HOW TO ADD ALTERNATIVE TEXT

Adding Alt Text to Images and Tables

Abstract

Under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all Federal agencies must make their electronic and information technology accessible for people with disabilities.

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Overview

A disabled individual can benefit from alternative text (alt text) because when the document is converted to PDF format, the Adobe reader can read the alternative text to the disabled individual.[1] [2]

Making Images Accessible (Word 2016)

1. Right-click on the image and select Edit Alt Text (or Format Picture) as shown in Figure 1. Choose the "Generate a description for me" option or manually add a short description that accurately describes the importance of the image, shown in Figure 2.
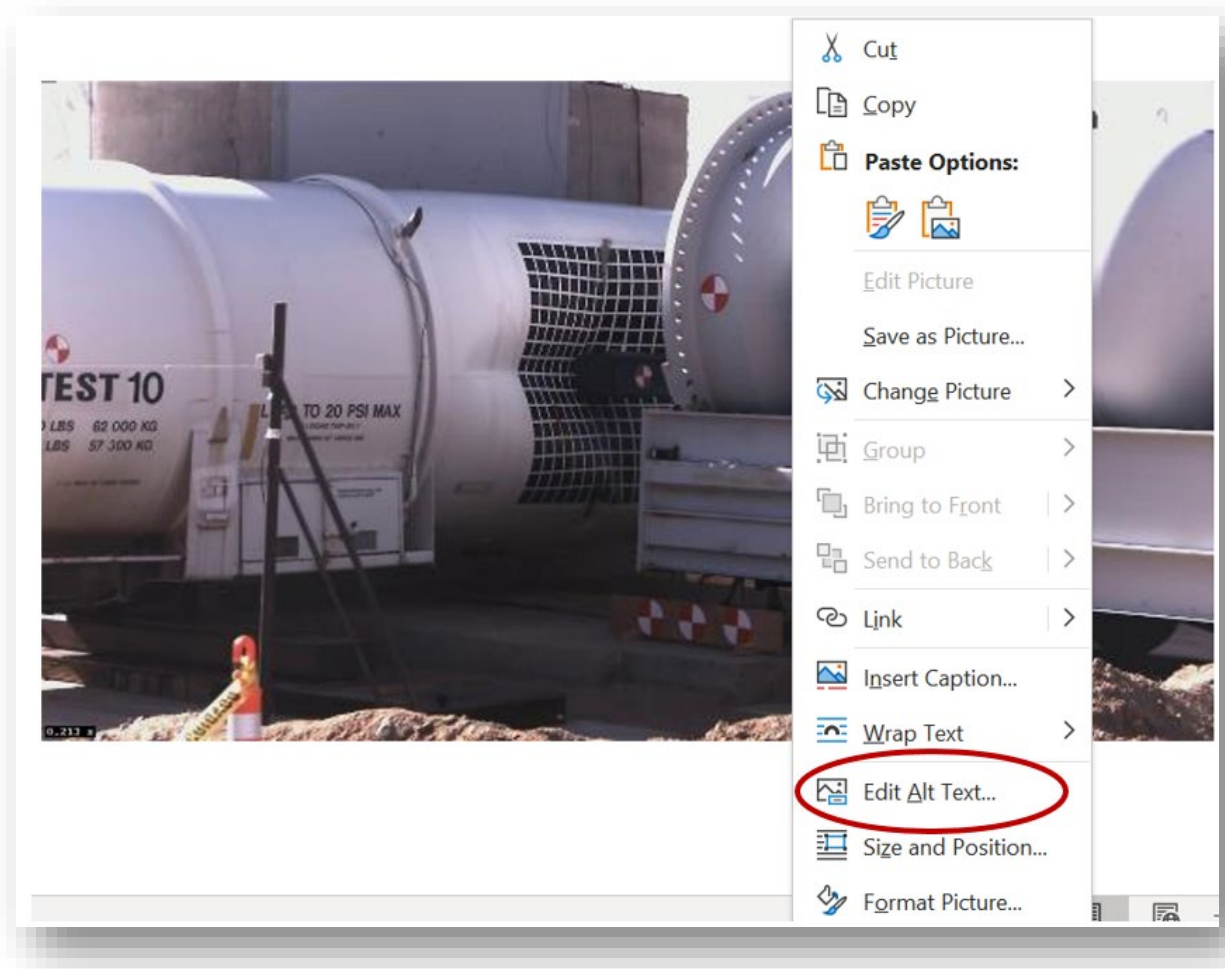
Figure 1. Step 1: Edit Alt Text

