



Alaska Department of Natural Resources  
550 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. Suite 1260  
Anchorage, AK 99501

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# Web Page Requirements

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For DNR web developers

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## Introduction

It is essential that the information published on the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) web servers be presented professionally and that it reflects positively on DNR and the State of Alaska. All units which provide official DNR content, including contractors developing web pages for DNR, are subject to these requirements and guidelines.

### Department Order 20

On November 6, 1996, DNR Commissioner John Shively established Department Order 20 titled "Policy for DNR World Wide Web Pages". This policy was revised by Marty Rutherford on September 24, 2001. It outlines the roles and responsibilities with the department for web page development and delivery and can be viewed on the internal DNR web site at <http://int.dnr.alaska.gov/commis/dos/do020.htm>.

### DNR Webmasters

This department order states that each division is responsible for the creation, monitoring and maintenance of their own web pages and that the Division is responsible for providing the resources needed to fulfill that responsibility. Additional people within each division can be identified as webmasters for different sections of the division's web pages and work in coordination with the division webmaster. Each division is responsible for providing backup to the division webmaster in case of illness, vacation, etc.

### DNR Webmasters Committee and Roles

The Department Order also established the DNR webmasters group, outlined the Public Information Center (PIC) role with the web site, recognized the DNR web publishing guidelines and identified the Land Records Information Section (now Information Resource Management) as responsible for the primary DNR web servers.

The DNR Webmasters Committee establishes requirements and guidelines for DNR's web presence based upon the state standards. The committee consists of the primary webmasters from each division and major offices.

### DNR Web Site Goal

The goal of the Alaska DNR web site is to inform, educate and provide access to DNR information and services in an easy-to-use manner.

## Web Page Requirements

### State of Alaska Look and Feel Standards

The first statewide standards for State of Alaska web pages' "look and feel" was mandated April 9, 2003 with Administrative Order No. 208 (<http://gov.state.ak.us/admin-orders/208.html>). The Telecommunications Information Council (TIC) referred to in the order later became the Technology Management Council (TMC). The TMC tasked the

Internet Functional Workgroup (Internet FWG) with creating a written web page standard to match the design that the Governor's contractor had developed.

In 2010 the Governor's Office updated the statewide "look and feel" for State of Alaska public web pages. The State of Alaska standards apply to all publicly accessible pages providing official state 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.

**1** State of Alaska myAlaska My Government Resident **2** Business in Alaska Visiting Alaska State Employees

**3** Alaska Department of Administration **4** search [Department] State of Alaska

### Department Level Template Essentials

1. Updated background
2. Universal SOA gold bar background and links
3. Department header banners using either Department seal or state provided seal
4. Search bar
5. Page width, 960 pixels.
6. Footer background and links

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### Not Specified

- Menu navigation layout or functionality
- Content area background
- Page content fonts, layout or column count
- Image usage such as banner photo or bordering

