



CALIFORNIA-FOCUSED EDITION · INFORMATION REVIEWED JULY 22, 2026

Received a Website Accessibility Demand Letter?

A Practical California Guide for Business Owners

What the letter means · Where costs can arise · What may happen if court papers are ignored · How to begin documented technical remediation

Educational information—not legal advice.

The Bowman Ranch Group is not a law firm and does not interpret demand letters, evaluate legal liability, or represent parties in legal matters. If you have received a demand letter or court papers, consult qualified counsel promptly.

The Bowman Ranch Group

Technical accessibility assessment, remediation, rebuilding, testing, and documentation

www.bowmanranchgroup.com

Start by identifying what you actually received.

These documents are not interchangeable.

Document or action	What it generally means	Practical next step
Private pre-litigation demand letter	An allegation and request from a private person or representative. It is not itself a court judgment, order, or automatic government fine.	Preserve it and related records. Ask qualified counsel to evaluate the legal response. Document the website’s current technical condition.
Filed lawsuit	A civil court case has been opened. Filing and formal service are distinct events, and procedure depends on the court and case.	Contact qualified counsel promptly. Do not assume a deadline based only on general internet guidance.
Formally served summons and complaint	Court papers have been delivered through a legally recognized process. Response deadlines may apply.	Contact qualified counsel immediately. Failure to respond can permit default proceedings and a decision without the defendant’s Answer.
Government inquiry or enforcement action	Communication from the U.S. Department of Justice or another government body is separate from an ordinary private demand.	Obtain qualified counsel and follow the instructions applicable to that specific communication.

Do not ignore formally served court papers.
Deadlines in a court matter are different from dates requested in a private letter. The Bowman Ranch Group cannot calculate or advise you about a legal deadline.

Preserve first. Change carefully. Document the work.

Keep the letter, envelope, emails, website backups, logs, contracts, relevant messages, and available prior versions. Avoid deleting, overwriting, or selectively changing potentially relevant material. Ask counsel how preservation should be handled, particularly when litigation is threatened or pending.

Technical remediation may still be appropriate, but it should be recorded carefully and coordinated with counsel when a claim is possible. The technical goal is to improve access while preserving an accurate record of the site’s condition and the work completed.

The website repair may be only one part of the total cost.

Not every category applies in every matter, and no amount is automatic merely because a letter was sent.

Cost category	What it may include	Important limit
Business's legal counsel	Consultation, factual review, response strategy, communications, negotiation, pleadings, discovery, and defense	BRG does not quote or estimate legal fees. Fees vary by counsel, facts, forum, and duration.
Potential statutory damages	Damages authorized by applicable state law if required legal elements are established	A scan result or demand letter does not itself establish liability or an award.
Potential claimant fees and costs	Attorney's fees or costs potentially recoverable under law or agreement	Availability and amount depend on the claim, outcome, statute, court, or settlement.
Court and litigation expense	Filing, discovery, expert, consultant, transcript, motion, and case-administration costs	Categories and amounts vary substantially.
Technical assessment	Scoping, automated and human evaluation, essential-path testing, and reporting	A preliminary scan is not a comprehensive audit.
Remediation or rebuild	Design, code, content, forms, documents, third-party work, and platform changes	Scope depends on the site's condition and what can be modified.
Validation and documentation	Retesting, issue closure, evidence organization, governance, and reporting	Validation is limited to what was tested and when it was tested.
Business disruption	Leadership attention, staff time, vendor coordination, content freezes, and operational change	Internal impact varies and is not a fixed estimate.
Ongoing review	Maintenance, regression testing, training, and review after major changes	Accessibility is an ongoing responsibility, not a one-time badge.

A responsible way to view the cost stack

Potential combined cost may include the business's legal fees, legally available damages or fee awards, litigation expense, technical audit and remediation, rebuilding where necessary, internal time, and future monitoring.

The Bowman Ranch Group does not publish a universal "average settlement," defense-cost estimate, or dramatic maximum. No authoritative statewide schedule establishes those amounts for every website claim.

The response path can change which costs and decisions arrive later.

These scenarios are illustrative only. They do not predict a legal outcome or promise that early action will prevent a claim.

