



**WELCH SIGN**



ADA and Egress Sign Whitepaper

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## 2010 Standards for Accessible Design

Effective - March 15, 2012

### What is the ADA?

The Americans with Disabilities Act is an anti-discrimination act signed into law by Congress in 1990. The ADA includes five Titles governing various aspects of discrimination. Title III "Public Accommodations" addresses signage requirements. The Department of Justice is responsible for enforcement of the ADA, however individuals and groups seeking access may also file suits. Revisions continue to be made to the ADA, and certain states and local jurisdictions have added further regulations that supplement the minimum standards set by the ADA. Consideration needs to be given to these regulations.

### What are the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design?

The Department of Justice published final revisions regulating the Americans with Disabilities Act for Title II and Title III in the Federal Register on September 15, 2010. These requirements clarify and refine issues that have arisen over the 20 years since the ADA's inception and contain new and updated requirements, including the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design. There is also a useful companion publication titled "Guidance on the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design". Both documents are available free on-line and can be found at the locations listed below.

### Resources for more information

U.S. Department of Justice

Website <http://www.ada.gov/>

Tollfree ADA information line: 800.514.0301 (Voice)

or 800.514.0383 (TTY)

U.S. Access Board

Website: <http://www.access-board.gov/ada/index.htm>

Tollfree information: 800.872.2253 (voice) or 800.993.2822 (TTY)

### Who must comply and when?

Any alterations or new construction with a start date of March 15, 2012 must comply fully with the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design. The standard applies to all state and local government buildings, places of public accommodation and commercial facilities, including businesses not open to the general public.

If elements of an existing facility already comply with corresponding requirements in the 1991 Standards and are not being altered, then entities are not required to make changes to those elements to bring them in compliance with the 2010 Standards until completing any planned alterations.

Exemptions: Private clubs and religious organizations including places of worship. Signs not located in public use areas of detention facilities.

### Signs Exempt from ADA Standards (Section 216.1)

Building directories, menus, seat and row designations in assembly areas, occupant's names, building addresses, company names and logos and temporary signs used for 7 days or less are not required to comply. Exterior signs not located at the door to the space they serve are not required to comply with 703.2.

### Sign Categories

The guidelines define several categories of interior and exterior signs in section 216.1 of the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design, some of which are described below.

#### ◆ *Signs Designating Permanent Rooms or Space (Section 216.2)*

The highest standards, including the use of Tactile and Braille lettering, apply to signs that provide designation, labels or names for interior rooms or space where the sign is not likely to change over time. Examples include signs labeling restrooms, stair, room numbers and room names.

#### ◆ *Directional and Informational Signs (Section 216.3)*

Wall mounted signs which provide direction to or information about functional spaces are not required to have Tactile and Braille lettering. However, they must comply with the visual character requirements for character proportion, character height, sign finish and contrast.

#### ◆ *Overhead Signs*

Signs which are suspended or projected overhead must meet requirements for clearance, and visual character requirements for character proportion, character height, sign finish and contrast. (See drawings titled "Protruding Objects".)

#### ◆ *Restrooms and Bathing Rooms (Section 216.8)*

Facilities that have inaccessible restrooms must provide a directional sign at the inaccessible restroom giving direction to the accessible restroom. The sign shall contain the International Symbol of Accessibility.

#### ◆ *Exit and Entrance Signs (Sections 216.2, 216.4.1 and 216.6)*

Doors at exit passageways, exit discharge and exit stairways must be identified with signs containing Tactile and Braille. An exit passageway is defined as a horizontal exit component that is separated from the interior spaces by fire-rated construction and that leads to an exit discharge or public way. The exit discharge is that portion of an egress system between the termination of an exit and a public way.

The accessibility symbol must be displayed at all accessible entrances if all entrances are not accessible. At all entrances that are not accessible, directional signs which follow visual character guidelines must give direction to accessible entrances.

