CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
BAKERSFIELD ™

Sign Specifications and Guidelines

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Architectural signs are those that inform about, direct to, or identify architectural elements of the campus. They include parking signs, directional signs of all kinds, signs that inform about various programs and services and signs that identify buildings, enclosed spaces and rooms. Life safety signs are also included. Other architectural signs inform about, direct to and identify accessible elements such as accessible entrances, restrooms and telephone equipment.

Both the federal and state governments have specific guidelines and codes that regulate the design and installation of architectural signs. Signs that do not follow these guidelines and codes are considered barriers and should gradually be replaced. In addition, all signs that are added must, by law, comply with those guidelines and codes.

When we speak of signs, we are referring to the portions of signs which contain the message that gives the regulated information. Logos, decorations, frames and the names of individual occupants of offices are not required to comply.

There are four standards which regulate all architectural signs:

1. All such signs must have non-glare surfaces and characters for the regulated portions. *(Exception: Parking and traffic signs may be reflective.)*

2. All such signs must have very high light to dark or dark to light contrast between background and characters for the regulated portions (70 percent minimum).

3. All regulated sign characters must have specific character and stroke widths in proportion to their height. (Character width between 100 percent and 60 percent of height, measured at base of "X," and stroke width between 20 percent and 10 percent of height measured across stroke of "I").

4. Where signs can be touched, all edges and corners must be eased or rounded. Signs projecting from poles must have radius corners as well as eased edges.

All enclosed rooms and spaces must be identified with signs which include raised characters and braille.

1. Individual offices, suites and rooms. (Raised number or letter only, if provided. The room function or occupant does not have to be tactile, unless there is no number.)

2. Restrooms.

3. Enclosed stairways, areas for evacuation assistance and exits.

4. Floor level number or letter for enclosed stairwell or elevator hoistway (jamb).

5. Floor level number, letter or symbol for elevator control panel.

In addition to the four universal sign standards, tactile signs must follow the following standards:

1. Raised characters are uppercase, sans serif, from 5/8 inch to 2 inches high.

2. Braille to be contracted (grade 2) Braille. Dots within cells to be 1/10 inch apart on center. Cells to be 2/10 inch apart, on center, measured from the second column in the first cell to the first column in the second cell in the same word.

Visual signs (signs which inform or direct, rather than identify), must follow the following standards, in addition to the four universal sign rules:

1. Characters are upper and lowercase, except where otherwise required by code, and sized to be seen from the proper viewing distance. Characters on signs mounted 80 inches or more above the floor are to be 3 inches high, measured by the uppercase letter "X."

2. Signs must not project more than four inches into the path of travel. Such signs must be mounted 80 inches above the floor or ground.

3. The following signs are typical of visual signs which must comply with these standards:

   a. Signs with arrows which direct to specific buildings, rooms, spaces, programs and services.
   b. Informational signs with names of buildings, divisions, departments, programs and services.
   c. Fire Dept. required life safety signs such as evacuation plans, 12 inch stairwell code signs, and fire extinguisher.
   d. Regulatory signs such as "No Smoking" signs and "No Food or Drink" signs.
   e. Cautionary or warning signs.
   f. Hours of operation and other signs with useful information.

Signs that inform about, direct to, or identify accessible elements must include the appropriate symbol of accessibility. They must be mounted at decision points, or junctions, so that steps do not need to be retraced.

1. International Symbol of Accessibility (wheelchair pictogram) for accessible parking, exterior or interior path of travel when it diverges from the regular pedestrian pathway, entrances, seating, check stands and restrooms.

2. International Symbol for Hearing Loss (ear profile with bar) for assistive listening systems. This sign must include text with information about availability.

3. TTY Symbol for text telephones (keyboard with handset).

4. Volume Control Symbol for volume control phones. (handset with sound waves).

BEST PRACTICES

Best practices is the term used to specify quality for both visual and tactile signs. When best practices are used, the signs may be more attractive, sturdier, with higher-quality materials and fabrication techniques and will be more readable for both visual and tactile readers. The standard for CSUB signs which has been established includes some best practices, as well as some specific material and fabrication techniques which add to the quality and longevity of the signs.

1. **Plaque material for tactile signs:** The sign faces are to be manufactured of Mitsubishi brand Shinkolite non-glare acrylic, 1/8 inch thick. 1/8 inch thick Sintra™ or acrylic may be used for backing in "window" insert signs.

2. **Tactile characters:** Computer routed from 1/32 inch material with integral color. All characters to have beveled edges. Characters are uppercase, Gill Sans Regular. All characters to have 1/8 inch minimum space between top surfaces of two closest points of adjacent characters.

3. **Braille:** Contracted (grade 2) braille to be fabricated by the "Raster™" method, using clear acrylic beads. Braille should follow Title 24 specifications. No uppercase indicators are to be used except for individual letters, initials, acronyms and beginnings of proper nouns.

4. Plaque material for interior visual signs:
Signs below 80 inches above the floor are to be manufactured of Mitsubishi brand Shinkolite non-glare acrylic, 1/8 inch thick, with subsurface color, text and graphics. Signs 80 inches or more above the floor may also be manufactured of Sintra™ with surface paint, text and graphics. Visual "window" insert signs, such as evacuation plans, directories and directionals may have backers of Sintra™ or acrylic.

5. Plaque material for exterior visual signs:
a. For signs installed on glass: 1/4 inch Sintra™ with surface paint, text and graphics.
b. For small exterior signs, .080 aluminum, flat panels with matte acrylic automotive enamel paint. Surface text and graphics.
c. For large exterior signs, reverse .125 aluminum pans, 2 inches deep. Matte finish polyurethane paint. Surface text and graphics.

6. Interior inserts are paper. Exterior inserts are polycarbonate.

7. Vinyl text and graphics are computer cut from high performance, 2 mil vinyl. Text is Gill Sans Regular or SemiBold. Except where required by code, text is upper and lower case.

Design Notes

1. Most interior and exterior signs are CSUB blue (Pantone 661) with CSUB gold (Pantone 123) gold stripe. Text and graphics are bright white.

2. Window sign inserts are computer printed on white paper and can be color or black and white. Building plan, evacuation plan or site plan can also be printed in color or black and white.

3. Interior signs have radius corners.

4. Most exterior signs do not have radius corners.

5. Send design questions to **brand@csub.edu**

The primary CSUB logo (horizontal) should always be used first:

If horizontal space is limited, use the stacked (vertical) version.

The CSUB mark may be used if the sign is not at a main campus entry point:

FONTS

COLORS

Most interior signs should use Gill Sans Regular.

Large exterior signs should use Gill Sans SemiBold.

Gill Sans Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ 0123456789!

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789!

Gill Sans SemiBold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ 0123456789!

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 0123456789!

CSUB Blue	CSUB Gold
PANTONE 661	**PANTONE 123**
RGB: 0, 53, 148	RGB: 255, 199, 44
CMYK: 100, 81, 0, 13	CMYK: 0, 16, 89, 0
HSL: 219, 100, 29	HSL: 44, 100, 59
HEX: 003594	HEX: FFC72C

100: Room or Space Number or Name Signs

These signs have the main identifying element in tactile characters accompanied by braille. When there is a tactile number, the name, function or occupant can be included on a printed insert, or in the case of an exterior sign, applied in permanent letters to the second surface of the sign face.

101 - Small interior room ID signs
- Size: 8"w x 8"h
- Plain paper insert
- 3/4"h tactile characters
- 1/8"h gold stripe
- Grade 2 braille

102 - Large interior room ID signs
- Size: 12"w x 8"h
- Plain paper insert
- 3/4"h tactile characters
- 1/8"h gold stripe
- Grade 2 braille

103a - Number/letter only signs
- Size: 6"w x 3 1/2"h
- 3/4"h tactile characters
- 1/8"h gold stripes
- Grade 2 braille

103b - Braille/tactile signs - stair level
- Size: 3"w x 3"h
- 3/4"h tactile characters
- Grade 2 braille

103c

103c - Braille/tactile signs - hoistway
- Size: 4"w x 4"h
- 2"h tactile characters
- Grade 2 braille
- White text on black

103d

103d - Braille/tactile signs - elevator control panel
- Size: 1 1/4"w x 1 1/4"h
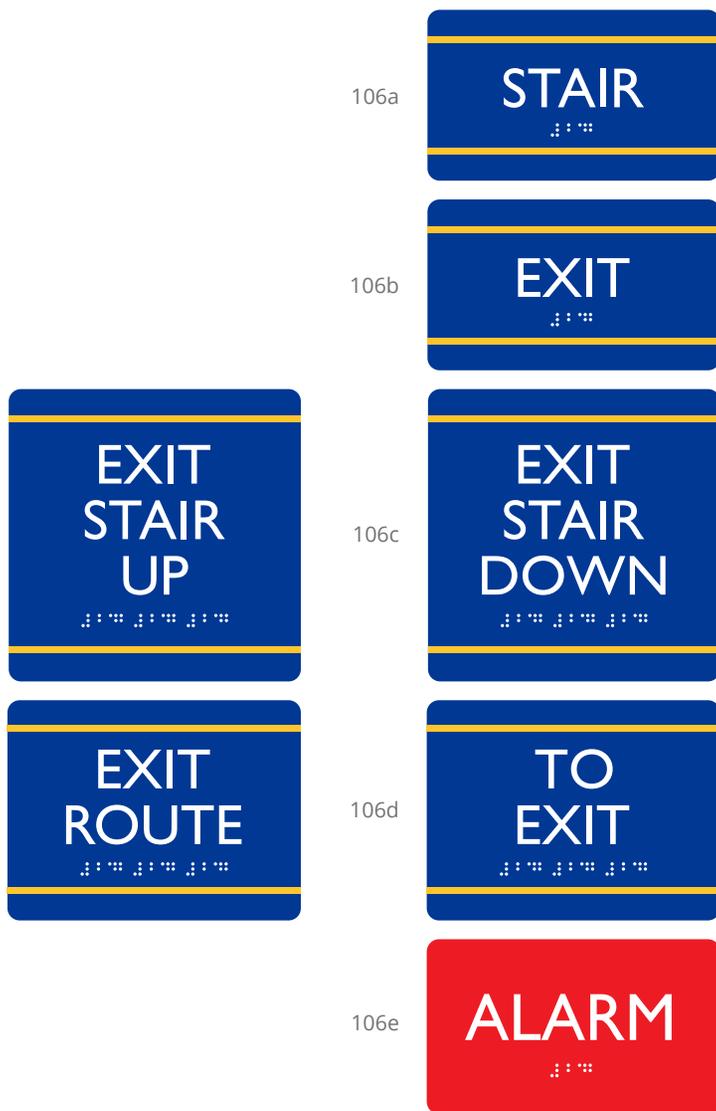- 5/8" h tactile characters
- Grade 2 braille
- White text on black

104

CONFERENCE

104 - Braille/tactile signs - name/function
- Size: 9"w x 3 1/2"h (width can vary if needed)
- 3/4"h tactile characters (all caps)
- 1/8"h gold stripes
- Grade 2 braille

105

MEN   WOMEN   RESTROOM

RESTROOM

ALL GENDER RESTROOM

105 - Braille/tactile signs - restrooms
- Men/Women with pictogram size: 6"w x 9"h
- Restroom with pictogram size: 7"w x 9"h
- Restroom size: 6"w x 6"h
- All gender size: 8"w x 4 1/2"h
- 5"h pictograms
- 3/4" h tactile characters (all caps)
- 1/8"h gold stripe
- Grade 2 braille

106a - Braille/tactile signs - stair
- Size: 6"w x 3 1/2"h
- 3/4"h tactile characters (all caps)
- 1/8"h gold stripes
- Grade 2 braille

106b - Braille/tactile signs - exit
- Size: 6"w x 3 1/2"h
- 3/4"h tactile characters (all caps)
- 1/8"h gold stripes
- Grade 2 braille

106c - Braille/tactile signs - exit stair (or ramp)
- Size: 6"w x 6"h
- 3/4"h tactile characters (all caps)
- 1/8"h gold stripes
- Grade 2 braille

106d - Braille/tactile signs - exit route/to exit
- Size: 6"w x 4 1/2"h
- 3/4"h tactile characters (all caps)
- 1/8"h gold stripes
- Grade 2 braille

106e - Braille/tactile signs - alarm
- Size: 6"w x 3 1/2"h
- 3/4"h tactile characters (all caps)
- Grade 2 braille

106a — STAIR

106b — EXIT

106c — EXIT STAIR UP / EXIT STAIR DOWN

106d — EXIT ROUTE / TO EXIT

106e — ALARM

200: Interior signs for departments, programs or services, visual only (no braille)
These non-tactile signs are mounted on walls, above doors, or as hanging or projecting signs to inform people of the locations of individual departments, programs or services.

