



Department of Veterans Affairs

Environmental Graphics Design Program Guide

*Veterans Health Administration
Washington, DC 20420*

July, 1996



Department of Veterans Affairs

Environmental Graphic Design

P R O G R A M G U I D E

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The Department of Veteran Affairs has developed this Program Guide recognizing the responsibility to provide an appropriate Environmental Graphics Design Program at and within all facilities. An effective Environmental Graphics Design Program also reinforces the image of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The purpose of this Program Guide is to provide guidelines to the staff at VA facilities so signs and sign programs can be designed to meet their individual needs. This guideline is also provided for the development of a sign system that will assist VA customers as they approach the property, locate buildings, and functions within them.

This Program Guide can be used to:

- Establish the various types of signs to be used for various purposes.
- Define requirements for various interior and exterior signs.
- Provide uniform signs for life and safety codes.
- Require facilities to adapt to new regulations and requirements.
- Define the need for updating and implementing a sign program.
- Provide uniformity of specifications, material, construction, and installation of interior and exterior signs.
- Reduce costs of maintenance and procurement.
- Provide color selections for both interior and exterior signs.
- Allow flexibility in designing an interior or exterior sign program.

This Environmental Graphics Design Program guide is in compliance with policy contained in VA Directive.

This Program Guide for the Department of Veterans Affairs has involved work and input from many departments, individuals and VA Medical Centers. The following identifies the participants and acknowledges their contributions.

VA MEDICAL CENTERS

Albany
Baltimore
Birmingham
Buffalo
Denver
Houston
Indianapolis
Iowa City
Little Rock
Long Beach
Los Angeles Outpatient Clinic
Martinsburg
Memphis
Mountain Home
Palo Alto
Portland
San Francisco
Salt Lake City
Topeka
Washington, DC
West Los Angeles

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Veterans Health Administration
Environmental Management Services
Facilities Management Office

National Cemetery System

Veterans Benefits Offices
Los Angeles
Oakland

DESIGN CONSULTANTS

Englund + Donnelly Design
The Ratcliff Architects

The Department of Veterans Affairs sign system has been designed using a selected group of common graphic elements and visual standards.

The graphic elements include the Department of Veterans Affairs logo signature and seal, three versions (weight and style) of the Helvetica typeface and specifications for letter and word spacing. Visual standards include: colors and finishes, and letter size in relation to viewing distance.

These standards become the component building blocks around which signs are configured. They have been adopted to provide a functional consistency in signs for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

If specialized or unique sign applications require deviation from these standards, as applied to signs, contact the Department of Veterans Affairs, Facilities Management or Environmental Management Services.

Typeface

Helvetica Medium is the standard typeface for the VA Sign System and will be used predominantly throughout the sign program. Signs identifying permanent rooms shall be in all caps with accompanying Grade 2 Braille. All other signs are to maintain an upper and lower case (Initial Caps) format.

The secondary language of a multilingual sign shall be Helvetica Regular.

Overhead signs shall be Helvetica Condensed Medium.

Building Standard- Helvetica Medium

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890**

Second Language- Helvetica Regular

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890**

Overhead Signs- Helvetica Condensed Medium

**ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890**

Letterspacing

Normal letter spacing is utilized when the readability ratio factor (capital letter height in inches to maximum readable viewing distance in feet) is 1:25 for a word using upper and lower case letters. Word spacing shall be equivalent to the width of a lower case "v".

Normal letter spacing should not be used when letter forms are to be illuminated as light bleed causes letters to fuse together visually.

Distance letter spacing shall be utilized when the copy content is intended for readability at greater viewing distances than normal letter spacing allows. The readability ratio factor is 1:40. Distance letter spacing shall be used for all exterior & illuminated signs.

