



Parking Lot Signage

- **Informational**
- **Disabled Access**
- **Parking Lot Identification**
- **Parking Stall**

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Section 6 Parking Lot Signage

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- Helpful Hints Pages 6-3-1 – 6-3-2
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Planning a Parking Lot Sign Program

The development of an effective parking lot sign program requires the coordination of several interrelated criteria.

An effective sign program must have to take into account the following:

1. Circulation system in the parking lot.
2. How do visitors currently drive around and through the parking lot?
3. Where do you want visitors to park? Where do you want staff to park? Where is disabled access parking?
4. What is the desired path of travel on the roadway system, to parking, for visitors and staff?
5. What is the desired path of pedestrian travel from parking to building entrances?
6. Location of building entrances in relation to parking.
7. What is the availability and voltage of electricity at these areas?
8. Adequate light on and around directional signs.
9. Placement of signs in locations where people expect signage.

These elements help establish the basis of a clear sign program that communicates and informs in a direct and simple manner.

A parking lot sign program that works well is one that has been planned as an integrated whole from the vehicle directional signs, pedestrian directional signs, building, and building entrance identification through parking lot exit signs.

Another important consideration is that a parking lot sign program needs to be planned in accord with a cohesive organized parking plan for both visitors and staff. The parking lot sign program needs to be coordinated with an organized parking plan for both visitors and staff. Visitors will need wayfinding information, whereas staff will not. In split use parking facilities where a section will be designated as “visitor parking” and another section will be designated as “staff parking,” only the visitor parking section will require wayfinding signage.

Types of Signs

Non-illuminated signs with reflective letters will function well for secondary signs. It is a good practice to make all non-illuminated exterior signs with reflective letters and graphics as that will ensure the best possibility of the sign being read.

Color Coding Options

Facilities with multiple parking lots should consider color coding lots by assigning each lot with a specific color. Colors should be distinctly different from one lot to the next. For example, if one lot is blue, the adjacent lot should be an obvious different color, such as orange or red.

Facilities that have one large parking lot, or a few large parking lots, should consider dividing those lots into color coded zones to help visitors remember the location of their vehicle. Colors should be distinctly different from one zone to the next. For example, if one zone is blue, the adjacent zone could be orange, and another, green, etc.

In addition to color coding parking lots or zones, one may also consider using imagery to differentiate one lot or zone, from the next. The various images assigned to each lot or zone should be thematically related. For example, one may choose trees or leaves as a theme, where each zone is associated with a distinctly different looking leaf or tree image. Imagery should consist of bold graphics, that are easy to read and interpret at a quick glance, such as icons or silhouetted shapes.

Zones can be designated either by a number or letter, or a combination of both.

Examples of Color Coding, No Imagery



Examples of Combined Image and Color Coding

(illustrations intended to convey idea, NOT actual layout, colors or artwork)



The following are some general “Do’s and Don’ts” guidelines 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 and suggestions that will hopefully reduce common errors that are made when planning and programming a parking lot sign program.

General Guidelines

- Never use text smaller than 3" capital letter height when a sign is intended to be read from a moving vehicle.
 - Text intended to be read by pedestrians should be a minimum of 1 1/2" capital letter height.
 - Use text which is familiar, easy to understand, and comfortable to the viewer.
 - Always use the same words, names or titles throughout the sign program.
 - All sign messages need to be a minimum of 24" above grade.
 - When selecting a background color for the signs, select a complementary color to the buildings on campus.
 - Signs require maintenance. Cleaning and waxing will extend the life of exterior signs.
 - Landscaping around signs must be regularly trimmed to prevent plants from obscuring signs.
-

Size of Sign to Use

- Always consider the landscaping surrounding a sign when determining a sign's size. It is important that shrubs and plants do not hide or obscure the sign.
 - Lettering and sign panel size should be appropriate for the distance and speed at which a sign is viewed.
 - Signs to be read from vehicles need to be larger than signs for pedestrians.
-

Message Content

- Keep sign messages brief.
- Unnecessary information on signs confuses the viewer.
- Typically, all signs, with the exception of directional signs, should convey no more than one concept or thought.
- Use text (words) that can be quickly read by the viewer.
- Use the same wording throughout the sign program.
- On directional and informational signs provide only the information necessary to make a decision at that particular location.
- Whenever possible, messages should be presented using positive information.
- On directional signs, do not anticipate decisions that can be made later. Unnecessary or premature information will confuse the reader.
- Messages placed on signs should be concise, preferably with no more than seven to eight words.
- For signs to be read from a moving vehicle, take into account the speed of the car. At a slow speed the driver may be able to read 7 or 8 words. At a faster speed they will only be able to read 4 or 5.

Message Layout

- Use upper and lower case text whenever possible. Upper and lower case text is easier to read and can be understood faster than text in all capital letters.

- Line-spacing between two different messages should be greater than line-spacing between lines of the same multiple-line message.
- Text should not be run to the edge of the sign; always provide a margin.
- 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.
- 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 on free standing signs.

Placement of Signs

- Signs should, if at all possible, always be perpendicular to the intended viewer.
- Position signs with a clear line of sight from the viewing point to the sign face.
- 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.
- Signs should be placed in a manner that will be clearly visible to drivers at all times of the year. For example, make sure that snow removal doesn't bury signs.
- Signs that receive spray from irrigation sprinklers will show staining from the minerals in the water resulting in a poor appearance. The life of the sign will also be considerably shortened.
- 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.
- Do not place signs in locations where pedestrians may walk into them, or where they will constrict disabled access paths of travel. Do not place signs any closer than 12" to a walkway.
- Signs placed at the head of a parking stall need to be set far enough away that the bumper of a car does not strike the sign (See PL-15).

This section of the VA Signage Design Guide provides sign guidelines for the various types of parking lot signs necessary to sign any parking area, regardless of size or type of use.

The following overview illustrates the various types of signs in this section. The individual pages on each sign type provide more specific information and detailed layouts.

**PARKING LOT SIGN
DESIGNATIONS**

Each sign in the program guide has been given a specific sign type number designation. This designation provides a common description that can be referenced when programming a site and ordering signs. The following explains how the sign type designations are derived.

PL - 12.03 A

PL Designates a Parking Lot sign.

12 Two digit numbers identify a particular sign type family like.

.03 The two digit number following the period identifies a specific type of sign within the sign family.

A The letter designates a specific sign configuration, version and/or layout for graphics.