201

Credentials & Graduate Studies Office

201 - Interior wall signs, mounted below 80" from floor
- Size: 42"w x 12"h
- 2 1/2"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/4"h gold stripes

202

Credentials & Graduate Studies Office

202 - Interior wall signs, mounted 80" or higher from floor
- Size: 42"w x 14"h
- 3"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/4"h gold stripes

203

Credentials & Graduate Studies Office

203 - Hanging ceiling signs, mounted 80" or higher from floor
- Size: 42"w x 14"h
- 3"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/4"h gold stripes
- Double-sided

204

Counseling and Testing

204 - Projecting signs, mounted 80" or higher from floor
- Size: 20"w x 10"h
- 2 1/2"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/4"h gold stripes
- Double-sided

300: Exterior Signs for Buildings, Departments, Programs or Services

These non-tactile signs are mounted on walls, above doors, projecting from buildings, mounted on poles, posts or footings to inform people of the locations of buildings, departments, programs or services.

301a | **Credentials & Graduate Studies**

301a - Small exterior signs, mounted below 80" from floor
- Size: 32"w x 12"h
- 2 1/2"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/2"h gold stripe

301b | **Faculty Teaching and Learning Center**

301b - Division/program wall signs
- Size: 48"w x 12"h
- 3"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/2"h gold stripe

301c | **Classroom Building**

301c - Small satellite building identification signs
- Size: 9'w x 3'h
- 7"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1"h gold stripe

301d | **University Advancement**

301d - Standard large building identification signs
- Size: 12'w x 4'h
- 10"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1"h gold stripe

302

CSU Bakersfield

Children's Center

303a

Business Development Center

302 - Pole or post signs
- Size: 60"w x 36"h
- 5"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 2 1/2"h smaller text
- 1"h gold stripe

303a - Pylon monument signs
- Size: 48"w x 78"h
- 5"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1"h gold stripe

303b

Science III

303b - Low monument signs
- Size: 72"w x 36"h
- 7"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1"h gold stripe

303c

Science III

303c - Tall monument signs
- Size: 72"w x 48"h
- 7"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1"h gold stripe

Campus Map

304c - Pylon campus map signs - back-lit
- Size: 28"w x 75"h
- 2"h characters (Campus Map)
- 3/8"h gold stripe

Notes:
- Single-sided, back-lit
- Map opening is 20 1/2"w x 30 3/4"h
- 5" thick
- Top angle goes from 72" to 75"
- Gold stripe bleeds to right

CSUB

LOT

E

Parking Permit
or Fee
Required

Park in
Designated
Spaces Only

CVC 21113(a)

LOT

E

Parking Permit
or Fee
Required

Park in
Designated
Spaces Only

CVC 21113(a)

304d - Pylon parking lot identifier signs
- Size: 28"w x 86"h
- 2 1/2"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 18"h lot identifier character (E)
- 3/8"h gold stripe

Notes:
- Double-sided
- 3" thick
- Top angle goes from 83" to 86"
- Top of large lot character is 72" from ground
- Gold stripe bleeds to right

305 - Campus entrance monuments - primary logo only
- Size: varies
- Logo: full color, primary version
- Material: 1" thick acrylic

Notes:
- CSUB or stacked versions may be used if space is limited
- Single color applications may be used if background color is prohibitive to readability

306 - Satellite campus signs
- Size: varies and will be determined based on individual campus needs
- Logo: full color, primary version or unit forward version
- Material: 1" thick acrylic

Notes:

On satellite campuses, there may be a need to identify buildings and entrances, particularly if the campus is shared with other entities or in shared office space. The Primary logo or unit forward logo may be used in these instances. Directional signs may also be used if necessary, but should follow the guidelines in this document.

These instances require prior approval from the facilities and marketing and communication groups.

Examples:

- Antelope Valley Campus

307 - Business partner exterior signs
- Size: varies

Notes:

Third-party vendors or business partners that are independent of CSUB may apply their logos on building interiors and exteriors per their individual brand guidelines.

These instances require prior approval from the facilities and marketing and communication groups.

Examples:

- Starbucks
- Which-wich
- Follette (`Runner Bookstore)
- Aramark (`Runner Café and `Runner Express)

400: Accessibility Signs and Title 24 Restroom Door Signs
These non-tactile signs are mounted, for both interior and exterior locations, on doors, walls and poles. The geometric door signs do not indicate accessibility, but identify the restrooms for gender. However, they may be used as a base for the accessibility symbol when the restroom is accessible. In all other cases, the signs in this section identify, inform about or direct to accessible features and elements. **ISA = International Symbol of Accessibility.**

401a

401b
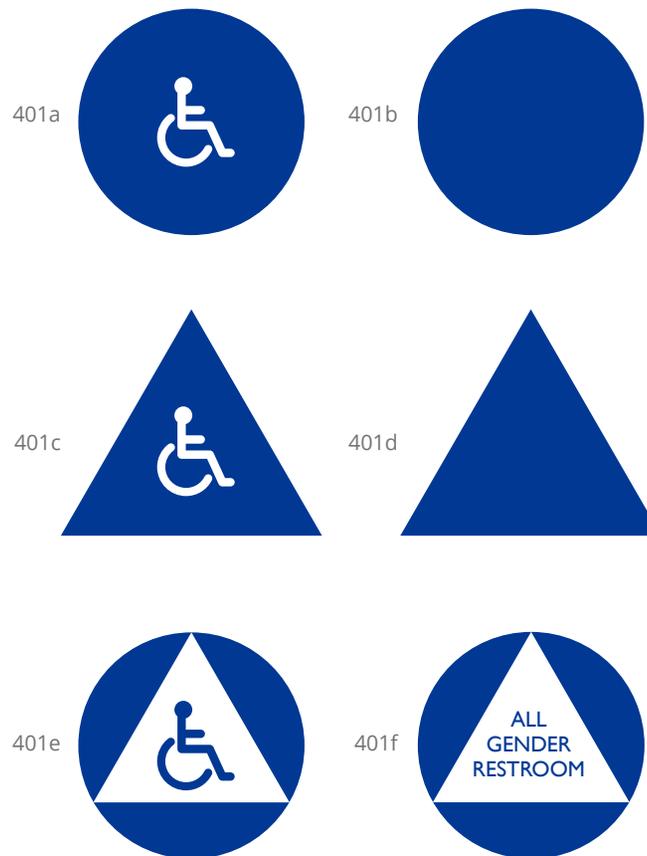
401a/b - Geometric women's restroom door signs
- Size: 12"h circle
- Accessible (a) and not accessible (b)
- 4"h ISA on accessible version

401c

401d

401c/d - Geometric men's restroom door signs
- Size: 12"h triangle
- Accessible (c) and not accessible (d)
- 4"h ISA on accessible version

401e

401f

ALL GENDER RESTROOM

401e/f - Geometric all gender restroom door signs
- Size: 12"h circle
- Accessible (e) and not accessible (f)
- 4"h ISA on accessible version
- 3/4" h characters (all caps) on all gender sign

Accessibility and title 24

(400 series)

402a

402b

402c

402d

402e

Ramp

Ramp

No Smoking

Ramp

Nearest Accessible Restroom in Science Building

402a - ISA as a decal or vinyl symbol

- Size varies

402b - ISA on acrylic or aluminum substrate signs

- Size varies

402c - ISA + No Smoking combination signs

- Size varies

402d - ISA with arrow and/or informational text signs

- Size varies
- On acrylic or aluminum substrate

402e - ISA with informational text signs

- Size varies
- On acrylic or aluminum substrate

403a

403a - TTY (TeleTypewriter symbol) signs
- Size: 6"w x 6"h minimum

403b

TTY Available on Third Floor

TTY Available on Third Floor

403b - TTY with arrow and/or informational text signs
- Size: 8"w x 12"h or 14"w x 6"h

404
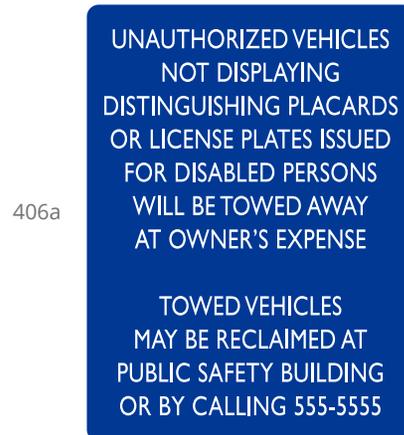

404 - Volume control signs
- Size: 6"w x 6"h minimum

405

Assistive Listening System Available

405 - Assistive listening signs
- Size: 12"w x 6"h or 14"w x 6"h

Assistive Listening System Available at Front Desk

(400 series)

406a

UNAUTHORIZED VEHICLES
NOT DISPLAYING
DISTINGUISHING PLACARDS
OR LICENSE PLATES ISSUED
FOR DISABLED PERSONS
WILL BE TOWED AWAY
AT OWNER'S EXPENSE

TOWED VEHICLES
MAY BE RECLAIMED AT
PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
OR BY CALLING 555-5555

406b — PARKING ONLY
406c — VAN ACCESSIBLE
406d — PASSENGER LOADING

406a - Parking - tow away signs
- Size: 18"w x 24"h
- 1"h characters (all upper case)

406b - ISA accessible parking only signs
- Size: 8"w x 12"h
- 5 1/2"h ISA
- 2"h characters (all upper case)

406c - ISA van accessible parking signs
- Size: 8"w x 12"h
- 5 1/2"h ISA
- 2"h characters (all upper case)

406d - ISA passenger loading parking signs
- Size: 8"w x 12"h
- 5 1/2"h ISA
- 2"h characters (all upper case)

500: Directories, maps and floor plans

These non-tactile signs are mounted, for both interior and exterior locations, on doors, walls and poles. Maps, levels, floors names, room numbers, departments and other information can be included on paper inserts to allow for easy updates. Exterior inserts should be printed on polycarbonate to withstand the elements.