Normal Spacing

Correct Spacing

Administration

Correct Spacing

Administration

Distance Spacing

Correct Spacing

Building

Correct Spacing

Building

Spacing Is Too Tight

Administration

Spacing Is Too Tight

Administration

Spacing Is Too Tight

Building

Spacing Is Too Tight

Building

Spacing Is Too Loose

Administration

Spacing Is Too Loose

Administration

Spacing Is Too Loose

Building

Spacing Is Too Loose

Building

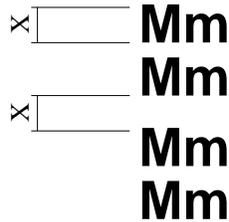
Interline Spacing

Interline spacing will generally be noted on sign type drawings. As a rule, line spacing shall be no less than 1/2 the height of the upper case letter form.



Paragraph Spacing

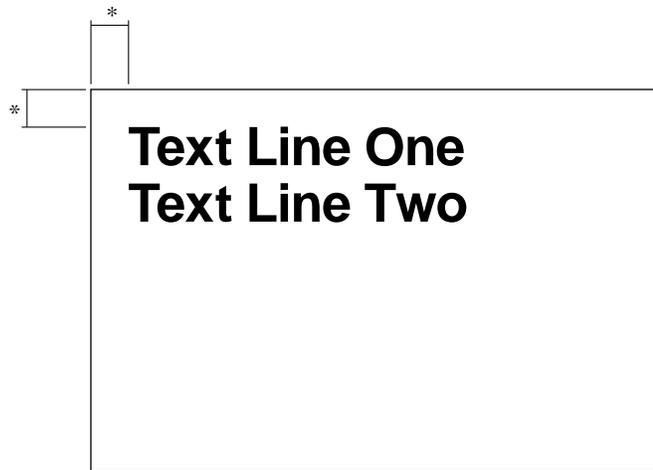
Paragraph spacing will generally be noted on sign type drawings. As a rule, paragraph spacing shall be no less than the height of the upper case letter form.



Alignment

A flush upper left copy format shall be the general rule though certain exceptions shall be noted.

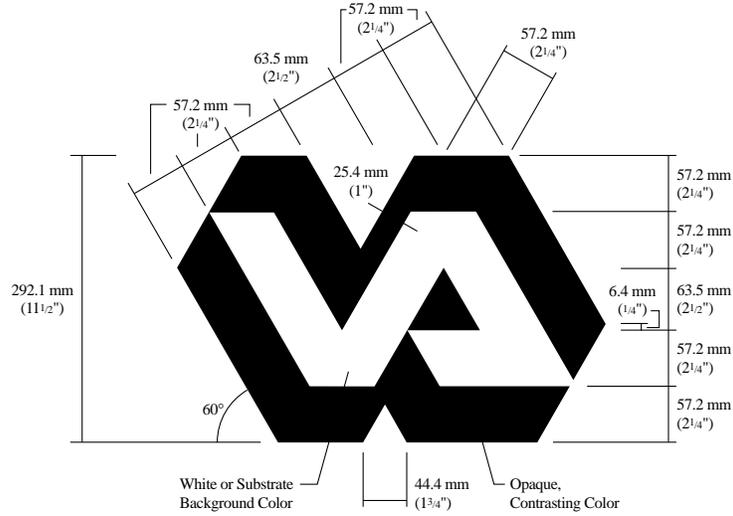
As a rule, all copy placed on inserts, changeable directional modules, listing strips, overhead panels, and changeable exterior panels shall be vertically centered, (equal margins top and bottom) Graphic symbols used in square format shall be centered on four sides.



* Dimension varies per sign type.
See Sign Type Drawings for exact dimension

Signature

The signature which includes the VA logo icon and the text shall be presented in a manner consistent with the Department of Veterans Affairs Graphic Standards. Adjacent configuration are those that are typically acceptable for use with the logo icon. If other configurations of the name and logo icon are desired consult with Washington, DC for prior approval.



Seal

Adjacent illustrations show the two versions of the Department of Veterans Affairs seal.

The seal is for use on the exterior of the main building of a medical center, or within the main lobby of a Department of Veterans Affairs facility or office.

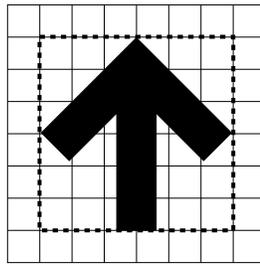
All seals must conform to master art work which is available from the Department of Veterans Affairs

NOTE: The seal is not to be used on signs.

