

# ADA REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERIOR SIGNS



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# SIGN REQUIREMENTS BY SIGN TYPE

## Sign Types

- 1. Signs Designating Permanent Rooms and Spaces:** The highest standards, including the use of tactile and Braille lettering, apply to signs that provide designations, labels, or names for interior rooms or spaces where the sign is not likely to change over time. Examples include interior signs labeling restrooms, room and floor numbers or letters, and room names.
- 2. Directional and Informational Signs:** Wall mounted signs which provide direction to or information about functional spaces are not required to have tactile and Braille lettering. However, they must meet requirements for character proportion, minimum character height, sign finish and contrast.
- 3. Overhead Signs:** Signs which are projected or suspended overhead must meet requirements for clearance, character proportion, minimum character height, sign finish and contrast.
- 4. Signs Exempt from ADA Standards:** Building directories, menus, seat and row designations in assembly areas, occupant names, building addresses, and company names and logos are not required to comply with ADA standards. In addition, temporary signs used for 7 days or less are not required to comply with ADA standards.

## MINIMUM SIGN REQUIREMENTS BY SIGN TYPE

### TACTILE CHARACTERS

- Must be raised 1/32 inch minimum above their background
- Must be all uppercase and sans serif
- Stroke thickness of the uppercase letter "I" must be 15 percent maximum of the height of the character
- Must have a width-to-height ratio in which the width of the uppercase letter "O" is 55 percent minimum and 110 percent maximum of the height of the uppercase letter "I"
- Character height must be 5/8 inch minimum and 2 inches maximum based on the height of the uppercase letter "I"
- Must be accompanied by Grade II Braille

### BRAILLE

- Must be contracted Grade II Braille
- Braille dots must have a domed or rounded shape
- Must be positioned below the corresponding text
- Braille must be separated 3/8 inch minimum from any other tactile characters and 3/8 inch minimum from raised borders and decorative elements

### VISUAL CHARACTERS

- May be uppercase, lowercase, or a combination of both
- May be serif, simple serif or sans serif, but must not be italic, oblique, script, or highly decorative
- Must have a width-to-height ratio in which the width of the uppercase letter "O" is 55 percent minimum and 110 percent maximum of the height of the uppercase letter "I"
- Stroke thickness of the uppercase letter "I" must be 10 percent minimum and 30 percent maximum of the height of the character

### PICTOGRAMS

- Must have a field height of 6 inches minimum
- Text descriptors must be placed below (not within) the pictogram field
- Text descriptors must be tactile and Braille

### FINISH & CONTRAST

- Characters and their background must have a non-glare finish
- Characters must contrast with their background with either light characters on a dark background or dark characters on a light background

	PERMANENT	DIRECTIONAL	OVERHEAD
TACTILE CHARACTERS	•	•	•
BRAILLE	•	•	•
VISUAL CHARACTERS	•	•	•
PICTOGRAMS	•	•	•
FINISH & CONTRAST	•	•	•