501a

Vice President	125
Business & Administrative Services	127
Personnel	129
Student Account Receivables	132
Cashiering	137

501b

Vice President	125
Business & Administrative Services	127
Personnel	129

paper map insert goes here

501c

**Restrooms
100, 101, & 112** ▶

Exit this area to enter 113 - 116
▼

paper map insert

goes here
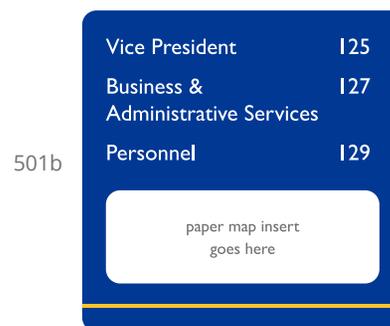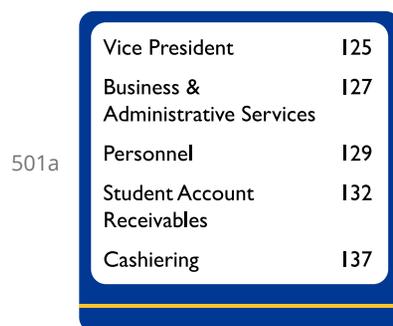
501a - Small wall directory signs, interior
- Size: 13 1/2"w x 13 1/2"h
- Paper insert
- 5/8"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/8"h gold stripe

501b - Small wall directory signs, with floor plan, interior
- Size: 13 1/2"w x 13 1/2"h
- Paper insert
- 5/8"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/8"h gold stripe

501c - Small wall floor plan signs with directions, interior
- Size: 18"w x 24"h
- Paper insert
- 1 1/4"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/4"h gold stripe

501d - Large window directory signs with floor plan, interior

- Size: 48"w x 48"h
- Paper inserts (12)
- 1/2"h gold stripes

502a - Small wall directory signs, exterior

- Size: 13 1/2"w x 13 1/2"h
- Polycarbonate insert
- 5/8"h characters (upper and lower case)
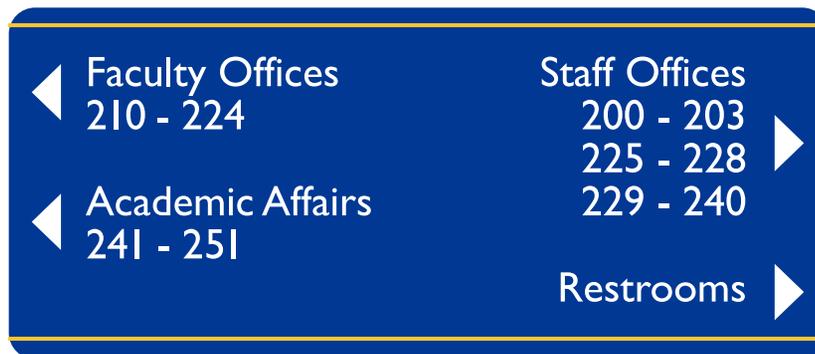- 1/8"h gold stripe

600 Directional Signs, Interior and Exterior

These signs are in addition to signs that specifically direct to accessible features and elements. They provide directions to specific rooms, offices, buildings and campus locations and services. Signs should be mounted at eye level unless otherwise noted.

601a

◄ University Advancement

Health Center Pharmacy ►

601b

◄ Counseling & Testing

Pharmacy ►

◄ Faculty Offices 210 - 224

Staff Offices 200 - 203 225 - 228 229 - 240 ►

◄ Academic Affairs 241 - 251

Restrooms ►

601a - Interior wall directional signs
- Size: 18"w x 15"h
- 1 1/2"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/4"h gold stripes

601b - Interior wall directional signs, changeable
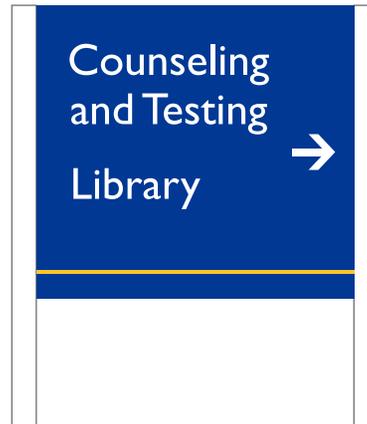- Size: 18"w x 15"h
- 1 1/2"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/4"h gold stripes
- Paper insert

601c - Interior wall directional signs, large
- Size: 56"w x 24"h
- 2"h characters (upper and lower case
- 1/4"h gold stripes

CSUB

◄ **225 and 226**
Men's
Restroom

Emergency
Exit

231 - 239 ►
Women's
Restroom

Emergency
Exit

◄ **109 - 123**
Teacher Education
Reading Literacy Lab
Restrooms
Emergency Exit

**Procurement
Children's Center** ►

601d - Interior wall directional signs, small
- Size: 12"w x 12"h
- 1"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/8"h gold stripes

601e - Interior wall directional signs
- Size: 18"w x 12"h
- 1"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/8"h gold stripes

602a - Interior suspended directional signs
- Size: 48"w x 14"h
- 3"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/4"h gold stripes
- Suspend from ceiling at least 80" above the floor

Counseling and Testing ▶

602b - Interior projecting directional signs
- Size: 20"w x 10"h
- 2 1/2"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/4"h gold stripes
- Project from wall at least 80" above the floor

Classroom C401 ↗

603a - Exterior wall directional signs, small
- Size: 13"w x 12"h
- 1 1/4"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/8"h gold stripe
- 2"w x 2"h arrow

University Counselor Training Clinic ↖

603b - Exterior wall directional signs, large
- Size: 26"w x 24"h
- 2 3/4"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/4"h gold stripe
- 4"w x 4"h arrow

CSUB

Counseling and Testing

Library →

604a - Post-mounted exterior directional signs, small
- Size: 26"w x 24"h
- 2 1/2"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 1/4"h gold stripe
- 3 1/2"w arrow

Doré Theatre
Walter Stiern Library →

← Procurement
Children's Center
Dormitories

604b - Post-mounted exterior directional signs, large
- Size: 60"w x 38"h
- 2 3/4"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 3/4"h gold stripe
- 5"w arrow

CSUB

604c

↑

Dr. Jacquelyn A. Kegley Center for Student Success

← Business Development Center

Dezember Leadership Center

Extended University

Public Safety

Student Health Center

604d

↑ Children's Center

President's Office

Dezember Leadership Center

Extended University

→ Public Safety

Icardo Center

Athletic Fields

Heath Center

604c - Pylon directional signs - small
- Size: 28"w x 75"h
- 2"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 3/8"h gold stripe
- 3"w arrow

Notes:
- Double-sided
- 3" thick
- Top angle goes from 72" to 75"
- Gold stripe bleeds to right

604d - Pylon directional signs - large
- Size: 42"w x 86"h
- 2 3/4"h characters (upper and lower case)
- 3/8"h gold stripe
- 3 1/2"w arrow

Notes:
- Double-sided
- 3" thick
- Top angle goes from 83" to 86"
- Gold stripe bleeds to right

700: Non-tactile Life Safety Signs

These signs are in addition to the tactile exit-and floor-level signs listed in section 100. They are required by Title 19, chapter 10 of Title 24, or by the state fire code. The local fire authority may also have its own requirements.

EXIT

701 - Overhead exit signs
- Size: 11"w x 6 1/2"h
- Usually required to be illuminated

EXIT

702 - Low level exit signs
- Size: 11"w x 6 1/2"h
- Made of photoluminescent material

**STAIR 6
ROOF ACCESS
R
4 TO R**
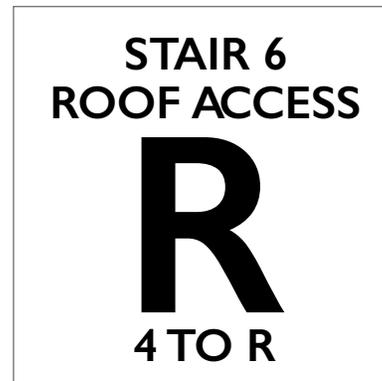
703 - Stairwell code signs
- Size: 12"w x 12"h
- 5 1/2"h large characters (upper case)
- 1"h small characters (upper case)
- Required in enclosed stairwells in buildings four or more stories high
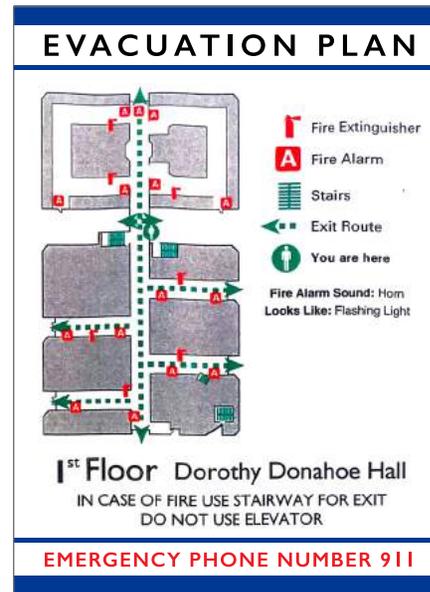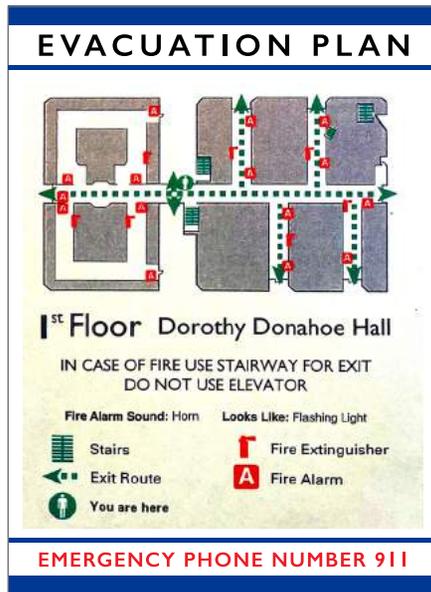
704 - Emergency evacuation plan signs
- Size: 11"w x 15"h
- Required in all buildings two stories or higher at main entrances, elevator lobbies and enclosed stairwells

CSUB

U.S. Access Board Technical Guide

The following pages are from the U.S. Access Board and explain the scoping and technical requirements in the ADA Standards for signs. More detail can be found here: https://www.access-board.gov/ada/guides/chapter-7-signs/

Appendix

U.S. ACCESS BOARD TECHNICAL GUIDE

Signs

This guide explains scoping and technical requirements in the ADA Standards for signs.
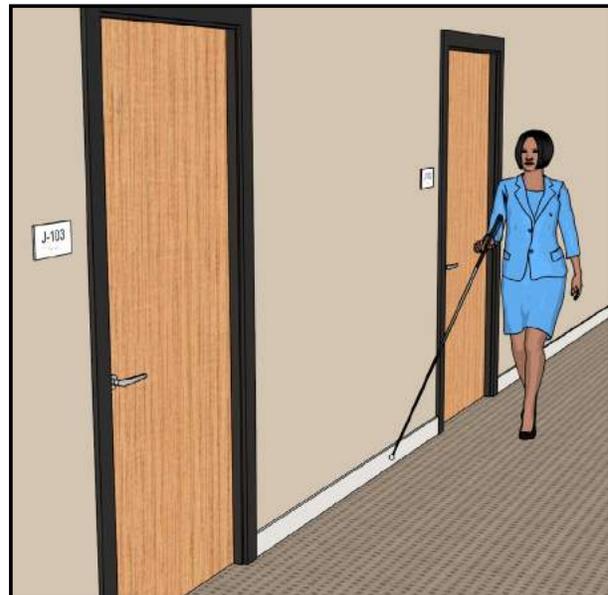
`123`

Required Compliance [§216]

The Standards require accessible signs that are used to identify certain accessible elements and spaces. Other types of signs, however, including room numbers and room labels, are covered only where they are provided. The Standards address visual and tactile content on signs, where provided.

The following types of signs are exempt and not required to meet visual and tactile requirements:

- temporary (posted for 7 days or less);
- building addresses and directories;
- occupant names and company names and logos;
- menus;
- seat or row designations in assembly areas; and
- signs in non-public areas of detention or correctional facilities.

Signs covered by the Standards must meet specifications for visual requirements so that they are accessible to people with low vision. Several categories of signs also must meet tactile requirements so that they are accessible to people who are blind or have low vision. Tactile requirements primarily apply to signs typically located at doorways because doorways provide a cue for locating signs by touch.

Doorways provide a tactile cue for locating signs.