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[1] Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, mandate amended January 18, 2018.
[2] Revised 508 Standards.

1
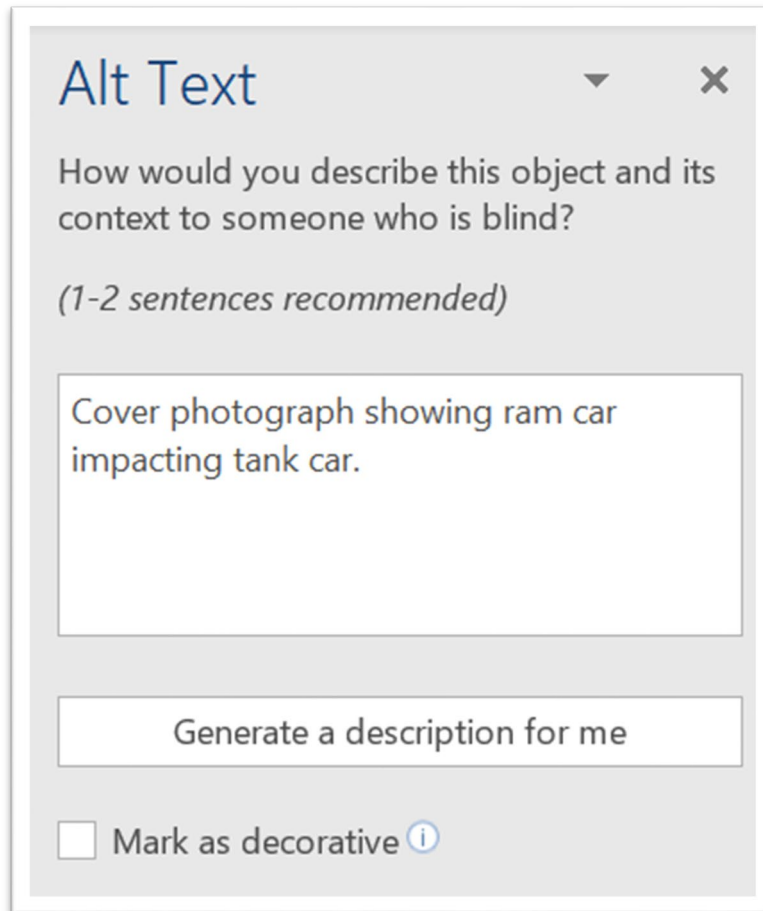
Figure 2. Step 2: Alt Text Description Example