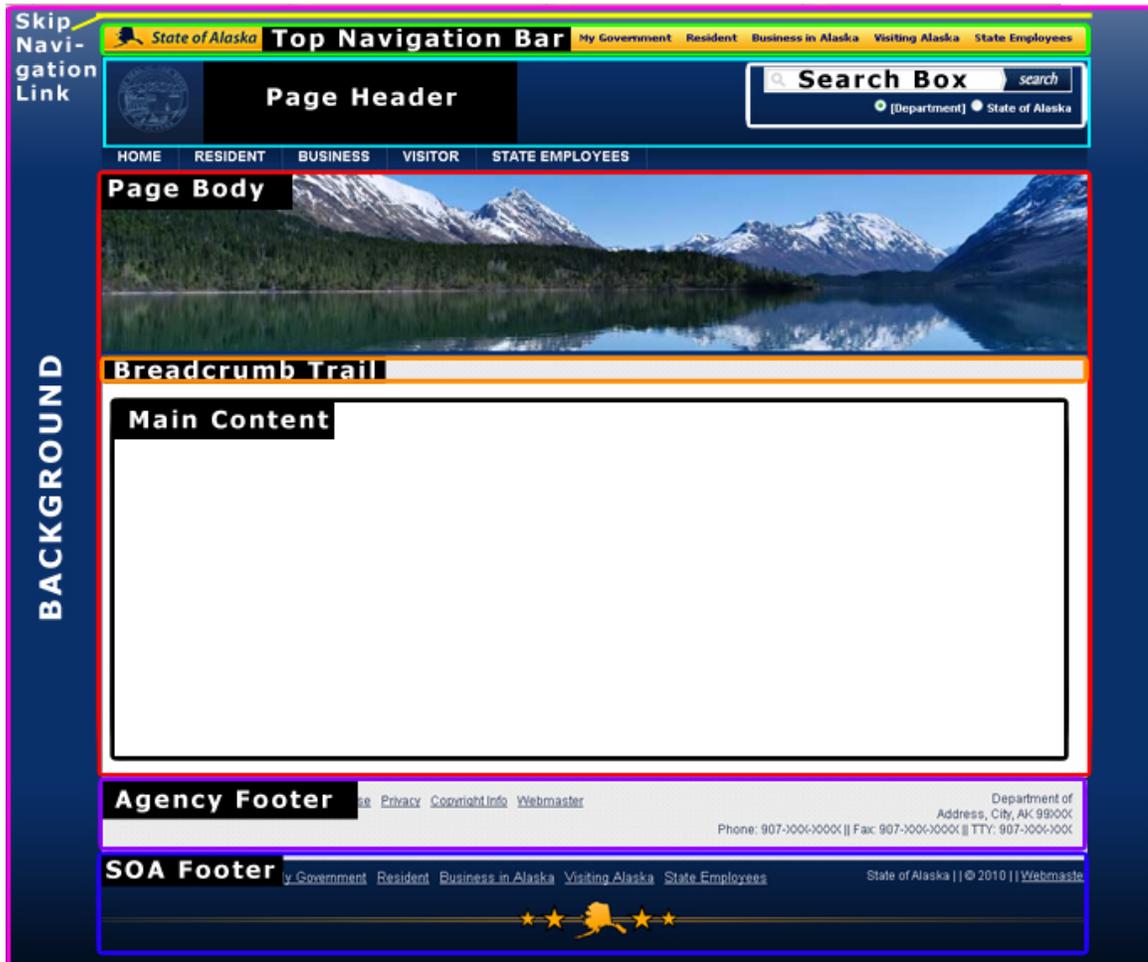
State of Alaska myAlaska My Government Resident Business in Alaska Visiting Alaska State Employees State of Alaska © 2010 Webmaster **6**

The State of Alaska standard can be found at <http://www.alaska.gov/LoakAndFeel>. The state standard requires the use of a standard background, a CSS file for standard state items, a State of Alaska (SOA) gold navigation bar, a department header banner with a search bar, a standard page width of 960 pixels, a body background standard and a SOA footer background and links.

## DNR Web Page Requirements

The State of Alaska standards provide a framework for DNR web pages. This document details DNR's requirements for consistency across all department web pages.

These standards also apply to web applications with some exceptions. Please refer to the State of Alaska Look and Feel standards for specifics.



DNR's standards encompass the page header, meta tags, page body including the breadcrumb trail and main content and the agency footer area. Additionally DNR's standards address web page best practices, links to commercial sites, file naming standards, browser compatibility and moving and/or removing web pages.

## Accessibility

*"The power of the Web is in its universality. Access by everyone regardless of disability is an essential aspect."*

-- Tim Berners-Lee, W3C Director and inventor of the World Wide Web

To ensure to the maximum extent feasible, all department web pages must be accessible to and usable by people with disabilities. Where reasonable, all web pages should be in accordance with established by the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Access Initiative Guidelines (WAIG) 2.0 (<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>). The Level AA and AAA requirements should be satisfied whenever feasible for maximum accessibility. All web pages will provide alternate contact information so the material can be requested in an alternative accessible format if needed.

Further, it is encouraged that state web pages comply with Section 508 guidelines from the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) of the U.S. Federal Government (<http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?fuseAction=stdsdoc>). Those utilizing federal funding to develop web sites are required to comply with Section 508.