The requirements in this guide apply to certain types of content on signs. There can be multiple types of content provided on a single sign to which different provisions, as described below, may apply. For example, a single sign may provide a room number, which would be required to be visual and tactile, the hours of operation, which is only required to be visual, and the name of the occupant, which does not have to be visual or tactile. Each type of content provided must be evaluated to determine how the content must be made accessible.
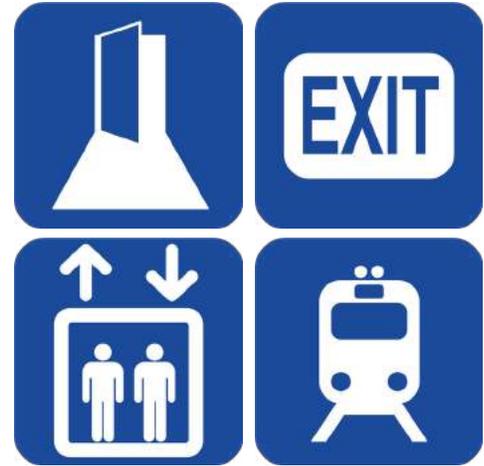
Signs

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Tactile Signs

Tactile requirements apply to these types of signs:

- interior and exterior signs identifying permanent rooms and spaces, where provided (§216.2);
- required door labels at exit stairways, exit passageways, and exit discharge (§216.4.1);
- required labels for floor levels, car controls, and emergency communication devices at elevators (§407.2.3.1, §407.2.3.2, §407.4.7.1.1, §407.4.9); and
- rail station identification signs at entrances and platforms or boarding areas (§810.6.1).

Designations of Permanent Rooms and Spaces [§216.2]

Signs that identify permanent rooms and spaces include:

- room and floor numbers or letters;
- room names; and
- labels for restrooms, locker rooms, cafeterias, libraries, conference rooms, mechanical rooms, and other permanent rooms or spaces.

Visual and tactile requirements apply to both interior and exterior signs labeling permanent rooms and spaces. However, exterior signs not located at the door to the space they serve do not have to be tactile but must meet visual requirements (§216.2, Ex. 1).

Directional and Informational Signs [§216.3]

Signs that provide direction to or information about interior spaces and facilities must meet visual requirements but are not required to be tactile. Examples of informational signs include instructions, rules of conduct, hours of operation, and similar content. Directional signs include all types of signs that provide direction to spaces and facilities. These requirements apply only where such signs are provided.

Required Accessibility Symbols [§216.5 - §216.11]

The Standards require certain spaces and elements be identified as accessible by providing signs that include International Symbols of:

- Accessibility;
- TTY, or Text Telephone which is a phone assistive device for people with hearing or speech impairments; or
- Access for Hearing Loss, which indicates availability of an assistive listening system.

Visual and Tactile Requirements on Single Sign

Tactile signs must have raised characters that are repeated in Grade 2 braille. In addition, they are subject to requirements for non-glare finish and color contrast for visual accessibility. Other information provided in addition to permanent room or space labels is not required to be raised or brailled but must meet visual criteria if informational or directional. Some information on such signs may be exempt, such as occupant names.

The required location of tactile signs is relatively uniform (i.e., beside or, where permitted, on doors) to make them easier to locate without vision. The height is limited to a specific range (48 inches – 60 inches) to facilitate reading by touch.

J-103

Braille is located below raised characters, including when text is multi-lined.

This sign includes exempt and informational content in addition to a permanent room label (room number).

Exempt
(occupant name, title)

Visual
(informational)

Tactile & Visual
(permanent room label)

Jill Smith
Director

Accounting

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*Exterior signs labelling permanent rooms and spaces that are not located at a doorway do not have to be tactile but must meet visual criteria.*

WESTGATE PLAZA

Means of Egress Signs [§216.4]

The Standards require that tactile and visual signs be provided to identify doors at exit stairways, exit passageways, and exit discharge. Exit passageways are horizontal fire resistance-rated components that lead to exit discharge or public ways. Exit discharge is the path from an exit to a public way.

Exit labels at other locations are not required to be tactile but must meet visual requirements. Life safety and building codes address the visibility and illumination of exit signs, which can also satisfy the visual requirements in the ADA Standards. At exit doors, the tactile requirements typically must be met on a separate sign.

½" – 2"
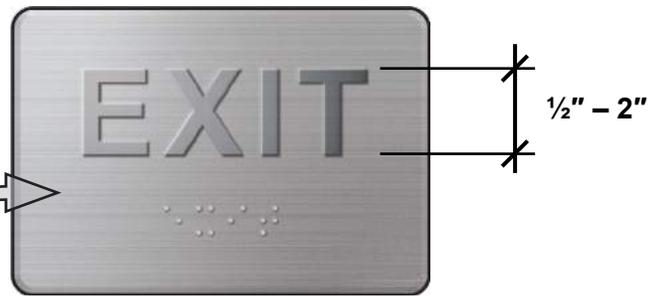
Separate Tactile Sign
When visual characters are provided on a separate sign (or separately on the same sign), tactile content does not need to meet finish and contrast requirements, and raised characters can have a slightly smaller character height (½ inch instead of ⅝ inch).

This stairway sign includes permanent space labels (stair and floor designations) that must be tactile and visual, as well as content that is required to be visual only (egress-related directions and information).
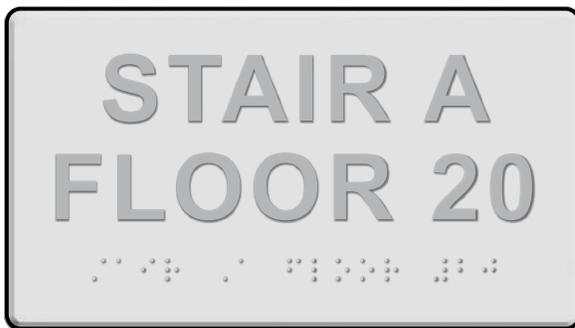
Tactile content on separate sign

STAIR A
FLOOR
20
1 THROUGH 25
DOWN TO 1ST FLOOR
FOR EXIT DISCHARGE
NO ROOF ACCESS
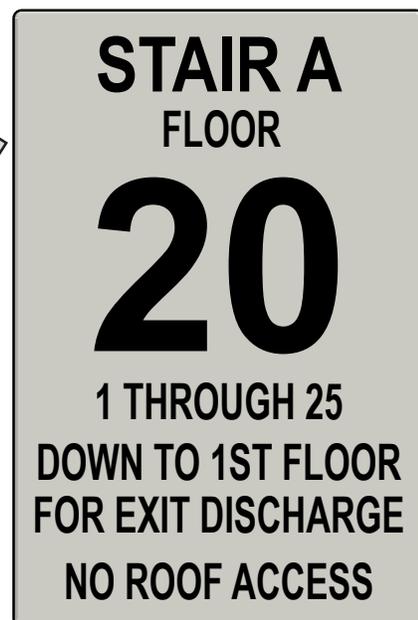
Directional signs, including those for means of egress, required by the applicable life safety code, must comply with the visual requirements for information and directional signs (§703.5). In addition, directions to accessible means of egress required by the International Building Code (IBC) must meet visual criteria (§216.4.3).

Areas of refuge are fire-resistance rated and smoke-protected areas where those persons who are unable to use stairs can register a call for evacuation assistance and await instructions or assistance. Required by the IBC in some buildings, areas of refuge must provide direct access to an exit stairway (or to an elevator equipped with standby power). Signs labeling areas of refuge must be tactile since they designate a permanent space.

Area of refuge signs can be incorporated into required exit signs.

Instructions on using the area of refuge under emergency conditions must be posted under the IBC [§1007.6.4 (2003) or §1003.2.13.5.4 (2000)]. These instructions must meet requirements for visual characters in the ADA Standards (§216.4.2) but are not required to be tactile. The IBC specifies the content for these signs.

Elevator Signs and Labels [§407]

The Standards require tactile signs (and, in some cases, symbols) at elevators, including labels for:

- floor designations at elevator hoistways (§407.2.3.1);
- destination-oriented elevator cars (§407.2.3.2);
- car control buttons (§407.4.7.1.1); and
- emergency communication devices (§407.4.9).

For signs at elevators, most of the criteria for raised and braille characters apply, but there are differences. For example, raised characters can be at least 2 inches high on hoistway floor level signs, and tactile content on control panels can be located outside the standard 48 inches – 60 inches mounting height. See Elevators and Platform Lifts Guide for more information.

Technical Requirements for Tactile Characters
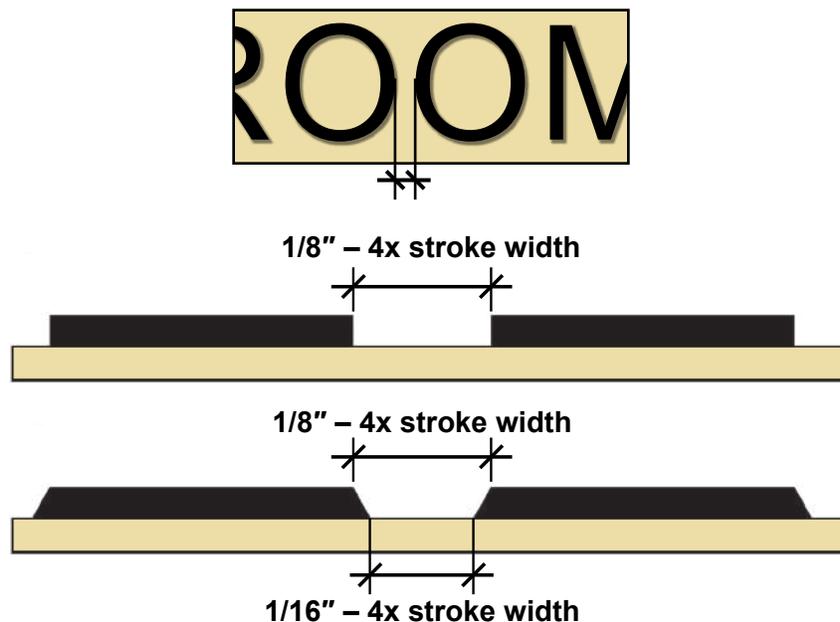
Raised Characters [§703.2]

Criteria for raised characters address: depth, case, style, character height and proportions, stroke thickness, and line and character spacing.

Characters 1/32" min, upper case, sans serif
(prohibited: italic, oblique, script, highly decorative or other unusual forms)

3/8″ min
(raised borders/
decorative elements)

5/8″ – 2″
(uppercase "I")

135% – 170%
of character height

non-glare finish
(raised characters
and background)

FAMILY RESTROOM

Grade 2 braille below
raised characters

Light-on-dark or dark-on-light contrast
between the background and raised
characters (but not braille)

3/8″ min
(raised borders/
decorative elements)

Note: If visual characters are provided on a separate sign, the tactile sign does not have to meet finish and contrast criteria and can have raised characters at ½ inch minimum height.

Character spacing, as measured between the two closest points of adjacent characters excluding word spaces, is specified for rectangular and non-rectangular cross sections.

ROOM

1/8″ – 4x stroke width

1/8″ – 4x stroke width

1/16″ – 4x stroke width

The stroke thickness of the uppercase letter "I" must be 15% maximum of the character height. Characters must be selected from fonts where the width of the uppercase letter "O" is 55% to 110% of the height of the uppercase letter "I." Raised character height must be from 1/2 inch minimum to 2 inches maximum. Where raised characters also serve as visual characters, the minimum height is 5/8 inch.
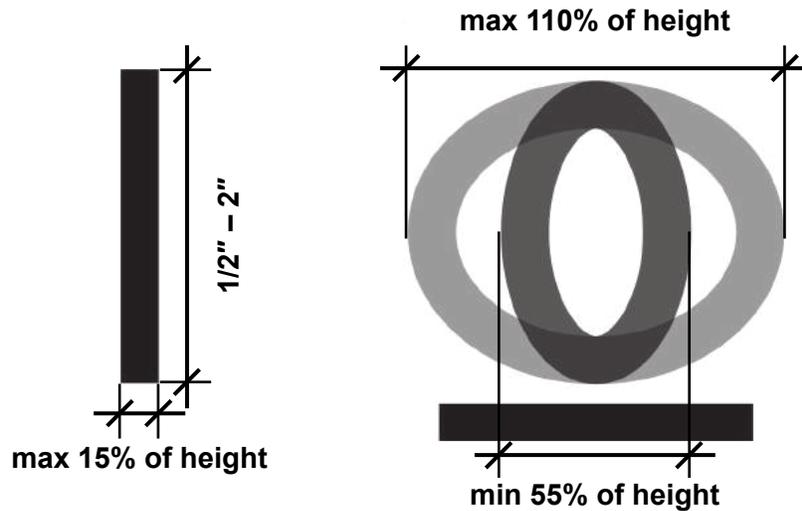
Recommendation: Where visual and tactile access is provided on the same sign, provide a stroke thickness no less than 10% of the height based on the uppercase letter "I" so that raised characters are sufficiently legible.

