line with the ADA's requirements.



If your site is hard to use, it may violate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) — even if you didn't intend it.

## The Gold Standard: Understanding WCAG 2.1 AA

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are the internationally recognized standards referenced by courts and the DOJ. To meet compliance, your software must follow the four POUR principles.

### P — Perceivable

Users must be able to perceive the information presented. This means providing text alternatives (alt text) for images and synchronized captions for video content.

### O — Operable

The interface cannot require interactions a user cannot perform. Your entire platform must be navigable without a mouse (keyboard-only accessibility).

### U — Understandable

Information and operation must be clear. This requires consistent navigation patterns across pages and clear, text-based error identification in forms.

### R — Robust

Content must be robust enough to be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, ensuring compatibility with modern assistive technologies like screen readers.

# Why Accessibility Matters



## Your Digital Front Door

Your website is how customers find you. If it doesn't work for everyone, you're turning people away before they arrive.



## The Right Thing to Do

Everyone deserves equal access — online and in person. Accessibility is good business *and* good values.



## Real Legal Risk

Farms are settling lawsuits for **\$3,000 to \$15,000+** — for website issues they didn't even know existed.

Lawsuits rose by 35% in 2025

# Who Benefits from an Accessible Website?



## Blind or Low Vision

They use software that reads the screen aloud — but it only works if your site is built correctly.



## Deaf or Hard of Hearing

They rely on captions and written text instead of audio or spoken words in videos.



## Limited Mobility

Some people can't use a mouse — they navigate entirely with a keyboard or other device.



## Learning or Cognitive Disabilities

Clear language, simple layouts, and good contrast help them understand and use your site.

# Common Problems on Websites

## Low Contrast Text

People with limited vision or color blindness cannot read text if there is not enough contrast between the text and background (for example, light gray text on a light-colored background).

## Images Without Descriptions

People who are blind will not be able to understand the content and purpose of images, such as pictures, illustrations, and charts, when no text alternative is provided.

## Videos Without Captions

Deaf visitors can't access your content if there are no subtitles.

## Forms or PDF's That Break

Checkout and contact forms often fail for keyboard-only users.

## Mouse-only Navigation

People with disabilities who cannot use a mouse or trackpad will not be able to access web content if they cannot navigate a website using a keyboard.

## Improper Heading Structure

Headings are used for styling, not structure (e.g., jumping from H1 to H4). Screen reader users cannot understand page hierarchy.





# Lawsuits Are Happening Right Now

## \$5K

### Minimum Settlement

The low end of what farms are paying to resolve accessibility complaints.

## \$15K+

### Common Settlement

Many farms pay far more once legal fees and compliance costs are added in. This can be as high as \$85,000 for larger sites.

## \$1,000 - \$5,000

### Estimated Fix Cost

Many accessibility improvements cost a fraction of what a lawsuit does.

Lawsuits that primarily impacted small e-commerce retailers rose by **35% in 2025**.

- ☐ **Prevention is always cheaper than a settlement. Most farms targeted had no idea their website was non-compliant.**





ACTION PLAN

# What You Can Do Today

Seven simple steps to protect your farm, welcome more customers, and sleep better at night.

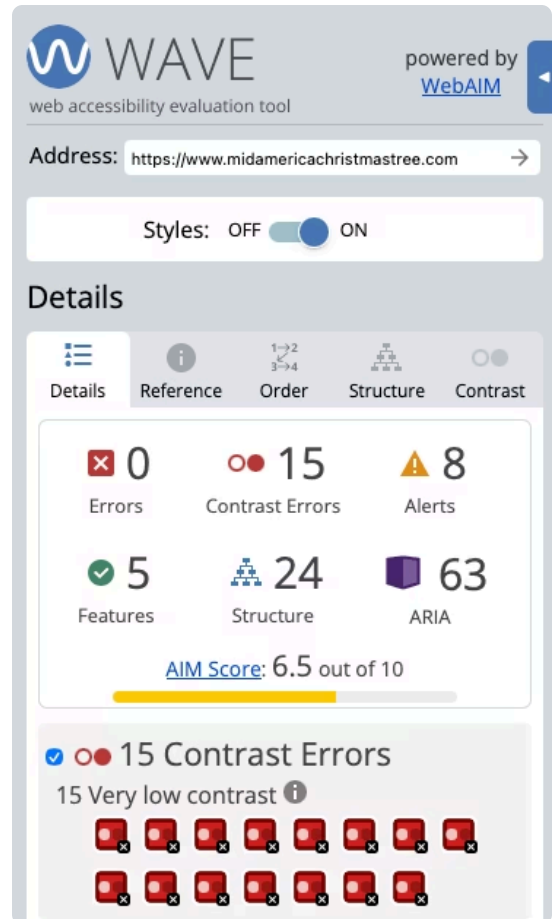
# Step 1: Test Your Website

## WAVE Tool

Free online scanner at [wave.webaim.org](https://wave.webaim.org) — paste your website address and get an instant report. There's also a Chrome/Brave plugin.