#### ◆ *Areas of Refuge (Section 216.4.2)*

Signs required by section 1003.2.13.5.4 of the International Building Code (2000 edition) or section 1007.6.4 (2003 edition, "reference standards" in Chapter 1) to provide instruction in areas of refuge shall comply with 703.5.

#### ◆ *Parking Spaces (Section 216.5)*

Accessible parking spaces must have a sign that displays the International Symbol of Accessibility except in situations where there are four or fewer parking spaces and residential facilities where parking spaces are assigned to dwellings. Signs for van parking spaces shall contain the designation "Van Accessible". (See drawing titled "Location for Parking Signs".)

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**Tactile Characters (Section 703.2)**

**Depth:** Characters must be raised 1/32" minimum above background.

**Case:** Characters must be uppercase.

**Typestyle:** Characters must be sans serif style. Characters shall not be italic, oblique, script, highly decorative or of unusual form. Directional and informational signs are allowed to include lowercase letters.

**Proportion:** Characters shall be selected from fonts where the width of the uppercase letter "O" is 55% minimum and 110% maximum of the height of the uppercase letter "I".

**Character Height:** Tactile characters must be between 5/8" and 2" high based on the uppercase letter "I". Where separate raised and visual characters with the same information are provided, raised characters are permitted to be 1/2" minimum.

**Other:** ADA specifications also provides technical guidelines relative to character spacing, line spacing and stroke thickness. Refer to sections 703.2.6-703.2.8 of the 2010 Title III standards.

**Braille (Section 703.3)**

**Type:** Characters must be accompanied by contracted Grade II Braille.

**Position:** Braille must be positioned below corresponding text. If text is multi-lined, Braille shall be placed below the entire text. Braille shall be separated by 3/8" minimum from any other tactile character, raised element or decorative elements. (Exception: Braille provided on elevator cars shall be separated by 3/16").

**Other:** ADA specifications also provides technical guidelines relative to Braille shape, dimensions and capitalization. Refer to sections 703.3.1 of the 2010 Title III standards.

**Visual Non-Tactile Characters (Section 703.5)**

**Sign Finish & Contrast:** The characters and their background must have a non-glare finish. Characters shall contrast with their background with either light characters on a dark background or dark characters on a light background

**Case:** Characters may be uppercase, lowercase or a combination of both.

**Typestyle:** Characters shall be conventional in form. Characters shall not be italic, oblique, script, highly decorative or of unusual form.

**Proportion:** Characters shall be selected from fonts where the width of the uppercase letter "O" is 55% minimum and 110% maximum of the height of the uppercase letter "I".

**Character Height:** Minimum character height shall comply with Table 703.5.5. Viewing distance is the horizontal distance between the character and an obstruction preventing further approach to the sign. Height shall be based on the uppercase letter "I".

**Other:** ADA specifications also provides technical guidelines relative to character spacing, line spacing and stroke thickness. Refer to sections 703.5.7-703.5.9 of the 2010 Title II standards.

**Visual Character Height Table (Section 703.5.5)**

Height to Finish Floor or from Baseline of Character	Horizontal Viewing Distance	Minimum Visual Character Height (Based on Uppercase "I")
40 inches to less than or equal to 70 inches	Less than 72 inches	5/8 inch
	72 inches and greater	5/8 inch, plus 1/8 inch per foot of viewing distance above 72 inches
Greater than 70 inches to less than or equal to 120 inches	Less than 180 inches	2 inches
	180 inches and greater	2 inches, plus 1/8 inch per foot of viewing distance above 180 inches
Greater than 120 inches	Less than 21 feet	3 inches
	21 feet and greater	3 inches, plus 1/8 inch per foot viewing distance above 21 feet

