

# Glossary of Sign Acronyms, Terms and Definitions

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**3D Printing:** Also known as **additive manufacturing**, is a method of creating a three-dimensional object layer-by-layer using a computer-created design. 3D printing is an additive process whereby layers of material are built up to create a 3D part.

**80% Rule:** A basic sign design layout rule. The total area of copy on a sign should not exceed 80% of the area of the sign face.

∅ The symbol on a technical drawing for Diameter

© The Copyright Symbol

⏟ Centerline (drafting)

® The Registered Trademark Symbol, or, the symbol used on technical drawings referring to a **reference dimension**

± The symbol on a technical drawing indicating an approximate size or dimension.

## A

**Abatement:** Related to signage, it is the removal or correction of a sign that violates local community code or standards.

**Abrasion Resistance:** The ability of a given surface to resist scratching or scuffing due to contact or friction with another material. It is one measure of durability.

**Access Door:** A hinged door that when opened provides access to the interior of a sign allowing for the inspection and servicing of its internal components.

**Access Panel:** A removable panel that when opened provides access to the interior of a sign allowing for the inspection and servicing of its internal components.

**Acetate (Substrate):** A thin, clear plastic material that is both flexible and strong. Available in both glossy and matte finishes, it is receptive to ink, and is popular as a substrate for point-of-purchase advertising signs.

**Achromatic:** Literally means without color. Black, white and grays are achromatic.

**Acid Etching:** A method of marking or decorating a surface. In acid etching an acid resistant stencil of the artwork or text is applied to the chosen surface. A corrosive compound such as hydrofluoric acid is then applied to the remaining exposed areas. After a specified length of time during which the acid mixture is allowed to eat away at the exposed material, the entire surface is washed and the stencil removed, leaving behind an etched impression of the artwork. (See also etching and sandblasting.)

**ACM:** Acronym for Aluminum Composite Material.

**Acrylic (Substrate):** Generic term for manufactured synthetic polymer or plastic. Also referred to as **Plexiglas**. Used for interior and exterior signs.

**Acrylic Paint:** Any water-based paint having its pigments or dyes bound in an acrylic resin emulsion. Once it is dry, acrylic paint forms a tough, flexible film that is resistant to water. These types of paints are often used for silk screening and screen printing and for hand painted signs.

**ADA: ( Americans with Disabilities Act)** Legislation enacted by the U.S. federal government in 1991 with the goal of removing barriers that limit a disabled individual's ability to engage in normal daily activity in the physical, public environment. Title III of the ADA deals with related signage and way finding issues.

**ADAA (Americans with Disabilities Accessibility Guidelines):** A set of U.S. standards enacted in 1990 with the goal of ensuring equal access to public places and facilities for all persons. For signage and way finding, the ADAA defines proper letter forms and letter heights for best legibility, proper Braille and tactile lettering forms, and also appropriate signage materials and finishes.

**Additive colors:** Red, green and blue are the three additive colors of light. All other colors of light are created by combinations of these three. If the three additive colors come together in equal proportions, the resulting light is white. (Also called **additive primaries**). See also **Primary Colors**.) Internally illuminated signs use additive color, since they are backlit

**Additive manufacturing:** Also known as **3D Printing**, is a method of creating a three-dimensional object layer-by-layer using a computer-created design. It is an additive process whereby layers of material are built up to create a 3D part.

**Additive primaries:** Red, green and blue are the three additive colors of light. All other colors of light are created by combinations of these three. If the three additive colors come together in equal proportions, the resulting light is white. (Also called additive colors. See also **Primary Colors**.)

**Adhesion:** The force that holds the surface of one material to another. The strength of adhesion is affected by the type and condition of the surfaces in question and the adhesive used. Generally the surfaces need to be clean and porous enough to allow for a certain amount of penetration by the adhesive.

**Adhesive:** A material or substance able to bind and hold two surfaces together. Examples include glue, epoxy and tape.

**Advance notice sign:** A sign indicating the approach of a specific destination such as a highway, street intersection or building entrance. It is different from a directional sign in that it announces a single destination. (It is also called an approach sign.)

**A.F.F. :** Abbreviation for Above Finished Floor. Used in dimensioning vertically on building drawings.

**Above Grade:** a reference point for dimensioning vertically, where ground meets atmosphere.

**Age In:** The initial time a new neon light must be on before it is able to achieve full brightness thereafter. The amount of time this takes can vary widely. (It is also called burn-in. See also **initial lumens**.)

