

The purpose of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) is to make public sites, facilities and buildings accessible to and usable by people with physical disabilities. The section of ADA that has the most effect on signage is Title III, which deals with Public Accommodations.

Title III specifies a series of sign characteristics that ultimately enhances accessibility by way of improved legibility and the standardization of sign placement. A review of each of these characteristics is outlined below and cross-referenced to the respective sign types in Table 1.

**ADA Sign Characteristics**

The following characteristics are applicable to specific sign types. Each sign type category is listed in Table 1, along with the applicable characteristics.

- Finish**  
Characters and background to be non-glare
- Contrast**  
Characters and background to contrast
- Tactile Characters**  
Raised characters are to be raised a minimum of 1/32"
- Braille**  
Corresponding Grade 2 Braille to accompany all tactile text
- Case**  
Sign type dictates whether or not upper case or upper/lower case is required (see Table 1 below)
- Character Height**  
Visibility and use will determine copy height ranging from 5/8" to 3" or more (see Table 2 below)

- Character Width**  
Using uppercase "O", width shall be between 55% and 110% of the height of an upper-case letter "I"
- Line Spacing**  
(aka Leading) Measured from baseline to baseline of (2) separate lines of copy, spacing shall equal 135% - 170% of a uppercase letter "I"
- Character Spacing**  
(aka Kerning) Between 1/16" to 3/8" depending on character type
- Stroke Thickness**  
Between 10% and 30% of the height of an uppercase letter "I", depending on character type
- Mounting Height**  
Location and height vary based on sign type (see Table 1 below)

**Table 1 - Sign Types**

Y = Required N = Not Required

ADA Characteristics	Permanent Room	Directional	Overhead	Projecting	Temporary	Directories
Finish	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Contrast	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Tactile	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Grade 2 Braille	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Case	U/C	U/C &/or L/C	U/C & L/C	U/C & L/C	N	N
Character Height Min - Max	5/8" - 2"	Table 2	3" minimum	3" minimum	N	N
Character Width	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Line Spacing	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Character Spacing	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Stroke Thickness	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Mounting	48" - 60" from copy baseline to floor	40" minimum from copy baseline to floor	Minimum 80" clearance	Minimum 80" clearance	N	N

**Mounting Permanent Signs**

Sign location shall be relative to door type and swing path.

- Doors opening out:** Centre of sign 9" from door frame
- Single Door:** Next to door on latch side
- Double doors:** Right of right hand door
- Push doors:** On the push side of doors with closers and without hold-open devices

Note: Signs for doors without wall spaces on latch side shall be mounted on nearest adjacent wall. Such signs must have 18" of clearance from swing path of door.

**Table 2 - Character Heights**

Floor to Top of Characters	Viewing Distance	Minimum Character Height
40" - 70"	< 6'	5/8"
	> 6'	5/8" + 1/8" per ft. beyond 6'
70" - 120"	< 15'	2"
	> 15'	2" + 1/8" per ft. beyond 15'
120" +	< 21'	3"
	> 21'	3" + 1/8" per ft. beyond 21'