



Nova White Papers – Accessibility Series
CALIFORNIA

International Accessibility Standards:

California Title 24

Summary

California's Title 24 is part of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) consisting of 28 sections and released by the Department of the State Architect (DSA). Title 24 covers the California Building Standards code. Signage regulations are located in multiple areas, but mainly in 1117B.5 Signs and identification. Additional areas of note include but are not limited to 1011.3 for tactile exit signage and 1022.8 for tactile floor identification signs in stairways. The most recent addition of the code was in 2010 and became effective January 1 2011. Because of the 2010 Standard for Accessible Design (SAD) released concurrently at the national level the current Title 24 matches many of the national standards while providing unique requirements. Designers working in California must match Title 24 requirements.

Title 24 is enforced by Certified Access Specialists sanctioned by the state to verify that accessibility standards have been met, particularly in regards to Braille and tactile character standards. Enforcement officials use a document titled Checklist 17 that covers signage criteria that need to be met in buildings including identification, wayfinding, egress, and areas of refuge. Enforcement must be met for both building occupancy and the addition or alteration of existing buildings.

California Title 24

Scope

- Like the national code Title 24 requires tactile signs for all permanent identification signs, and in addition there are additional requirements related to egress signs.
- Visual sign guidelines are required on all identification and wayfinding signs.
- Specific standards are included for the use of the International Symbol of Accessibility to identify accessible paths. International symbols are not required in mechanical areas or spaces that already have accessible entrances and exits established.

Braille

- Grade 2 Braille is required on all signs with specific requirement for Braille spacing. California has more stringent requirements than the national ADA with a separation of 2/10" between dot cells. California building inspectors often use a template to test for California Braille.
- Braille must be underneath tactile letters on the sign a minimum of 3/8" away from any raised surface, but a maximum of 1/2" from raised characters.
- Braille dots must be domed or rounded and be a minimum 1/40" off of the surface.

Tactile Characters.

- Tactile characters must be a minimum of 3/8" from any tactile surface.
- Only upper case characters can be used.
- Similar to the national ADA characters must be san serif with a stroke width where the uppercase letter "O" is 55 percent minimum and 110 percent maximum of the height of the uppercase letter "I".
- Similar to the national ADA characters must have a width-to-height ratio between 3:5 and 1:1 and a stroke width-to-height ratio between 1:5 and 1:10.
- Raised characters cannot be less than 5/8" minimum and 2" maximum.

Sign Height and Location

- Signs should be installed on the wall adjacent to the latch side of the door. Where there is no wall space to the latch side of the door, including at double opening doors, signs should be sited on the nearest adjacent wall. Tactile Exit signs should be mounted on the approach side as one exits the space.
- Signs cannot protrude more than 3" from the wall. All signs must be edged or rounded with a minimum 1/8" radius.
- Sign heights are mounted 60" above floor level to the center of the sign. This contrasts with the national ADA where the mounting height is based on a range between the bottom and top of the raised text.

Visual Characters

- Similar to the national standards characters and numbers on signs need to be sized according to the viewing distance and height above ground with a minimum 2" high for viewing conditions base on the letter I and additional character heights sized based on sign height and distance.
- Visual letters can be upper case or upper/lower case but unlike the national ADA there is in mention of the use of serif type.

Color Contrast

- All signs must have a light background on a dark surface or a dark background on a light surface with a non-glare finish. This matches the national ADA.

Dual Signs

- An ambiguous area of the code. Dual signs are not specifically called out like the national code. There are not special accommodations for raised text when legible type is used and vice versa.

Restroom Signs

- Men's restroom signs must be represented by a triangle 1/4" thick with 12" long edges and must contrast with the background door. The triangle edges must be rounded or chamfered with a minimum 1/8" radius.
- Women's restroom signs must be represented by a 1/4" thick 12" diameter circle and must contrast with the background door.
- Unisex restrooms must be represented by a 1/4" thick triangle transimposed on a 1/4" circle. The triangle must contrast with the circle which in turn must contrast with the background door.
- The national ADA requires that all restroom signs must have additional raised letters and Braille. If the doors swing out and additional tactile sign must be included adjacent to the door.

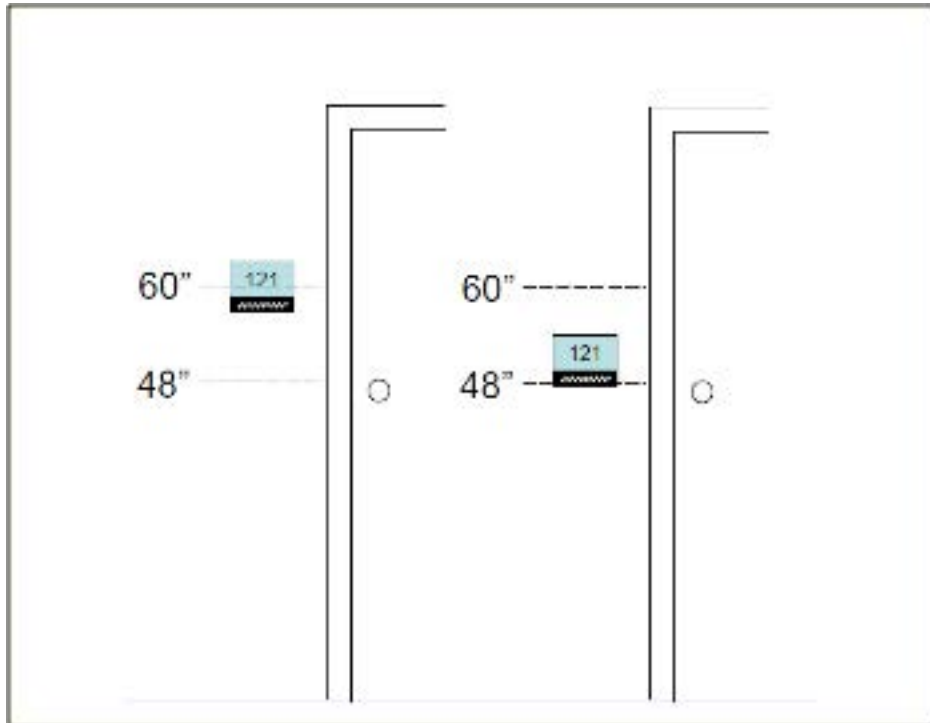
Symbols and Pictograms

- The international symbol of accessibility must be used to mark accessible areas. The symbol specified should consist of a white figure on a blue background and be equal to Color No. 15090 in Federal Standard 595B.
- Symbols must be within a 6" field with text descriptors below following the ADA, even on restroom signs.
- Symbols do not have to be tactile.
- For publicly funded buildings a cleaner air symbol is required in accessible spaces for people impacted by airborne chemicals

Design Recommendations

- California must be compliant with all national codes. If the state code does not include a specific issue, default to the national code.
- Inspection is required for major modifications to signs. Consult with a code inspector on guidance for when inspection is needed.
- Dual signs are not called out in the code. Consult with the office of the state architect for guidance before using dual signs.
- Character heights on visual signs beyond the minimum requirements are at the discretion and analysis of the designer based on the guidelines provided.

- Code inspectors in California are particularly on the lookout for mistakes in Braille spacing or doming as well as tactile character standards. Make sure all signs are inspected and meet all the standards before installation.
- There are no contrast requirement for signs but a minimum LRV of 60% is recommended.
- Make sure to use the international symbol of accessibility with the exact shape and color specified in the code.
- Review all areas of Title 24 related to signage. They are spread out throughout the code document.



Sign height and location



Sign details