**Pictograms (Section 703.6)**

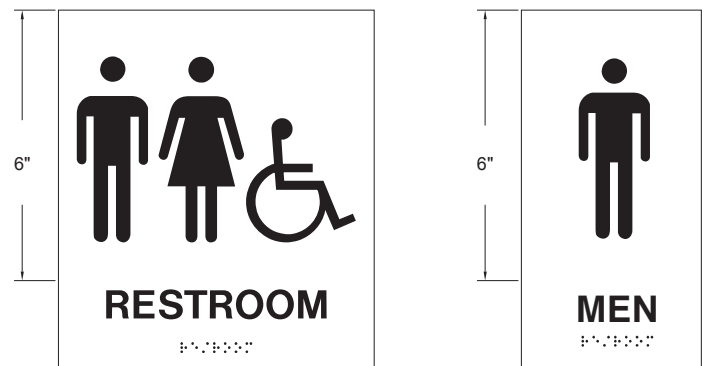
**Pictogram Field:** Pictograms must have a field height of 6" minimum. Characters and Braille shall not be located in the pictogram field.

**Sign Finish & Contrast:** Pictograms and their fields must have a non-glare finish. Characters shall contrast with their background with either light characters on a dark background or dark characters on a light background.

**Text Descriptors:** Pictograms shall have text descriptors located directly below the pictogram field. Text descriptors must comply with 703.2, 703.3 and 703.4.

**Typestyle:** Characters shall be conventional in form. Characters shall not be italic, oblique, script, highly decorative or of unusual form.

**Pictogram Field Requirement**



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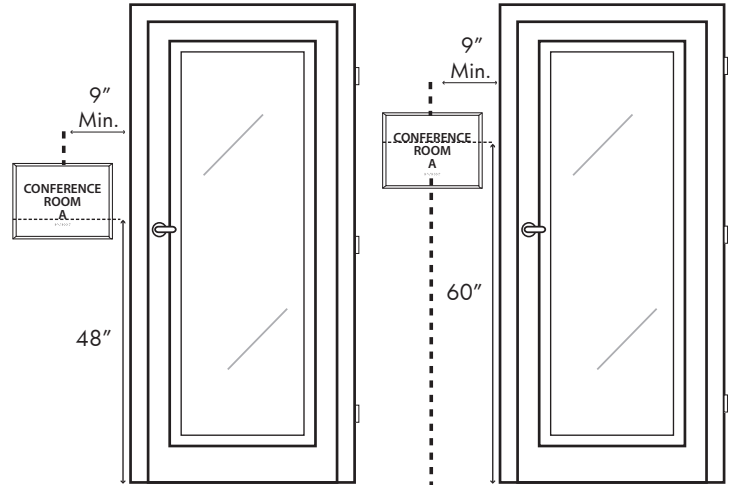
Mounting Location for Tactile and Braille Signs (Section 703.4)

**Height:** Tactile characters on signs shall be located 48" minimum above finished floor, measured from the bottom of the lowest tactile character and 60" maximum, measured from the bottom of the highest tactile character. Tactile characters for elevator cars need not comply.

**Location:** Signs shall be located as follows:  
 Single doors: Tactile signs shall be located on latch side of door.  
 Double door with one active leaf: Locate on inactive leaf.  
 Double door with two active leaves: Locate to right of right door.  
 Where there is no wall space as specified: Locate on nearest adjacent wall.

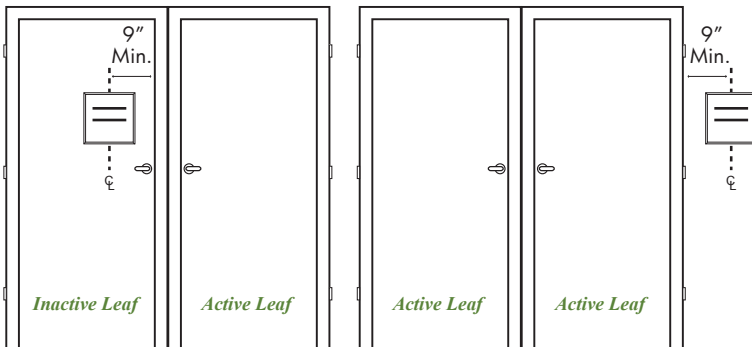
**Clearance:** Signs shall be located so that a clear floor space of 18" x 18" minimum, centered on the tactile characters, is provided beyond the arch of the door swing between the closed and 45% open position.