Scenario A — The business responds promptly

The business preserves relevant material, contacts qualified counsel, records the current website, and begins a scoped technical assessment.

Cost categories that may arise: legal consultation, technical assessment, prioritized remediation, retesting, documentation, and ongoing maintenance.

What this path can provide: earlier factual clarity, a documented technical baseline, a controlled remediation plan, and a record that counsel can evaluate. It does not establish whether the allegations are legally valid or eliminate possible claims concerning past events.

Scenario B — The business does not act before a lawsuit is filed

The technical condition remains undocumented or unresolved while the matter progresses into litigation.

Additional cost categories that may arise: defense counsel, court filings, discovery, consultants or experts, claimant fee exposure where legally available, possible damages where state law permits them, and business disruption—along with technical work that may still be necessary.

Ignoring a private letter does not automatically create liability or a government fine. It may, however, remove an opportunity to understand the alleged barriers and address the technical condition before litigation adds more processes and expenses.

Scenario C — The business does not respond after formal service

Formally served court papers are different from private correspondence. If a defendant does not respond as required, the plaintiff may seek default, and the court may proceed without the defendant's Answer. The available remedies and amounts depend on the claims, evidence, procedure, and court.

Technical remediation may still be needed even after legal fees, damages, settlement expense, or court-ordered relief have been incurred. Fixing the website is important, but it does not automatically erase allegations concerning earlier events or decide the legal case.

California can add state-law exposure to the federal accessibility analysis.

Federal baseline

Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits disability discrimination by businesses open to the public. The U.S. Department of Justice states that the ADA's requirements apply to the goods, services, privileges, and activities that public accommodations offer on the web. For private businesses, however, DOJ has not issued a Title III regulation prescribing one detailed website technical standard. Coverage and the required legal analysis can depend on the business, website, alleged barrier, jurisdiction, and connection to a physical place.

WCAG 2.2 Level A and AA is The Bowman Ranch Group's technical evaluation target. WCAG is a respected W3C technical standard; using it does not by itself certify legal compliance or determine liability.

California Civil Code sections 51 and 52

California Civil Code section 51—the Unruh Civil Rights Act—provides for full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in business establishments, and states that an ADA violation also constitutes a violation of section 51.

Conditional statutory language

If liability under the covered provisions is established, Civil Code section 52(a) provides for actual damages and an amount determined by the factfinder that is no less than \$4,000 for each offense, plus attorney's fees as determined by the court. That amount is not automatically owed because a letter was sent, a scan found an error, or a website contains several alleged defects. Pages, coding errors, and tool alerts do not automatically determine the number of legally recoverable offenses.

Section 52 also addresses preventive relief, including injunctions or other orders in circumstances covered by the statute. Federal private Title III litigation can likewise involve court-ordered corrective relief, and federal law permits a court, in its discretion, to allow the prevailing party a reasonable attorney's fee as part of costs. The remedies available in a particular matter require legal analysis.

Why counsel must evaluate the specific claim

In Ninth Circuit cases, the relationship between a website or app and the goods and services of a physical place can be important to federal Title III coverage. California decisions also show that online-only facts and the legal theory pleaded can change the analysis. BRG does not decide whether a site is covered, whether intent is required, whether a claimant has standing, whether an access attempt is sufficient, or whether a letter states a valid claim.

Key distinctions

- Settlement payment: an amount agreed by parties to resolve disputed claims; not the same as a court-awarded statutory amount.
- Statutory damages: damages authorized by statute when required legal elements are established.
- Attorney's fees and costs: amounts paid to the business's own professionals or, where authorized, potentially awarded to another party.
- Injunctive or corrective relief: a court order requiring conduct to stop or corrective action to occur.
- Technical remediation expense: the cost to assess, repair, rebuild, validate, and maintain the website.

