

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law in July, 1990, with enforcement of the law beginning in July, 1991. The intent of the law is to broadly protect the civil rights of the disabled, prohibiting discrimination in employment and access to goods and services.

## The ADA Contains Five Parts or Titles:

### Title I Employment

Ensures that qualified individuals with disabilities are protected from discrimination on the basis of disability.

### Title II Public Services and Transportation

Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all services, programs, and activities provided or made available by local or state governments and their affiliate agencies.

### Title III Public Accommodations (Including Signage)

Specifies that no individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal access of public accommodations. All services and facilities, even those privately owned, must be accessible to persons with disabilities.

### Title IV Telecommunications

Requires telephone companies to provide special services for the hearing and/or speech impaired.

### Title V Miscellaneous

Contains supplemental regulations including legal and implementation details that are not explicitly covered in other parts of the ADA.

## ADA Title III Applies to Public Accommodations and Commercial Facilities

### Public Accommodations

Public accommodations are defined as private establishments providing goods and services to the general public. Over five million facilities are affected including hotels, restaurants, hospitals, physicians' offices, schools, stores, movie theaters, convention centers, libraries, banks, museums and airports.

### Commercial Facilities

Commercial facilities are defined as non-residential establishments not open to the general public that affect commerce, such as factories, warehouses and office buildings.

### Exemptions

Private clubs and religious organizations, including places of worship.

## Revised Final ADA Regulations

The Department of Justice published revised final regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for title II and title III on September 15, 2010, in the Federal Register. These requirements, or rules, clarify and refine issues that have arisen over the past 20 years and contain new and updated requirements, including the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design ("2010 Standards").

## 2010 ADA Standards: Compliance Dates

March 15, 2012, is the compliance date for using the 2010 Standards for new construction, alterations, program accessibility, and barrier removal.

Although under certain circumstances, the revised regulations permit the use of the 2010 Standards before the compliance date of March 15, 2012, entities are not required to comply with the 2010 Standards until March 15, 2012.

Please note that formal compliance is administered at the state and local levels, and that many states and municipalities have already adopted the new standards. Some states and municipalities are permitted to adopt accessibility codes that are even more stringent than the 2010 Standards, as long as they minimally meet the 2010 Standards and obtain approval from the U.S. Department of Justice.

## Title III: New Construction and Alterations

From September 15, 2010, to March 15, 2012, if a title III entity undertakes

new construction or alterations, it may choose either the 1991 Standards or the 2010 Standards, unless state or municipality code mandates otherwise. For example, an entity cannot use the 1991 Standards for accessible routes and the 2010 Standards for accessible seating.

On or after March 15, 2012, all newly constructed or altered facilities must comply with all of the requirements in the 2010 Standards.

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

## Sign Categories

The guidelines define four categories of interior and exterior signs:

### 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.

### 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.

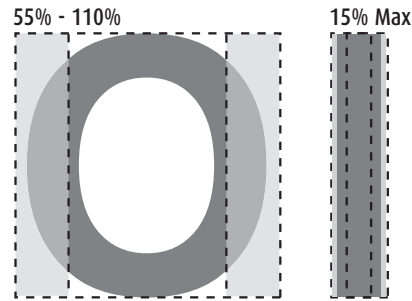
### Overhead Signs

Signs which are projected or suspended overhead must meet requirements for clearance, character proportion, minimum character height, sign finish and contrast.

## 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.

## Tactile Character Considerations



**Stroke Width to Height Proportion**  
Stroke thickness of the uppercase letter "I" should be 15% maximum of the height of the character

### Body Width to Height Proportion

Characters should 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"

## Minimum Sign Requirements

### Tactile Characters

- Must be raised 1/32 inch minimum above their background
- Must be all uppercase and sans serif
- 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 2 Braille
- Stroke thickness of the uppercase letter "I" must be 15 percent maximum of the height of the character

### Braille

- Must be contracted (Grade 2) 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

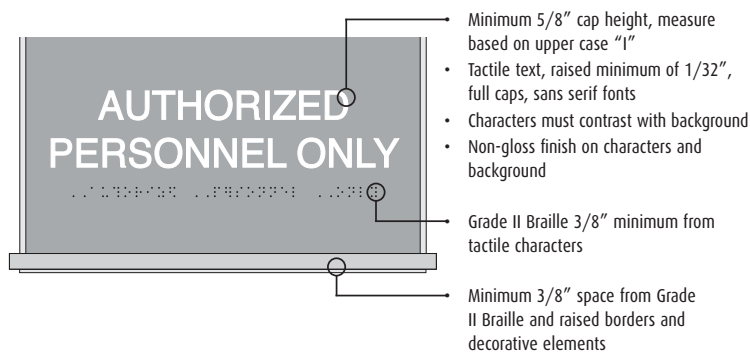
- Must have a field height of 6 inches minimum
- Text descriptors must be placed below (not within) the pictogram field
- Text descriptors must be tactile and Braille