Minimum and Maximum Height (Section 703.4)

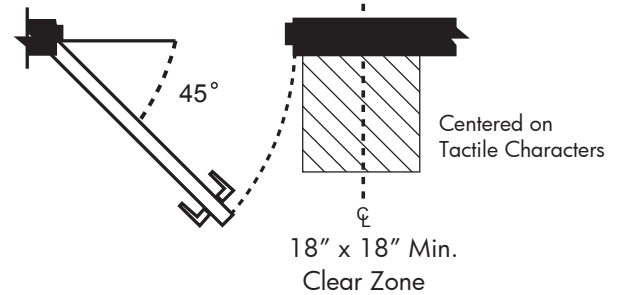


Double Door  
Active and Inactive Leaf

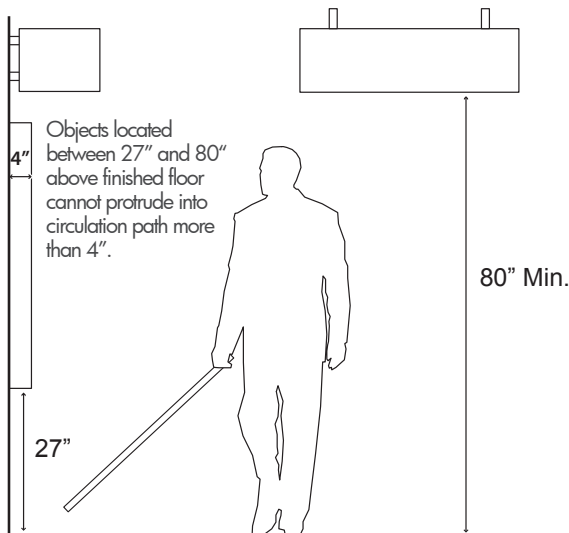
Double Door  
Both Active



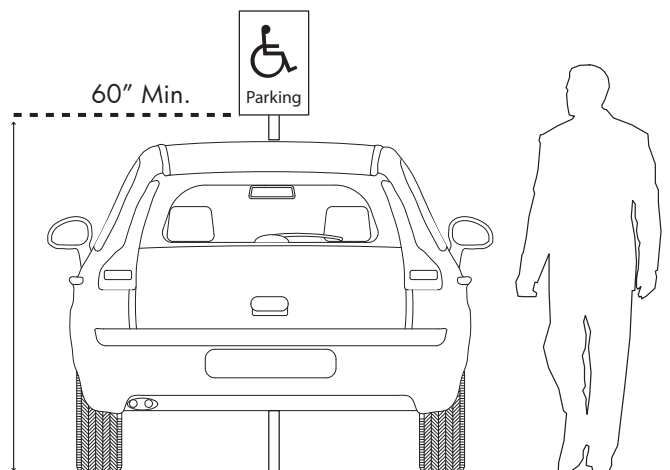
Mounting from Door Jamb



Protruding Objects (Section 307.2)



Location for Parking Signs (Section 502.6)





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Code Compliant Fonts

Tactile characters for signs that must comply with section 703.2 are required to be sans serif. Serifs are the decorative points or strokes on letters in some fonts. "Sans Serif" means the font is "without" serifs. Because a serif is an embellishment to the letter's shape and not an intergral part of the letter, it can be eliminated while leaving the letter intact.

For most typstyles a regular, medium, or semi-bold weight will meet ADA's stroke-to-height ratio guideline of 15% maximum. Individual fonts should be inspected to ensure they will fit within this ratio. Many fonts will gain or loose a little weight when fabricated into a tactile letter as compared to a printed representation of the letter.