Finish and Contrast [§703.5.1]

When a single set of characters is used to meet requirements for raised and visual characters, the characters and their background must have a non-glare finish. Characters must contrast with their background with either light-on-dark or dark-on-light. A minimum level of color contrast is not specified, but the higher the contrast, the better, especially for people with low vision. Finish and contrast requirements do not apply to braille.


Dark-on-light contrast
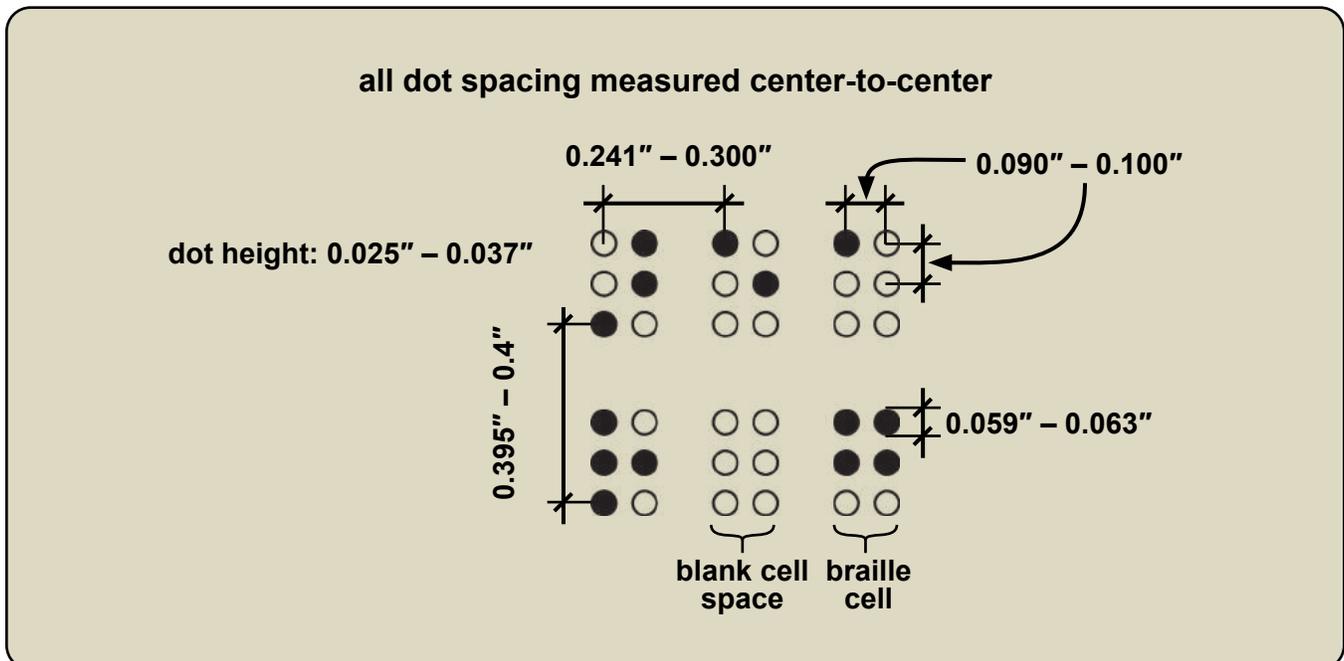

Light-on-dark contrast

Braille [§703.3]

The content of raised characters also must be provided in contracted or "Grade 2" braille. This type of braille uses the same characters as standard braille but also includes characters to represent common words and letter combinations. Braille is read with a light sweeping touch, and braille dots must be domed or rounded. The Standards specify the height and diameter of dots and their spacing within and between cells.

Braille located below entire raised text and separated ⅜ inch minimum from tactile characters and any raised borders and decorative elements.

3/8" min

3/8" min
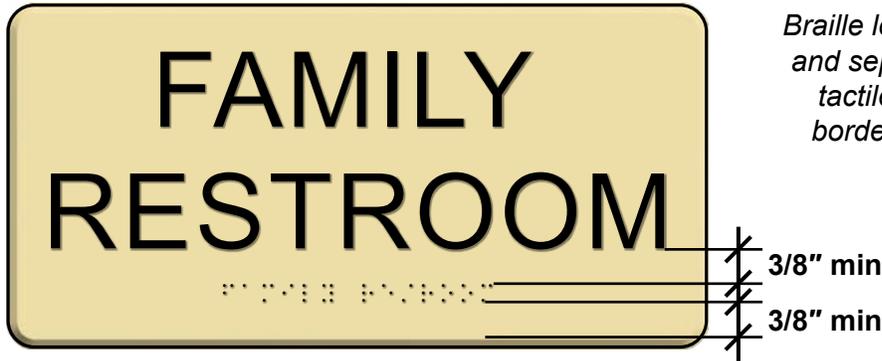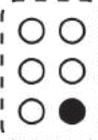
The braille capital symbol precedes each capitalized word; the symbol is repeated to indicate all caps. To ease reading, capitalization in braille is limited to the first word of sentences, proper nouns or names, individual letters, initials, and acronyms (but all raised characters must be uppercase).

all dot spacing measured center-to-center

0.241" – 0.300"

0.090" – 0.100"

dot height: 0.025" – 0.037"

0.395" – 0.4"

0.059" – 0.063"

blank cell space   braille cell

Pictograms [§703.6]

The Standards do not mandate the provision of pictograms other than the symbols of accessibility, which are informational pictograms. Where other pictograms are included on a sign to designate a permanent room or space, text descriptors in raised and braille characters are required directly below the pictogram field. The pictogram is not required to be raised. The pictogram field must be at least 6 inches high. (This applies to the field, not the pictogram itself.) The pictograms and fields must have a non-glare finish and a light-on-dark or dark-on-light contrast.

Note that these requirements apply to those pictograms that *label a permanent room or space*, such as a restroom, cafeteria, or stairway.

6" min

MEN — not in pictogram field

RESTROOM

STAIRWAY

CAFETERIA
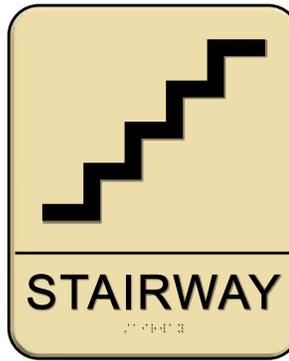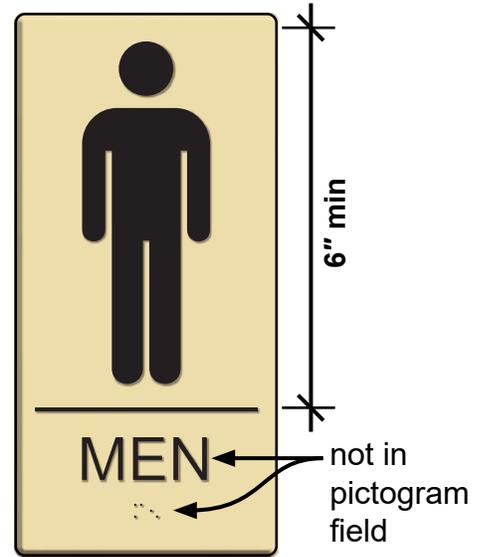
Informational Pictograms

Pictograms that provide information about a room or space or that are on directional signs, including accessibility symbols, are not required to provide tactile text descriptors or to be located on a field at least 6 inches high. Note, however, that specified accessibility symbols must meet finish and contrast criteria, which is discussed in more detail below. Examples of these types of pictograms include the International Symbol of Accessibility, the International Symbol of TTY directional sign, a pictogram indicating a no cellphone use area, and the biohazard symbol.

**Installation Height and Location [§703.4]**

Raised characters and braille on signs must be located 48 inches minimum above the finish floor or ground surface, measured from the baseline of the lowest tactile character, and 60 inches maximum above the finish floor or ground surface, measured from the baseline of the highest tactile character. This location is convenient for tactile reading.
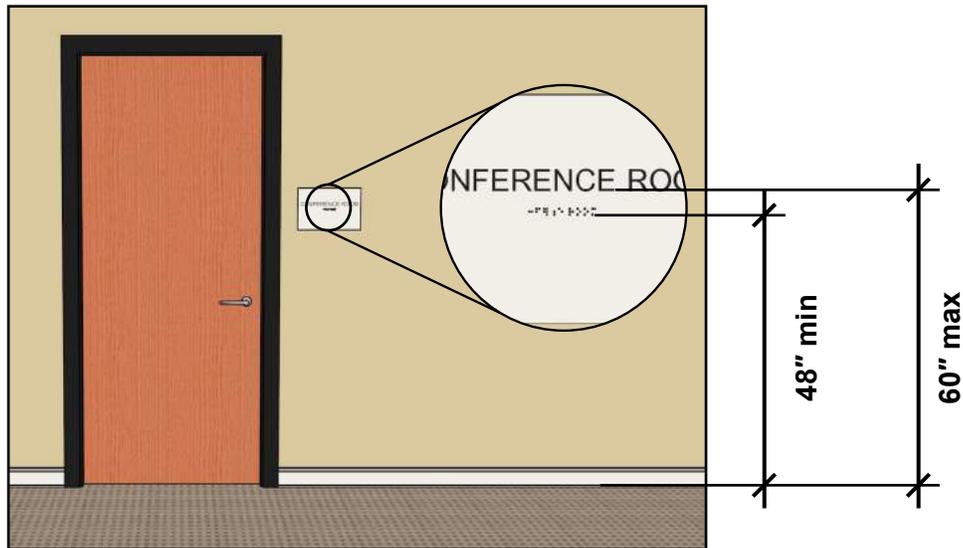
A clear floor space 18 inches minimum by 18 inches minimum must be centered on the tactile characters. This placement of the clear floor space provides unobstructed standing space at the sign for reading by touch. This space must be free of any protrusions to a height of 80 inches. For safety, the space must be located beyond the arc of any door swing to a 45° open position. This effectively sets a minimum, but not an absolute, distance of tactile signs from out-swinging doors. While the clear floor space must be centered on the tactile characters, signs can be located varying distances beyond the door swing.
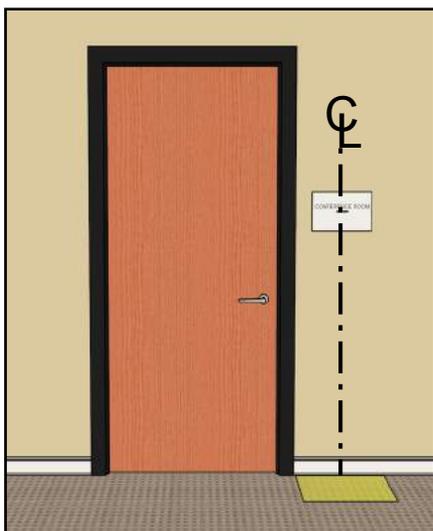

18" x 18" clear floor space centered on tactile characters
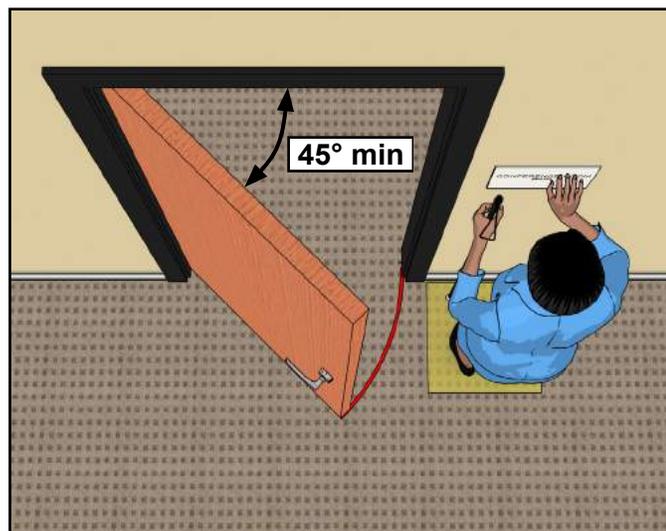
This clear floor space must be beyond the swing of any door from a closed position to a 45° open position.