Sign Type PL-12.01

Informational signs

PL-12.01

Post and panel sign

PL-12.02

Single post and panel sign

PL-12.03

Single post and panel sign

PL-12.04

Single post and panel sign

PL-12.05

Single post and panel sign

PL-12.06

Blade sign mounted to light pole

PL-12.07

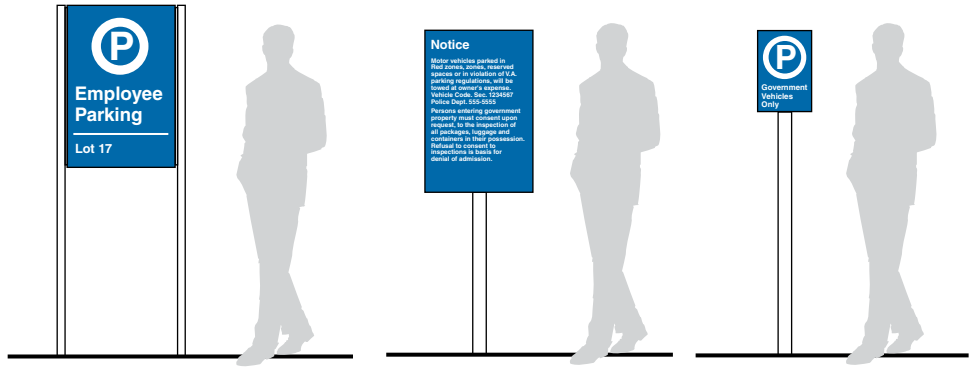
Panel sign mounted to wall

PL-12.08

Parking spinal cord stall

PL-12.09

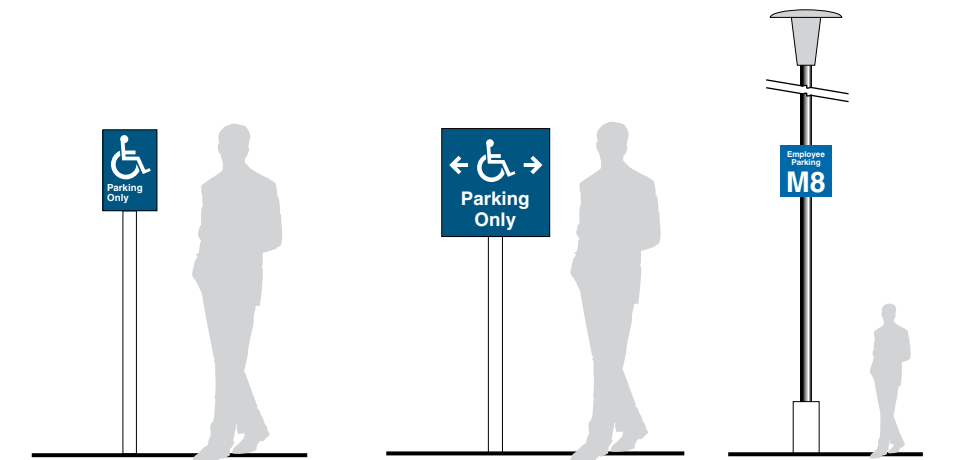
Spinal cord van parking stall



PL-12.01

PL-12.02

PL-12.03



PL-12.04

PL-12.05

PL-12.06

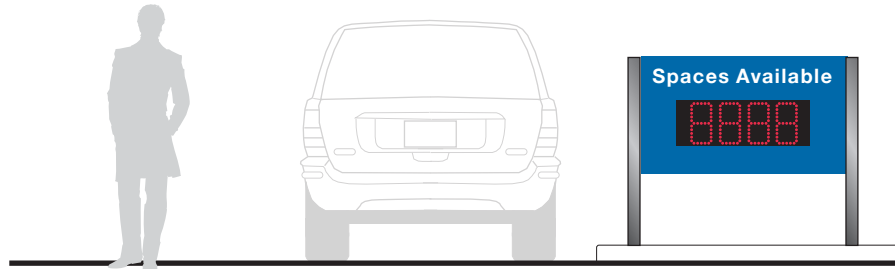


PL-12.07

PL-12.08

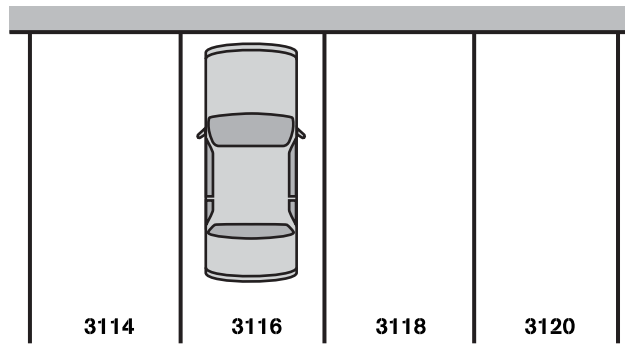
PL-12.09

PL-13
Parking Availability Sign



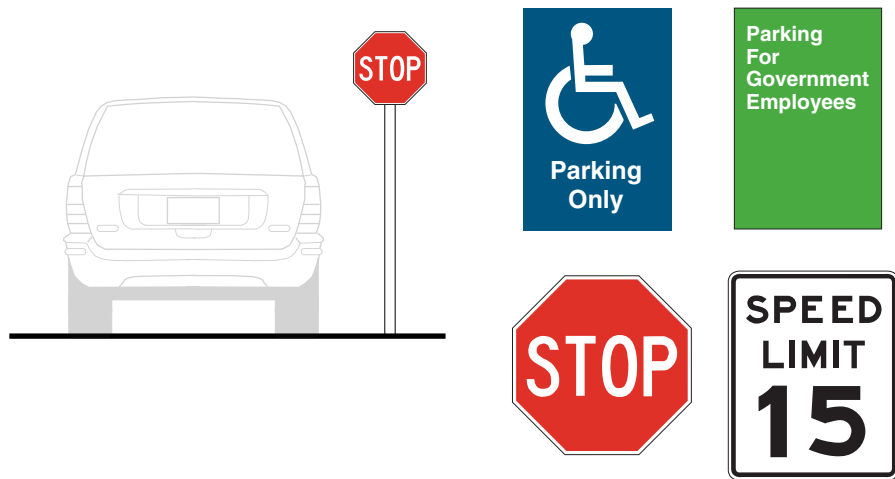
PL-13

PL-15
Painted Parking Stall Identification



PL-15

**Parking and Traffic
Regulatory**
See Exterior Sign Section for more
detail.



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Post and Panel Informational

Size

Sign Face: 914 mm H x 610 mm W
(3' 0" H x 2' 0" W)

Overall Sign Height: 1982 mm
(6' 6")

Description

Large, non-illuminated post and panel parking lot identification sign. This sign type is for identifying parking lots to drivers circulating on a roadway system.

Message Configuration

(Refer to message layout drawing for dimensions.)

Message Layout A is for identifying visitor parking lots.

Message Layout B is to identify the parking lot and label the lot with a number or letter.

Graphic Process

Surface applied reflective vinyl

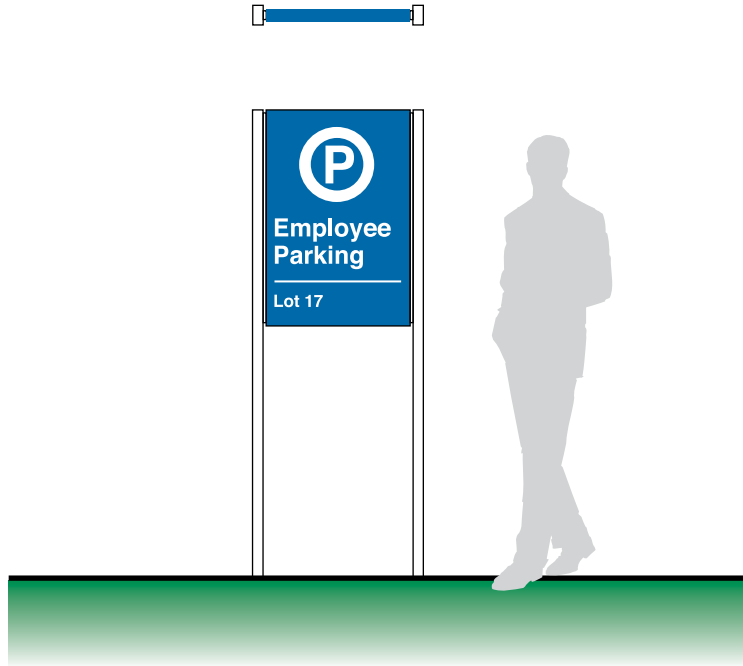
Colors

Text: white
Background: refer to color chart
Post: refer to color chart

Recommendations

Position sign so drivers have a clear, unobstructed view of the sign.

Place signs in a highly visible location adjacent to the driveway entrance to a parking lot.



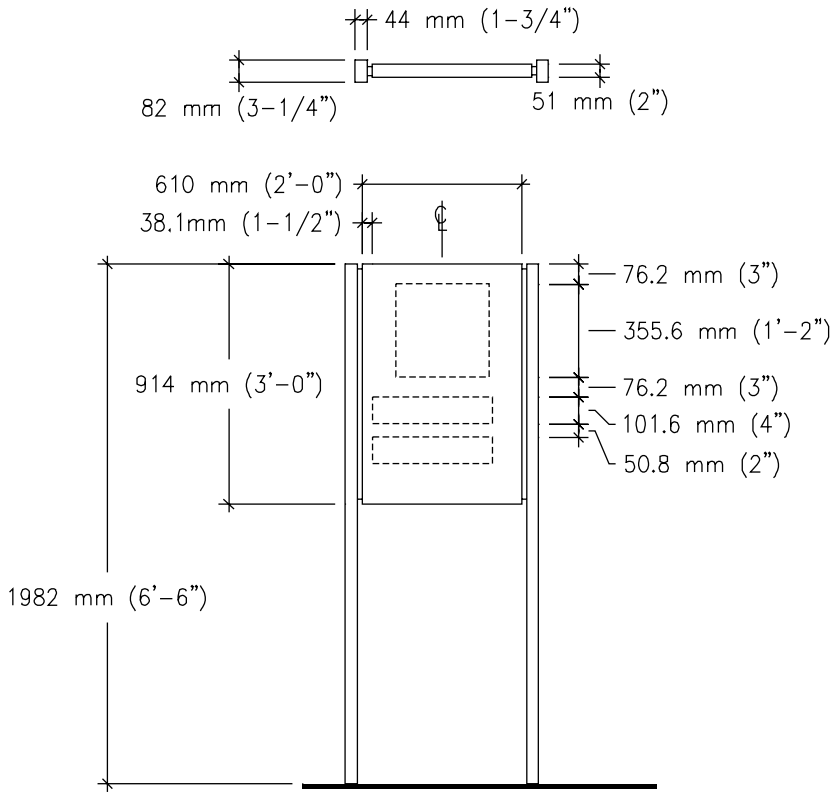
Message Layout A



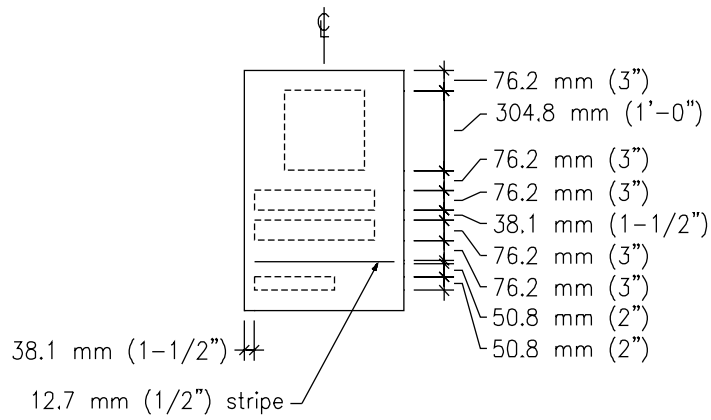
Message Layout B



Post and Panel Informational



Message Layout A



Message Layout B

Single Post and Panel Informational

Size

Sign Face:
914 mm H x 610 mm W
(3' 0" H x 2' 0" W)

Overall Sign Height:
1829 mm (6' 0")

Description

Non-illuminated single post and panel sign with messages directed specifically to drivers. This sign can be used to communicate various informational or instructional messages.