A calm response checklist

1. Preserve what you received. Keep the letter, envelope, emails, attachments, and related communications.
2. Contact qualified counsel promptly. Let counsel evaluate the letter, claims, deadlines, and legal response.
3. Avoid unadvised legal admissions or negotiations. Ask counsel how substantive communications should be handled.
4. Preserve the website's current condition. Keep available backups, logs, contracts, source or theme files, prior versions, and dated captures before making unrecorded changes.
5. Obtain a technical accessibility assessment. Define the pages, templates, components, documents, and essential user paths to be reviewed.
6. Build a prioritized remediation plan. Address barriers by user impact, recurrence, severity, and technical dependency.
7. Record each material change. Preserve the finding, affected location, action taken, date, responsible party, and validation result.
8. Retest with automated and human methods. Include keyboard use and representative assistive-technology paths; a clean automated scan is not enough.
9. Publish an accurate accessibility statement and assistance method. Do not claim permanent or perfect compliance.
10. Assign ongoing ownership. Review the site after meaningful content, theme, plugin, integration, or platform changes.

Court papers require immediate legal attention.

If a complaint, summons, or other court paper has been formally served, contact qualified counsel immediately because response deadlines may apply.

We handle the technical work and the documentation.

- Free Website Accessibility Risk Snapshot
- Defined-scope technical audit
- Automated and knowledgeable human evaluation
- Keyboard and representative screen-reader testing
- Mobile, tablet, browser, zoom, reflow, contrast, focus, form, and structure testing
- Prioritized remediation
- Accessible website rebuild where appropriate
- Issue, remediation, and validation log
- Pre-change and post-remediation backups when included in scope
- Attorney-shareable technical report
- Accessibility statement and governance recommendations
- Ongoing maintenance or regression testing under a separate scope

What we do not do

We do not determine whether a demand is legally valid; interpret legal rights or obligations; calculate damages; draft legal responses; contact a claimant or law firm for the client; negotiate settlements; provide legal representation; imply attorney-client privilege; or guarantee legal outcomes, permanent accessibility, or freedom from future claims.

Accessibility Audit, Remediation & Documentation Package

Typically \$4,500-\$8,000

This is The Bowman Ranch Group's service range, not an industry average. Final scope and price depend on site size, platform, third-party components, current condition, source access, essential user paths, and agreed testing scope.

Request a Free Website Accessibility Risk Snapshot

The free snapshot is a limited preliminary review intended to identify visible indicators of potential technical accessibility exposure. It does not test every WCAG success criterion, page, user journey, document, device, browser, or assistive technology. It is not a comprehensive audit, legal opinion, compliance certification, or prediction of whether a claim will occur.

- A one-page quick report
- The public pages and paths sampled
- A 1-100 Website Accessibility Exposure Score
- A short list of initial observed barriers
- A prioritized next step
- An invitation to use your own developer or ask us for a scoped proposal

Request the Free Snapshot: www.bowmanranchgroup.com/risk-snapshot

Text: 805-402-2312 · Email: contact@bowmanranchgroup.com · Yucca Valley, CA 92284

Legal and technical disclaimer

The Bowman Ranch Group is not a law firm and does not provide legal advice, legal opinions, or representation. This California-focused guide provides general educational information and reflects sources reviewed July 22, 2026. Laws, standards, interpretations, procedures, and individual facts vary and can change. Consult qualified counsel about a specific demand, claim, deadline, or legal decision.

Technical findings and validation are limited to the pages, user paths, content, documents, components, browsers, devices, assistive technologies, methods, scope, and dates identified in the applicable report. Websites change. A score, report, remediation project, or retest is not a legal conclusion, certification, or guarantee. No service can guarantee that a complaint will not be made or determine how a court will rule. Pricing shown is BRG's typical package range, not an industry average or final quote.

Public sources reviewed July 22, 2026

- [DOJ · Guidance on Web Accessibility and the ADA](#)
- [42 U.S.C. § 12188](#)
- [42 U.S.C. § 12205](#)
- [California Civil Code § 51](#)
- [California Civil Code § 52](#)
- [California Courts · Responding to a Civil Lawsuit](#)
- [California Courts · What to Expect if You Default](#)
- [Ninth Circuit · Robles v. Domino's Pizza, LLC](#)
- [California Court of Appeal · Martinez v. Cot'n Wash, Inc.](#)
- [W3C · Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2](#)
- [W3C WAI · Evaluating Web Accessibility](#)