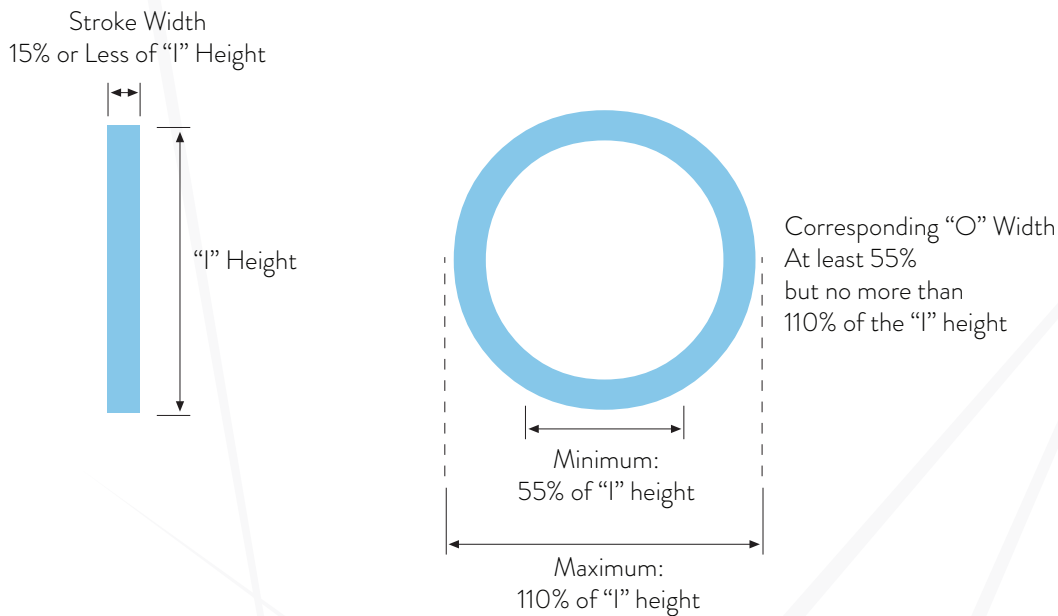
# TYPOGRAPHY FOR TACTILE SIGNS

## Rules for Acceptable Tactile Fonts

- Copy must be all upper case and raised at least 1/32”.
- Tactile characters must be sans serif, not italic, not oblique, script or highly decorative.

## Character Proportions

- The stroke width of the upper case “l” has to be 15% of the letter height or less.
- The character width of the uppercase “O” must be between 55% and 110% of the height of the corresponding uppercase “l”.

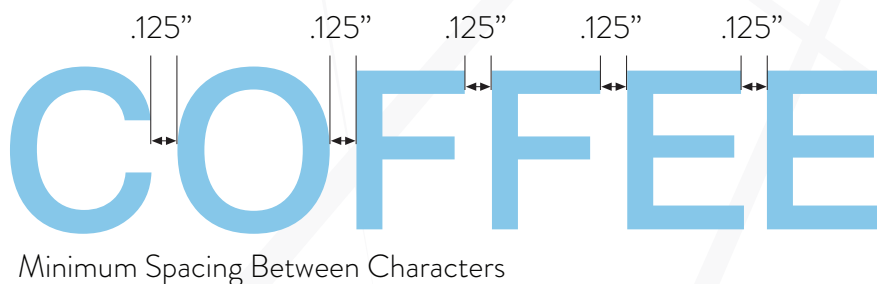


## Copy Height for Tactile Information

- Limited to be between 5/8” and 2”.
- If separate visual characters are provided raised characters can be 1/2” and need not contrast with background.

## Tactile Font Character Spacing

- The distance between characters on tactile copy must be a minimum of 1/8” and a maximum of 4 times the character stroke width. These distances are measured between the closest points of adjacent characters.



## Tactile Font Line Spacing For Multiple Lines of Raised Copy

- Spacing between lines of copy to be a minimum of 135% and a maximum of 170% of the corresponding uppercase “I” height (measured from baseline to baseline).



## Font Examples

The fonts shown below are an examples of standard tactile fonts that can be used on ADA compliant signage:

**Arial**  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

**BAVGarde-Normal**  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

**Frutiger-Normal**  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

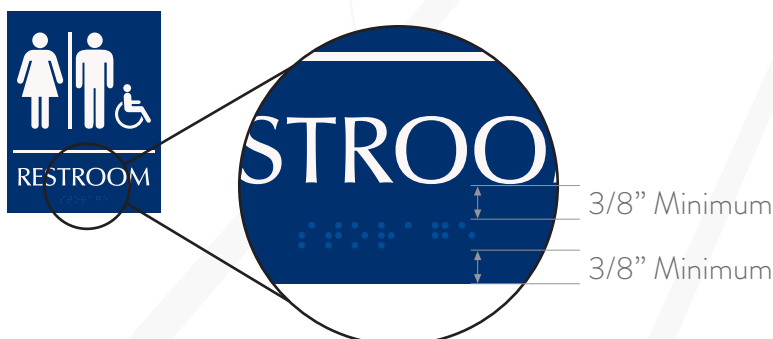
**Futura Book**  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

**Helvetica / Swiss Medium**  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

**Myriad Pro**  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

## Braille

- Must be Grade II with contractions.
- Braille is to be placed directly below the corresponding raised characters.
- If text is multi-lined, braille is placed below entire text and separated 3/8” from any other tactile characters and 3/8” minimum from raised borders and decorative elements.
- The shape of braille characters must always be rounded.
- Almost always lower case. Uppercase is only used before the first word of sentences, proper nouns and names, individual letters of the alphabet, initials and acronyms.
- Never tipped.



## TYPOGRAPHY & SYMBOLS FOR VISUAL INFORMATION

The following information applies to all information that is to be read visually, it also applies to dual purpose raised graphics.

### Acceptable Characters

- Visual characters cannot be italic or oblique, script or highly decorative.

### Finish and Contrast

- Characters or symbols and their background are to have a non-glare finish.
- The color of raised characters must contrast as much as possible with their background to make signs more legible for persons with low vision.
- Characters must be light on dark or dark on light.