## Meta Tags

Be sure to include a page title with the <title> tags so that search engines can display the appropriate information about the web page. For search engine use, make sure the <title> tag is immediately after the <head> tag. Keep titles short but descriptive. Using 90 – 150 characters or less including any punctuation is recommended. Remember that if the page is bookmarked, this is what the person will see for the bookmark.

Use meta tags for description and keywords. This allows search engines to find information on your pages more effectively. Do not use the same keywords and description across the site. Use of other meta tags is optional. Examples of the two required meta tags are:

```
<META NAME="DESCRIPTION" CONTENT="Enter a two or three line description of your Web site">
```

```
<META NAME="KEYWORDS" CONTENT="Enter keywords prospects would use to search for your site; separate each keyword by a space. Keywords may be a single word or two-word phrases.">
```

Here are a few tips on selecting keywords:

- When choosing your keywords, try to think of what people who could benefit from your page might type into the search engine.
- Do not use common words like "and", "of", and "the".
- If you use keywords that have nothing to do with your page or if you use the same keyword over and over many of the search engines will penalize you for this. Don't use a keyword more than 3 times.
- Most search engines will index 1000 characters for keywords.
- Spaces rather than commas seem to work best.
- Use plural over singular.

If you have problems thinking of the keywords, you might try a couple free online tools to help generate keywords like <http://www.webmaster-toolkit.com/meta-tag-generator.shtml> or to count the usage of words in a page visit <http://www.webmaster-toolkit.com/keyword-analysis-tool.shtml>.

For the description, use an informative description around 250 characters or less. Include keyword phrases if possible. Do not use too many stop words (a, on, the, etc) as the search engines do not index them.

In addition to the two required meta tags, it is recommended to use the date and author meta tags to help identify when the file was created and who created the file. Use the date format of YYYYMMDD when specifying the date. The general format for these two meta tags are:

```
<META NAME = "DATE" CONTENT = "YYYYMMDD">  
<META NAME = "AUTHOR" CONTENT = "Your name">
```

## Page Header

The state standard states that the page header will:

- The header size will be 960px x 90px.
- **Agency or state-issued logo** shall be used for the header.
  - Left-side position: minimum of 15px from header left-hand edge.
  - Right-side position: minimum of 15px from start of Agency identifier.
  - Top position: minimum of 10px from top edge.
  - Bottom position: minimum of 10px from bottom edge.
- Header text shall be in the State-specified font and style.
  - Parent Agency ("Alaska Department of" / "Department or division") shall be 18pt.
  - Child Agency main text size shall be 30pt, up to 48pt font size.
  - Left-side position: 100px from header left hand edge.
- The text within the banner with the department logo or graphic shall have high contrast/brightness to allow for readability/accessibility. The state standard font for the header is Baker Signet. DNR Computer and Technology Services has managed site licenses for this font.

Transparent png files work best for the department or official logos with the header text. Use the state issued background for the header.

### Division/Major Office Home Page Header Requirements

For consistency and branding purposes Division/Major Office home pages have additional header requirements for photo, logo and text displays.

#### Photo Requirement

For the DNR home page and for division home pages a photo will be used directly below the state required page header and before the breadcrumb trail or page body.

#### Logo Requirement

Either the standard DNR web logo or official state issued logo will be included within the page header at the location specified in the state standard.

#### Header Text Requirements

The header will include the name of the Division or Major Office.

The text "Division of", "Division", "Office of", "Office", etc. may be left off the name in a header as long as the formal Division or Office name is visible elsewhere on the screen when the page is first displayed.

If you need assistance with creating the header graphic, please contact the DNR webmaster.

## Page Header Navigational Menu

The current design allows for incorporating a page header navigational menu directly below the page header and before the page body. Use of a menu is at this location optional. Any menu used should be accessible.

The design of this optional menu will be consistent for all DNR web pages. Coding information for this menu can be found at the DNR Webmasters' Center at <http://int.dnr.alaska.gov/webmasters>.

## Breadcrumbs

Breadcrumb trails are a navigational tool to show the current page relative to its parents. A breadcrumb trail may look like:

Natural Resources > Land Offerings

Breadcrumbs are required below the page header and before main body content. They should be left justified. For Agency/Organizational Unit home pages breadcrumbs are optional.