**Airbrush:** A handheld painting device that uses compressed air to generate a fine spray of paint. The pressurized air passes through the airbrush nozzle creating a vacuum that siphons paint from an attached container. Airbrushes come in a variety of sizes for different applications, and can be fitted with a variety of nozzles for different effects and levels of detail.

**Aerial View (Drawing):** On a sign drawing, a screen capture of an aircraft or satellite view of a sign project's location as seen from above. Not to be confused with a **Site Plan** or a **Plot Plan**.

**Aesthetics:** The general perception of a sign's artistic merit or beauty, both on its own and in relation to its surroundings. The design, construction, materials and colors of a sign all factor into its aesthetic appeal. A critical reflection on an item's beauty or artistic value. A design permit for a sign may take into consideration the aesthetics, including how the sign fits into its proposed surroundings.

**Aluminum (Substrate):** A lightweight metal material used in sign panels, poles and frames. It is strong and durable in relation to its weight, and resistant to rust and corrosion.

**Aluminum Composite Material (ACM):** a type of substrate which is aluminum skinned over a PVC core.

**Amortization:** In accounting, this term means the time in which an asset has been depreciated. As it relates specifically to signage, this term also applies to the "grace" period in which a sign must be replaced or removed. In this instance, a sign was in compliance with zoning laws or codes that were then changed; the no-longer compliant sign must be replaced after the amortization period ends.

**Ambient Light:** The sum of all non-directional light in a given area emitted by all sources at a given time. A high level of ambient light can have an impact on a sign's readability, and can be a consideration in a sign's design. Outdoor sunlight creates a high level of ambient light.

**Ampersand:** The logogram , representing the conjunction "and". It originated as a ligature of the letters *et*—Latin for "and".

**AMSE (American Society of Mechanical Engineers):** An American professional association that, in its own words, "promotes the art, science, and practice of multidisciplinary engineering and allied sciences around the globe" via "continuing education, training and professional development, codes and standards, research, conferences and publications, government relations, and other forms of outreach." ASME is thus an engineering society, a standards organization, a research and development organization, an advocacy organization, a provider of training and education, and a nonprofit organization.

**AMSE Y14.00:** This Standard establishes the essential requirements and reference documents applicable to the preparation and revision of manual or computer generated engineering drawings and associated lists unless tailored by a specialty Standard. It is essential that this Standard be used in close conjunction with ASME Y14.24, ASME Y14.34, ASME Y14.35M, and ASME Y14.41. Incorporates Y14.42 on Digital Approval Systems. ASME Y14.00 is the established standard for technical drawings used in the United States and the sign industry.

**ANSI (American National Standards Institute):** A private, nonprofit organization in the U.S. that works to develop manufacturing and quality standards across multiple industries. The organization also works with the committees of other nations to develop standards that facilitate international trade and telecommunications.

**Anchor (Sign Engineering):** In general, any device that connects and secures one object to another. An example would be the devices used to secure awnings and fascia signs to facades. (See also expansion anchor and J-bolt.)

**Anchor Tenant:** The main tenant in a shopping center or shopping mall.

**Animated Sign:** Is a sign depicting action, motion, lights, or color change. Similar to a flashing sign, an animated sign features graphics and illustrations rather than words. They are not usually allowed by sign code, because the human eye/ brain system is attracted to moving objects.

**Annual Average Daily Traffic (Annual ADT):** The number of vehicles passing a given location each day, an important figure in determining where to place signs if multiple locations are an option. This figure typically can be obtained from a state's highway department.

**Anodized finish:** A thin aluminum oxide coating applied electrochemically to the surface of a metal object. The coating hardens, protects and enhances the appearance of the object. It prevents oxidation of aluminum. An anodized finish can be created in a variety of colors.

**Appliqué:** A graphic element made separately then affixed to a cloth or fabric covering such as an awning.

**Approach:** The distance at which a sign becomes readable to a viewer to the point where the sign is no longer readable as the viewer passes by.

**Approach sign:** A sign indicating the approach of a specific destination such as a highway, street intersection, or building entrance. It is different to a directional sign in that it announces a single destination (also called an advance notice sign.)

**Apex:** The uppermost point of a triangular or conical form.

**Arc (Drafting):** A part (section) of a circle

**Arc Radius (Drafting):** it equals the radius of the circular arc which best approximates the curve at that point.

**Architectural signage:** A term used to describe signage in a built environment having the purpose of providing way finding or other site specific information.

**Argon:** An inert gas used in fluorescent lamps and neon tubes. By itself, argon generates pale lavender light. Combined with mercury, it can generate a blue or ultra-violet light. When it is not lit the phosphors show as white.