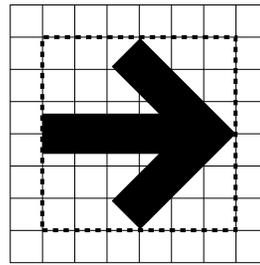


Arrow

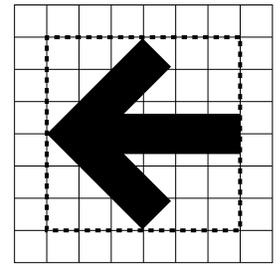
Illustrations show the prescribed arrow for use in the VA sign program. The arrow is always centered within its square field.



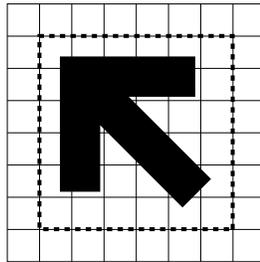
POSITION 1



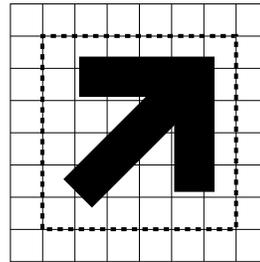
POSITION 2



POSITION 3



POSITION 4



POSITION 5

Arrow Alignment with Text

The arrow is always positioned in such a manner that it is centered in relationship to the capital letter that it precedes. The standard position for arrows, in relationship to text, is either on the left of the first line of text or immediately above the first line of text.

On signs with numerous destinations a single arrow will be placed adjacent to the first line of text to identify the direction for all destinations grouped together.

The arrow size is one and one half (1 1/2) times the capital letter height.



Sign Colors

The adjacent chart and accompanying illustrations provide a listing of sign colors that allow a medical center to coordinate an interior or exterior sign program to the architectural colors and finishes of the buildings on the campus.

The color options listed have been selected because they provide contrast between typography and the sign background. Contrast for exterior signs is important for both day and night readability from vehicles. High contrast for readability is equally important for interior signs, especially for the elderly and vision impaired. Light background colors need black or dark gray text and deep or dark colors need white text. Exterior signs that are not internally illuminated should have reflective white letters.