While good in theory, they are not dynamically generated on our pages. To hand code one path on a page and the user arrive using a different path will create confusion for the user. To prevent this confusion we only require the Natural Resources breadcrumb trail link right under the page header and optional navigational menu.

You can include your division and subunit links in the breadcrumb trail if you so choose. It is recommended to use no more than 5 items in the trail. The trail should be left justified in with the "greater than" symbol (>) used as a separator between items.

The background for this area should be either the state suggested background graphic, the background color #EEE, or a high contrast background. Whichever background is selected should match the background for the department footer.

## AddThis icons

DNR uses the AddThis.com's set of icons/links on our public, non-application pages to allow emailing the page link, a print button and other sharing options. The preferred location for these icons is on the right-hand side of the breadcrumb trail. The alternative

location is the bottom of the page, just before the start of the department and state footers. Divisions should set a standard location for the icons on their pages.

At a minimum use the print and email icons with a “Share” link for access to the other AddThis options. The recommended set of icons are printer, email, pdf, Facebook, Twitter and the Share link. An example the recommended set of icons and links looks like:



## Page Body

The state required width for the page body is 960 pixels with a main content background of white (#FFFFFF). Additionally the state standard states that the H1 through H6 headers will be in text rather than graphics and that there will be sufficient contrast between the header and its background for accessibility purposes.

For consistency and ease of reading, DNR requires the use of a san-serif font for the primary body text.

### DNR H1 Tag

A DNR standard H1 tag is to be used for all web pages. The H1 heading should be the top-level heading on the page and used only once. Coding information for the DNR H1 tag can be found on the DNR Webmasters' Center at <http://int.dnr.alaska.gov/webmasters>.

## Department Footer

The area directly below the page body content is reserved for departmental footer information. The background for this area should match the background for the breadcrumb trail.

On the left-side of the footer the following links are required for all DNR web pages:

- Privacy (linked to /shared/notice/privacy.htm)
- Copyright (linked to /shared/notice/copyright.htm)
- System Status (linked to /shared/status/systemstatus.cfm)
- Webmaster (linked to a form that captures the IP address of the sender)

On the right-hand side of the footer will contain the following on separate lines:

- the Department name, a separator, copyright symbol and the current year;
- the Department mailing address;
- and the Department Phone number, Fax and TTY numbers divided by the separator symbol.

## State of Alaska Footer

The State of Alaska footer comes after the department footer and requires the state-issued graphics for the background. The state standard requires use of the state-issued links on the left hand side and on the right hand side it requires the text

State of Alaska, a separator, the copyright symbol, a separator and a link to the page's webmaster.

## Links to Commercial Sites

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

When linking to an outside entity, it is recommended to:

- Have an intermediary web page stating that the user is leaving the State of Alaska web site and going to a commercial site. Consider including two buttons on this page - one to continue, another to return to the State of Alaska or DNR web page.
- Have the commercial site open in a second web browser window by adding target="\_blank" to the href (link) statement. Also consider adding statement by those links that "All external sites will open in a new browser. DNR does not endorse external sites." The second browser window accomplishes two things:
  - It reiterates and supports the concept that this web site is separate from the State of Alaska web site.
  - It keeps the State of Alaska web site open on the user's computer. There are some sites that have hidden web page coding that prevents the user from using the back button on their browser to leave the current web site and return to the previous web site.
- Note: It is recognized that some users dislike the automatic opening of additional web browser windows. In this case, the advantages to the State outweigh this concern.

## Browser Compatibility

It is required that all public-facing State of Alaska Internet web pages will 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.

## Moving/Removing Pages

If you must delete or move a document then leave in its place a document indicating that the original has been moved or deleted and ask anyone pointing to the document to change their links. If it has moved, include a link indicating the new location of the document. This "We've moved" page needs to be in place for a minimum of 6 months. An example of the meta tag to auto advance to another page is:

```
<META HTTP-EQUIV="refresh" CONTENT="5;  
URL=http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/path_for_new_webpage/new.html">
```

If you move a web page, be sure to let the Public Information Center web master (dnr.pic@alaska.gov) know which links are changing and their new addresses. This is critical so that the site index, frequently asked questions and many other topic links continue to function.