### Pictograms

- Pictograms are to be located within a 6" vertical void.
- No characters or braille can be located within this field.
- Text descriptors are to be located directly below the pictogram.



### Symbols of Accessibility

- Finish of symbol and background shall be non-glare.
- Symbols shall contrast with their background.
- Examples of symbols of accessibility:



Wheelchair Accessible Handicapped Access, Disabled



Device for the Deaf (TDD) Telecommunications



Access for Hearing Loss Hearing Impaired



Telephone Volume Control



Impaired Access for the Sight

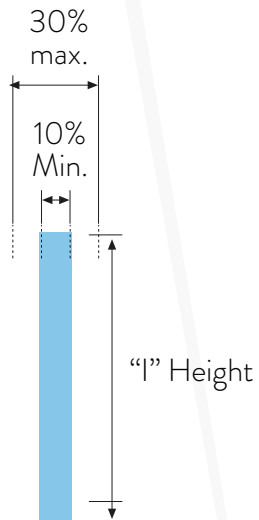


Sign Language Interpretation

# VISUAL CHARACTERS FOR DIRECTIONAL, INFORMATION & REGULATORY SIGNS

## Stroke Thickness

- Stroke thickness to be between 10% and 30% of the height of the upper case “I”.



## Character Spacing

- Character spacing is measured between the 3 closest points of adjacent characters.
- Spacing to be between 10% and 35% of the character height.

## Line Spacing

- Spacing between the baselines of separate lines of copy is to be between 135% and 170% of the maximum character height.

## VIEWING DISTANCE IMPACT ON COPY SIZE

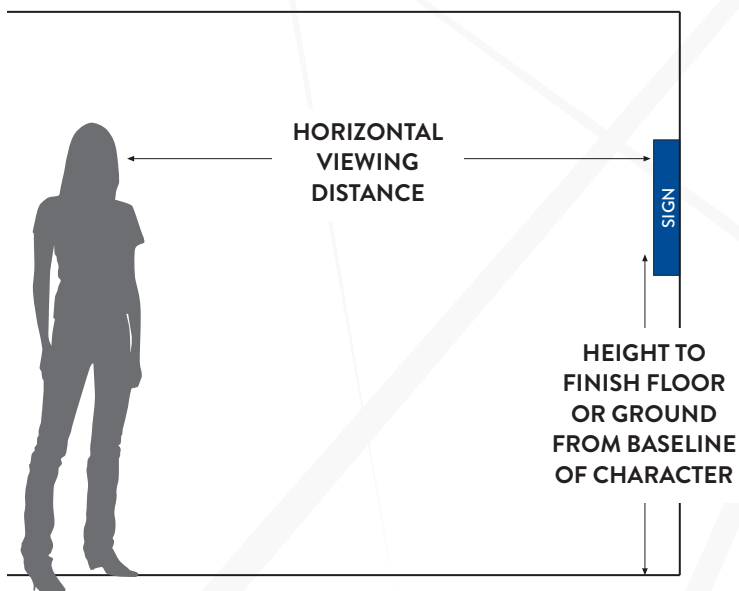
### Minimum Height for Copy Placement

- Visual characters shall be 40” minimum above the finish floor or ground.

### Visual Copy Restrictions at Various Viewing Distances Chart

## VISUAL COPY RESTRICTIONS AT VARIOUS VIEWING DISTANCES

HEIGHT TO FINISH FLOOR OR GROUND FROM BASELINE OF CHARACTER	HORIZONTAL VIEWING DISTANCE	MINIMUM CHARACTER HEIGHT
40” to less than or equal to 70”	Less than 72”	5/8”
	72” and greater	5/8”, plus 1/8” per foot of viewing distance above 72”
Greater than 70” to less than or equal to 120”	Less than 180”	2”
	180” and greater	2”, plus 1/8” per foot of viewing distance above 180”
Greater than 120”	Less than 21’	3”
	21’ and greater	3”, plus 1/8” per foot of viewing distance above 21’