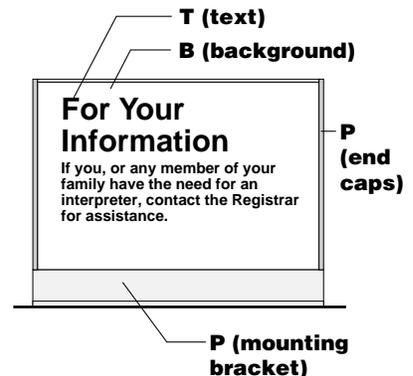
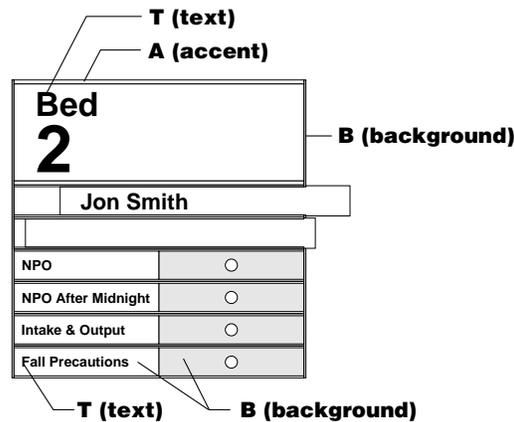
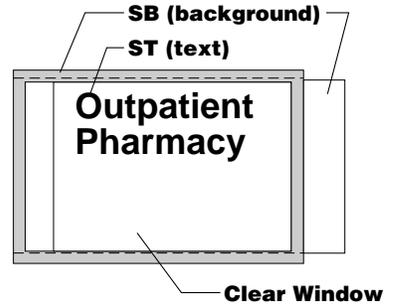
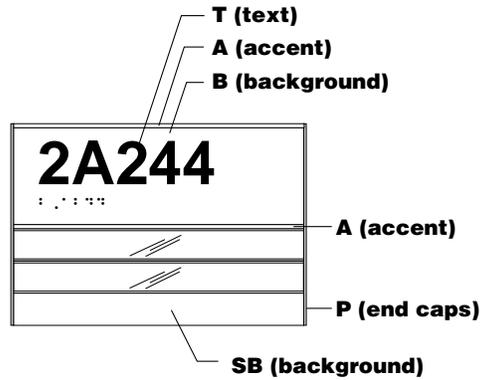
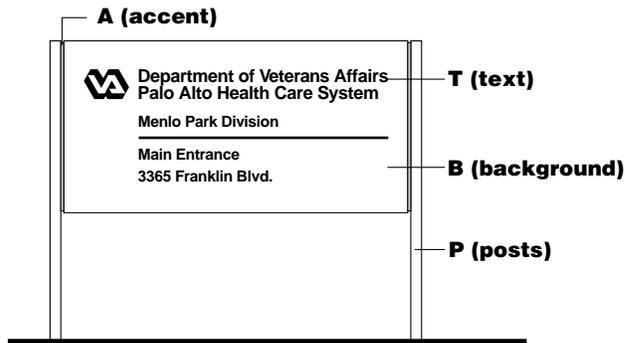
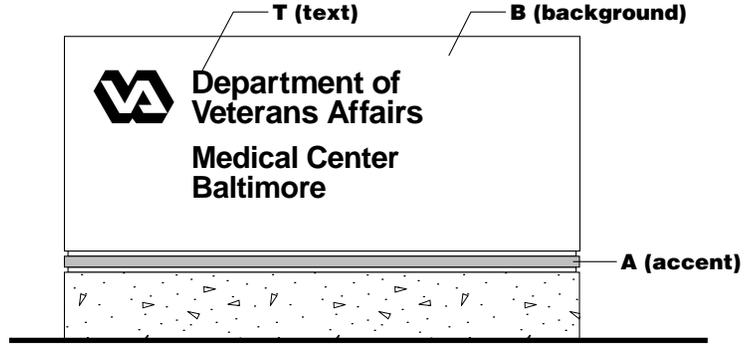
If a facility deviates from the identified family of colors, they should insure that there is sufficient contrast between the typography and sign background under all lighting situations. Night and day light conditions for exterior signs can vary a lot so readability should be field verified with actual color samples. Placement, type of light fixture, sodium and halide lights, warm and cool florescent lights can also change colors and effect contrast so this also needs to be taken into account.

Some of the colors listed can be used for both interior and exterior applications and are so indicated. There are however certain colors that should not be used for interior or exterior signs because of their unsuitability or because they are only for special applications. Background color B5 is a match to the dark brown that has been in use for interior signs.

The manufacturers listed for colors are listed for reference. Sign manufacturers may already have product available in some of these colors. Each of the background colors can be custom mixed to match in different types of paint based upon the various application requirements and specifications.

Besides these colors, all traffic sign faces should use the prescribed colors as listed in the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices. All OSHA Safety Colors are to meet ANSI specification Z53.1/OSHA.

Construction and temporary signs may utilize colors other than those identified as their functions are strictly temporary and the colors can be adapted to an individual facility's requirement.



	Color #	Color Description	Exterior	Interior	Specification
Text	T1	Gloss White	X	X	Spartan International, Sparcal #1503 (08)
	T2	Reflective White	X		Spartan International, Sparcal #1221
	T3	Translucent White	X		CYRO, Acrylite, White #015-2
	T4	Black		X	Spartan International, Sparcal #1500 (02)
	T5	Graphite		X	Spartan International, Sparcal, #1669
	T6	Red (OSHA)		X	Spartan International, Sparcal, #1576 (31)
	T7	Purple (OSHA)		X	Spartan International, Sparcal #1625 (15)
	T8	Handicapped Blue	X	X	Spartan International, Sparcal #1530 (47)