San Serif Font



Serif Font



Popular Tactile Compliant Fonts

- ARIAL arial
AVANTGARDE avantgarde
CENTURY GOTHIC century gothic
CLEARVIEW HIGHWAY clearview highway
FRANKLIN GOTHIC franklin gothic
FRUTIGER frutiger
FUTURA futura
GIL SANS gil sans
GOTHAM gotham
HELVETICA helvetica
LUCIDA SANS lucida sans
MYRIAD PRO myriad pro
OPTIMA optima
TWENTETH CENTURY twentieth century
UNIVERS univers
VERDANA verdana
ZURICH zurich

Keep Line Length in Mind

Tactile characters are required to be all uppercase and a minimum of 5/8" in height. In addition, the ADA requires a certain height-to-width ratio. The combination of these two requirements limits how many letters can fit across the width of a typical sign. The number of characters per line varies with each font and with the actual characters in the copy. It is important to keep room descriptions brief. The following chart is intended to provide a general guideline based on popular fonts. Actual number may vary based on content.

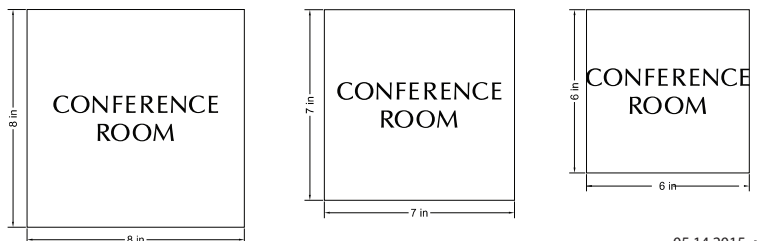
Characters Per Line

Table with 4 columns: Font, 6" Sign Width, 7" Sign Width, 8" Sign Width. Lists various fonts and their character counts per line.

These three lines are typeset at the same letter height. Note the variation in line length by typestyle.

CONFERENCE ROOM CONFERENCE ROOM CONFERENCE ROOM with font names Myriad Pro, Helvetica, and Optima listed to the right.

These three drawings are drawn to scale with the minimum 5/8" copy height. Note the copy fits on the 8" and 7" wide sign, but it does not fit on a 6" wide sign. We recommend that ADA signs that include room names be a minimum of 7" wide.





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### Tactile and Braille Egress Signage

#### Exit, Entrance, Stair and Area of Refuge

#### What is included in this document?

Regulations/guidelines for Tactile and Braille exit, entrance, stair and area of refuge are provided in key building code documents including 2010 ADA Standard for Design, 2012 NFPA 101: Life Safety Code, and 2009 ICC Building Code. While most municipalities have adopted these standards, it is important that you check with your local code enforcement officers to ensure compliance with local codes.

The information contained in this document is intended to be a general guideline and should not be used to ensure compliance. This summary does not address illuminated exit signs, which are generally provided by the General Contractor or electrical subcontractors. Instead, it is focused in Tactile and Braille signage that is often overlooked.

#### Exit and Entrance Signs

##### ♦ Exit Signs - 2010 ADA Sections 216.2, 216.4.1

Doors at exit passageways, exit discharge and exit stairways must be identified with signs containing Tactile and Braille. An exit passageway is defined as a horizontal exit component that is separated from the interior spaces by fire-rated construction and that leads to an exit discharge or public way. The exit discharge is that portion of an egress system between the termination of an exit and a public way.

##### ♦ Exit Signs - 2009 IBC Section 1011.3

A tactile sign stating Exit and complying with ICC A117.1 shall be provided adjacent to each door to an area of refuge, exterior area for rescue assistance, exit stairway, exit ramp, exit passageway and an exit discharge.

##### ♦ Entrance Signs - 2010 ADA Section 216.6

The accessibility Symbol must be displayed at all accessible entrances if all entrances are not accessible. At all entrances that are not accessible, directional signs which follow visual character guidelines must give direction to accessible entrances.

#### Stair and Floor Level Designation Signs

##### ♦ Stair Signs - ADA Section 216.2

Doors leading in and out of stairwells are governed by the ADA definition for permanent space. Therefore, a Tactile and Braille sign is required at the entrance to the stairwell identifying the stair designation. If the stairwell also serves as a means of egress the stair sign should include an exit designation.