Message Configuration

(Refer to message layout drawing for dimensions.)

Graphic Process

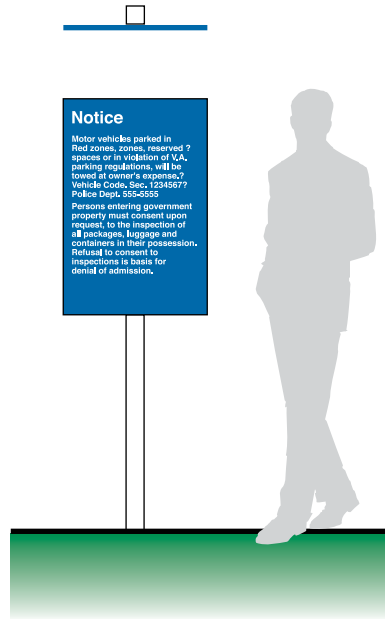
Surface applied reflective vinyl

Colors

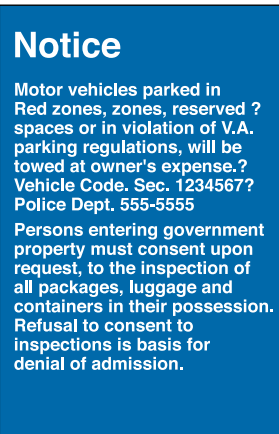
Text: white
Background: refer to color chart
Post: refer to color chart

Recommendations

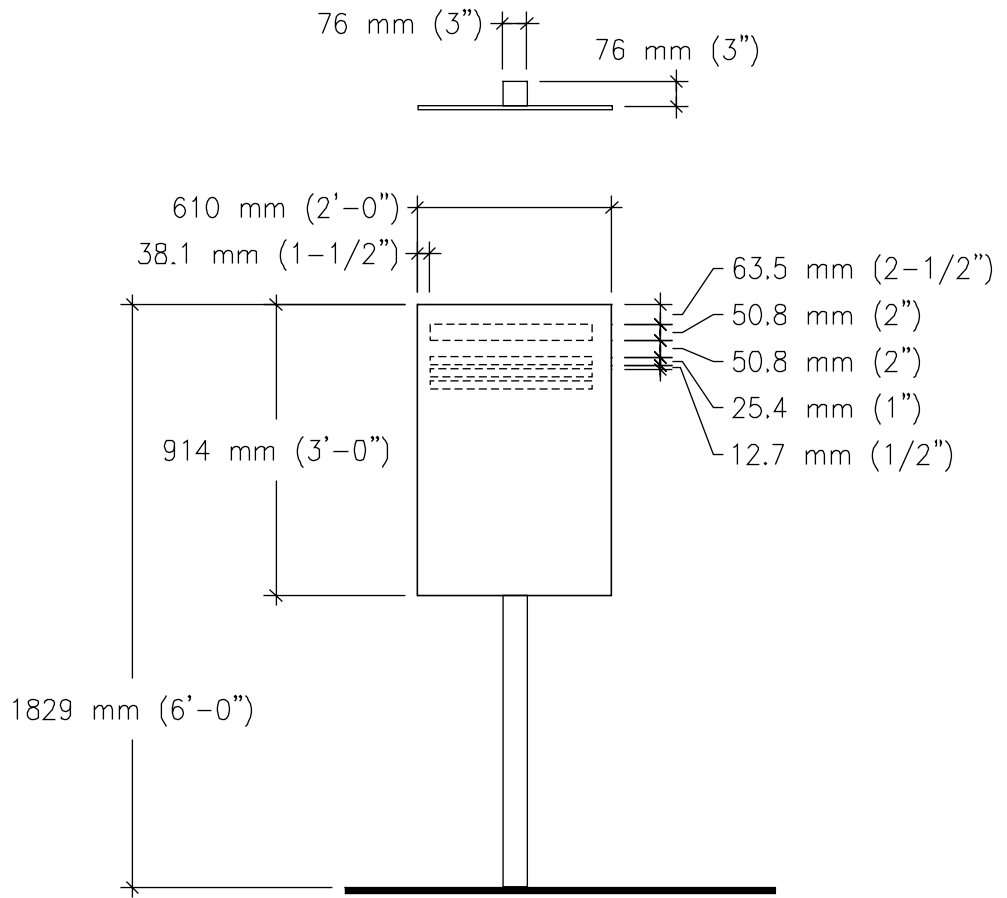
Position sign where message needs to be conveyed.



Message Layout A



Single Post and Panel Informational



Message Layout A

Parking Stall Designation

Size

Sign Face: 457 mm H x 305 mm W
(1' 6" H x 1' 0" W)

Overall Sign Height:
1829 mm (6' 0")

Description

Non-illuminated single post parking identification and informational sign. This type of sign is for use in identifying or controlling specific parking areas, spaces or stalls.

Message Configuration

(Refer to message layout drawing for dimensions.)

This sign with symbol or title and the appropriate text shall be used as shown in the adjacent examples.

Colors

Text: white
Background: refer to color chart
Post: refer to color chart

Recommendations

Position sign so drivers have a clear, unobstructed view of the sign. When placing this type of sign near curbs or parking places, be sure the sign is set far enough back that over hanging front and rear of automobiles do not come in contact with the sign post.



Message Layout A



Other possible messages for this layout.

- 1) Visitors Only
- 2) Buses Only
- 3) Authorized Vehicles Only
- 4) On Paved Road Only
- 5) Staff Only

Message Layout B



Other possible messages for this layout.

- 1) Along Roadway
- 2) Any Time
- 3) Fire Lane
- 4) On the Grass
- 5) 00am - 00pm

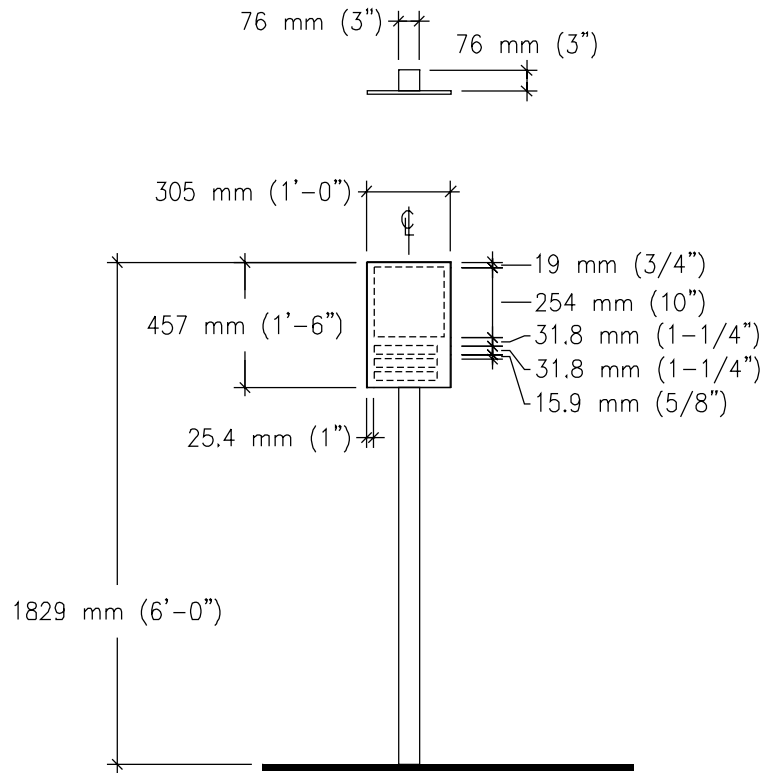
Message Layout C



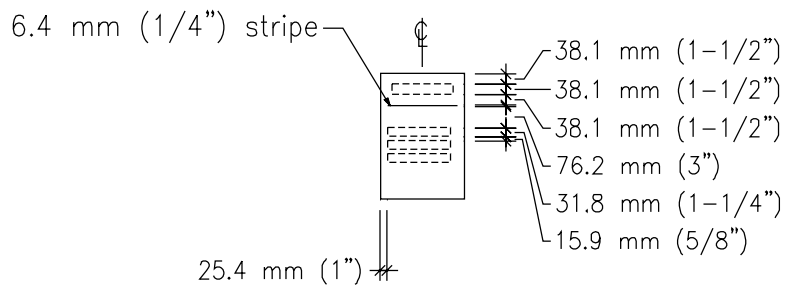
Other possible messages for this layout.

- 1) Director
- 2) Chief of Staff
- 3) Volunteers
- 4) Consultant
- 5) Motorcycle Parking
- 6) Officer of the Day
- 7) Outpatient Only
- 8) Government Vehicle
- 9) Police Only
- 10) Car Pool

Parking Stall Designation



Message Layout A and B



Message Layout C

Handicapped Parking Stall

Size

Sign Face:
457 mm H x 305 mm W
(1' 6" H x 1' 0" W)

Overall Sign Height:
1829 mm (6' 0")

Description

Single post, non-illuminated
handicapped parking stall sign.

Message Configuration

(Refer to message layout drawing
for dimensions.)

Symbol and text must conform to
layout as shown.

Graphic Process

Surface applied reflective vinyl

Colors

Text: white
Background: handicapped blue
Post: refer to color chart

Recommendations

Position sign so drivers have a
clear, unobstructed view of the
sign.

When placing this type of sign near
curbs or parking places, be sure
the sign is set far enough back
that over hanging front and rear of
automobiles do not come in contact
with the sign post.