Background	B1	Dark Bronze Anodized 313	X		US Paint, Awlgrip Duranodics #H6013
	B2	Handicapped Blue (Fed #15090)	X		DuPont, Spectramaster #BS210
	B3	Red (OSHA)	X	X	DuPont, Spectramaster #RS901
	B4	VA Blue	X		PMS 280
	B5	Dark Brown		X	DuPont, Spectramaster, #YS068
	B6	Black	X	X	Formica, #909-58
	B7	White		X	Formica, #459-58
	B8	Yellow (OSHA)	X	X	DuPont, Spectramaster #YS911
	B9	Graphite	X	X	Formica #837-58
	B10	Gray		X	Formica #961-58
	B11	Putty		X	Formica #929-58
	B12	Dark Blue	X	X	Formica #914-58
	B13	Burgundy	X	X	Formica #875-58
	B14	Teal	X	X	Formica #456-58
	B15	Dark Green	X	X	Formica #446-58
	B16	Brick	X	X	Formica #7202-58
	B17	Blue Gray	X	X	Formica #957-58
	B18	Taupe		X	Formica #440-58
	B19	Light Green		X	Formica #879-58
	B20	Light Blue		X	Formica #880-58
	B21	Mauve		X	Formica #962-58

Exterior Posts	P1	Dark Bronze Anodized 313	X	X	US Paint, Awlgrip Duranodics #H6013	
	P2	Clear Anodized	X	X	US Paint, Awlgrip Duranodics #F1038	
	Interior End Caps, Brackets Directory Case Stanchions	P3	White	X		US Paint, Awlgrip #G8044
		P4	Black		X	DuPont, Spectramaster #DS024

Accent	A1	Polished Aluminum	X	X	Mirror Finish
	A2	Satin Aluminum	X	X	Grained #4 Finish
	A3	Brass Colored Aluminum		X	Grained #4 Finish

Viewing Distance Guide

The adjacent charts are to provide assistance in determining the size of lettering to be used in relation to the distance that a sign is going to be read.

These charts are general and there may be situations that would require lettering larger than what is indicated in the chart for a given distance of viewing. If in doubt regarding a size decision, choose the next larger size.

NOTE: All interior rooms number signs that have tactile letters/ numbers and Braille have specific requirements for size. Certain life safety signs have specific text size requirements. Refer to the sign type drawing for the dimensions and configuration.

Interior Signs

Viewing Distance Up To:		Letter Height	
7.5 M	25'	16 mm	5/8"
10.5 M	35'	19 mm	3/4"
15 M	50'	25 mm	1"
22.5 M	75'	40 mm	1 1/2"
30 M	100'	50 mm	2"
45 M	150'	75 mm	3"
60 M	200'	100 mm	4"
75 M	250'	125 mm	5"
90 M	300'	150 mm	6"
105 M	350'	175 mm	7"

Exterior Signs

Viewing Distance Up To:		Letter Height		Application
7.5 M	25'	25 mm	1"	
12 M	40'	40 mm	1 1/2"	
15 M	50'	50 mm	2"	
24 M	80'	75 mm	3"	
33 M	110'	100 mm	4"	
48 M	160'	150 mm	6"	
75 M	250'	225 mm	9"	
97.5 M	325'	300 mm	12"	
150 M	500'	450 mm	18"	
195 M	650'	600 mm	24"	

Symbols

Viewing Distance Up To:		Letter Height	
7.5 M	25'	75 mm	3"
10.5 M	35'	100 mm	4"
15 M	50'	125 mm	5"
18 M	60'	150 mm	6"
30 M	100'	200 mm	8"
34.5 M	115'	225 mm	9"
39 M	130'	250 mm	10"
45 M	150'	300 mm	12"

Metric

The metric system is the preferred system of measurement in accordance with the Metric Conversion Act of 1975, P.L. 94-168, as amended by Section 5164 of Omnibus Trade & Competitiveness Act of 1988 Executive Order 12770.

In accord with the Department of Veteran Affairs metric conversion plan, the sign system is recommended to be constructed in metric, however the English system can be used on VA projects, if it meets the needs of a specific facility. The use of metric should not add cost to a project and "off the shelf" metric sign systems are preferred.

The VA does not intend to impose rigid metric conversions on the sign industry and will support sign manufacturers as their industry converts to the metric standard.