Location at Doors

At single doors, tactile signs must be located alongside the door on the latch side. They are permitted on the push side of doors equipped with closers that do not have devices to keep them open.
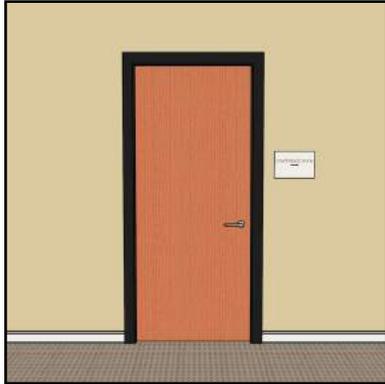
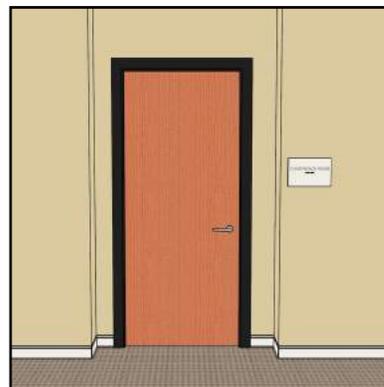*Sign on latch side of single door*

*Sign on push side of a door
with a closer*

If there is no wall space on the latch side, signs must be located on the nearest adjacent wall.

*Recessed door with space for
latch side placement*

*Recessed door with sign on
adjacent wall*

For double-leaf doors with one active leaf, the sign must be located on the inactive leaf. If each door has an active leaf, the sign must be located to the right of the door.

*Sign on inactive leaf at double-
door entry*

*Sign at right-side hinge side of double-
door entry with two active leaves*

Technical Requirements for Characters [§703.5]

Specifications for visual characters cover finish and contrast, case, style, character proportion and height, stroke thickness, and line and character spacing.

Upper or lowercase characters (or combination of both), conventional form (prohibited: italic, oblique, script, highly decorative, or other unusual forms)

Line spacing: 135% – 170% of character height

Characters 40" min. above finish floor or ground

*Character height (based on viewing distance)*

Non-glare finish

*Light-on-dark or dark-on-light contrast between characters and the background*

Characters must contrast with their background with either light-on-dark or dark-on-light and have a non-glare finish. A minimum level of contrast is not specified in the Standards. The higher the contrast, the better for legibility, particularly for people with low vision. Variated or textured backgrounds can reduce contrast and compromise readability.

*Examples of good contrast*   *Examples of poor contrast*
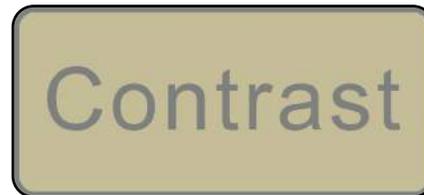
The stroke thickness of the uppercase letter "I" must be from 10% to 30% of the character height. Characters must be selected from fonts where the width of the uppercase letter "O" is 55% to 110% of the height of the uppercase letter "I."

min 10% of height   **max 110% of height**

**max 30% of height**   **min 55% of height**
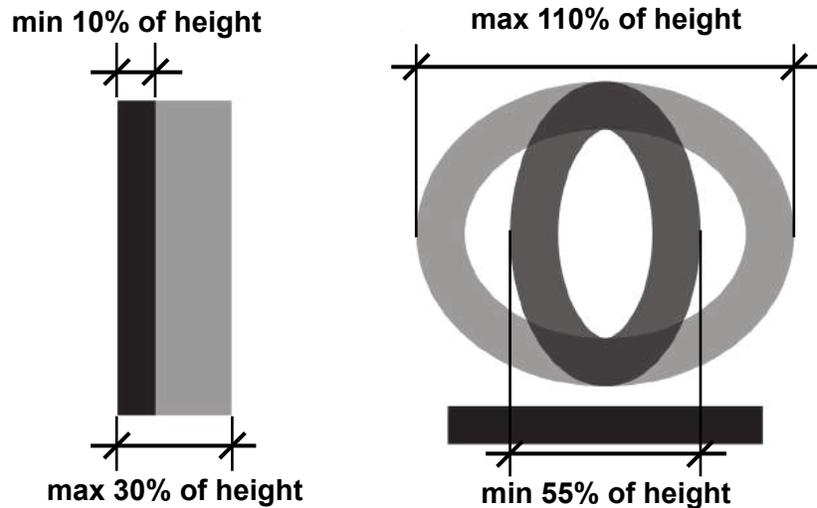
Character Spacing

Character spacing, as measured between the two closest points of adjacent characters excluding word spaces, must be 10% to 35% of the character height.

10% − 35% of height
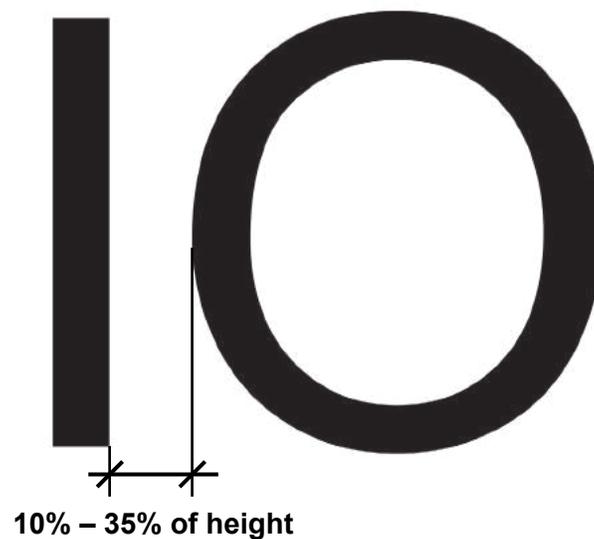
Character Height

The minimum height of characters is based on their height above the finish floor and the horizontal viewing distance. Horizontal viewing distance is the distance between the character and an obstruction preventing further approach to the sign.

Horizontal Viewing Distance
between the character and an obstruction
preventing further approach to the sign

Height
from finish floor/ground to
character baseline (40" min.)
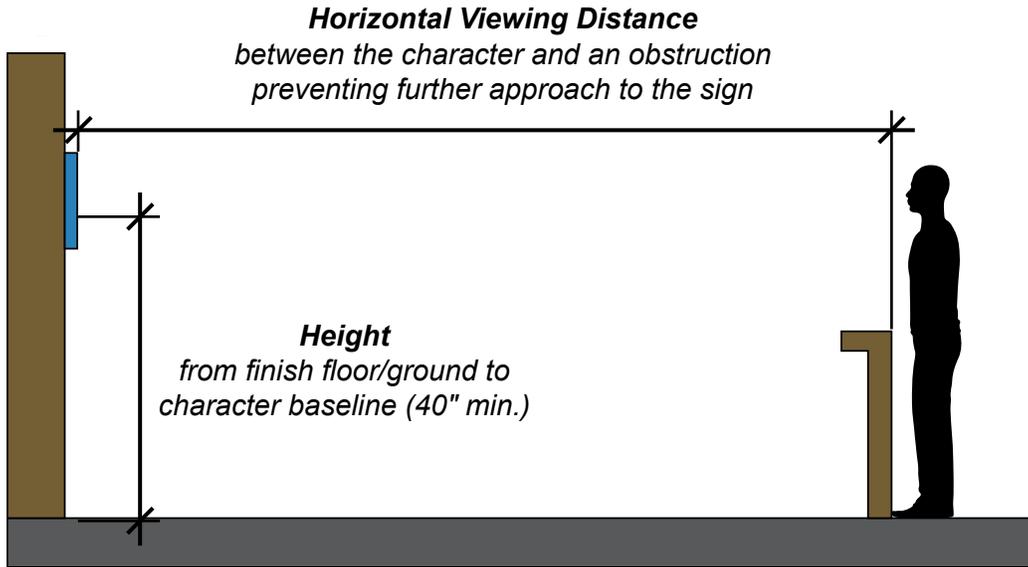
| Height	Viewing Distance	Min. Character Height
40″ – 70″	under 6′	5/8″
	6′ or more	5/8″ + 1/8″ per foot of viewing distance above 6′
above 70″ to 10′	under 15′	2″
	15′ or more	2″ + 1/8″ per foot of viewing distance above 15′
above 10′	under 21′	3″
	21′ or more	3″ + 1/8″ per foot of viewing distance above 21′

Headroom Clearance at Overhead Signs

Signs above circulation paths must provide the required 80 inches minimum headroom clearance (§307.4).

Gates A16, A18

Gates A20 to A35
B Gates
Restrooms

80″ min

Post-Mounted Signs [§307.3]

Signs and other objects mounted on posts or pylons that have leading edges of 27 inches to 80 inches high cannot protrude more than 12 inches into circulation paths. The 12-inch limit also applies to the clearance between multiple posts, excluding the sloping portions of handrails.
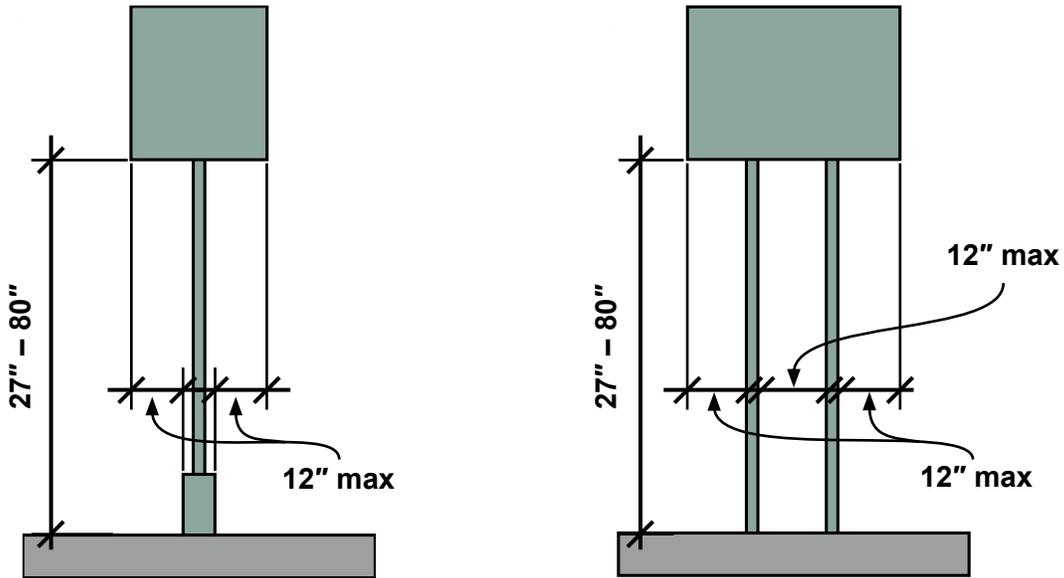
Post-mounted signs with leading edges 27 inches maximum or above 80 inches can protrude any amount from posts or pylons.
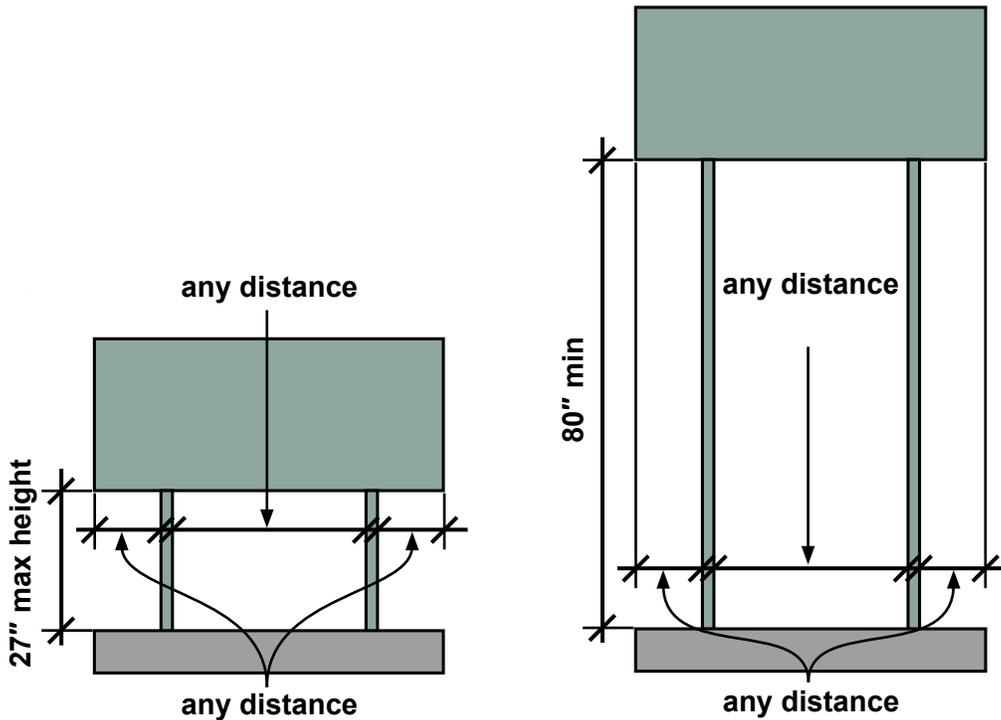
Signs at Transportation Facilities [§810.4, §810.6]