Message Layout A



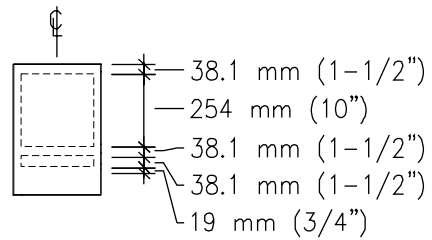
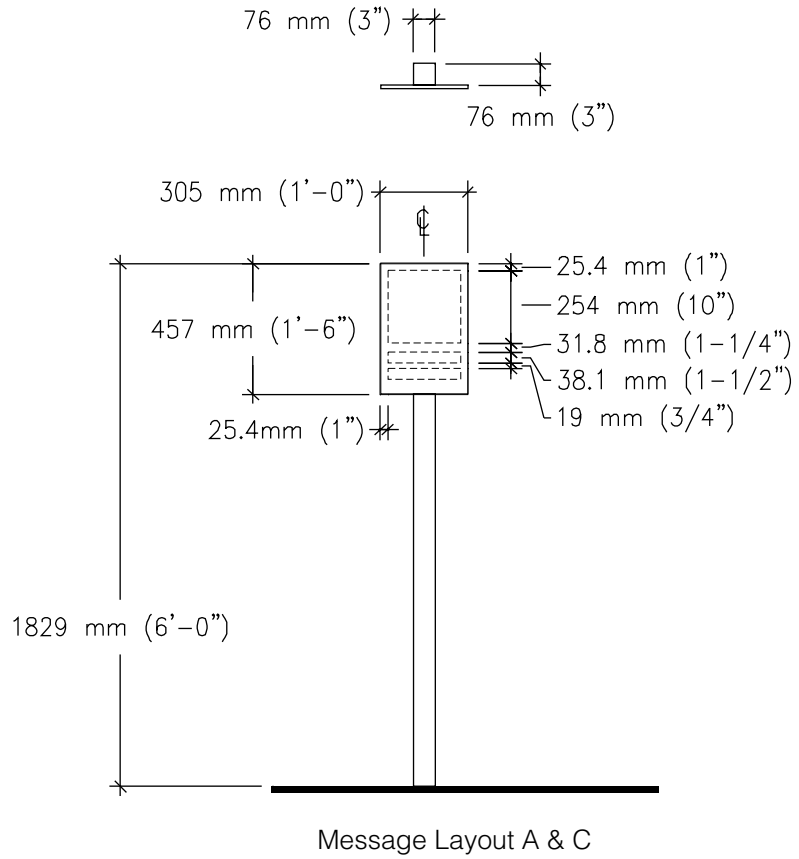
Message Layout B



Message Layout C



Handicapped Parking Stall



Message Layout B

Handicapped Parking Area

Size

Sign Face:
610 mm H x 610 mm W
(2' 0" H x 2' 0" W)

Overall Sign Height:
1829 mm (6' 0")

Description

Single post, non-illuminated handicapped parking area sign. Identification of handicapped parking areas and directional information regarding access.

Message Configuration

(Refer to message layout drawing for dimensions.) Symbol is to remain constant.

Graphic Process

Surface applied reflective vinyl

Colors

Text: white
Background: handicapped blue
Post: refer to color chart

Recommendations

Position sign so drivers have a clear, unobstructed view of the sign.

When placing this type of sign near curbs or parking spaces, be sure the sign is set far enough back that over hanging front and rear of automobiles do not come in contact with the sign post.



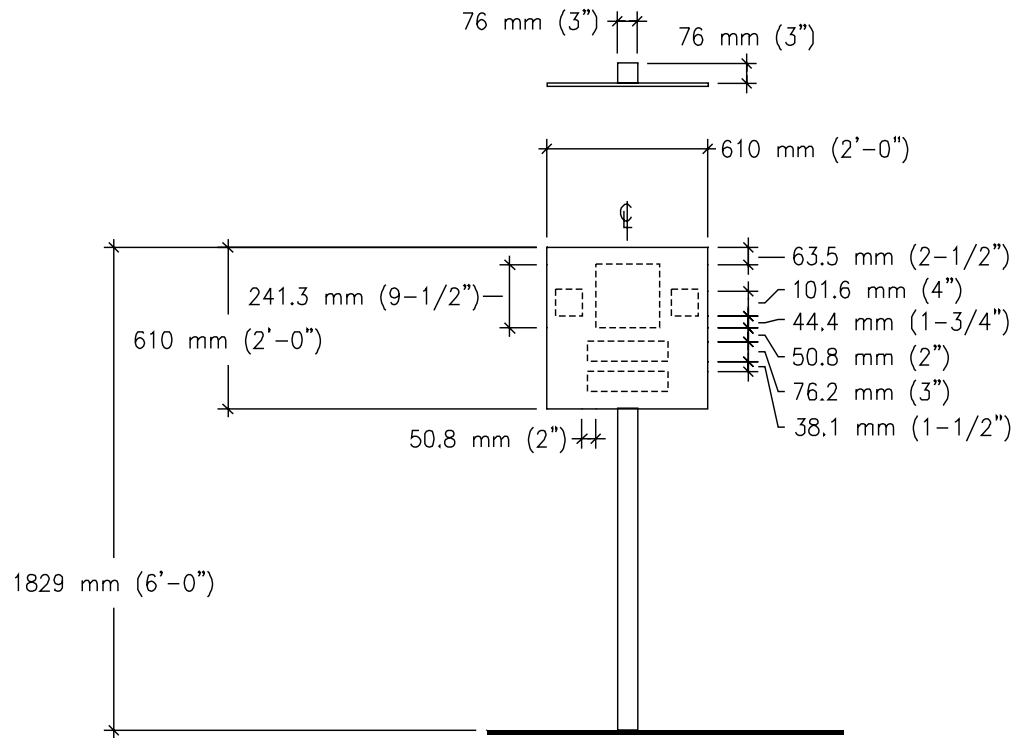
Message Layout A



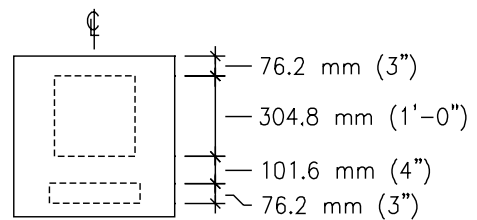
Message Layout B



Handicapped Parking Area



Message Layout A



Message Layout B

Pole Mounted Lot Identification or Area Sign

Size

Sign Face:
610 mm H x 610 mm W
(2' 0" H x 2' 0" W)

Description

Parking lot and parking area identification sign for mounting on light pole in parking lots and parking areas where the size of the parking lot is so large that zone information is needed to assist the drivers in locating their cars.

These signs should be double faced (on each side of the pole) and high enough to be clearly visible throughout the parking lot. Signs may be mounted in front of the pole, or on either side of the pole.

Message Configuration

(Refer to message layout drawing for dimensions.) Message layouts show various applications that might be applicable.

Graphic Process

Surface applied reflective vinyl.

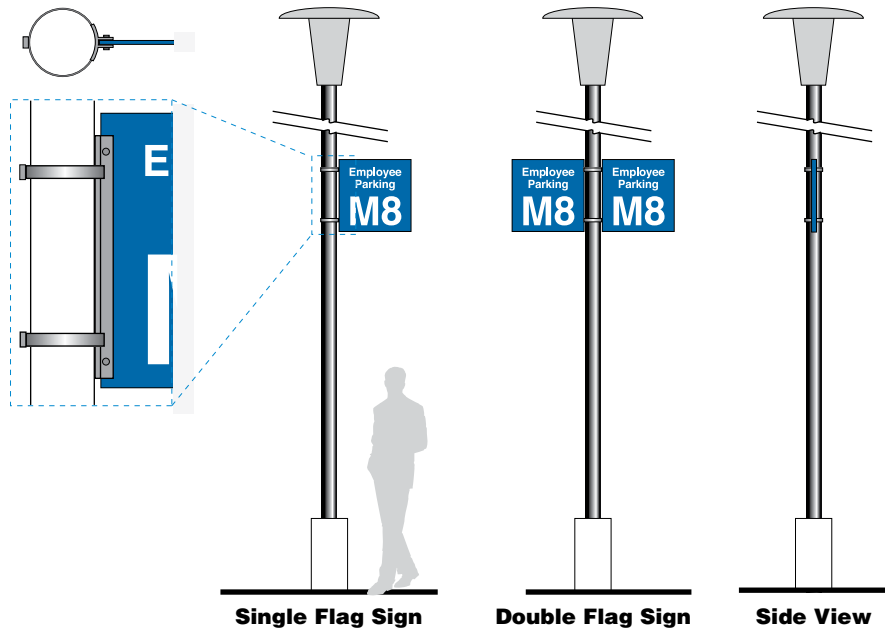
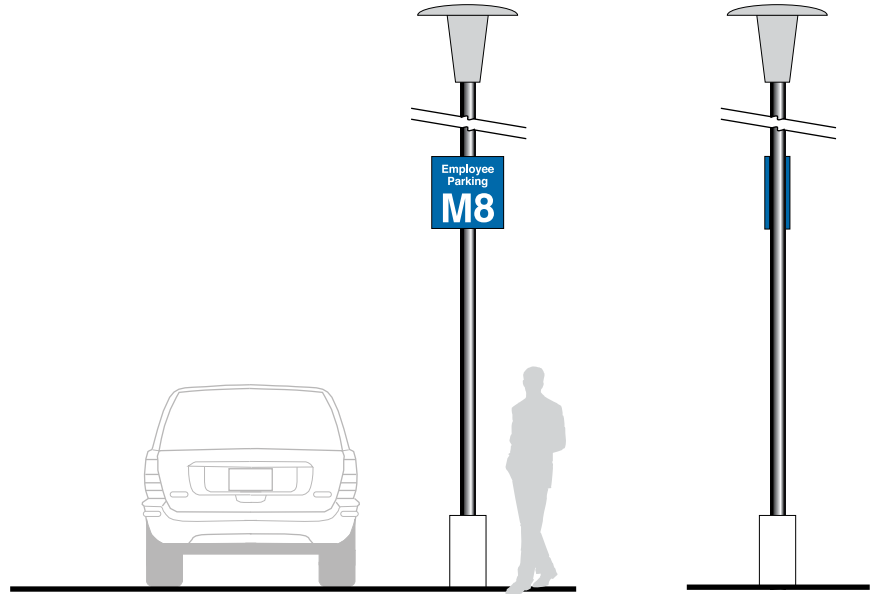
Colors

Text: white
Background: refer to color chart
Post: refer to color chart

Recommendations

Position sign so drivers have a clear, unobstructed view of the sign.