### Finish & Contrast

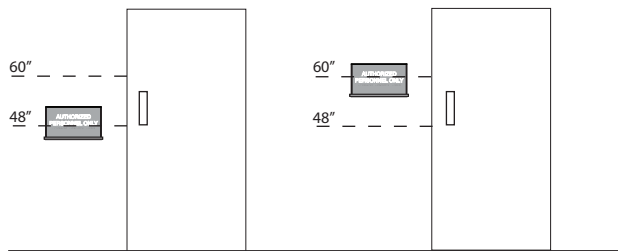
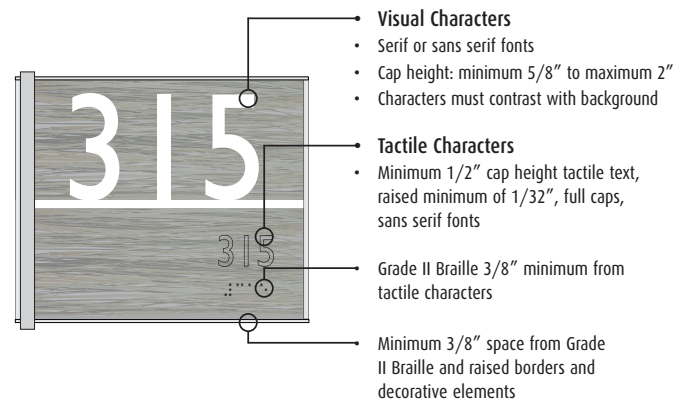
- Characters and their background must have a non-glare finish
- Characters must contrast with their background with either light characters on a dark background or dark characters on a light background

	Permanent	Directional	Overhead
• Must be raised 1/32 inch minimum above their background		•	
• Must be all uppercase and sans serif		•	
• 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 2 Braille		•	
• Stroke thickness of the uppercase letter "I" must be 15 percent maximum of the height of the character		•	
• Must be contracted (Grade 2) 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		•	
• 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			• •
• 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	•		
• 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	•	•	•

## Typical ADA Compliant Sign



## ADA Compliant Sign (Design Alternate)



### Mounting Height

Tactile characters on signs should be located 48" minimum above the finish floor or ground surface, measured from the baseline of the lowest tactile character and 60" maximum above the finish floor or ground surface, measured from the baseline of the highest tactile character.

### Mounting from Door Jamb

Signs containing tactile characters should be located so that a clear floor space of 18" minimum by 18" minimum, centered on the tactile characters, is provided beyond the arc of any door swing between the closed position and 45 degree open position.

## Visual Character Height Table

Height to Finish Floor or Ground from Baseline of Character	Horizontal Viewing Distance	Minimum Visual Character Height (Based on Uppercase "I")
40 inches (1015 mm) to less than or equal to 70 inches (1780 mm)	Less than 72 inches (1830 mm)	5/8 inch (16 mm)
	72 inches (1830 mm) and greater	5/8 inch (16 mm), plus 1/8 inch (3.2 mm) per foot (305 mm) of viewing distance above 72 inches (1830 mm)
Greater than 70 inches (1780 mm) to less than or equal to 120 inches (3050 mm)	Less than 180 inches (4570 mm)	2 inches (51 mm)
	180 inches (4570 mm) and greater	2 inches (51 mm), plus 1/8 inch (3.2 mm) per foot (305 mm) of viewing distance above 180 inches (4570 mm)
Greater than 120 inches (3050 mm)	Less than 21 feet (6400 mm)	3 inches (75 mm)
	21 feet (6400 mm) and greater	3 inches (75 mm), plus 1/8 inch (3.2 mm) per foot (305 mm) viewing distance above 21 feet (6400 mm)

## Identification of Accessible Facilities & Features

### Entrances

The International Symbol of Accessibility must be displayed at accessible entrances if all entrances are not accessible. Directional signs must follow visual character guidelines and be provided at inaccessible entrances to provide navigation to accessible entrances.