The requirements for signs apply fully to all types of transportation facilities subject to the Standards. The Standards also include some exceptions or requirements specific to signs at bus stops and rail stations.

Bus Route Signs [§810.4]

Signs that identify bus routes must comply with requirements for visual characters (§703.5), except those for the minimum location height (40 inches) and line spacing. Additionally, because the size of these signs is often limited, compliance with the minimum character height is required to the maximum extent feasible. Signs providing bus schedules, timetables, or maps are exempt from the sign requirements.

Rail Station Signs [§810.6]

Entrances

If signs are provided to identify the rail stations or station entrances, a tactile sign (§703.2) providing this information is required at each entrance. The tactile signs must be placed in uniform locations to the maximum extent feasible. If a station lacks a defined entrance, at least one tactile sign must be provided in a central location. In other facilities, exterior signs not located at the entrance or door they serve are not required to be tactile.
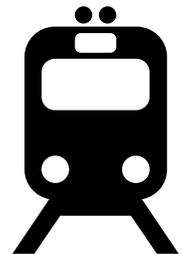
Platform or Boarding Area Signs

In addition, at least one tactile station identification sign is required on each platform or boarding area. Requirements for visual characters apply to signs at boarding areas, platforms, or mezzanines that list stations, routes, and destinations served by the station, excluding route maps. These types of signs must be uniformly located within the transit system to the maximum extent feasible. Visual characters are not required to exceed 3 inches where sign space is limited.

Station Names

The Standards also require the provision of signs labelling stations that meet the visual requirements (§703.5). These signs must be clearly visible from within vehicles on both sides (when not obstructed by another vehicle) and within passenger sight lines.

Audible Technology as an Alternative to Signs

Audible or "talking" sign systems and technologies that use infrared or other means to transmit information otherwise provided on signs may provide greater accessibility in the transit environments than tactile signs. They also can include wayfinding information not included on posted signs. The Standards generally recognize these technologies and permit them as an alternative to the tactile and visual requirements for entrance signs and platform or boarding area signs (§810.6).

Amusement Ride Signs [§216.12]

The Standards address access to amusement rides and include requirements for signs. Some amusement rides may accommodate wheeled mobility aids while others require transfer to a seat. The Standards require signs at entries to queues and waiting lines to identify the type of access provided by a ride. Signs indicating the location of the accessible load and unload areas must be provided at entries to queues and waiting lines.

Symbols of Accessibility [§703.7]

Symbols required by the Standards to label accessible features and spaces must:

- conform to referenced (and reprinted) international symbols;
- have a non-glare finish (both symbol and background); and
- contrast with the background (either light-on-dark or dark-on-light).

The Standards do not specify particular colors, a minimum color contrast level, nor the size of these symbols. Written content is not required or addressed, except in the case of van accessible parking signs, but can be included.

International Symbol of Accessibility [§216.5 – §216.8, §216.11, §703.7.2.1]

The Standards reference the International Symbol of Accessibility (ISA), a long-standing global icon adopted by the International Organization for Standardization which represents over 160 national standard-setting entities and develops voluntary, consensus-based international standards. Uniform iconography promotes legibility, especially for people with low vision or cognitive disabilities. In addition, various codes and standards in the U.S., including the International Building Code (IBC), also require use of the ISA.

The ISA must be used to label, or provide direction to, these elements and spaces (unless all are accessible):

- entrances
- toilet rooms and bathing rooms
- parking
- check-out aisles
- existing compliant elevators

Use of Alternatives to the ISA

Where the ADA Standards require accessible spaces or elements to be identified by the ISA (or the other designated international symbols), the ISA must be used even if a state or local code or regulation specifies a different symbol. Use of a symbol other than the ISA is permitted under the ADA Standards if it satisfies the equivalent facilitation provision (§103). This provision allows alternatives to prescribed requirements only if they result in "substantially equivalent or greater accessibility and usability." The burden of proof in demonstrating equivalent facilitation rests with the covered entity in the event of a legal challenge. Accessibility labels not required by the Standards, such as surface decals at parking spaces, are not required to comply or conform to the ISA.

The Access Board provides more information in its Guidance on the International Symbol of Accessibility.

Entrances [§216.6]

If a facility has inaccessible entrances, the ISA must identify compliant entrances. At inaccessible entrances, directional signs meeting the visual requirements (§703.5) must be provided to indicate the nearest compliant entrance. If all entrances are accessible, these labels and directional signs are not required.

Directional signs can be as simple as the ISA with an arrow, but additional content, while not required, can be helpful.

Recommendation:
While the Standards do not specify the location of directional signs at inaccessible entrances, they should be placed to prevent or minimize back-tracking.

Toilet Rooms and Bathing Rooms [§213.2, §216.8]

Where all toilet rooms and bathing rooms are accessible, which is often the case in new construction, designation by the ISA is not required. However, in areas where not all toilet or bathing rooms are accessible, then the ISA is required. For example, at clustered portable toilets (where at least 5% must comply) and clustered single user toilet rooms of the same type (where at least 50% must comply), the ISA must be used to identify those units and rooms that are accessible.

In alterations to existing facilities where existing toilet or bathing rooms do not comply, the ISA must be provided to:

- identify those rooms that are accessible; and
- provide direction to the nearest compliant toilet or bathing room.

Restroom Sign with ISA

6" min

The ISA must meet finish and contrast criteria but not requirements for the field height or text description.

Pictograms that identify restrooms and other permanent rooms or spaces (where provided) must be on a field at least 6" high, meet finish and contrast criteria, and have tactile text descriptors below the field.

Check-out Aisles [§216.11]

Compliant check-out aisles must be labelled by the ISA unless all aisles serving the same function are accessible. The sign indicating accessibility must be in the same location as any other signs that identify check-out aisles by number, letter, or function.

Existing Elevators [§216.7]

If a facility has existing elevators that do not meet the Standards, compliant elevators must be labelled by the ISA.

Parking Signs [§216.5, §502.6]

Accessible parking spaces must be identified by signs with the ISA. The bottom edge of each sign must be at least 60 inches high measured from the ground surface so that they are visible while vehicles are parked in a space. These signs can be on posts, walls, or suspended from ceilings. ISA designations on the parking surface, even if required by a state or local government, cannot substitute for above-ground signs. State or local codes and regulations may address other sign characteristics, including size, color, and additional content, such as "reserved" or violation fines, but the ADA Standards do not require such characteristics.

Signs identifying van spaces must include the term "van accessible." This designation is informative and not restrictive in identifying spaces suitable for vans since such spaces are not limited to only vans. It can be included on the main designation sign or provided on a separate sign.
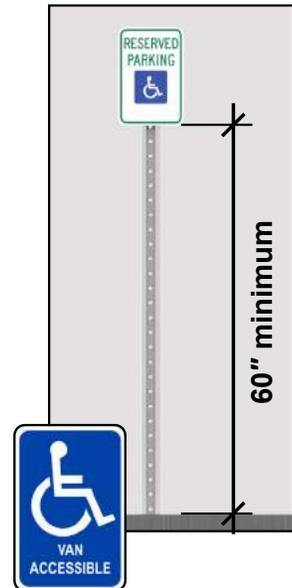
Parking Sign Exceptions

Parking Facilities (§216.1, Ex. 2)

Parking facilities are subject only to provisions for parking space signs (§216.5) and means of egress (§216.4). No other sign requirements apply.

Sites with under 5 Spaces Total (§216.5, Ex. 1)

If a total of 4 or fewer (inaccessible and accessible) parking spaces is provided on a site, the required accessible space must comply but does not have to be identified by a sign (i.e., reserved exclusively for use by people with disabilities).

Residential Facilities (§216.5, Ex. 2)

At residential facilities, identification of accessible spaces is not required where spaces are assigned to specific dwelling units.

International Symbol of TTY [§216.9, §703.7.2.2]

Some public payphones, where provided, must be equipped with TTYs to provide communication access for people with hearing or speech impairments. The International Symbol of TTY must be used to identify TTY-equipped phones. Directional signs indicating the location of the nearest TTY must be provided at phonebanks without TTYs. Additionally, where directional signs to public pay phones are provided, signs must also be provided to public TTYs. These directional signs must include the International Symbol of TTY and meet visual criteria in the Standards.

International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss [§216.10, §703.7.2.4]

Signs with the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss and compliant with the visual criteria are required to indicate the availability of assistive listening systems in assembly areas. These systems enhance sound signals for people who are hard of hearing and must be provided in assembly areas equipped with audio amplification and in courtrooms. Signs can be provided at each assembly area or each ticket office or window. Verbiage on signs is not specified, but it is helpful to indicate where assistive listening devices can be acquired.

Information Displays and Technologies

Display Screens

Requirements for fare machines and ATMs address display screens (§707.7) and require:

- screens to be visible from a point 40 inches above the center of the clear floor space;
- sans serif characters at least 3/16 inches high as based on uppercase letter "I"; and
- light-on-dark or dark-on-light contrast between the characters and the background.

Electronic Sign Systems and Audible Sign Technologies

Electronic signs that stream or scroll content, also known as variable message signs (VMS), pose unique accessibility considerations. New "talking sign" technologies, such as remote infrared audible sign (RIAS) systems, provide additional means of making sign content accessible. The ADA Standards do not address these technologies. However, recent editions of the ICC A117.1 accessibility standard, which is referenced by the IBC, provide specifications on VMS and RIAS (§703.7 and §703.8 in the 2009 and 2017 editions).