**Artistic Drawing:** The expression of real or imagined ideas of a cultural nature. It is also known as **Presentation Artwork.**

**Artwork:** Any and all logos, graphics and images used in a sign.

**ASI Adhesive:** A brand of industrial strength adhesives. cyanoacrylates, super glues, methacrylates, & epoxies for precision bonding applications

**Aspect ratio (Design):** The ratio of a sign's height to its width.

**Awning:** A building mounting sign that provides shelter. See also synonym **Canopy.** A sign constructed of a fabric type material stretched over a rigid metal frame that is attached to the wall, roof or mansard of a building. Such signs shall be classified as wall signs.

**Awning Cord:** Most commonly a small diameter, cotton braid cord manufactured for stretch resistance and used for tying down awning covers (also known as a bungee cord).

## B

**Back-to-Back Sign:** A sign having two faces mounted in opposite directions. It is typically used for Pole and Pylon signs (also called a **double-faced sign**.)

**Background panel:** A sign panel to which text or graphical elements are affixed.

**Backlit Letter:** An illuminated channel letter, with an open or translucent back. Light is directed against a surface behind the letter, producing a halo effect. Also known as a **silhouette letter** or **reverse halo lit channel letter**.

**Backlit Film:** Short run, indoor or outdoor, backlit signage for a fraction of the cost for traditional photographic methods.

**Backlit Polyester (Right Reading):** Premium quality 8mil right-reading backlit polyester film with excellent ink retention giving sharp edge definition on graphic images.

**Backward Compatible:** Hardware or software that is compatible with earlier versions of the product. Also called "downward compatible."

**Baffle:** An opaque material, usually aluminum, which is placed inside a light box to isolate internal illumination to a specific area on the sign face.

**Bagging or Sign Bagging:** An opaque plastic cover, usually black in color, that is placed over a pole or pylon sign cabinet to hide the sign of a defunct business. They are used until the defunct sign can be removed or refaced.

**Banding (Drawing):** The appearance of solid bands or patterns of visibly distinct colors within what should otherwise be a continuous and seamless color gradation. Banding can be caused by several factors, including low resolution artwork, a poor quality scan of the original artwork or improper calibration of the printer used.

**Banding (Sign Illumination):** Discontinuous illumination seen in internally illuminated signs when lamp or LED spacing is too far apart or when individual lamps or LEDs fail.

**Banner Mesh:** An extremely lightweight and durable mesh polyester banner material. It is great for large exterior wall murals where weight and/or wind would become a problem using other substrates. It can be sewn, seamed and grommetted to finish in a wide variety of methods and sizes.

**Banner Sign:** Any sign constructed of cloth, canvas, light fabric or other light material, not to exceed 40 square feet in size; provided that portable signs, flag signs, and awning signs shall not be considered banner signs.

**Banner Vinyl:** **vinyl** for Indoor or outdoor applications with either spot or full color graphics. A durable scrim extruded within the banner fabric makes the banner extremely durable when used outdoors. May be sewn, seamed, and grommetted to finish in a wide variety of methods and sizes. It is available in 10 oz or 14 oz.

**Ballast:** An electrical device used in **fluorescent lights** to stabilize the flow of the electrical current

**Banner:** A sign composed of lightweight material; often used in a non-permanent setting, such as to announce a grand opening, sale, or special event, or a new business

**Base Plate:** A flat, thick piece of metal, usually steel and square or rectangular in shape, welded to the bottom of a sign support structure and then anchored with bolts to a concrete foundation or other substructure.

**Base Skirt:** The aluminum-clad area below a monument sign cabinet. It is used to raise the sign for visibility.

**Bench Sign:** A sign located on the back of a bench that is placed near the public right of way, such as at a bus stop.

**Bevel:** 1. A slant or angle on a surface.  
2. A cut made at the edge of a material to form an angle that is not 90

**Bid Package:** Documents from a prospective customer that state for the contractor the requirements and conditions of the project under bid. These documents communicate such details as design intent, desired materials, installation criteria and other project specifics. They also include standardized bidding forms and bidding instructions. (Also called front end documents).

**Bitmap:** a piece of text, a drawing, etc., represented, as on a computer display, by the activation of certain dots in a rectangular matrix of dots. A bitmap image is a dot matrix data structure that represents a generally rectangular grid of pixels (points of color), viewable via a monitor, paper, or other display medium. Raster images are stored in image files with varying formats.

**Blackout:** A specially formulated paint or coating for use on electric signs to block light emission where needed, for example between letters in a neon sign. It adheres well to glass, and resists weather, heat and electrical discharge. (Also called blackout.)

**Blade Sign:** A type of projecting sign mounted such that the face of the sign is perpendicular to the normal flow of traffic.