2. In older versions of Microsoft Word, older images may not have the above features. As an alternative, right-click on the image and select Picture. In the dialogue box, click on the **Alt Text** tab to the far right of the box. Type or copy/paste the image's description into the box, and then click OK. See Figure 2(a) & (b).
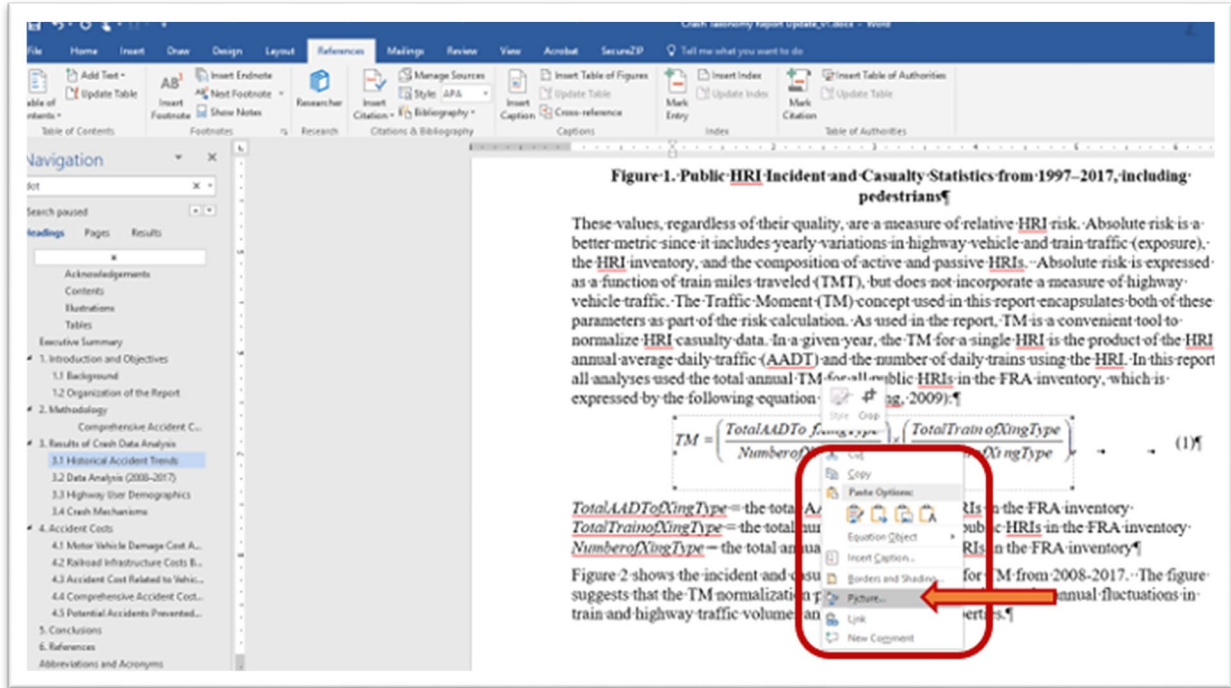
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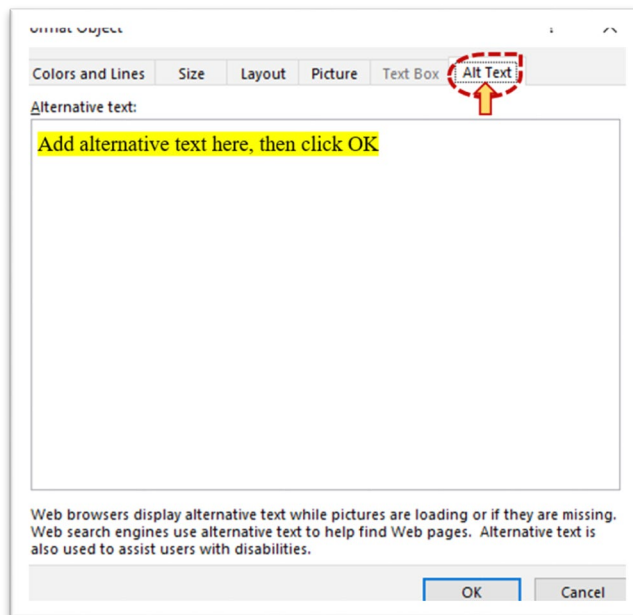**Figure 2(a). When the Figure is Older and Requires Alt Text**

**Figure 2(b). How to Add Alt Text to Older Figure**

Making Tables Accessible

1. Make sure to add a caption for the table as well.

2. When creating the table make sure that there are repeated header rows by highlighting the rows that should be the header. Right click in the table and select 'Table Properties,' then the **Row** tab. Check mark "Repeat as header row at the top of each page," then go to the **Alt Text** tab in the same dialogue box and add the appropriate description of the table, as shown in Figure 3.