Install the signs in the position that is clearly visible to drivers and pedestrians up and down the path of travel in the parking lot.



Message Layout A



Message Layout B



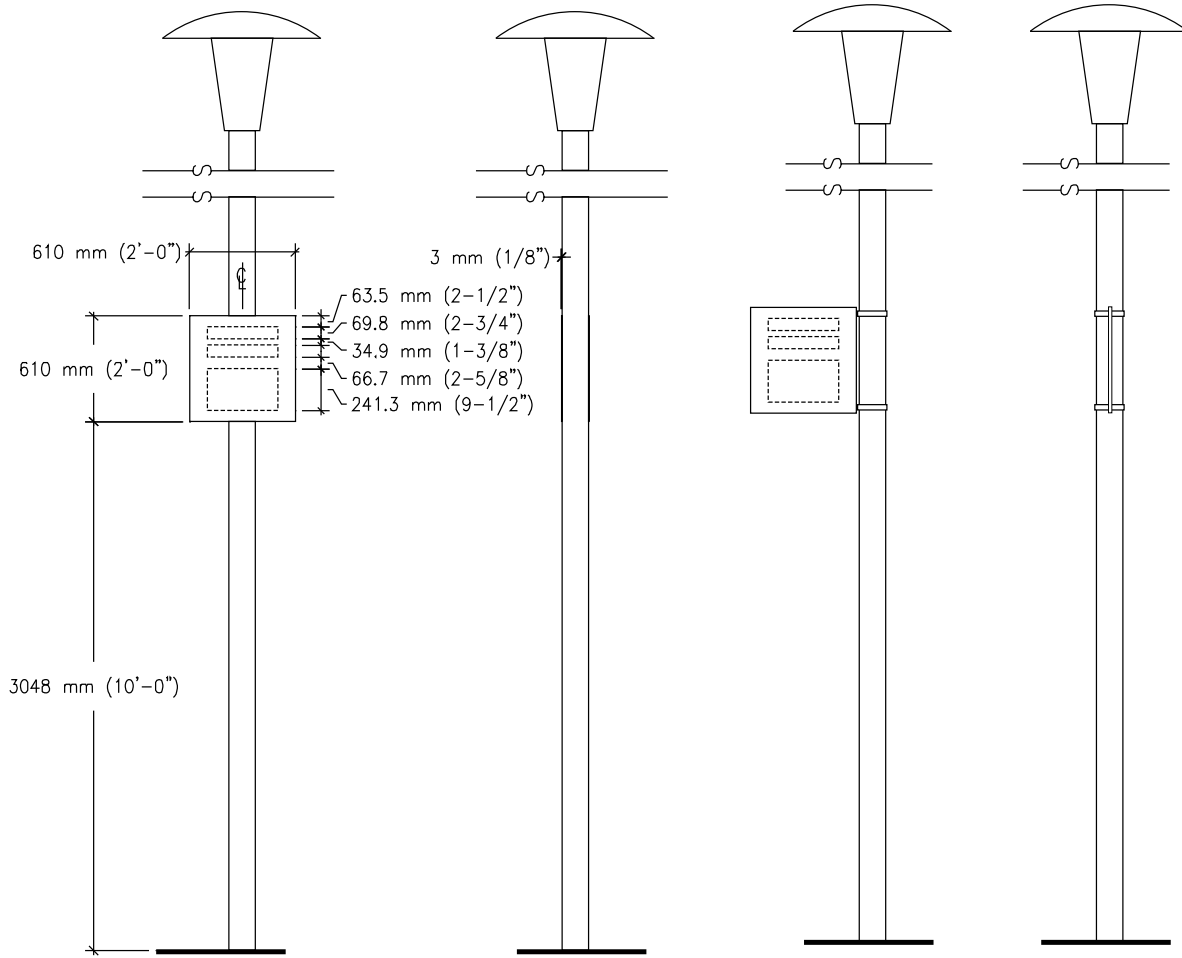
Message Layout C



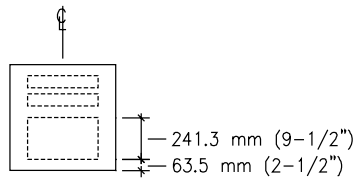
Message Layout D



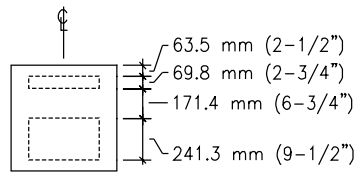
Pole Mounted Lot Identification or Area Sign



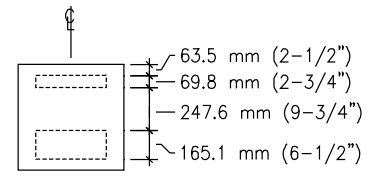
Message Layout A



Message Layout B



Message Layout C



Message Layout D

Wall Informational Panel

Size

Sign Face:
914 mm H x 610 mm W
(3' 0" H x 2' 0" W)

Description

Non-illuminated panel sign with messages directed specifically to drivers and pedestrian. This sign can be used to communicate various informational or instructional messages.

Message Configuration

(Refer to message layout drawing for dimensions.)

Graphic Process

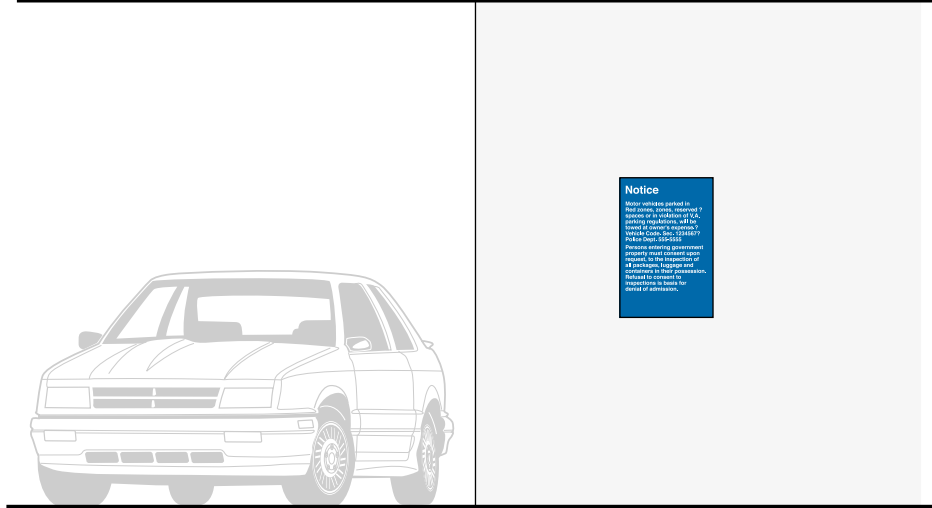
Surface applied reflective vinyl.

Colors

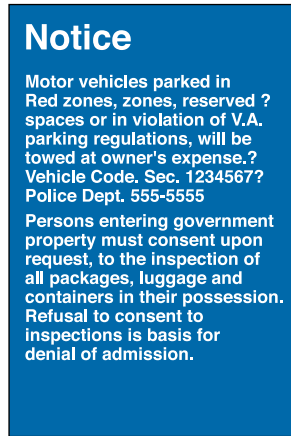
Text: white
Background: refer to color chart
Post: refer to color chart

Recommendations

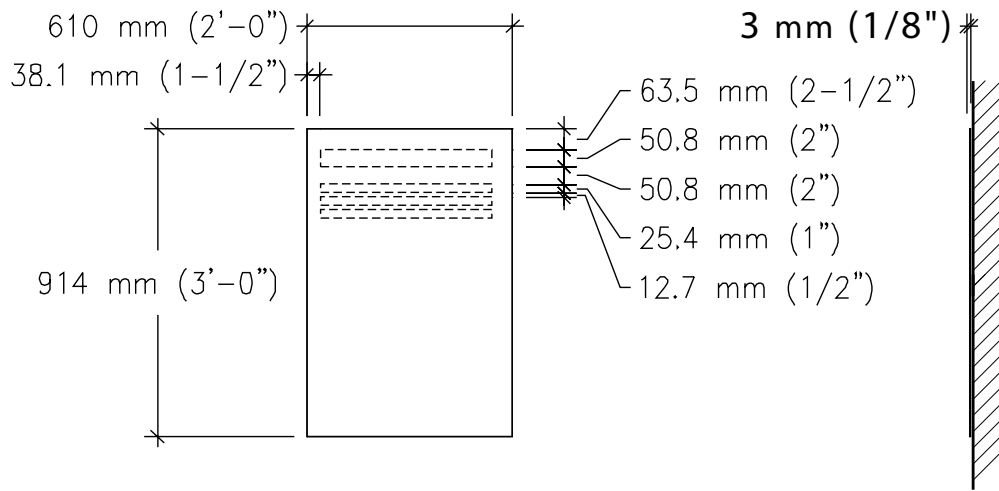
Position sign where message needs to be conveyed.