## Real User Testing

Ask a friend or family member with a disability to try your site. Their feedback is gold.



The screenshot shows the WAVE web accessibility evaluation tool interface. At the top, it says "WAVE web accessibility evaluation tool" and "powered by WebAIM". The address bar shows "https://www.midamericachristmastree.com". Below the address bar, there is a toggle switch for "Styles" set to "ON". The "Details" section shows the following results:

| Category        | Count |
|-----------------|-------|
| Errors          | 0     |
| Contrast Errors | 15    |
| Alerts          | 8     |
| Features        | 5     |
| Structure       | 24    |
| ARIA            | 63    |

The "AIM Score" is 6.5 out of 10, represented by a yellow progress bar. Below this, there is a section for "15 Contrast Errors" with a sub-header "15 Very low contrast" and an information icon. This section displays 15 red square icons, each with a white 'x', representing the specific contrast errors found.

## Step 2: Use Clear, Simple Language

Write like you're talking to a customer at the farm stand — friendly, direct, and easy to understand.

- Use short sentences and plain words
- Avoid technical terms or farm industry jargon
- Break up long blocks of text with bullet points

❏ If your 12-year-old can read it easily, you're in good shape. **Use AI to re-word and re-format your text.**

### Good Example

"We sell fresh-cut trees every weekend from November 28 through December 22, 9am–5pm."

### Hard to Read Example

"Coniferous holiday greenery procured on-site via self-select methodology available during seasonal operating hours."

## Step 3: Make Text Easy to Read



### Use Big Fonts

Keep body text at least 16px. Tiny text is hard to read, especially on phones.



### Dark Text on Light Backgrounds

Black or dark gray text on white is the gold standard. Avoid light-on-light combos.



### Don't Use Color Alone

Don't say "click the green button" — not everyone sees color the same way.



### Don't Skip Heading Structure

One H1 per page, then H2-H6 as needed





## Step 4: Add Descriptions to Images

Every photo on your website needs a short text description called **alt text**. Screen reader software reads this description aloud for visitors who can't see the image.

Your web developer can add alt text to every image in minutes.

### ✗ No description

A blind visitor hears nothing — or just "image."

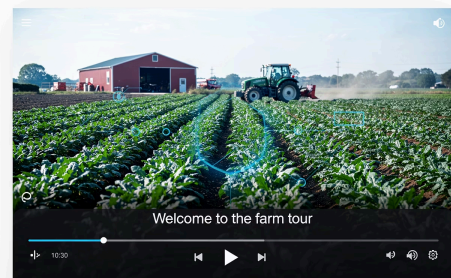
### ✓ Good description

"Family selecting a 7-foot Fraser fir on our snowy lot."

## Step 5: Caption Your Videos

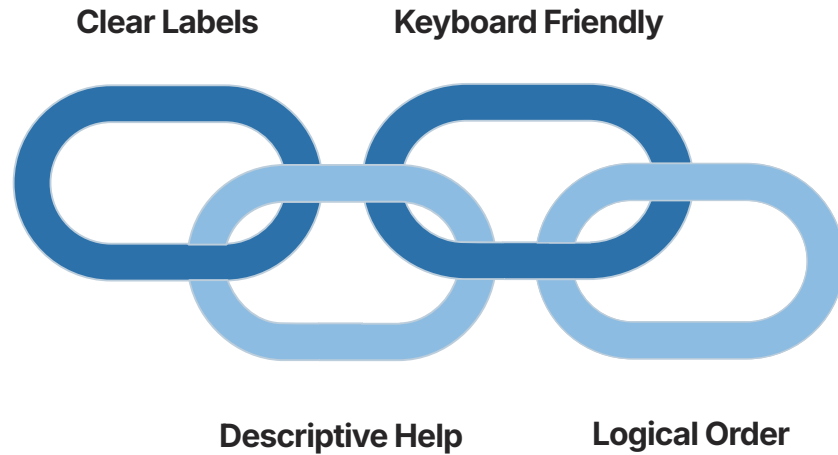
If your website has videos — farm tours, how-to guides, holiday messages — they need **captions** (subtitles showing every spoken word).