3. Alternatively, alt text can also be added by the 'Table Tools' ribbon by making sure to click in the table, then select 'Table Tools' from the top ribbon, then the **Layout** tab, and "Repeat Header Rows" shown in Figure 4. See Table 1 for additional requirements regarding tables.

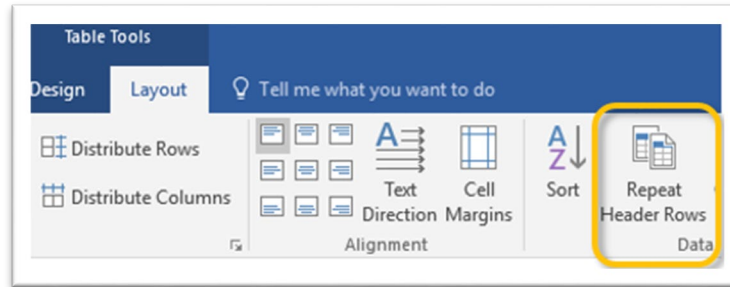**Table 1. Sample Table**

| Making Tables Accessible	
No merged cells nor split cells	Reading order should be left to right
Proper captions	Designated rows
No blank cells, see Figure 5	Add alt text including title, see Figure 3 (right)
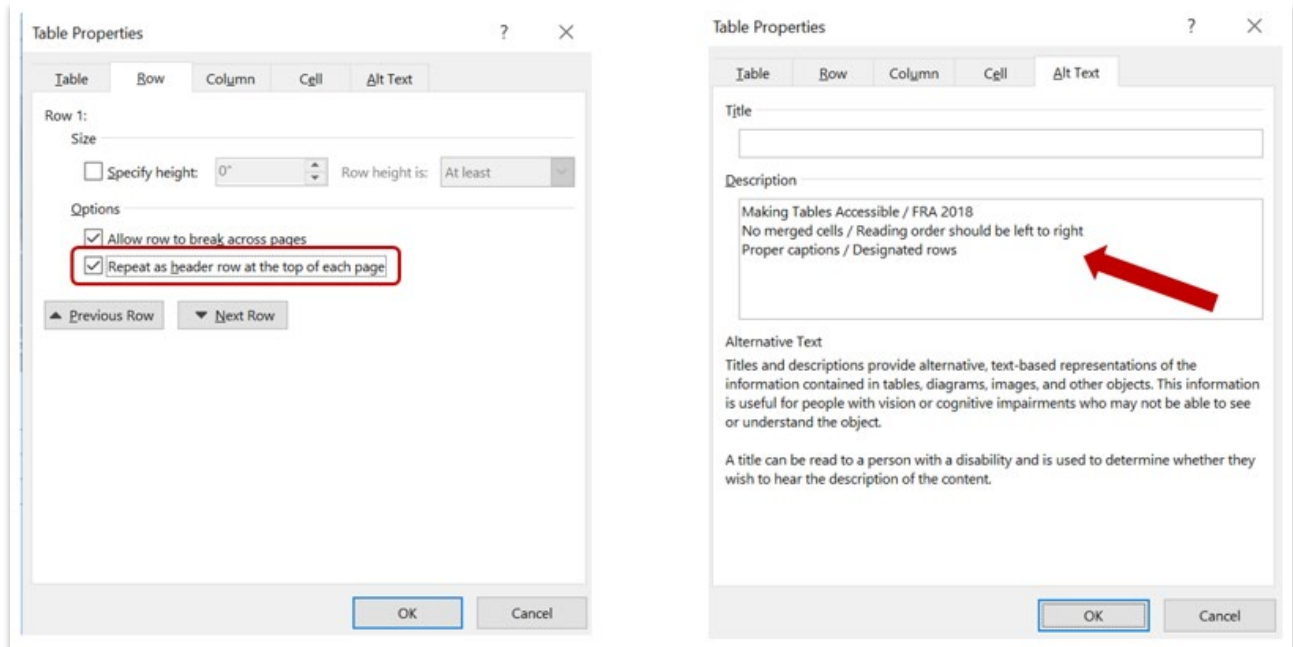
Figure 3. Selecting Repeat Headers (Left) and Adding Alt Text (Right)