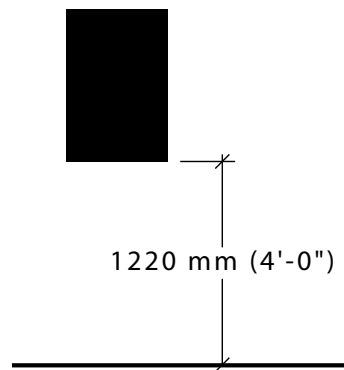
Message Layout A



Wall Informational Panel



Message Layout A



Spinal Cord / Permit Parking Sign

Size

Sign Face:
457 mm H x 305 mm W
(1' 6" H x 1' 0" W)

Overall height:
1829 mm (6' 0")

Description

Non-illuminated single post permit parking sign.

Message Configuration

(Refer to message layout drawing for dimensions.)

Graphic Process

Surface applied vinyl

Colors

Text: white and black
Background: red and white
Post: refer to color chart

Installation

Position sign so drivers have a clear, unobstructed view of the sign.

When placing this type of sign near curbs or parking places, be sure the sign is set far enough back that over hanging front and rear of automobiles do not come in contact with the sign post.



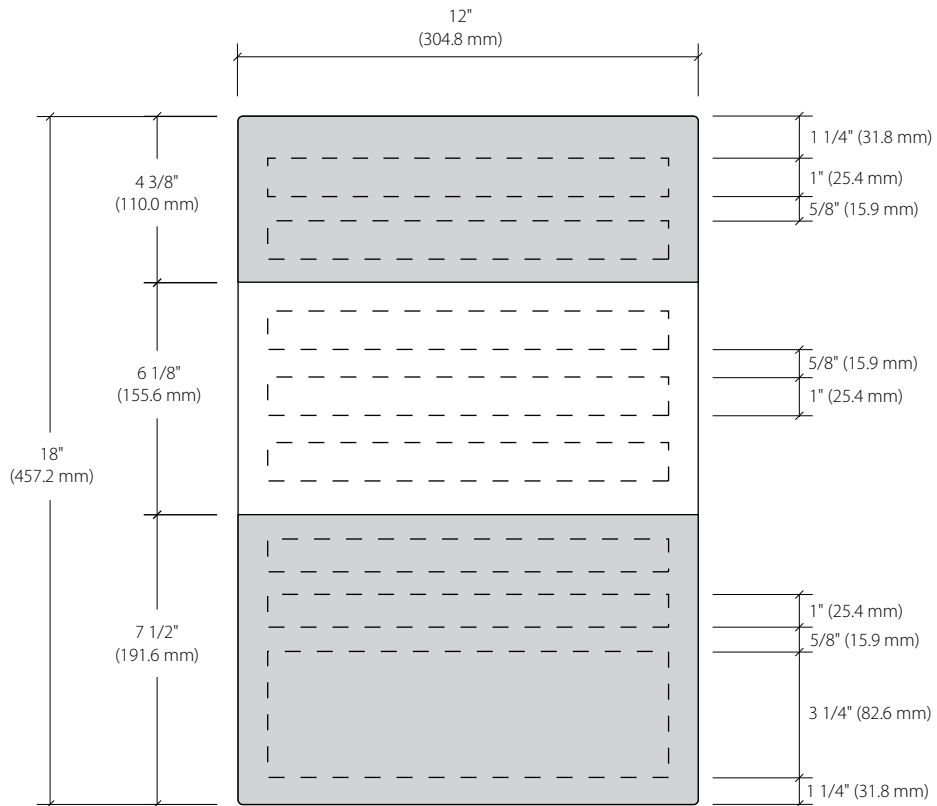
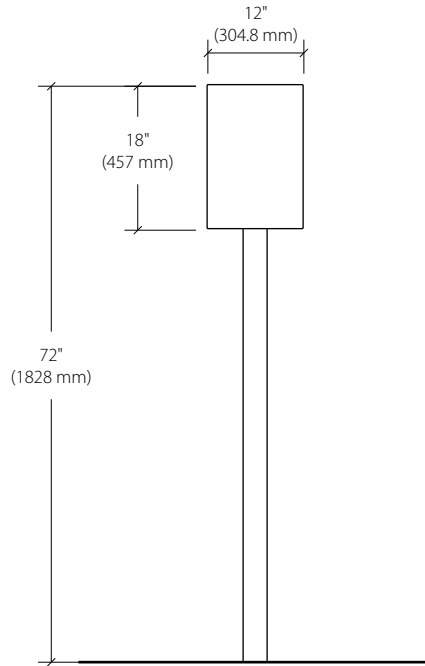
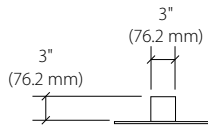
Message Layout A



Message Layout B



Spinal Cord / Permit Parking Sign



Spinal Cord / Permit Van Parking Sign

Size

Sign Face:
533 mm H x 305 mm W
(1' 9" H x 1' 0" W)

Overall height:
1829 mm (6' 0")

Description

Non-illuminated single post permit parking sign.

Message Configuration

(Refer to message layout drawing for dimensions.)

Graphic Process

Surface applied vinyl

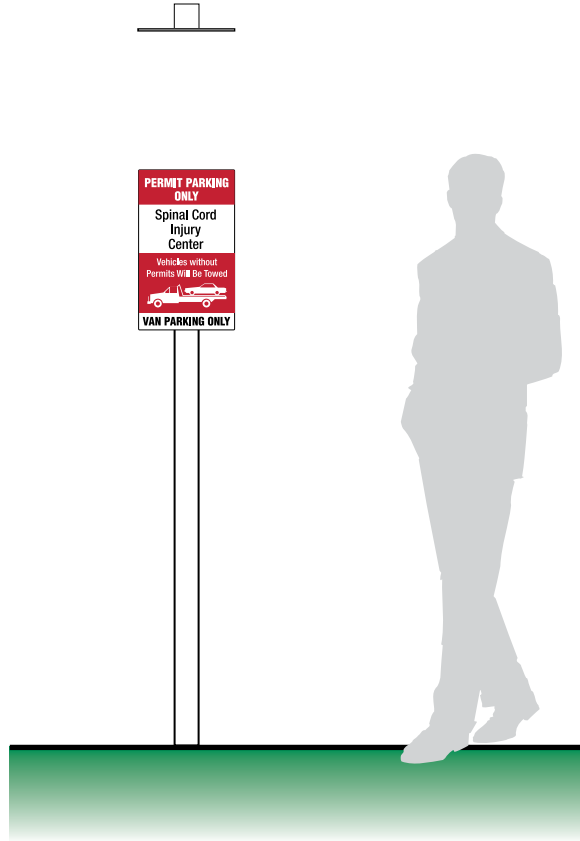
Colors

Text: white and black
Background: red and white
Post: refer to color chart

Installation

Position sign so drivers have a clear, unobstructed view of the sign.

When placing this type of sign near curbs or parking places, be sure the sign is set far enough back that over hanging front and rear of automobiles do not come in contact with the sign post.



