# Search Engine Accessibility Elements

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| Category | Description of Accessibility Element | WCAG Guidance |
| Position | Search bar should be positioned where people would expect to find it, which is typically in the upper right corner of the screen. | [3.2.4 Consistent Identification](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/consistent-identification) |
| Labeling/Alt Text | Search icon should be labeled with alt-text=”search” attribute in the image tag. | [1.1.1 Non-text Content](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/non-text-content) |
| Labeling/Alt Text | Search bar should have a visible label of “search”; in the code, you can see the aria-label description “Search through the site content”. | [1.1.1 Non-text Content](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/non-text-content) |
| Visual Element | Visual presentation of text and images of text has an appropriate color contrast ratio.[[1]](#footnote-2),[[2]](#footnote-3) | [1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum)](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/contrast-minimum) |
| Visual Element | Decorative images do not need alt attributes. | [1.1.1 Non-text Content](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/non-text-content) |
| Visual Element | The search bar should be visible; the search bar should be large enough so it isn’t obscured by the rest of the site. | [2.5.5 Target Size (Enhanced)](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/target-size-enhanced) |
| Visual Element | The action of “search” should be labeled on the left side of the search bar user interface. | [2.5.3 Label in Name](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/label-in-name) |
| Visual Element | Search input and font size should accommodate the standard user query length — typically about 27 characters; test this on various devices, including different mobile devices. |  |
| Navigation | User should be able to navigate from landing page to search bar with Tab button. | [2.4.3 Focus Order](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/focus-order) |
| Navigation | While entering a query in the search bar, the keyboard focus should remain on the search bar so that, if needed, they can continue to enter or modify their query. | [3.2.2 On Input](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/on-input) |
| Navigation | When presented with the search results, users should be able to bypass blocks of content that are repeated on multiple Web pages. | [2.4.1 Bypass Blocks](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/bypass-blocks) |
| Navigation | Navigate search results, then to pagination, then to the URL of the page in their browser, and then back to the web page. | [2.4.3 Focus Order](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/focus-order) |
| Navigation | Pagination is numbered and can be navigated across each number for selection. | [2.4.3 Focus Order](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/focus-order) |
| Search Status | Status of search (with screen reader) should be provided by adding an aria status role (role=”status”) message to the code, you can allow the screen reader to announce the number of returned results. | [4.1.3 Status Messages](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/status-messages) |
| Search Status | Status without navigation to status; the description and status message (e.g., “x results for ‘site search'”) are not accessible by using the Tab key. However, the screen-reader software or voice-over utility should be able to read the description and status message to the user, which makes all the necessary information available without interfering with the navigation. | [4.1.3 Status Messages](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/status-messages) |
| Functionality | Search results should open within the same tab. | [3.2.5: Change on Request](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG21/Understanding/change-on-request) |
| Functionality | Search should tolerate misspellings. | [3.3.6 Error Prevention (All)](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/error-prevention-all) |
| Overlay window | If displaying search results in an overlay window, the user should be able to navigate to the close button, and the close button (if it’s an icon) should have the correct aria-label or alt-description attribute. | [2.4.3 Focus Order](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/focus-order) |
| Options | All filters and facets should be accessible and operable from the keyboard with aria-label descriptions. | [1.1.1 Non-text Content](https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG22/Understanding/non-text-content) |

1. <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://color.adobe.com/create/color-contrast-analyzer> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)