

## WHAT'S IN A SIGN?

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Signs are the keys to daily living. Without good signs, blind and visually impaired people are often forced to depend on the kindness of sighted strangers to manage even the most basic of tasks or not live the quality of life non-visually impaired people do. Good signage minimizes anxiety and confusion and is easy to understand and people with a visual impairment should not be placed at a disadvantage; good signage also significantly improves the ease with which both disabled and non-disabled people gain access to services and products.

The Canadian Standards Association has issued a set of recommended standards that should be taken into account when replacing old signs or adding new signs. Some of the more common standards include the following recommendations.

**Location** – signage should be positioned to avoid shadow areas, glare and be prohibited from plants and opened doors. Signs at eye level allow persons to get closer to the sign.

**Configuration** – signage should have a glare-free surface; be uniform of design; be consistent in set-up, shape, colour and positioning within the same facility; be colour contrasted with its background. The greatest legibility is white or light lettering on a black or dark background.

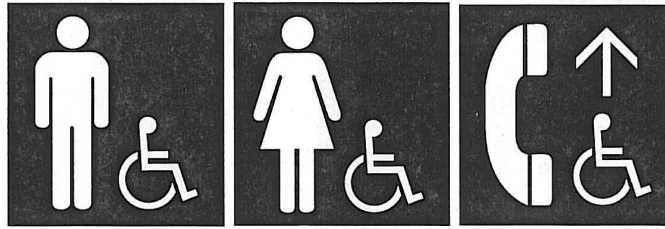
**Characters** – letter and numerals should be sans serif (in typography serifs are semi-structural details on the ends of some of the strokes that make up letters and symbols – eg **serif** and sans serif) and have Arabic numbers. There are also recommended width-to-height ratios depending on size of signage. Signage using a mixture of upper case and lower case are easier to read than all capital letters. (eg. Canada not CANADA). Vertical wording should be avoided and if electronic scrolling signage is used, ensure that characters and symbols move slowly across the screen.

**Tactile Signs** – tactile markings shall supplement the text of regulatory signs, warning signs and identification signs; mounting locations for tactile signs should allow a person to approach and touch the message with ease.

**Symbols** – The International Symbol of Access shall be used where facilities or their elements are required to be identified as accessible.



**International Symbol of Access**



**Examples of service identification signs  
incorporating the International Symbol of Access**

For more information on signage please visit the Canadian Standards Association website @ [www.csa.ca](http://www.csa.ca) or contact the City of Cornwall's Accessibility Advisory Committee Office Coordinator at 613-932-6252 or [jmalyon@cornwall.ca](mailto:jmalyon@cornwall.ca).