- Helps deaf and hard-of-hearing visitors
- Also helps people watching in noisy environments
- YouTube and Facebook can generate captions automatically — just review them for accuracy

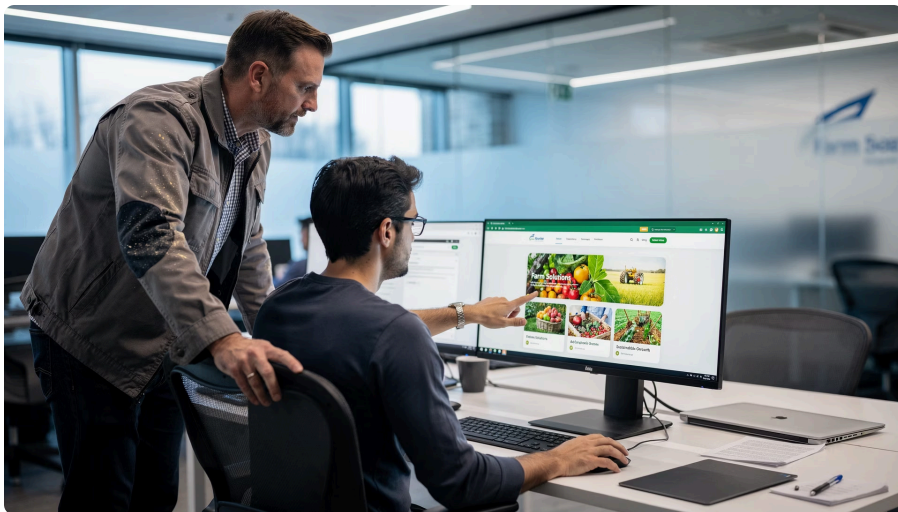




# Step 6: Make Forms Easy to Use



**Forms are often the most broken part of a farm website. If a customer can't complete a contact or order form, they can't do business with you — and that's a legal risk.**



## Step 7: Work With A Web Developer

You don't need to fix this yourself — that's what your web person is for. But you need to ask the right questions.

→ **Share Your Goals**  
Tell them you want your site to be accessible and legally compliant.

→ **Ask About WCAG 2.2**  
This is the official accessibility standard.  
Ask if your site meets it.

→ **Review All Changes**  
Any time the site is updated, accessibility should be part of the checklist.

## Helpful Resources



### [ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov)

Official legal information about the Americans with Disabilities Act and your obligations as a business owner.



### [W3.org/WAI](https://www.w3.org/WAI)

The official source for WCAG accessibility guidelines — the rulebook your web developer should follow.



### [EssentialAccessibility.com](https://essentialaccessibility.com)

Plain-English tips and tools designed for small business owners who aren't tech experts.

# Online PDFs Are One of the Biggest Accessibility Liabilities on a Website

PDFs are often treated like separate documents, but they are still part of your website experience. If essential PDFs are inaccessible, your site can still fail ADA and WCAG expectations.

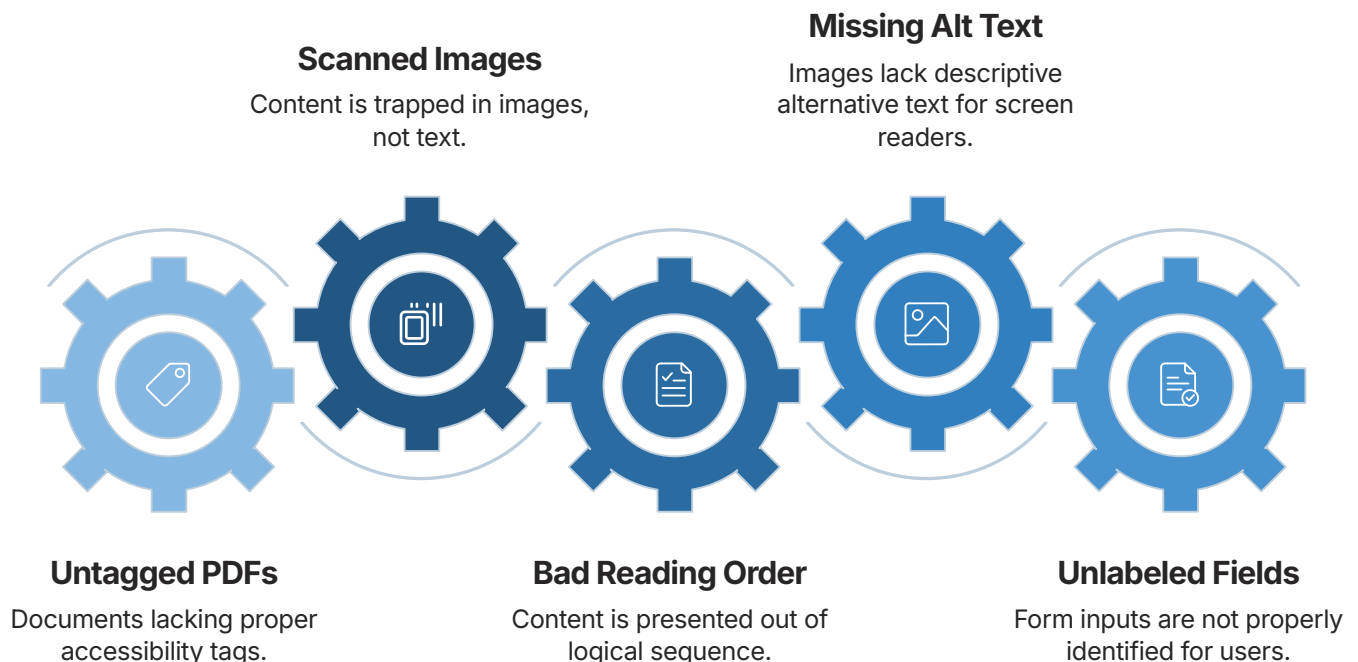
**The core problem:** PDFs frequently look fine visually while failing completely for screen readers, keyboard users, and people who rely on reflowed or highly readable content.

