



# REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERIOR SIGNS FROM THE NEW ADA

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## Introduction

On March 15, 2011, the updated ADA Accessibility Guidelines took effect in construction and alterations of facilities covered by the ADA, including places of public accommodation, commercial facilities, and state and local government facilities.

DOJ regulations allow covered entities the choice of following either the updated standards or the original standards until March 15, 2012. After this period of time, use of the new standards is mandatory. In setting the effective dates, DOJ sought to allow sufficient time for transitioning to the updated standards so as not to disrupt design and construction projects already underway.

Airports, train stations and bus depots covered by the Department of Transportation and Federal Property covered by the General Services Administration or the Department of Defense have already adopted the updated standards and have been following them for several years.

The updated accessibility standards include substantive changes to the requirements for accessible signage. This document summarizes the changes to the technical section of the standard and elaborates on the requirements for accessible signage.

## 1. Typography For Tactile Signs

### A. 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.

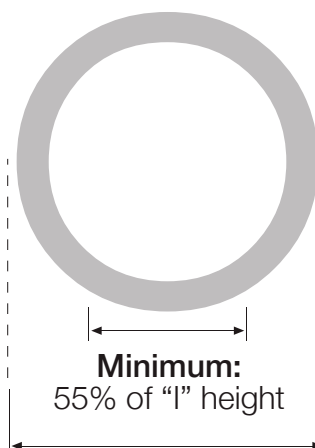
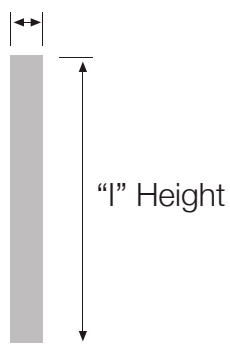
### B. Character Proportions

The stroke width of the upper case "I" 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 "I".

#### Stroke Width

15% or Less  
of "I" Height



#### Corresponding "O" Width

At least 55%  
but no more than  
110% of the "I" height

**Minimum:**  
55% of "I" height

**Maximum:**  
110% of "I" height

### C. 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).

### E. 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.



Minimum Spacing Between Characters

## 1. Typography For Tactile Signs (cont)

### F. 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).



### G. 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.



### 3. Location of Permanent Room ID Signs

#### A. 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.

#### B. What if there are double doors?

If only one door opens, the sign should mount to inactive door.

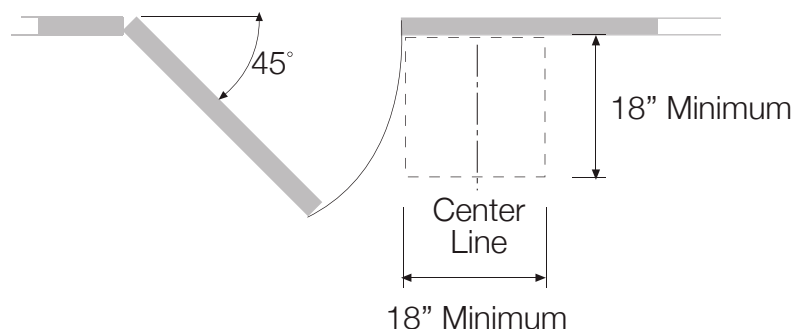
If both doors open, then the sign will mount to the right of the right hand door.

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.

