

RCCD Video Standards and Guidelines

As of 09-23-25

These guidelines outline the process of standardizing video content, mastering it in HD (1080p), and creating deliverables for various resolutions and platforms.

1. Accessibility Standards (ADA & Section 508)

All video content must comply with **WCAG 2.1 Level AA**, as required by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Guidelines: [WCAG 2.1](#)

Essential Steps for Compliance (Citation: www.beaccessible.com):

1. **High-Quality Captions** – Prefer human transcription services; use SRT or VTT files for compatibility. Burn-in captions only when required (e.g., social reels).
 2. **Audio Description** – Provide narration of essential on-screen action, separate from dialogue.
 3. **Transcripts** – Offer text versions of narration/dialogue, optimized for screen readers (plain text, accessible PDF, or webpage).
 4. **Proper Color Contrast** – Minimum 4.5:1 ratio for small text, 3:1 for large text.
 5. **Keyboard-Accessible Playback** – Host videos on platforms that allow full keyboard navigation.
 6. **Safe Visual Design** – Avoid flashing imagery; if unavoidable, no more than 3 flashes/second and within WCAG thresholds.
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2. Source Material Standardization

- **Resolution:** Capture at 4K/60fps (3840×2160) when possible; 1080p/60fps (1920×1080) is the minimum.
- **Frame Rate:** Match across footage. Downstep is acceptable; upstep is not. Confirm platform/vendor requirements.
- **Color Space:** Rec. 709 (HD) or Rec. 2020 (HDR). Always prepare SDR versions if HDR is used.
- **Aspect Ratio:**
 - 16:9 (standard landscape)
 - 9:16 (vertical)
 - 1:1 (square)

Frame for the intended final format at the shoot stage.

- **File Format:** Preferred capture in MOV or MP4 using ProRes, H.264, or HEVC.
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3. Mastering in HD (1080p)

1080p is the standard resolution for RCCD deliverables. 4K is reserved for VIP, archival, or special projects.

Editing Workflow

- Use professional software: Premiere Pro, Final Cut Pro, AVID, or DaVinci Resolve.
- Set timeline resolution to 1920×1080.
- Optimize all graphics and overlays for 1080p.

Audio Mixing

- Stereo mix at **48kHz**.
- Loudness: Target **-24 LKFS for broadcast**; follow platform-specific standards.
- Keep dialogue clear and dominant over background music.
- Use approved royalty-free tracks (e.g., Envato). Avoid vocal tracks beneath dialogue.

Export Settings

- **Format:** Apple ProRes 422, H.264, or H.265 (HEVC).
 - **Bitrate:** 10–20 Mbps for 1080p; 50–100 Mbps for 4K.
 - **File Type:** MP4 for widest compatibility.
 - **Metadata:** Include title, description, copyright.
 - **Naming Convention:** ProjectName_Resolution_Date (e.g., Commencement1080p_2025-05-20).
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4. Downscaling for Deliverables

Always confirm vendor/platform requirements.

- **1080p HD:** 1920×1080, 10–20 Mbps, 24/30/60fps.
 - **720p HD (rare):** 1280×720, 5–10 Mbps, 24/30/60fps.
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5. Encoding for Platforms

Social Media (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook)

- Resolution: 1080×1920 (vertical), 1080×1080 (square) or 1920×1080 (landscape).
- Bitrate: 4–10 Mbps.
- Codec: ProRes 422 or H.264.

YouTube

- Resolution: Upload highest quality (4K when available, 1080p minimum).
- Codec: ProRes 422, H.264, or H.265.
- Bitrate: 35–45 Mbps (4K), 8–12 Mbps (1080p).
- Captions: Provide sidecar SRT/VTT files.

6. Quality Assurance (QA)

Pre-Production

- Hold production meetings to define goals, messaging, and scope.
- Scriptwriting: draft and refine with staff.
- Creative discussions: reference visual examples, create shot lists.
- Location scouting: evaluate lighting, sound, and logistics.
- Scheduling: confirm participants and locations early.
- Documentation: secure media release forms and permissions.

Production

- Use manual controls (ISO, white balance, shutter, iris) when possible.
- Composition: follow rule of thirds, maintain headroom at ~70–75%.
- Depth: avoid flat backgrounds; add separation when possible.
- Camera stability: tripod preferred; handheld acceptable only for action.
- B-roll: capture supplementary footage for editing flexibility.
- Lighting: avoid mixed color temperatures; use 3-point setups when possible.

Post-Production

The three main versions, or stages, of a video edit are the rough cut, fine cut, and final cut. These versions are used to systematically refine the video project from an initial assembly into the polished finished product.

Rough cut

This is the first basic edited version of the film, focusing on assembling the raw footage into a coherent sequence.

It establishes the overall structure and narrative flow but often contains many flaws, such as bad takes, and is typically longer than the finished product.

Sound, music, and special effects are generally temporary or not yet added.

Fine cut

The fine cut builds on the rough cut, refining the pacing, rhythm, and timing of the story. This stage involves selecting the best takes, tightening up transitions, and making more detailed edits to create a nearly finished version of the film.

Music, sound design, and other effects are integrated, and the project begins to look and sound much closer to the final product.

Final cut

This is the completed, polished version of the video, ready for distribution. All major creative decisions on the edit have been finalized, a stage often referred to as "picture lock". The final cut includes all the finished color grading, sound mixing, visual effects, and other post-production work.

- **Visual Review:** resolution, color accuracy, framing, branding (logos/placement per RCCD style guide).
- **Audience Review:** confirm accuracy, spelling, and appropriateness of on-screen content. Avoid visible licensed IP or political statements. Include on-screen calls to action (e.g., URLs).
- **Audio Review:** check clarity, balance, sync. Ensure background music doesn't overpower dialogue. Use approved royalty free music from a platform such as Envato, APM Music, Adobe Music Stock, or any verified royalty free licensable entity.
- **Accessibility Review:** verify captions, transcripts, and audio descriptions.
- **Playback Test:** test files on intended devices and platforms.
- **Archival Prep:** master file, compressed deliverables, captions, transcript, thumbnail, metadata.

7. Quick Reference Checklist

- ✓ Capture at 4K/60fps (1080p minimum)
- ✓ Frame for intended aspect ratio (16:9 / 9:16 / 1:1)
- ✓ Audio: Stereo, 48kHz, dialogue clear on top
- ✓ Export MP4 (H.264/ProRes 422), 10–20 Mbps (1080p)
- ✓ Include captions (SRT/VTT), transcripts, and metadata
- ✓ Apply RCCD branding (logos, colors, style guide)
- ✓ Confirm playback and accessibility before release