Figure 4. Another Way to Add Repeating Headers

Additionally, tables should not have blank rows or columns as shown in Figure 5(b). If you are unable to see them, turn on your paragraph symbol, i.e., ¶, in the **Home** ⟶ *Paragraph* ribbon, see Figure 5(a). Highlight the row or column, right click, and select delete row <u>or</u> column if there is an unnecessary blank row. Note that the Technical Editors are aware that some tables are structured a certain way where a blank cell is necessary, but in Figure 5(b), it was not.
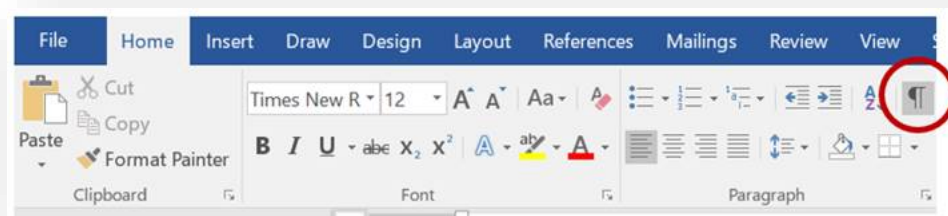
(a)

Table 34. Monte Carlo Simulation Results for 6.3.11.5.ENG2 Emergency Brake Backup Enabled¶			
Train Type¤	Probability of Stopping short of Target↵ (%)¤	Probability of Stopping Short of Performance Limit <30 mph (%)¤	Probability of Stopping Short of Performance Limit >=30 mph (%)¤
Unit¤	99.66¤	14.75¤	18.39¤
Manifest¤	99.90¤	17.87¤	19.51¤
Intermodal¤	99.95¤	18.15¤	14.94¤
¤	¤	¤	¤

Blank rows

(b)

Figure 5. To See Blank Rows in Tables, Turn on Paragraph Symbols

Equations are not read by the Adobe Reader, as shown **HERE**, then the equations should be captured in tables with designated headers and alt text must be added to the table in Table Properties with the most accurate description of the equation (see Figure 3 through Figure 4, and Figure 5); or the equations can be captured as figures.

$$a_m(t) = \big(U_r(x_m,t) - U_t(x_m,t)\big)K_p(m) + \Big(\dot{U}_r(x_m,t) - \dot{U}_t(x_m,t)\Big)D_p(m) \tag{1}$$

$$b_m(t) = \big(U_b(x_m,t) - U_a(x_m,t)\big)K_b(m)$$
$$+ \Big(\dot{U}_b(x_m,t) - \dot{U}_a(x_m,t)\Big)D_b(m) \tag{2}$$

$$\big(U_r(x_m,t) - U_t(x_m,t)\big)K_p(m) + \Big(\dot{U}_r(x_m,t) - \dot{U}_t(x_m,t)\Big)D_p(m)$$
$$- \Big[\big(U_t(x_m,t) - U_b(x_m,t)\big)K_b(m) + \Big(\dot{U}_t(x_m,t) - \dot{U}_b(x_m,t)\Big)D_b(m)\Big]$$
$$= M_t(m)\ddot{U}_t(x_m,t) \tag{3}$$

$$\big(U_t(x_m,t) - U_b(x_m,t)\big)K_b(m) + \Big(\dot{U}_t(x_m,t) - \dot{U}_b(x_m,t)\Big)D_b(m)$$
$$- \Big[\big(U_b(x_m,t) - U_a(x_m,t)\big)K_b(m) + \Big(\dot{U}_b(x_m,t) - \dot{U}_a(x_m,t)\Big)D_b(m)\Big]$$
$$= M_b(m)\ddot{U}_b(x_m,t) \tag{4}$$

**Figure 6. Workaround for Equations if Not Read by Adobe Reader**

This method will be accepted by the Technical Editors for the reasons stated above, no other means of using tables for formatting purposes can take place.