## File Naming Standards

File naming standards are in place due to deal with server and software limitations as well as making things easier for the end user typing in a web address. For DNR servers use the following standards for naming files:

- Use all lower case for file names and URLs to help to eliminate errors, confusion and frustrations on the part of people using our web site.
- It is recommended to use the .htm file extension for HTML files (as opposed to .html).
- Filenames should accurately represent the content of the page.
- Do not use special characters in filenames; e.g., &, \$, \*, %, etc. (example: land&water.htm).
- Do not use spaces between words (example: use landsales.htm, not land sales.htm).
- Even though most web servers handle underscores ( \_ ) you should refrain from using them because they are difficult to read in a URL address.
- Use index.cfm, index.html, index.htm in a directory as your home page. That way the web address can end with the directory name. For example:  
http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/ vs http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/indexhome.htm

## Web Content Best Practices

The following best practices are used within DNR:

### Use of "New" Images

The use of "New" images should be avoided. A "new" label will not be used for over two weeks. Too many web pages keep "New" images for long periods of time which reduces the effectiveness of such graphics.

### Use of "Click Here" text

The use of 'Click Here' should be avoided. Instead use text that makes sense when read out of context.

### Use of "Under Construction"

Do not use "under construction" to label a page. If the page is not ready, do not create a link to it. It decreases the user's confidence in a site if they are taken to pages without content. There is either content that is ready or not.

### Use of Blinking Text

Do not use blinking text.

### Lists

Try to restrict the number of links within a list to an upper limit of 7 to 12 items. People can track only so many items at a time.

## Graphics

Avoid using the height and width tags to resize graphics; instead resize the graphic and save it via a graphics program to the size you need.

All images are invested with copyright by default, regardless of whether a copyright statement is displayed. If you are using photographs, graphic elements or any other type of original work be sure to list the name of its creator. If you want to use someone's icon or image, the easiest thing is simply to ask the owner. For more information on copyrights, see the US Copyright Office home page at <http://lcWeb.loc.gov/copyright/>.

Use graphics when it visually contributes to the meaning. Too many graphics slows the viewing of the document and taxes the patience of viewers.

Take steps to ensure that images on the website do not slow page download times unnecessarily.

## Writing Web Content

Because the World Wide Web is international, try to keep use of idioms to a minimum for readers who have English as a second language.

Use the clearest and simplest language appropriate for your site's content.

Carefully select images or symbols keeping in mind some may be culturally specific and may not be understood universally or internationally.

Keep the use of acronyms to a minimum. If using an acronym, spell it out the first time it is used in a document and follow it with the acronym in parenthesis.

When specifying dates the preferred format is month dd, yyyy such as July 4, 1776. Spell out the month. Other common date formats such as 07/04/76 and have conflicting alternatives such as 04/07/76 that may be misinterpreted.

## Email/"Mailto" Links

Do not use the `mailto:email_address` for contact information. Department of Public Safety requested that we capture the IP address an email is sent from in case they need to try and track any threat received from a web contact. You can create a specific email form or use the generic DNR form. To use the generic DNR form use the following format:

`<a href="http://dnr.alaska.gov/emailforms/emailcontact.cfm?send=first.last">Person's Name</a>`

The generic web form will add the `@alaska.gov`. You cannot use this form to email people outside the State of Alaska system.

## Web Page Testing

Your web page may look great on your system but how will it look on other peoples' computers? Is the coding, spelling and grammar correct? Once you have a page that you feel is ready for prime time, start testing it. Before publishing a web page, it is the responsibility of each web page author to ensure that the page is:

- accurate (spelling, grammar, proper coding, images viewable, links work)
- current (remove old, inactive pages and let people know where the current information is)
- identified with a uniform indication of origin and responsible authority
- is functional in commonly used browsers
- quickly and easily accessible

## Resources

### Webmaster Resources

There is an intranet site for DNR web developers called the webmasters center at <http://int.dnr.alaska.gov/webmasters>. This site houses web page templates for developers that meet the standard as well as links to other information of interest to web page and web application developers. It also includes a getting started section.

### Related Documents

DNR Webmasters web site  
Introduction to DNR's Web Environment  
File organization  
Mapping Network Drives for the DNR Web Servers  
Web Publishing – Moving Files into Production