

IS 17802: Standards for Accessibility of ICT Products and Services

(Notified under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Amendment) Rules, 2023)

Digital accessibility is a fundamental matter of **equity, inclusion, and civil rights**, not merely one of convenience. In India, the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act)** guarantees non-discrimination and equal opportunity for persons with disabilities. Despite this strong legal framework, many users continue to face significant barriers in accessing websites, mobile applications, and digital services. These barriers often result in dependence on others for routine activities in an increasingly technology-driven society—such as booking transport, accessing public services, or ordering essential goods online.

Indian Standard IS 17802

To address challenges of digital inaccessibility, the **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)**, through its technical committee **LITD 35: Active Assisted Living**, developed **Indian Standard IS 17802**. This standard provides a comprehensive set of accessibility requirements that specify how information and communication technology (ICT) products and services can be made accessible—primarily for persons with disabilities, while also enhancing usability for all users.

IS 17802 Notified by the Government of India

The **Government of India**, through the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Amendment) Rules, 2023**, has formally notified **IS 17802 – Accessibility for ICT Products and Services** as the prescribed ICT accessibility standard under **Section 15 of the RPwD Act**.

This notification was issued by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE)** vide **Gazette Notification G.S.R. 359(E)** dated **10 May 2023**.

Mandatory Compliance from 11 May 2023

With this notification, **compliance with IS 17802 became mandatory with effect from 11 May 2023**. The amendment modifies the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017**, making digital accessibility a **legal obligation** for relevant establishments.

Alignment with Global Accessibility Standards

IS 17802 is harmonised with internationally recognised accessibility frameworks, including:

- **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)**
- **Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act**
- **European Standard EN 301 549**

This alignment ensures consistency with global best practices while addressing the Indian legal and socio-technical context.

Key Accessibility Requirements under IS 17802

The standard outlines several essential requirements, including but not limited to:

- **Text Alternatives for Non-Text Content**
Images, audio, and video content must be accompanied by appropriate text alternatives to ensure accessibility for users with visual impairments.
- **Keyboard Accessibility**
Websites and applications must be fully navigable using keyboard inputs, enabling access for users who cannot operate a mouse.
- **Colour Contrast**
Adequate colour contrast must be maintained to support users with low vision and colour vision deficiencies.
- **Focus Management**
Logical and predictable focus order is required to minimise confusion during navigation.
- **Compatibility with Assistive Technologies**
Digital platforms must function seamlessly with screen readers and other assistive technologies.

Why Compliance with IS 17802 Matters

Compliance with IS 17802 is not only a legal requirement but also offers significant strategic and operational benefits.