### Restrooms and Bathing Facilities

The International Symbol of Accessibility must be displayed at accessible restrooms and bathing facilities if all restrooms and bathing facilities are not accessible. Directional signs must be provided at the inaccessible locations, and these signs must include the International Symbol of Accessibility and follow visual character guidelines.

### Assembly Areas

The International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss must be displayed where assistive listening systems are required, informing patrons of the availability of the assistive listening system. In addition, assistive listening signs must comply with ADA visual character guidelines.

### Means of Egress

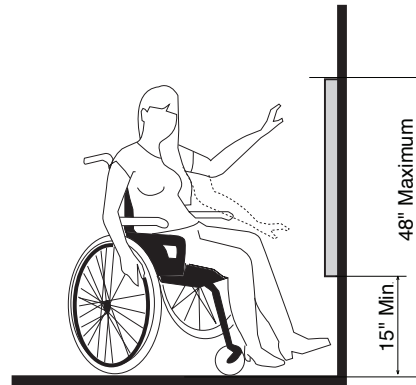
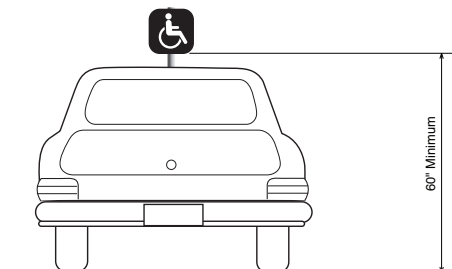
“Means of Egress” refers to the ability to exit a structure, and is broken into three parts: the path of travel to an exit, the exit itself, and the areas of refuge. Exit doors require signs that comply with tactile and visual character requirements, while area of refuge and directional signs must comply with visual character requirements.

### TTYs (Text Telephones)

Public TTYs must be identified by the International Symbol of TTY. Directional signs indicating the location of the nearest public TTY must be provided at all banks of public pay telephones not containing a public TTY. In addition, where signs provide direction to public pay telephones, they must also provide direction to public TTYs. Directional signs must comply with visual character guidelines and include the International Symbol of TTY.

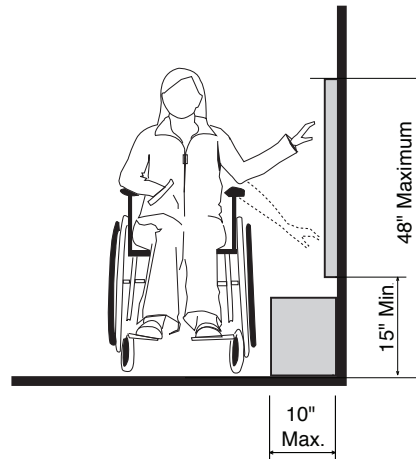
### Parking Areas

Accessible parking spaces require identification signs including the International Symbol of Accessibility. Signs identifying van parking spaces shall contain the designation “van accessible.” Signs must be mounted 60” minimum above the finished floor or ground surface measured to the bottom of the sign.



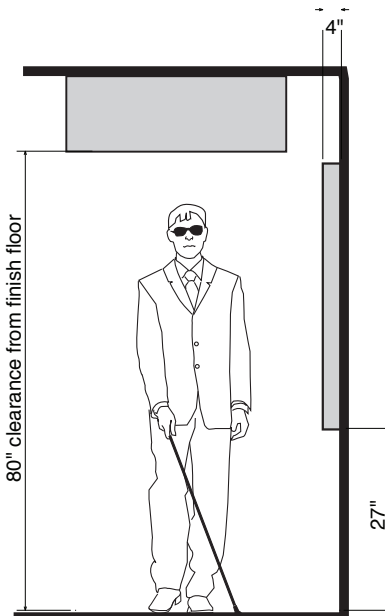
### 2010 ADA Section 308.2: Forward Reach

- Includes digital displays
- Ensures that a person in a wheelchair can comfortably access required controls on a wall-mounted device while reaching forward
- Maximum forward reach height is 48” above the finished floor
- Minimum forward reach height is 15” above the finished floor



### 2010 ADA Section 308.3: Side Reach

- Includes digital displays
- Ensures that a person in a wheelchair can comfortably access required controls on a wall-mounted device while reaching from the side
- Maximum side reach height is 48” above the finished floor
- Minimum side reach height is 15” above the finished floor



### 2010 ADA Section 307.2: Protruding Objects

- Includes digital displays
- Applies to objects that are more than 27” above the finished floor and not more than 80” above the finished floor
- Cannot extend away from the wall horizontally more than 4” into the circulation path