

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and rules made thereunder- mandatory compliance by all Regulated Entities.

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Background on the Circular

The circular mandates that all digital platforms operated by SEBI-regulated entities must ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities to protect their rights and dignity, and to enable their full and effective participation in the securities market.

Brief on the Circular

The term "Regulated Entities" (REs) includes SEBI-registered or recognized intermediaries such as stockbrokers, mutual funds, KYC Registration Agencies, Qualified Registrars to an Issue and Share Transfer Agents (QRTAs), as well as Market Infrastructure Institutions (stock exchanges, depositories, and clearing corporations) under SEBI's regulatory ambit.

All digital platforms of these entities are required to comply with the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act, 2016)**, along with the relevant rules. Key legal provisions emphasized include:

- Section 40 on Accessibility,
- Section 42 on Access to Information and Communication Technology,
- Section 46 on the Time Limit for Accessibility by Service Providers, and
- Rule 15(1)(c) of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017, regarding accessibility norms.

Regulated Entities are directed to refer to Annexure I of the circular for comprehensive instructions on implementing digital accessibility measures for persons with disabilities.

SEBI has set clear deadlines for compliance actions as follows:

- **Within 1 month:** Submit a list of all digital platforms offered to investors and a report on the compliance status against this circular.
- **Within 45 days:** Appoint accessibility professionals certified by IAAP (International Association of Accessibility Professionals) as auditors.
- **Within 3 months:** Conduct an accessibility audit of all digital platforms.
- **Within 6 months:** Remediate issues identified in the audit and achieve full compliance with accessibility requirements.

Ongoing Compliance and Reporting:

After initial implementation, Regulated Entities must submit annual compliance reports within 30 days after the end of each financial year. The reporting channels are defined as follows:

- Stockbrokers and Depository Participants report to Stock Exchanges or Depositories.
- Investment Advisors report to BSE Administration & Supervision Limited (BASL).
- Market Infrastructure Institutions and all other Regulated Entities report directly to SEBI.

Impact of the Circular

The SEBI circular on digital accessibility marks a significant step towards fostering an inclusive securities market by ensuring that persons with disabilities can fully and effectively participate through barrier-free digital platforms. By mandating compliance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, setting clear timelines for audits, remediation, and annual reporting, and involving IAAP-certified professionals, SEBI is standardizing accessibility norms across all regulated entities. This move not only empowers a previously underserved segment of investors but also promotes technological innovation, aligns India's market with global best practices, and strengthens the overall inclusivity, accountability, and reputation of the securities ecosystem.



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