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The following are some general “Do’s & Don’ts” guidelines that one can refer to when developing a sign program.

This is not intended to be a training section of the guide, but to provide key information or instructions that will hopefully reduce some common errors that are made when working out a sign program.

### **Exterior & Interior Signs**

- Keep sign messages brief. Unnecessary information will confuse the viewer.
- Line-spacing between two different messages should be greater than line-spacing between lines of the same multiple-line message group.
- Use upper and lower case text whenever possible. Upper and lower case text is easier to read and understood faster than text in all capital letters.
- On directional and informational signs only provide information necessary to make a decision at that particular location.
- On directional signs, do not anticipate decisions that can be made later. Unnecessary or premature information will confuse the reader.
- Whenever possible, messages should be presented using positive information.
- Text should not be run right up to the edge of the sign.
- If a line text needs to be reduced in order to fit on a sign, use only commonly recognized abbreviations, reduce the number of words or reduce the size of the type for the entire message. DO NOT condense the type face.

### **Interior Signs**

- Use words and department names which are familiar and comfortable to visitors and patients. And, use the same words consistently throughout the sign program.
- Too many signs can cause confusion for people. Don’t over sign.
- On wall directional signs, place the straight ahead information at the top of the sign.
- On ceiling signs leave blank modules at the top of the sign rather than at the bottom.
- Be careful to coordinate ceiling mounted signs so they do not obstruct or block fire sprinkler systems.
- If “You Are Here” maps are used in a sign program, make sure that the maps correctly orient the building in relation to the map’s location. Having no map is better than one that’s upside down and sends people the wrong way.
- Make sure that floor levels are clearly identified in elevator lobbies. If possible, floor level identification at the elevator lobby should be visible to passengers from within the elevator car when the door opens.
- Do not add “Please” and “Thank You” to signs. They obscure the message that is trying to be communicated and really do not create a friendlier sign.
- Signs with more than 8 to 12 words will typically not be read by people.
- If the public does not need to know what is in a room, don’t put a sign on it. Unlabeled doors generally do not call attention to themselves.
- If the need for a sign is temporary, remember to remove it after the need is over. Signs for temporary situations that do not get removed add to confusion and “sign pollution” within a facility.

### **Exterior Signs**

- Position signs with a clear line of sight from the viewing point to the sign face.
- Signs should, if at all possible, always be perpendicular to the intended viewer.
- Never use text smaller than 3" when a sign is intended to be read from a moving car.
- Always consider the landscaping surrounding a sign when determining a sign's location. It is important that trees, shrubs and other plants do not obscure the sign.
- Always evaluate a sign's location at night as well as in the daylight. Lighting conditions and visibility may change at night making a particular location unsuitable.
- Maintenance of signs (cleaning and waxing), will extend the life of a sign program.
- Signs that receive spray from irrigation sprinklers will show oxidation from the minerals in the water resulting in a poor appearance. The life of the sign will also be considerably shortened.
- Use text (words) which are familiar and comfortable to the viewer. And, use the same words throughout the sign program.
- Consideration should be given to the use of a facility (i.e., whether a department or building offers night time services) when determining if a sign should be illuminated or not.
- Signs intended for a moving vehicle need to be larger and require larger text than a sign intended for a pedestrians.
- Lettering and sign panel size should be appropriate for the distance and speed at which a sign is viewed.
- Stacking bar signs, if possible, should always have a blank bar between two different sets of directional information.
- Messages placed on signs should be concise preferably with no more than seven to ten words.
- Typically, all signs, with the exception of directional signs, should convey no more than one concept or thought.
- The most important message should appear as the first line text and the most important directional information should be at the top of the sign.

**Sample Sign Message Schedule Form**

The following form is to illustrate the typical information that a sign manufacturer and installer will require.

- Column 1** Location number of the sign within or on the building or property as shown on the Sign Location Drawings.
- Column 2** The copy, title, legend, arrow or symbol on the sign.
- Column 3** The side of the sign the message is to appear as shown on the Sign Location Drawings. No indication means single sided sign.
- Column 4** The type of sign to go in/on/at this specific location. Refer to Sign Type Drawings.
- Column 5** Notation indicated refers to Sign Type Drawings for graphic configuration detail.
- Column 6** Notation can indicate colors.
- Column 7** Notation indicated refers to Sign Type Drawings for specific mounting, footing or installation details.
- Column 8** Note or remarks listed at end of Sign Message Schedule for clarifications and general information regarding a specific sign at a particular location.

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Sign Location	Sign Message Arrow    Text	Sign Side	Sign Type	Sign Layout	Color	Footing/ Mounting	Notes