Creating Accessible Forms in Adobe Acrobat Pro

State of Iowa

April 2025

MSF&W

Best Practices for Form Design

Form Design

- **Remove non-essential fields** – if the information is not needed or can be obtained elsewhere, do not include the field
- **Visually group related fields and labels** – user should not have to search the page for related fields
- **Present fields in a single column or as few columns as possible** – presenting content in a single column makes it quicker and easier for users to navigate

Form Design

- **Place labels consistently above or to the left of fields** – users should not have to search for labels
- **Use logical sequencing** – put fields in the expected order (e.g., street address, city, state, zip)
- **Arrange checkbox and radio button groups vertically** – users are less likely to overlook an option

Form Design

- **Don’t split numbers into multiple fields** – use a single input for phone numbers, ID numbers, etc.
- **Match fields to the types and size of the input** – make fields the size of their expected content
- **Indicate optional fields** – add text to the field label to indicate the field is not required
- **Explain input or formatting requirements** – state requirements and instructions in the field label
- **Avoid Reset or Clear buttons** – the risk of a user accidentally delete their input is too high

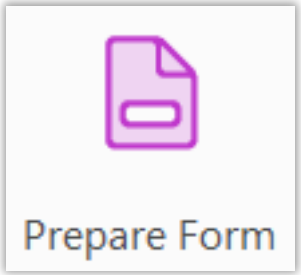
Adding Accessible Form Fields to PDFs

Accessibility Checker Forms rules

- Tagged form fields rule checks that each field is tagged
- Field descriptions rule checks that each field has a tooltip

Adding form fields

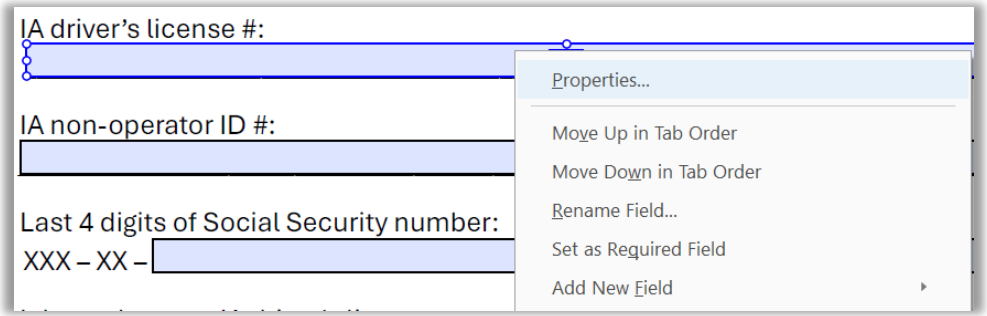
- Start with an accessible PDF
- View → Tools →
  Prepare Form → Start
- Edit/add fields,
  if needed.