##### ♦ Floor Level Designation

At the door leading out of the stairwell a Tactile and Braille sign identifying the floor level is required.

##### ♦ Stair Signs - NFPA 101 Section 7.2.2.5.4; IBC Section 1022.8.1)

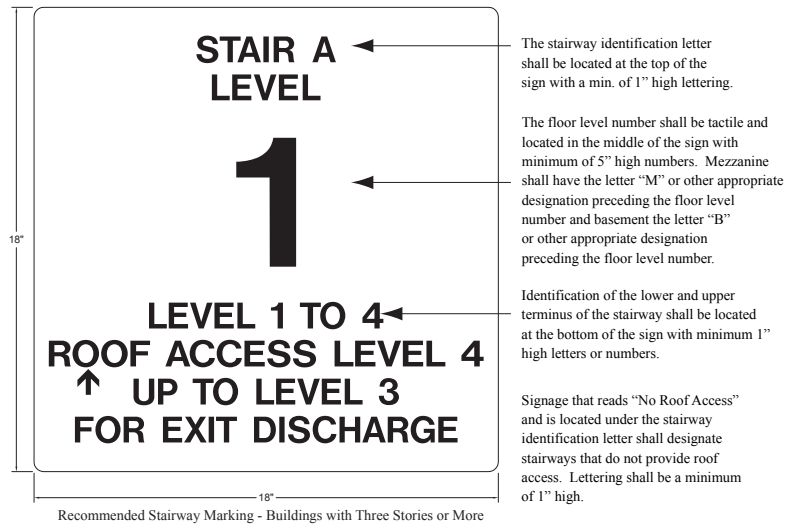
Section 7.2.2.5.4 of NFPA Life Safety Code regulates signage for Areas of Rescue Assistance meeting either of the following two conditions:

- ♦ The stair is a new enclosed stair serving three or more stories.
  - ♦ The stair is an existing enclosed stair serving five or more stories.
- The 2009 IBC's specifies signage for three stories or more and does not include the five story condition for existing stairs.

Special signage shall be provided within the stair enclosure at each floor landing. Signs shall be 18"x12" minimum and located inside the enclosure approximately 60" above the floor landing in a position that is visible when the door is in the open or closed position. Signs can be painted, stenciled or on a separate sign securely attached to the wall. Note: The floor designation must be Tactile therefore making a stenciled/painted sign less practical.

The sign shall indicate the following:

- ♦ Floor Level - NFPA states the level indicated must be Tactile in accordance with ICC/ANSI A117.1.
- ♦ Terminus of the top and bottom stair enclosure
- ♦ Identification of the stair enclosure
- ♦ Identification of, and the directions to, exit discharge



#### Area of Refuge Signs

##### ♦ IBC Section 1007.9

Signage indicating special accessibility provisions shall be provided as shown.

1. Each door providing access to an area of refuge from the adjacent floor shall be identified by a sign stating "Area of Refuge".
2. Each door providing access to an exterior area for assisted rescue shall be identified by a sign stating "Exterior Area for Assisted Rescue".

Where exit sign illumination is required by Section 1011.2, the signs shall be illuminated. Signs shall comply with ICC A117.1 requirements for visual characters and include the International Symbol of Accessibility. Additionally, tactile signage complying with ICC A117.1 shall be located at each door to an Area of Refuge.

##### ♦ NFPA 101 Section 7.2

Each Area of Refuge must be identified by a sign stating "AREA OF REFUGE" and displaying the international symbol of accessibility.

Signs must be installed at all exits not providing accessible means of egress and where otherwise necessary to clearly indicate the direction of the Area of Refuge.

##### ♦ Areas of Refuge (ADA Section 216.4.2)

Signs required by section 1003.2.13.5.4 of the International Building Code (2000 edition) or section 1007.6.4 (2003 edition, "reference standards" in Chapter 1) to provide instruction in areas of refuge shall comply with 703.5.



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