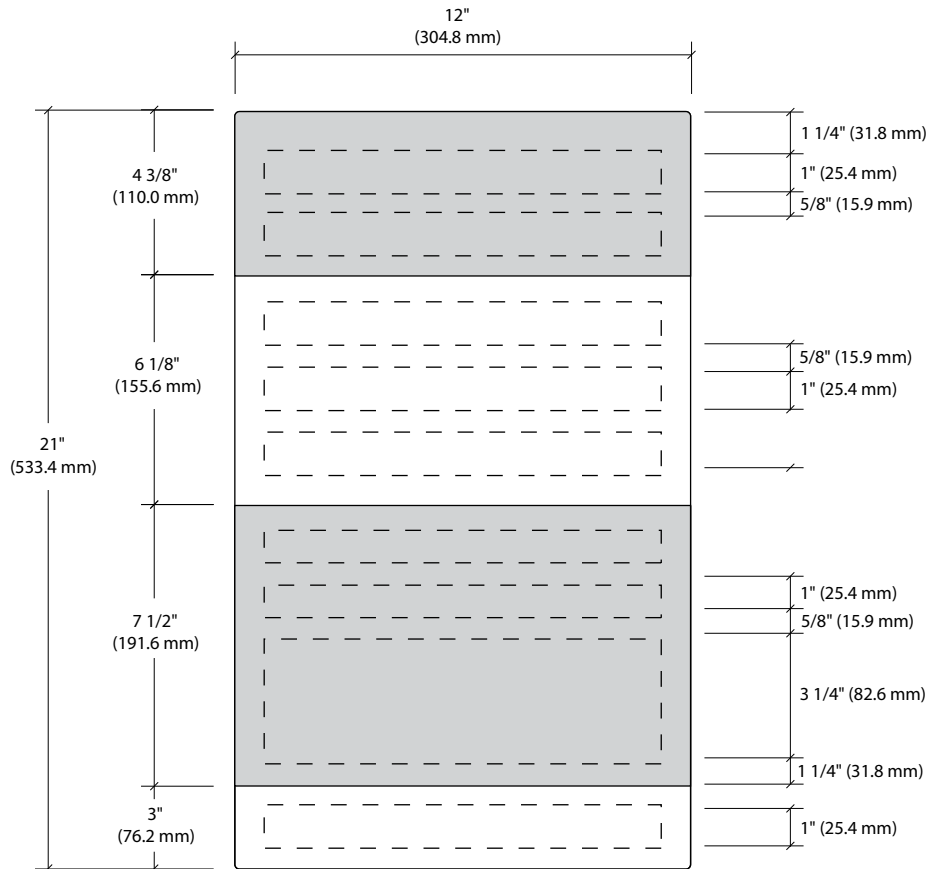
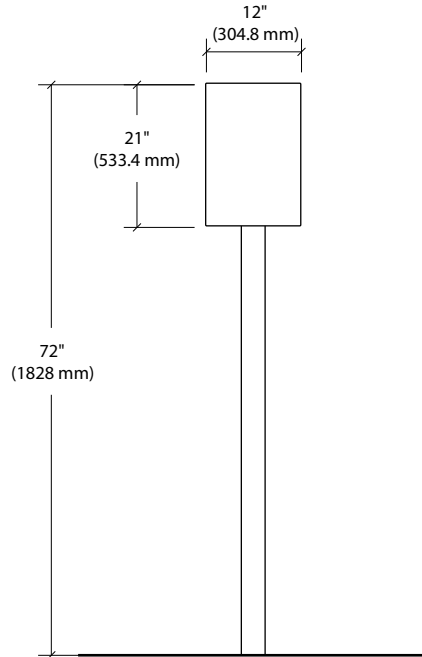
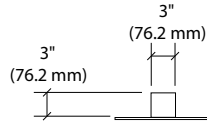
Message Layout A



Message Layout B



Spinal Cord / Permit Van Parking Sign



Electronic Stall Availability Sign

Size

Size to vary depending upon number of lots indicated and electronic system used.

Description

Sign to inform visitors as to the number of available parking spaces per lot. Electronic counting devices record the number of cars that enter and exit the lot(s). As this information changes, the corresponding number of parking stalls available per lot is reflected on the sign.

An alternate to an electronic sign that displays the actual number of available parking spaces is an electronic sign that only displays "open" when spaces are available and "full" when NO spaces are available.

Sign Components

Sign cabinet with electronic occupancy information.

Graphic Process

Painted, screened or vinyl graphics with electronic (LED) occupancy information.

Colors

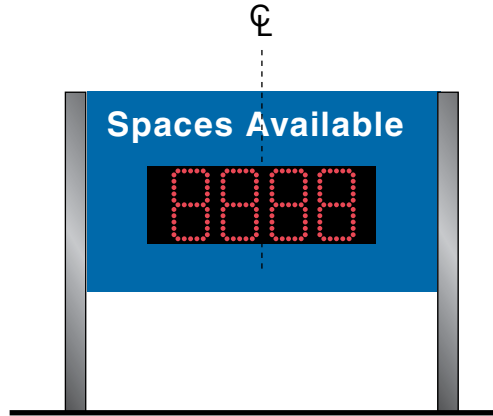
Color and materials to match rest of exterior parking signage.

Mounting

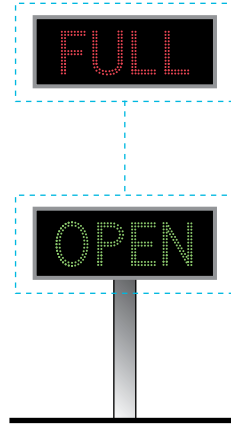
Post mounted

Installation

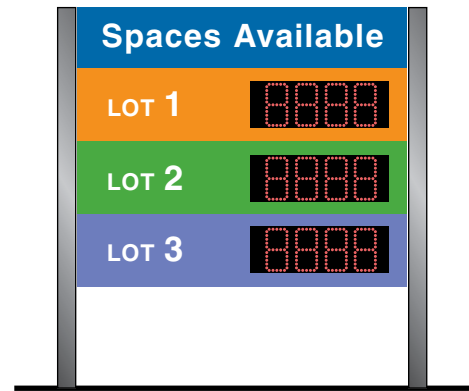
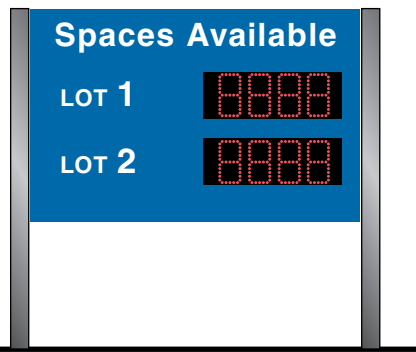
It is recommended that this sign be placed at, or approaching, parking lot entry.



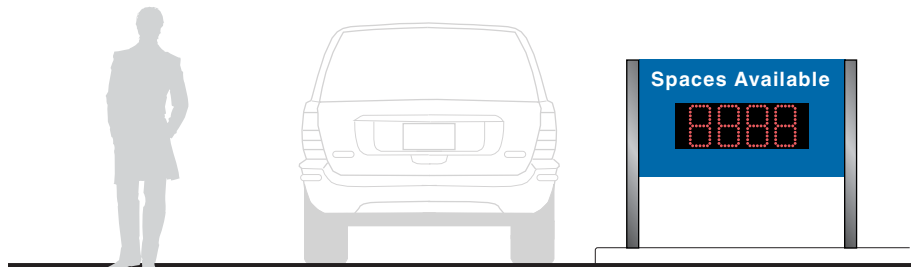
Example of single lot parking availability sign



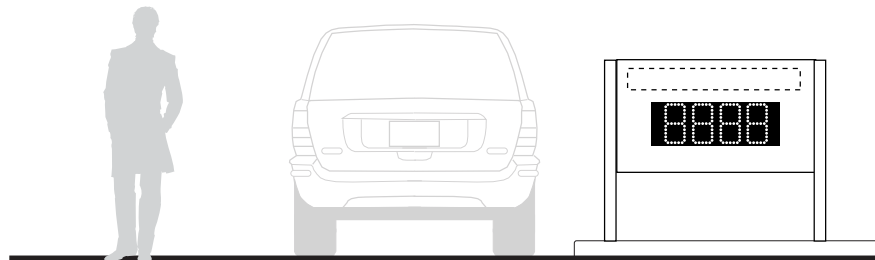
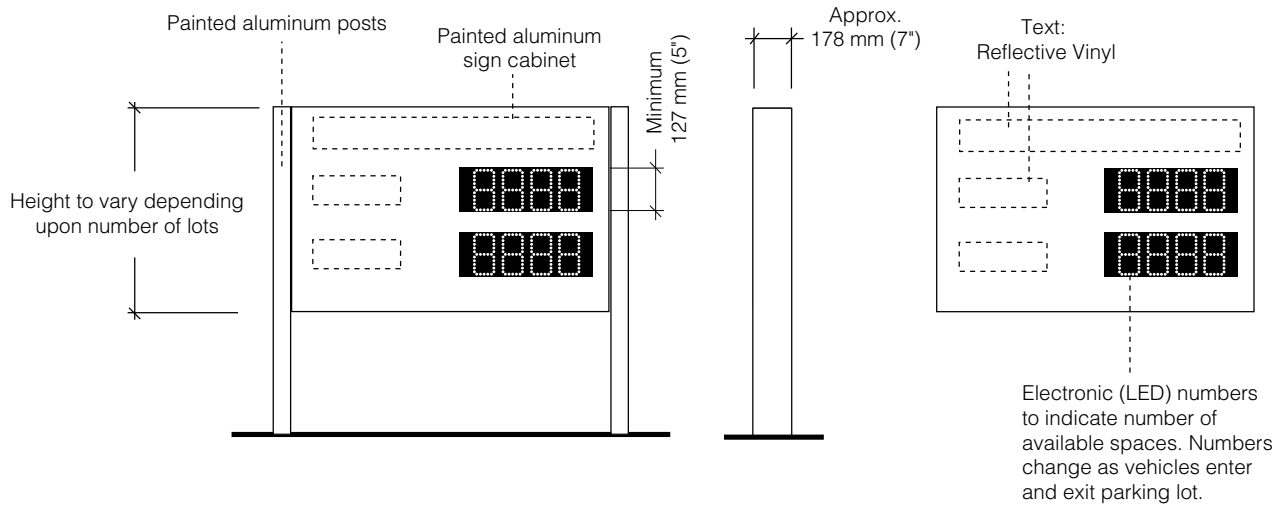
Alternate to parking space availability sign.



Examples of signs indicating parking availability for multiple lots. Sign on the right illustrates the integration of a color coded system.



Electronic Stall Availability Sign



Stall Identification Number

Description

Painted parking stall numbers.