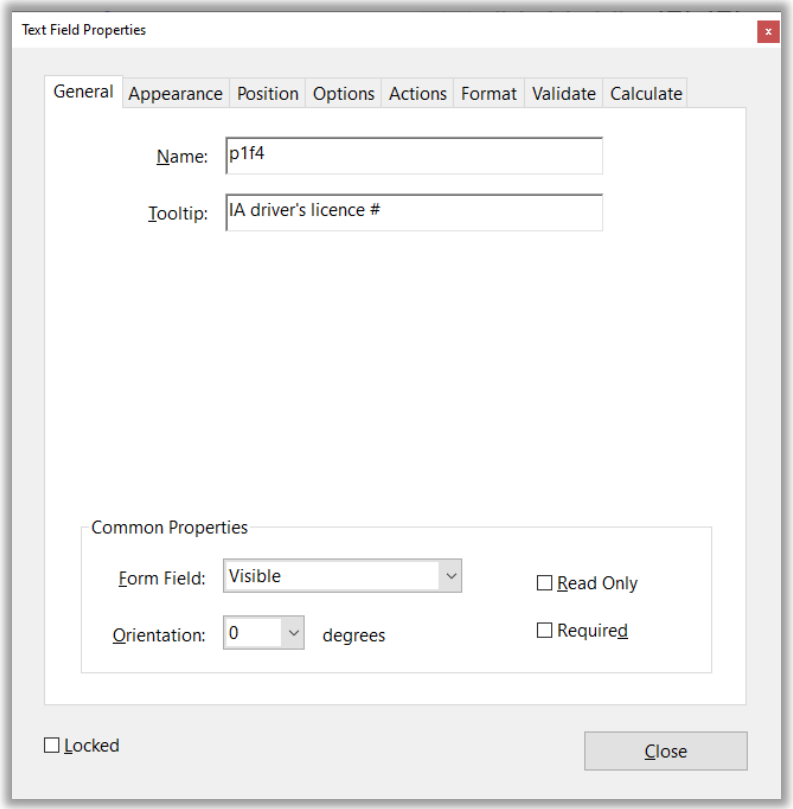




Tooltips

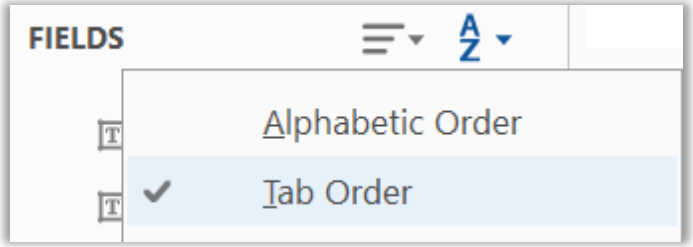
- Right click on form field → Properties → Edit Tooltip text

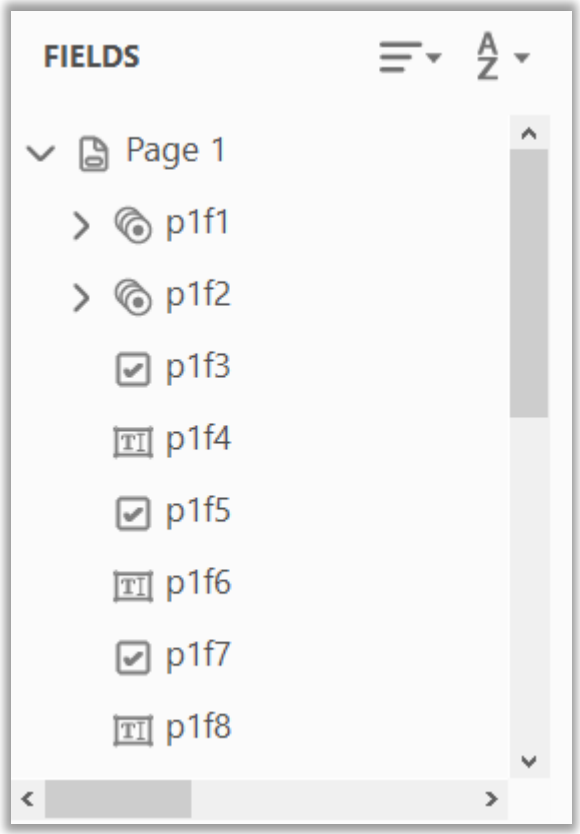




Form Tab Order

- Tab order should match the logical order.
- Adjust tab order by dragging the fields in the desired order.



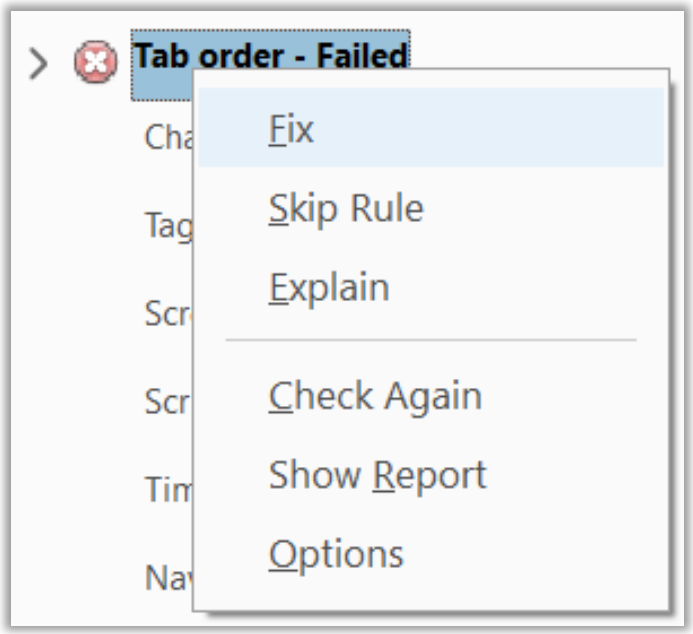


Tag Form Fields

- Tag tree → Options → Find → Choose Unmarked Annotations → Click Find/Find Next button until missing element is highlighted → Click Tag Element button → Choose Form as the Type → Click OK button
- Move the fields to the correct location in the Tags tree

Document Tab Order

- Run Accessibility Check
- If Tab Order fails, right-click and choose Fix
- Repair other issues as needed



Q&A

Questions?

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