How to Properly Caption Tables, Figures, and Equations

A proper caption is not a complete sentence, short, and simple. Use the automatic captioning tool in MS Word, by going to the **Home** ⟶ *References* ribbon and choosing the 'Insert Caption' option. The default is set to 'Figure' and the numbering is defaulted to start with a single digit shown in Figure 7(a). This is the method used for captioning tables as well, however, the label will need to be manually chosen as 'Table' within the drop-down. Another way to caption an image is to right click within the image and choose Insert Caption as shown in Figure 7(b). Refer to captions provided in Figure 1 through Figure 6 for examples of length, description, and conciseness.

(a)
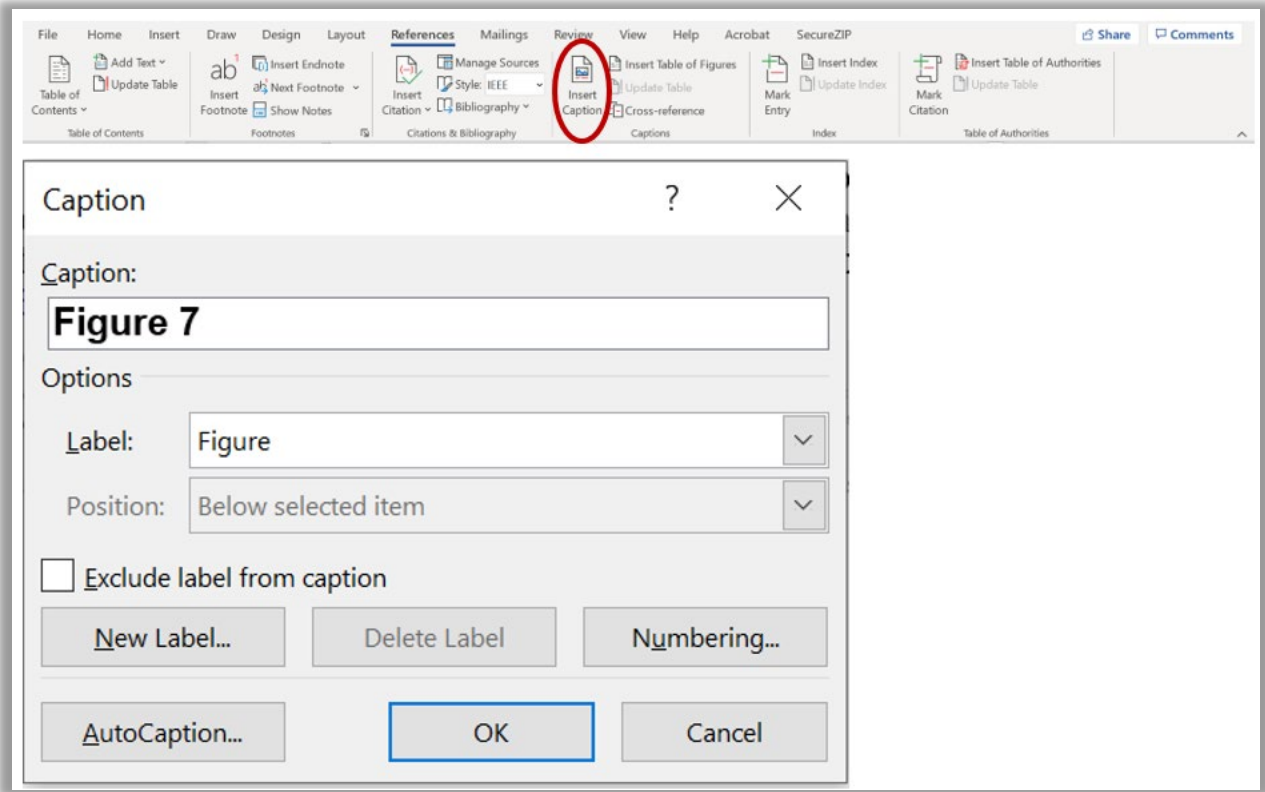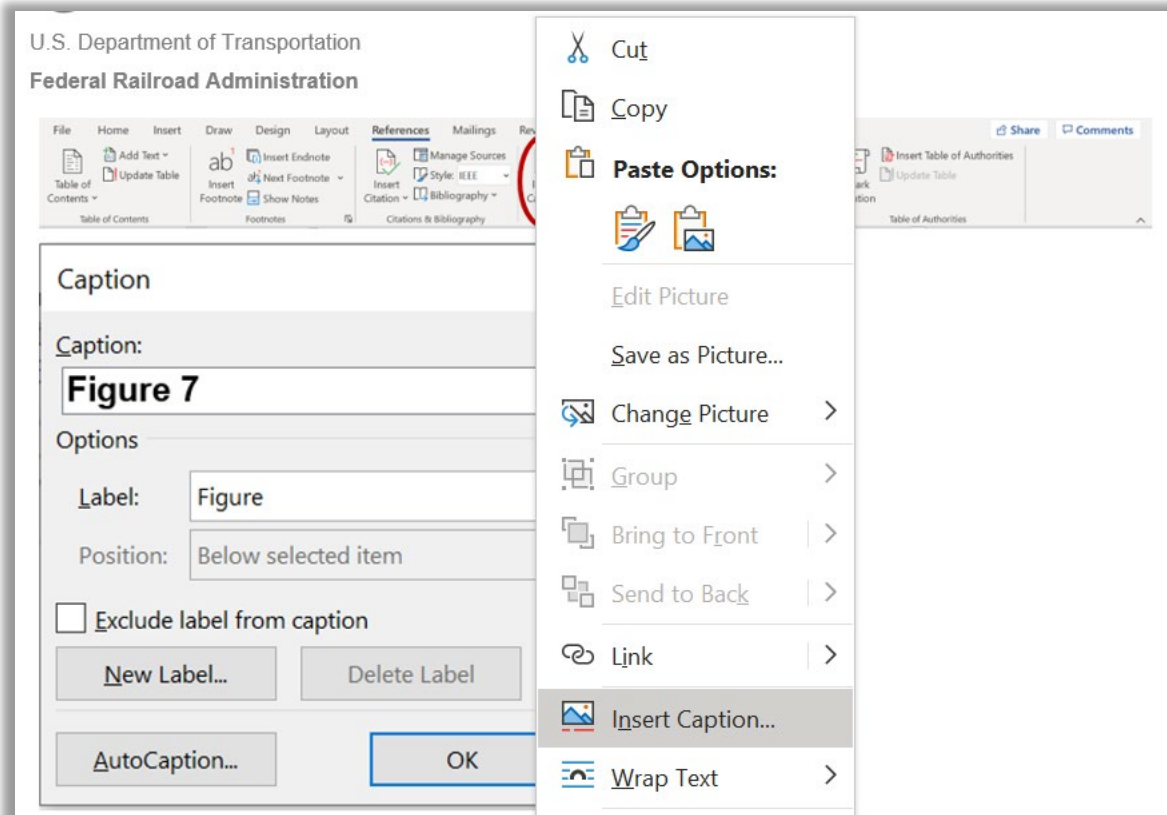
(b)

Figure 7. (a) How to Insert Caption for Figure via References ribbon; (b) Right Click on the Image