Many PDFs are exported from Word, InDesign, Canva, or scanned paper files without proper tags, reading order, headings, alt text, table markup, form labels, or document language.

That makes PDFs one of the most common hidden accessibility failures on otherwise modern websites, especially for governments, schools, healthcare providers, nonprofits, and organizations with years of legacy documents.

## Key Pitfalls That Cause Most PDF Accessibility Failures

These are the issues that most often turn ordinary PDFs into compliance risks.



# What Happens If You Don't Act?



## Financial Loss

Settlements, legal fees, and required fixes can easily run \$10,000–\$20,000+.



## Bad Publicity

Lawsuits are public record. A story about your farm being sued for discrimination hurts your reputation.



## Lost Customers

If people with disabilities can't use your site, they simply go to a competitor who welcomes them.

Christmas Tree Farm



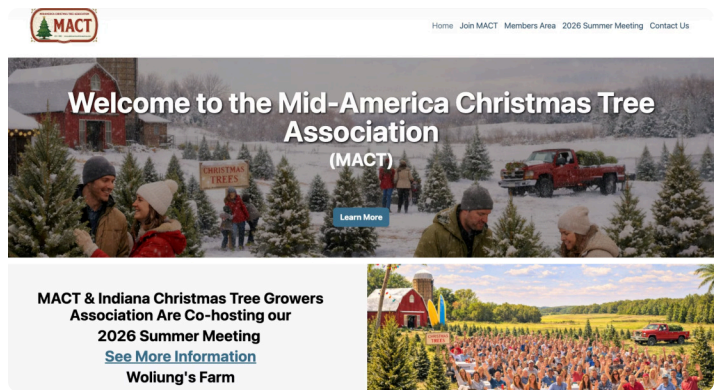


# An Example of Improvement

We updated

<https://www.midamericachristmastree.com>

The score went from a 6.4 → 9.6 / 10



## Questions & Next Steps

01

### Talk to A Web Developer Who Understands ADA

Share this presentation. Ask them to run a WAVE scan and fix the top issues this month.

02

### Run a Free Test Today

Visit [wave.webaim.org](https://wave.webaim.org), enter your farm's website address, and see where you stand.

03

### Come Back Next Season Ready

With a few small updates, you'll head into the holiday rush with a site that's safe, welcoming, and legally sound.



Questions? Take the handout home — it lists every resource and the 7 steps covered today.

# About Your Presenter



## Rod Martin

Rod holds two masters degrees and has been training people how to do “things” for over 30 years.

Originally from Australia, he grew up in Canada and now resides just outside Cincinnati, Ohio.

Rod began teaching Drupal (an open source web platform) in 2011 and has travelled hundreds of thousands of miles speaking and training all over the world. Through his live, online, and video training, he’s taught web design to over 50,000 people.

(<https://drupalhelps.com>)

Rod's company has built hundreds of websites for small businesses, cities and non-profits

(<https://navigatetomorrow.com>)

Rod plays ice hockey a couple of times a week and rides his Goldwing motorcycle pretty much everywhere he can. (<https://imrodmartin.com>)