CMS Lite content checklist

Always review your CMS Lite pages before publishing to meet web standards. These standards help real people (on smartphones or dial-up Internet, learning English, blind, etc.) to access government information. Follow links to the CMS Lite Manual and related content guides for more detail.

Accessibility requirements:

- No “click here” links. Link text should describe what it links to.
- Use graphics sparingly. Avoid text in graphics. Add alt text except for decorative images.
- Links to assets open in new window and include file type and size in the link: Asset Link (PDF, 1.4MB).
- Don’t skip heading levels. Use defined heading styles, not bold text.
- Do not use tables for layout. Use grid layouts instead. Test on a mobile device.
- Use “to” for ranges of dates or times, not dashes or hyphens (September 5 to October 6).

Style requirements:

- Use bold sparingly. No italics. Use callout boxes to highlight chunks of text. Follow callout guidelines.
- Maximum 1 brief alert banner per page at a time. Review often to keep them relevant.
- Sentence case for all titles (pages, tables, right-column boxes, accordions) and headings (H2, H3, H4).
- Never use ALL CAPS. Follow capitalization rules.
- Use lists: numbered only if appropriate. No periods, commas or semi-colons at the end of list items.
- Use default spacing and delete empty paragraph blocks (use the show block elements tool).
- Only one space at the end of a sentence. You can use Find and Replace to remove double spaces.
- Use Canadian spelling (centre, labour, colour).
- Use apostrophes correctly. Example: It’s your government. You’re one of its valued citizens.
- No ampersands (&) unless part of formal name (M&M’s) or citing sources (Jones & Jones, 2006).
- Right-column boxes for secondary information only. Contact information is always last!
- Phone number formatting: nnn-nnn-nnnn or n-nnn-nnnn-nnnn ext. nnn.
- B.C. not BC when referring to a geographic region.
- Add share preview tags to make your page easier to share on social media.
- Accordions can break up dense pages. Important information should not be hidden in an accordion.

Plain language top tips:

- Is it obvious who and what the page is for? Use clear, descriptive page titles.
- Use lists instead of long sentences whenever possible.
- Use clear, descriptive headings to identify sections of your content.
- Start with the most important information. Put details below.
- Have someone else review your content, or read it aloud to yourself.
- Use the Plain Language checklist for more tips.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) reminders:

- Check metadata. Description must be unique and describe page content in sentence format.
- Synonyms help people who search using slang or different phrases (B.C., BC, British Columbia).
- Keywords and phrases must appear in page content. Be specific and accurate.
- Title is the first thing people see. Make it accurate, specific and unique. Keep nav title brief.

Review after publishing:

- Are your assets published? Check for broken links. Make an inventory and audit plan.