#### C. 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.



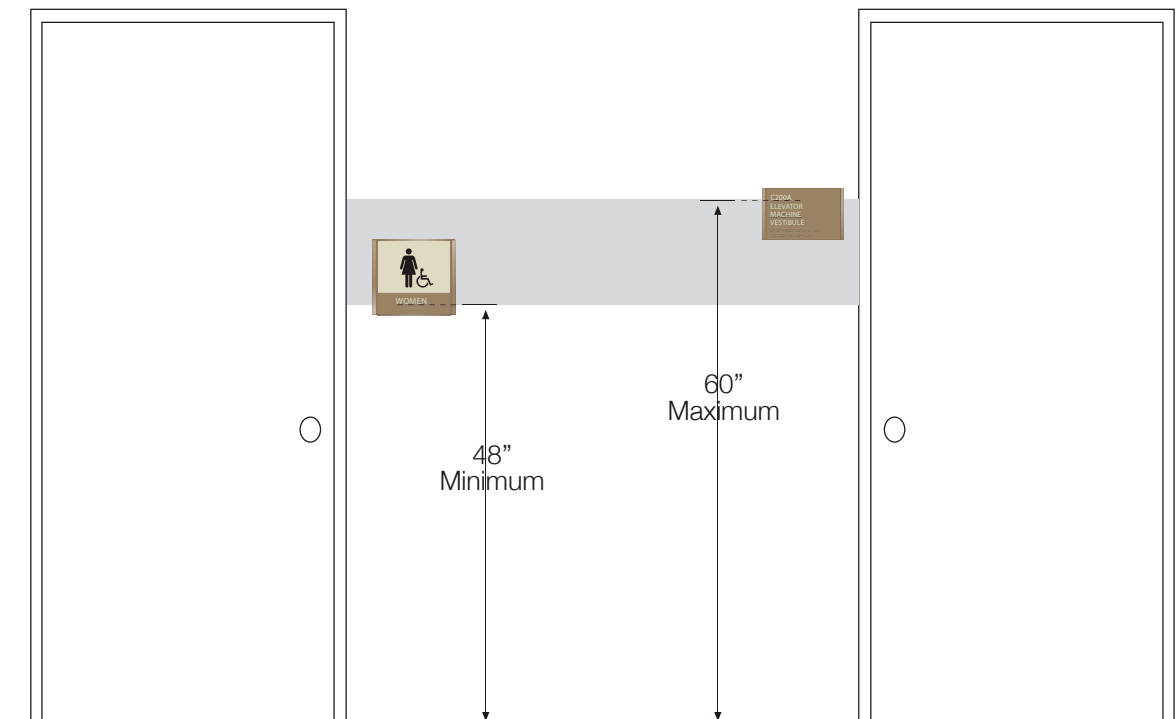
**Tactile characters centered within 18" x 18" clear floor space**

### 3. Location of Permanent Room ID Signs (cont)

#### D. 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

## 4. 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.

### A. Acceptable Characters

Visual characters can no longer be italic or oblique, script or highly decorative.

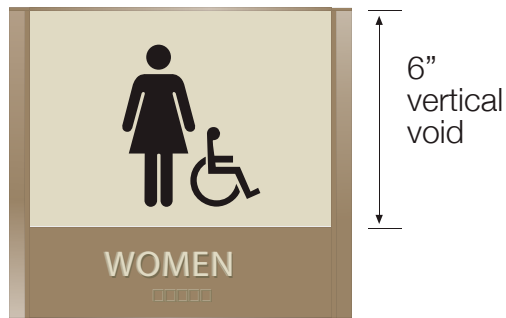
### B. Finish and Contrast

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.

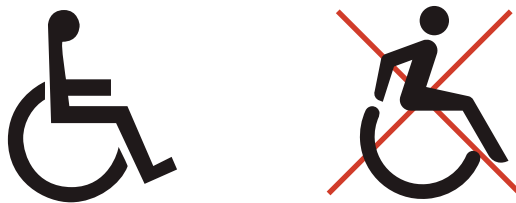
### C. Pictograms

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.



Use standard International symbols, not “zoomy” symbols:



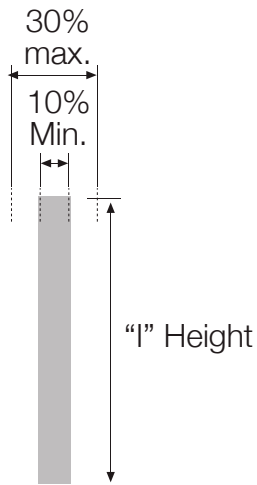
International Symbol of Accessibility



## 5. Visual Characters for Directional, Information & Regulatory Signs

### A. Stroke Thickness

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



### B. 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.

### C. Line Spacing

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

## 6. How Mounting Heights & Horizontal Viewing Distance Impact Copy Size

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

### A. Visual copy mounted between 40" and 70" above the floor

1. With a horizontal access of 72" or less.  
**Copy height can be as small as 5/8".**
2. With a horizontal access of greater than 72".  
**5/8" copy height will increase 1/8" per foot for each foot over 72".**

### B. Visual copy mounted between 70" and 120" above the floor

1. With a horizontal access of 180" or less.  
**Copy height can be as small as 2".**
2. With a horizontal access of greater than 180".  
**2" copy height will increase 1/8" per foot for each foot over 180".**

### C. Visual copy mounted higher than 120" above the floor

1. With a horizontal access of 21'-0" or less.  
**Copy height can be as small as 3".**
2. With a horizontal access of greater than 21'-0".  
**3" copy height will increase 1/8" per foot for each foot over 21'-0".**