Summary

Application of Sign Requirements

Sign	Tactile (§703.2 – 703.4)	Visual (§703.5)	Pictogram §703.6	Symbols of Accessibility §703.7
Permanent room or space designations	✓	✓ (703.5.1)*	✓ (if provided)	
Doors at exit stairways/ passageways/ discharge	✓	✓ (703.5.1)*	✓ (if provided)	
Informational and directional signs		✓		
Required access symbols				✓
* if tactile and visual characters provided separately, visual characters must fully meet 703.5				

Required Signs

Required Sign	Scoping Provision	Technical Provisions
Door labels at exit stairways/ passageways/ discharge	§216.4.1	• Tactile §703.2 and visual §703.5 criteria (can be met on separate signs)
International Symbol of Accessibility*	§216.5 – §216.8, §216.11	• Finish & Contrast §703.7.1 • Referenced symbol §703.7.2.1 • Any verbiage must comply with visual criteria §703.5
International Symbol of TTY	§216.9	• Finish & Contrast §703.7.1 • Referenced symbol §703.7.2.2 • Any verbiage must comply with visual criteria §703.5
International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss	§216.10	• Finish & Contrast §703.7.1 • Referenced symbol §703.7.2.4 • Any verbiage must comply with visual criteria §703.5
Amusement Ride Signs	§216.12	• Must comply with visual criteria §703.5
Rail Station Identification Signs	§810.6.2 §810.6.3	• Tactile criteria §703.2 (sign on each platform or boarding area) • Visual criteria §703.5 (clearly visible from within vehicles on both sides)
* Required at entrances, toilet and bathing rooms, parking spaces, check-out aisles, and existing elevators (unless all are accessible) and on directional signs to accessible entrances and toilet and bathing rooms		

Requirements for Visual and Raised Characters

	Visual Characters	Raised Characters
Finish	non-glare	
Contrast	light-on-dark or dark-on-light	
Depth	N/A	1/32″ min
Case	upper, lower, or both	upper only
Style	conventional	sans serif
Prohibited Forms	italic, oblique, script, highly decorative, or unusual	italic, oblique, script, highly decorative, or unusual
Character Height	based on height above floor and viewing distance	5/8″ – 2″ *
Character Proportion	"O" 55% - 110% of "I" height	"O" 55% - 110% of "I" height
Character Spacing	10% - 35% of the character height	1/8″ – 4x stroke width **
Stroke Thickness	10% - 30% of "I" height	15% max. of "I" height
Line Spacing	135% – 170% of character height	135% – 170% of character height
Height above finish floor or ground	40″ min.	48″ – 60″
Accompanied by Grade II Braille	N/A	Yes
* 1/2" min. if visual characters provided on separate sign ** 1/16" min. measured at base of characters with non-rectangular cross sections		

Common Questions

General

Are signs labeling rooms and spaces with numbers or names required by the Standards?

No, the ADA Standards do not require signs labeling rooms and spaces. However, if such signs are provided, they must comply with the requirements. The Standards do require some facilities and spaces, such as toilet rooms and bathing rooms, to be identified by the ISA, unless all are accessible. The Standards also specify that certain exit doors be labelled as exits.

Are building names or addresses required to comply?

No, building names and addresses are not required to comply. Signs identifying suite, room, or dwelling unit numbers are required to comply.

Are signs provided in areas not used by the public required to comply?

In general, signs provided in areas not used by the public are required to comply. In detention and correctional facilities, signs not located in public use areas are not required to comply.

If a sign repeats information in another language, must those characters comply as well?

If a sign repeats information in other languages, only the English content must comply with these requirements. If a sign is only written in a language other than English, that sign must comply to the maximum extent feasible. The Standards do not address requirements for character sets or braille for languages other than English.

Can tactile characters and visual characters be provided separately on different signs?

Yes, tactile characters and visual characters can be provided on separate signs (or separately on the same sign). Visual characters provided separately must comply with all applicable criteria (§703.5). Tactile characters on signs where compliant visual characters are also provided must comply with all applicable requirements for raised and braille characters, but they are exempt from finish and contrast requirements and are permitted smaller cap heights (1/2 inch instead of 5/8 inch minimum).

Are redundant signs required to comply if a compliant sign is provided?

No, redundant signs provided in addition to compliant signs are not required to meet the Standards.

Tactile Signs

What types of signs are considered designations of "permanent rooms and spaces?"

Signs identifying permanent rooms and spaces pertain to designations, labels, or names for rooms and spaces that are unlikely to change over time or without significant alteration. Examples include signs labeling restrooms, break rooms, mechanical rooms and other spaces, room and floor numbers or letters, and room names. These types of signs also include exterior signs labelling permanent rooms and spaces, such as motel rooms and park restrooms. However, exterior signs not located at the door to the spaces they serve do not have to be tactile.

Does additional information that is included on a sign intended for custodial staff need to also be tactile?

Secondary room numbers or designations intended for maintenance or custodial staff that are provided in addition to general room numbers or names are not required to be tactile, but they must meet criteria for visual characters (§703.5). Tactile requirements apply to names or numbers that serve as the main or only designation of a room or space.

Are all exit doors required to be labelled by tactile signs?

No, tactile labels are required only at doors at exit stairways, exit passageways, and exit discharge. Exit passageways are horizontal fire-resistance-rated components that lead to exit discharge or public ways. Exit discharge is the path from an exit to a public way, such as a sidewalk. Exit labels at other locations, including those required by life safety and building codes, must meet visual requirements in the Standards, but not those for tactile characters.

Do raised characters need to meet all criteria for visual characters?

To be visually accessible, raised characters only have to meet requirements for finish and contrast (§703.5.1). However, visual characters provided separately from raised characters must fully meet all applicable provisions for visual characters (§703.5).

Can tactile signs be placed on doors?

Tactile signs can be placed only on the push side of those doors that are equipped with closers and do not have a hold-open device.

What constitutes "hold-open devices" in determining whether a tactile sign can be placed on a door?

"Hold-open devices" pertains to devices that are fixed to doors and/or walls to keep the door in an open position. Examples include door stops mounted to doors, wall-mounted hooks, or similar hardware and magnetic products that keep doors in an open position. Non-fixed devices, such as moveable door stops, do not constitute "hold-open devices."

Where should tactile signs be placed at doorways without doors?

The Standards do not specify the location of tactile signs at doorways without doors. Tactile signs at doorways without doors should be located close to the doorway so that they are easy to locate by touch. In addition, the location should be consistent within a facility. It is advisable to treat doorways without doors in the same way as doors with two active leaves, which also do not have a latch side for reference. Where a door has two active leaves, the sign must be located to the right of the doorway or, if wall space is insufficient at this location, on the nearest adjacent wall.

Where are tactile signs to be mounted at doors with a vision panel or sidelight on the latch side or at doors located in glass partitions?

Tactile signs may be mounted next to, or on, vision panels and sidelights located on the latch side of the door so long as the required 18" by 18" minimum clear floor space centered on the tactile characters is provided and is located outside the swing of the door open 45 degrees. Signs also can be mounted on the push side doors with closers that do not have hold-open devices. If a door is located in a glass partition, then the sign must be mounted on the glass partition, except where it is permitted to be on the door.

Is Unified English Braille acceptable as "Grade 2 Braille"?

Yes, the Braille Authority of North America (BANA) made Unified English Braille (UEB) the official braille of the U.S in 2016. UEB is contracted (Grade 2) braille, although it has some differences from the previous English Braille American Edition. For purposes of the ADA Standards, UEB is acceptable as Grade 2 braille.

Which content on braille signs must be capitalized?

The first word of sentences, proper nouns and names, individual letters of the alphabet, initials, and acronyms are the only items that are to be capitalized on braille signs. No other items are to be capitalized on braille signs, regardless of what may be capitalized on equivalent printed signs.

Can the 18-inch by 18-inch clear floor space required at tactile signs be offset from the wall or sign?

The clear floor space required at tactile signs can be offset from the wall or sign surface to accommodate limited protrusions, such as base molding. Other elements or protrusions that would offset this clear floor space more significantly are not allowed because they may impede a person's ability to read signs tactilely.

Must braille be placed below all raised characters?

Braille must be located below the corresponding text; if the text is multi-lined, then braille must be located below the entire text. If there are multiple blocks of text on a sign, then braille should be placed below logical blocks of raised characters and not necessarily below all the raised characters.

Visual Signs

Are any colors specified for signs?

No, the Standards do not specify any colors for signs. The Standards only require that characters contrast from their background either light-on-dark or dark-on-light.

Why isn't a minimum level of color contrast between characters and the background specified in the Standards?

Color contrast is based on a color's light reflectance value (LFV), which measures the amount of a light a color reflects or absorbs. It is typically measured using a spectrophotometer. Measuring LFV accurately in the field can be difficult and is impacted by a variety of factors, including sign materials and lighting conditions.

For character height, what determines the horizontal viewing distance?

The horizontal viewing distance is the distance from the sign to a fixed obstruction that prevents a closer approach to the sign.

What are the requirements for the content of directional signs indicating the location of the nearest accessible facility (e.g., restroom, entrance, etc.)?

The Standards require that the sign include the ISA but do not specify or require other content. Directional signs can be as simple as the ISA and a directional arrow, but additional content may be helpful.

Can directional signs be located on the ground or floor?

Directional signs, including those required to indicate the location of accessible entrances and other accessible features and spaces, must comply with requirements for visual signs and be located at least 40 inches above the ground or floor. Redundant signs can be located on the floor or ground or in other non-compliant locations.

Can visual characters (e.g., room numbers, "men" and "women," etc.) be arranged vertically in a column instead of horizontally in a line or row?

The Standards do not prohibit arrangement of characters vertically, but this design is not recommended. If visual or raised characters are arranged vertically, they must meet all requirements, including height and line spacing. Braille characters must not be arranged vertically because it would be difficult to decipher some braille words if the braille contractions are stacked instead of arranged horizontally.

Do the Standards address illumination levels at signs?

No, the Standards do not address illumination levels at or of signs. Life safety and building codes address the visibility and illumination of exit signs.

Pictograms

Are alternatives to, or variations of, the International Symbol of Accessibility (ISA) permitted?

The Standards require use of the ISA to label or provide direction to certain accessible spaces and elements, including entrances, toilet and bathing facilities, and check-out aisles (unless all are accessible). A symbol other than the specified ISA will not comply with the Standards unless it satisfies the "equivalent facilitation" provision (§103). This provision allows alternatives to prescribed requirements if they result in "substantially equivalent or greater accessibility and usability." The burden of proof in demonstrating equivalent facilitation rests with the covered entity in the event of a legal challenge. Under DOT's ADA Standards, certain entities responsible for transportation facilities and systems, as well as manufacturers of products and vehicles used in transportation systems, can request a determination of equivalent facilitation from DOT as outlined in its ADA regulations (§37.7 and §37.9). This applies only where use of the ISA is required by the Standards. On other signs not mandated by the Standards, compliance with the specified ISA is not required.

Does the ISA include borders around the icon?

No, the specified ISA does not include a border around the image.

Do pictograms labelling permanent rooms and spaces need to be raised?

No, pictograms are not required to be raised. Pictograms that label permanent rooms and spaces must include text descriptors in raised and braille characters below the pictogram field, which must be at least 6 inches high. In addition, pictograms must meet finish and contrast requirements.

Do all pictograms need to be on a field at least 6 inches high and have tactile text descriptors?

No, the specifications for field height and text descriptors apply only to those pictograms that label a permanent room or space, where provided. Examples include pictograms designating restrooms, stairways, cafeterias, and other permanent rooms and spaces. Pictograms that provide information about a room or space, including the ISA, or that are included on directional signs, are not required to meet these requirements (but mandated accessibility symbols must meet finish and contrast criteria).

Parking

Are signs for accessible parking required individually at each accessible parking space?

The Standards require parking spaces to be identified by the ISA, but they do not specifically require one sign for each space. Under the Standards, it may be possible to label multiple spaces with a sign so long as it is clear which spaces are designated as accessible.

Other Types of Signs

Are variable message signs or electric signs addressed by the Standards?

The Standards do not address variable message signs or electric signs. However, the ICC A117.1 Standard for Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities, which is referenced by the International Building Code, provides technical specifications for variable message signs (§703.7). The A117.1 Standard also covers remote infrared audible sign systems (§703.8).

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