## LOCATION OF PERMANENT ROOM ID SIGNS

### Permanent room signs are to be located at doorways.

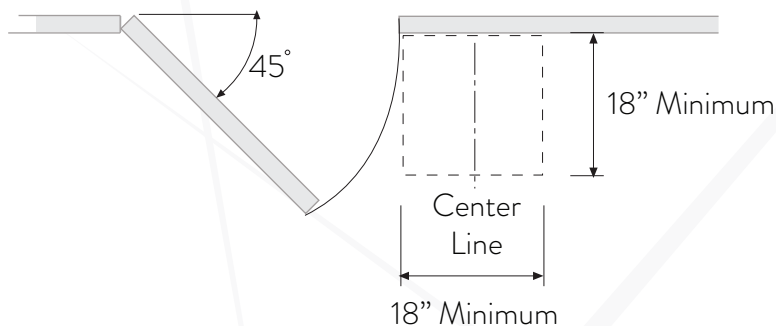
- This gives the visually impaired a location cue.
- The safety of the tactile reader is paramount.
- Signs mount on the strike side of the door most often, but there are exceptions.
- If there is no room for the sign on the strike side of the door, then it can be placed on the nearest adjacent wall.
- Signs can mount to the door itself if:
  - The sign is mounted on the push side of the door (it swings inward).
  - If the door automatically closes.
  - If the door has no hold open devices.(Examples include restrooms, hotel rooms & fire exits.)

### What if there are double doors?

- If only one door opens, the sign should mount to inactive door.
- If both doors open, then the sign will mount to the right of the right hand door.
- If there is no room for the sign on the right side of the door, then it can be placed on the nearest adjacent wall.

### What if the door opens outward?

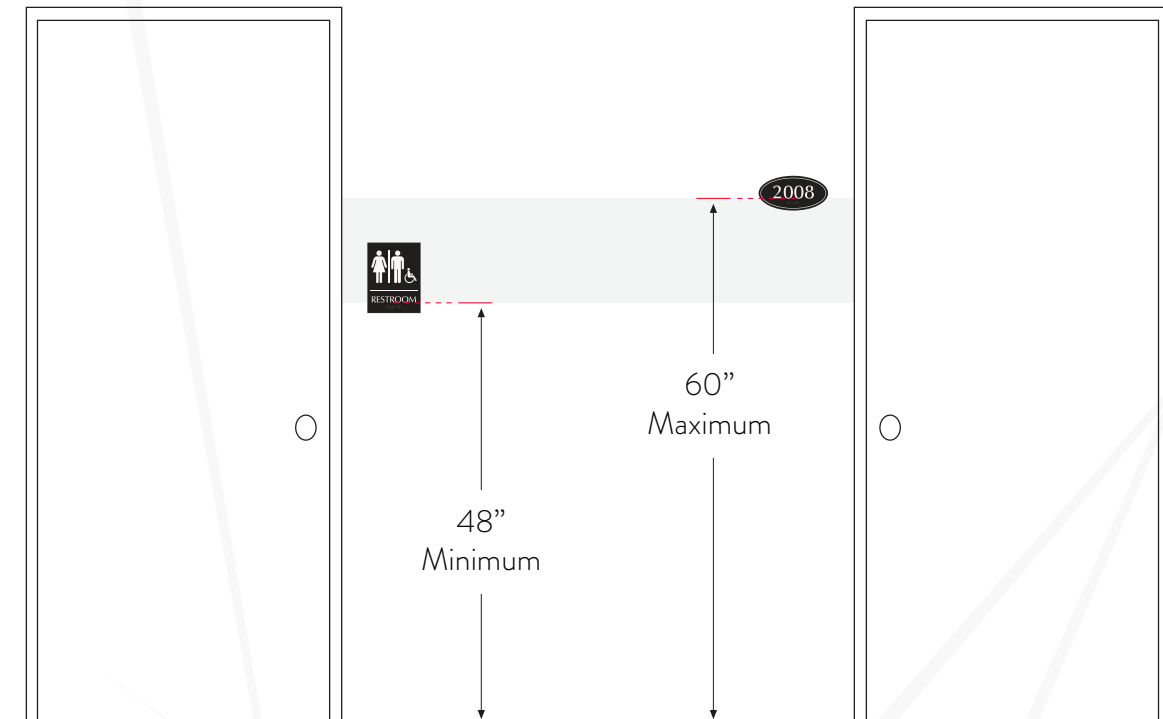
- To protect the tactile reader from an outward swinging door, the sign needs to be mounted outside of the arc of the door swing.
- The raised characters on a permanent room ID are to be centered within an 18" square clear floor space.



Tactile characters centered within 18" x 18" clear floor space

### Mounting height for tactile signs:

- Signs can now be mounted within a range of space which allows for a consistent top height for different sized signs along a hall.
- Signs are to be mounted at a height to allow the baselines of raised characters to be located between 48" and 60" above the ground.



Minimum Height: Baseline of lowest copy mounted no lower than 48" above floor

Maximum Height: Baseline of highest copy mounted no higher than 60" above floor

[See our Detailed ADA Sign Installation Guide for more information.](#)