For assistance in transition to metric, the drawings with dimensions have been prepared showing direct metric English conversion. While typography is generally referred to in the graphic industry by point sizes and the sign industry in inches, the VA sign program is showing text layouts developed in inches and then directly converted to metric. It is preferred however, that metric dimensions be rounded to the nearest 1 mm up to 1 inch; 5 mm up to 4 inches; and, above 4 inches rounded to the nearest 25 mm.

The adjacent conversion chart should provide assistance in determining conversions from inches to millimeters.

For further information on the conversation to metric, contact the Department of Veteran Affairs, Facilities Management Office.

Inches	Nearest 1 mm (1/25")	Nearest 5 mm (1/5")	Nearest 10 mm (2/5")	1" = 25mm EXACTLY
1/32"	1			
1/16"	2			
3/32"	2			
1/8"	3			
3/16"	5			
1/4"	6			
5/16"	8			
3/8"	10			
7/16"	11			
1/2"	13			
9/16"	14			
5/8"	16			
3/4"	19			
7/8"	22			
1"	25	25		
1 1/4"	32	30		
1 1/2"	38	40		
1 3/4"	44	45		
2"	51	50		
2 1/4"	57	55		
2 1/2"	64	65		
2 3/4"	70	70		
3"	76	75		
3 1/4"	83	85		
3 1/2"	89	90		
3 3/4"	95	95		
4"	102	100	100	100
5"	127	125	130	125
6"	152	150	150	150
7"	178	180	180	175
8"	203	205	200	200
9"	229	230	230	225
10"	254	255	250	250
11"	279	280	280	275
1'-0"	305	305	300	300
2'-0"	610	610	610	600
3'-0"		915	910	900
4'-0"		1220	1220	1200
5'-0"		1525	1520	1500
6'-0"		1830	1830	1800
7'-0"		2135	2130	2100
8'-0"		2440	2440	2400
9'-0"		2745	2740	2700
10'-0"		3050	3050	3000
15'-0"		4570	4570	4500
20'-0"		6095	6100	6000

Second Language

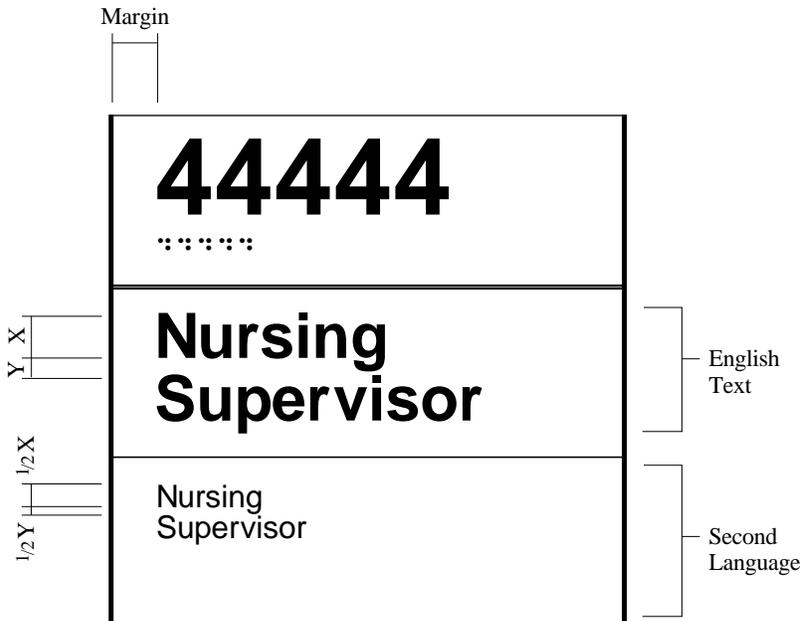
The cap height of the English text (see Sign Type Drawings for this dimension) is the basis for determining the cap height of the second language text.

Unless otherwise noted, the second language text is 1/2 the size of the English text.

Unless otherwise noted, the interline spacing of the second language text is 1/2 the interline spacing of the English text.

The second language margin is the same as the margin used for the English text and braille. See the Sign Type Drawings for this dimension.

Room Identification Sign



Informational Sign

