



**Victorian Government
Website Management Framework**

Contact Us

Guideline

This guideline provides advice on implementing website contact details as required by the Minimum Information Provision standard.

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|---|--|---|--|
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Overview

The Minimum Information Provision standard (WEB/STD/09) requires all corporate websites to display contact details ('Contact Us' information) for the department/agency. This guideline provides advice on how to write and structure 'Contact Us' information for corporate websites.

Rationale

'Contact Us' information is provided to ensure that website users can readily identify how to contact a department/agency at any time, regardless of where they are in the world.

Derivation

- WoVG Minimum Information Provision Standard (WEB/STD/09).

Context

The aim of this guideline is to:

- assist website owners and managers to provide appropriate and accurate information for citizens wishing to contact the organisation; and
- provide a consistent format for contact details.
- This guideline acknowledges that:
- citizens may wish to contact a department or agency for numerous reasons and by one or more methods; and
- departments and agencies have a range of primary customer contact models and that these may influence the content and structure of 'Contact Us' information.

Steps

Corporate websites should have a 'Contact Us' page. The content of this page should reflect the department's/agency's customer contact model, which should include as a minimum:

- a clearly identified and described process for citizens to communicate with the department or agency;
- the street and mailing addresses for the organisation's head office, including telephone and fax numbers with interstate and international dialling codes; and
- a generic email address or web form.

Additional content that may be provided may include:

- a listing of addresses, telephone and fax numbers for regional or other office locations;
- TTY numbers for people who are deaf or have a hearing, speech or communication impairment;



- referrals to other programs or departments for common misdirected enquiries;
- introductory information about the scope of the 'Contact Us' information;
- business unit, business activity or program contact information;
- customer contact centres (see below);
- website contacts (see below);
- blog addresses; and
- links to maps displaying local information.

The following is an example of the 'Contact Us' information that might be provided for a corporate site. Compulsory items are highlighted in purple and department-/agency-specific information is <bracketed>:

Introduction

The (name of department or agency) welcomes your comments, queries and feedback.

This page contains our telephone and fax numbers, email and street addresses.

Please include your relevant contact details when you contact us. We adhere to our privacy policy (link to Privacy Statement) when resolving all correspondence.

Street Address

Mailing Address

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <Name of the department/agency>• <Street address>• <City/town name>, VIC <postcode>, Australia• Telephone: (03) <number>• International telephone: (+61 3) <number>• Fax: (03) <number>• International fax: (+61 3) <number>• TTY: <number> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <Name of the department/agency>• <GPO box number>• <City/town name>, VIC <postcode>, Australia |
|--|--|
-

Internet

- <Email address/addresses>
 - <Blog URL>
-

Customer contact centres

Where the primary point of contact for citizens is a customer contact centre, relevant contact details should be provided including:

- telephone and fax numbers (including interstate and international dialling codes);
- hours of service; and
- a generic email address.

A list of the types of queries handled, and information provided, should also be included. This will assist users to determine if the customer contact centre is the appropriate point of contact for their particular enquiry.



Website contacts

Contact details for queries or issues specifically related to the website may also be included. It is at the discretion of departments and agencies as to whether or not telephone support is provided.

A web form or generic email address – rather than an employee-specific email address – should be used to ensure continuity of service and protection of privacy.

It is recommended to include a brief statement informing users of the type of assistance they will receive from using any of the website contact types. For example:

Please contact us¹ if you are experiencing any difficulties with this website or would like to provide feedback on your experience with the website. Any personal information you provide is collected in accordance with our privacy policy² and is used only in responding to you.

Managing contact us

Consideration should be given to minimising the number of contact points to ensure that:

- citizens receive timely responses to queries and requests for information;
- queries and responses can be tracked;
- responses are managed in accordance with relevant legislation³;
- Contact Us information is accurate, current and managed within the website content review and approval cycle; and
- 'Contact Us' information is consistent with listings in White Pages, Yellow Pages and other sources of contact information.

In general it is recommended that generic contact details – rather than employee-specific contact details – are provided to ensure continuity of service and protection of privacy.

References and toolkits

Victorian Government standards:

- <http://www.enterprisesolutions.vic.gov.au/business-systems>

Governing requirement

- Websites must provide contact details for the department or agency including:
 - a) street address and/or postal address;
 - b) phone and fax (national and international); and

¹ The text 'contact us' should be hyperlinked to a web form or generic email.

² The text 'privacy policy' should be hyperlinked to the website's privacy statement.

³ Notably, the *Public Records Act 1973* (Vic), the *Information Privacy Act 2000* (Vic) and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Vic).



c) email.

Related requirements

- Websites must provide a point of contact.

Related guidelines

- About Us (WEB/GUIDE/01)

It is recommended that the 'About Us' page contains either:

- 'Contact Us' information; or
- a link to a 'Contact Us' page.

If including 'Contact Us' information on the 'About Us' page, the 'Contact Us' element in the utility navigation must link to the 'About Us' page, preferably directly to the 'Contact Us' section.

- Developing and Managing an Information Architecture (WEB/GUIDE/03)
- Website Privacy Guidelines for the Victorian Public Sector May 2004 (www.privacy.vic.gov.au/domino/privacyvic/web2.nsf/files/website-privacy-guidelines)

Related policies and standards

- Consistent User Elements (WEB/STD/06)
 - Contact Us information must be hyperlinked from the utility navigation, as per the requirement in the Consistent User Elements standard. This link may target an About Us page containing contact information.
- Legal Compliance (WEB/STD/03)
- Privacy (WEB/STD/04)

Related resources

- Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)
- Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)
- Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)

Further information

For further information regarding this standard, please contact the Department of State Development and Business Innovation, at enterprise.solutions@dpc.vic.gov.au



Glossary

| Term | Meaning |
|-------------------------|---|
| Blog | A standalone website, or part of an existing website, devoted to the singular purpose of displaying articles/posts, often in a journal-like format. Blog posts are often text-heavy, but can contain images, audio and/or video. |
| Corporate Website | Each department/agency has a single corporate website that describes the structure and functions of the department/agency. Examples: www.diird.vic.gov.au , www.police.vic.gov.au , www.epa.vic.gov.au |
| Program/Issue Website | A website that provides information or services on a particular campaign, program or issue. Example: www.tenders.vic.gov.au |
| Thematic/Portal Website | A thematic website contains content focused on a particular topic. Example: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au A portal website presents information from diverse sources in a unified way, often providing outbound links for users to access further information. ⁴ Example: www.vic.gov.au |
| URL | Uniform Resource Locator – the individual address of each web page. |
| WMF | Website Management Framework. |
| WMT | Website Management Taskforce. Each department and inner-budget agency (Environmental Protection Agency, State Revenue Office, VicRoads, and Victoria Police) maintains a WMT to manage their internal web activity and administer the WMF. |

Version history

| Version | Date | TRIM ref | Details |
|------------|----------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| 1.0 | 3 August 2005 | | First published |
| 2.0 | 21 August 2009 | | |
| 2.1 | February 2014 | | Updated branding |

⁴ Adapted from the Wikipedia entry for Web portal (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_portal). Accessed 27 May 2009.