Recommendations

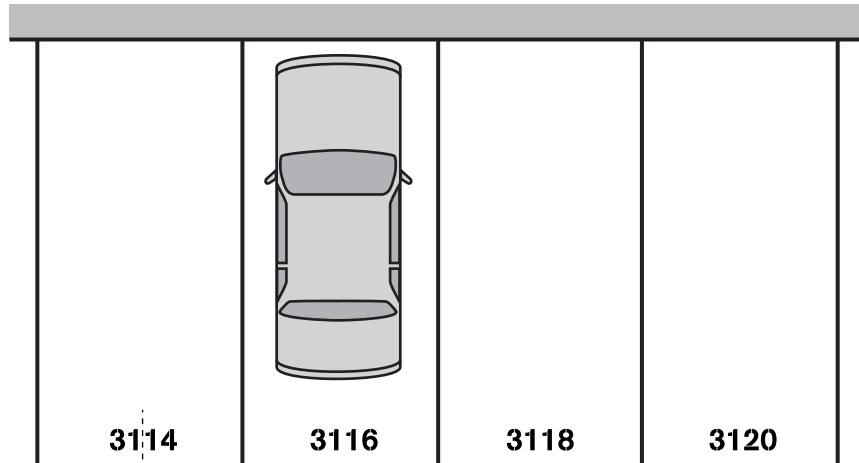
Stalls can be assigned a designated number based on a logical and sequential stall numbering system. It is recommended that each number be painted at the isle facing end of each stall. The ideal number height is 6 inches (numbers should be no less than 4 inches in height).

Graphic Process

Painted stenciled numbers.

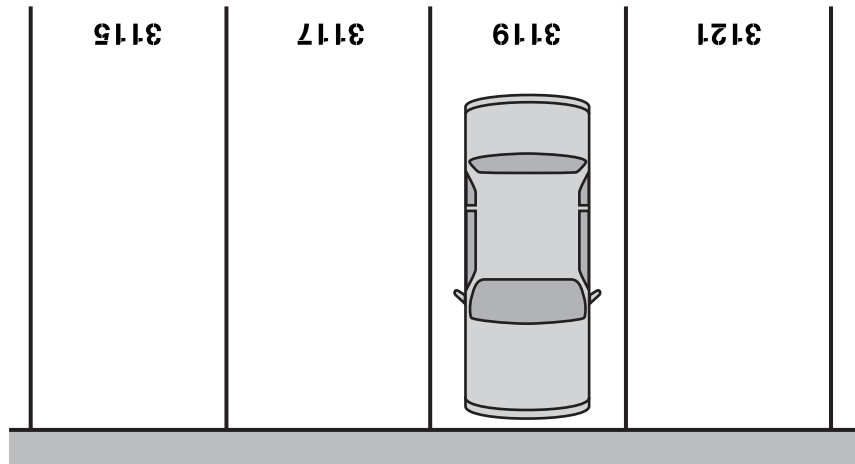
Colors

Colors need to contrast the parking lot pavement. If the pavement is light in color, the numbers should be black. If the pavement is a dark color, the numbers should be white or yellow.



Center Painted Number & Stall

DRIVE AISLE



Parking Lot Signs

Regulatory

Size

Sign Face:
Refer to Exterior Sign Types.

Description

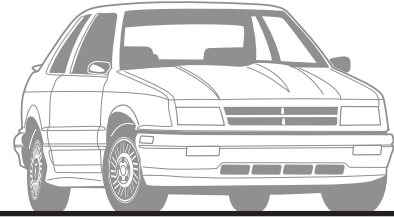
Parking and traffic regulatory signs.

Recommendations

Display the most commonly used signs as indicated. If other Traffic Regulatory and Warning Signs are needed, refer to MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices).

Position sign so drivers have a clear, unobstructed view of the sign.

It should be noted that the decision to use a particular traffic control device at a specific location should be made on the basis of a standard traffic engineering study of the location. Sign size should be based on traffic conditions. Where these conditions are the same, all signs of a similar type should be the same size.



See Sheet EN-10.1 for Other Traffic Regulatory Signs and Details



Parking Lot Signs

Flexible Sign Post

Description

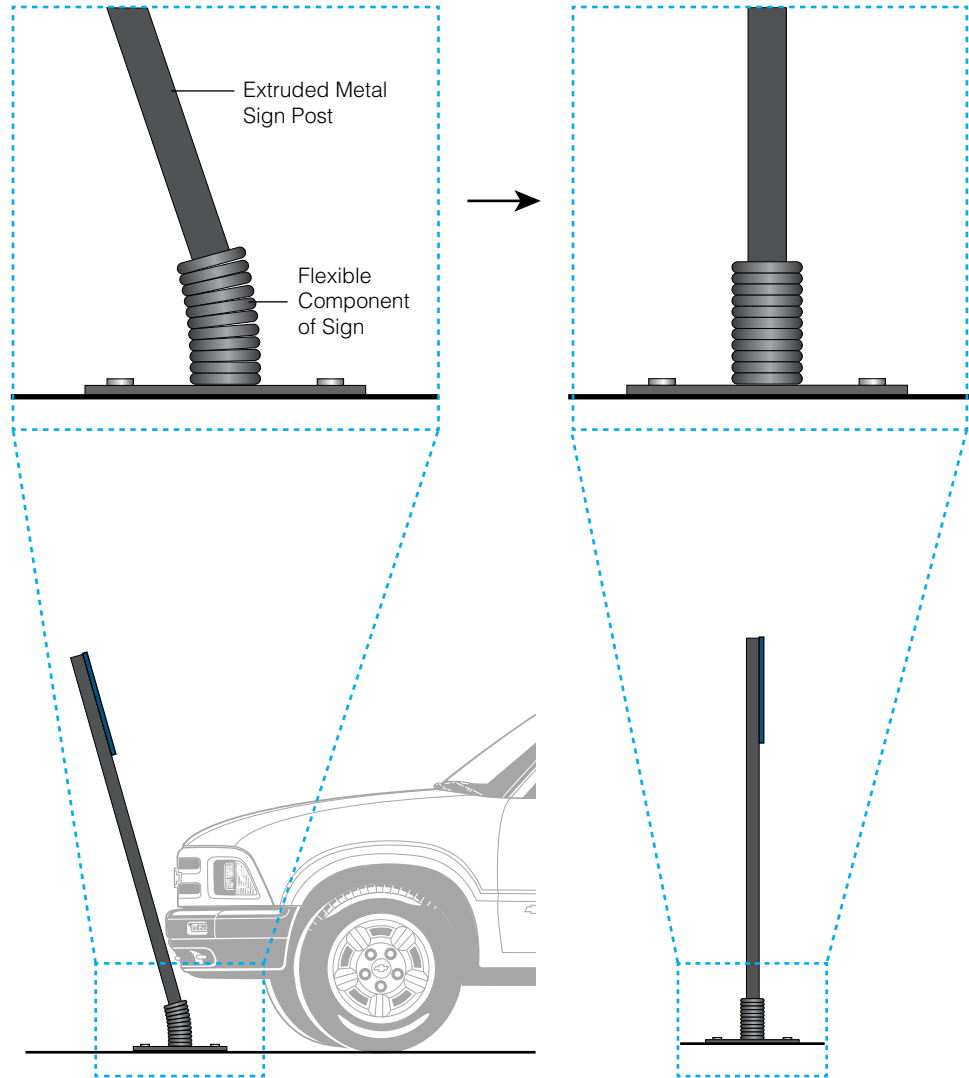
Flexible single post sign

Recommendations

Flexible sign posts may be useful for signage located in front of a parking stall. There are occasions when a driver may accidentally hit/bump these type of signs with their vehicle. Having a flexible sign will prevent damage to the sign as well as reduce damage to the vehicle.

Installation

There are different methods for installing these types of signs. The method of installation may be dependent on the type of flexible sign utilized as well as the conditions of the pavement where the sign is to be installed. A flexible sign post vendor should be able to provide installation instructions.



Flexible component at bottom of post allows sign to be pushed in a single direction if sufficient force is applied.

Sign returns to upright position after pushing force is removed.

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The specifications for signs are available in the Master Construction Specifications (PG-18-1) area of the VA Technical Information Library, which is available on the VA web site under Office of Construction & Facilities Management.

www.cfm.va.gov/til/

Refer to Signage in the specifications, Division 10, Section 10 14 00.

For more information regarding specifications, contact the Office of Construction & Facilities Management, Facility Standards Service.

The specifications require close coordination, taking into account the existing sign program at a medical center, any sign demolition, sign maintenance and future signing needs.

When preparing the specifications for a project, it will require editing to add and indicate new signs or eliminate signs that are not needed. Also, it will be necessary to adapt the specifications to project requirements required for the specific project in which they are intended.

The sign message schedule is considered a part of the specifications and would comprise a portion of the spec section. The configuration and format of the message schedule may vary according to individual project requirements. The sign message schedule format is shown in the Need a Sign Program section of the VA Signage Design Guide. It provides the method for identifying each sign location, type and message along with other notations. The sign schedule contains important information that the sign manufacturer and the sign installer will require for manufacturing and sign installation.

The sign message schedule must be coordinated with a sign location plan drawing showing where signs are to be placed within a building or on the site. Refer to the sign location plan example shown in the Need a Sign Program section of the VA Signage Design Guide.

For convenience, the sign type drawings can also be included in the specifications as it own section.