**Blank:** An uninstalled sign panel with no lettering or graphics applied. (Also called an **insert**.)

**Bleed:** In screen printing, the term refers to the portion of a printed image or graphic which extends beyond the intended borders of a sign. This excess portion is trimmed away. Also sometimes used to describe the halation where sharply contrasting colors meet on an illuminated sign.

**Blind Fasteners:** Fasteners used to mount signs to walls and other surfaces while remaining hidden from view. (Also called **Concealed fasteners**.)

**Blistering:** The appearance of bumps and bubbles on a surface covered in a coating such as paint, or a material such as vinyl. It is the result of the coating or material losing adhesion and separating from the surface underneath.

**Block Color:** An area of solid color having no gradation.

**Blockout:** A specially formulated paint or coating for use on electric signs to block light emission where needed, for example between letters in a neon sign. It adheres well to glass, and resists weather, heat and electrical discharge. (Also called **Blackout**.)

**Bombarding:** The process of heating of a neon glass tube to a high temperature for the purpose of releasing trapped gases and other impurities within it.

**Bonderizing:** The process of treating a metal surface with a zinc phosphate coating in preparation for painting or enameling.

**Border:** A line or band of color or material that defines the outer edges of a sign and/or elements within the sign.

**Box Sign:** A sign that is self enclosed in a typically square or rectangular structure with or without internal lighting. They can be single or double-faced. (See also **Light Box**.)

**Box Top Sign:** A sign element, such as a channel logo, applied **plant-on** to the face of an existing box shaped background.

**Braille beads:** Small plastic or metal beads that can be placed in the face of a sign to create informational Braille text as required by the ADA. (Also known as Braille bullets or ballpoint Braille.)

**Braille bullets:** Small plastic or metal beads that can be placed in the face of a sign to create informational Braille text as required by the ADA. (Also known as ballpoint Braille or Braille beads.)

**Brake Forming:** A manufacturing process that produces a V-shape, U-shape, or channel shape along a straight axis in ductile materials, most commonly sheet metal. The process of manufacturing sharp bends in aluminum or steel.

**Brand:** The mark, label, or image that makes a company recognizable.

**Branding:** The process of creating a unique, positive and recognizable identity for a product or service. Along with marketing and advertising, creating a visual identity through signage is an important part of the branding process. (See also **brand equity**.)

**Brand Equity (Branding):** The intangible value of product or a service in the marketplace, based on the way the business is perceived by consumers. The value a customer places on a branded product or service. It is the qualitative sum of everything that a customer thinks, feels and knows about the product or service. The value of brand equity can be determined by comparing the expected future revenue of the branded product/service against the expected future revenue from an equivalent but non-branded product/service. (See also **Branding**.)

**Breakaway Foundation:** A type of sign foundation that allows a sign pole or other attached support structure to break away cleanly if struck by a motor vehicle, thereby reducing the force of impact to the occupants inside the vehicle. Required by law in many areas. (Also called a **Frangible Sign Mount**.)

**Breaking Strength:** The maximum load a material can withstand before it breaks. (Also called tensile strength.)

**Brightness:** Brightness is one of the three attributes of color along with hue and saturation. The perceived amount of light that a visual target emits or reflects. Its relative luminance. The amount of white in a given color. The greater the amount of white, the brighter the color is said to be.

**Bronze:** A very strong and durable metal alloy made of copper and tin with traces of other metals such as zinc and nickel. It can be cast for the making of plaques, or fabricated from thin sheets into dimensional letters. Bronze can be finished in a variety of ways including being brushed, polished or lacquered.

**Brushed Finish:** A textured, non-reflective polished finish applied to metal by lightly brushing the surface with an abrasive material or briefly applying a mildly corrosive chemical.

**Buff:** To polish a metal surface by rubbing it with a slightly abrasive compound. (See also burnish.)

**Bug:** A symbol in drafting that identifies drawing elements.

**Building Code:** The regulations issued by state and local governments that establish standards for the construction, modification and repair of buildings and other structures in the interest of public health, safety and general welfare. (See also content neutral time, place and manner regulations.)

**Building Mounted Sign:** Any sign that is applied or attached to a building in some manner.

**Built-up letter:** A lettering technique in which the outline of the letter is made first and then filled in.

**Bulletin colors:** A type of quick drying, fade resistant enamel paint commonly used by sign painters for hand lettering.

**Burn-in:** The initial time a new neon light must be on before it is able to achieve full brightness thereafter. The amount of time this takes can vary widely. (Also called age in, see also **initial lumens**.)

**Burnish:** To polish by friction, i.e. to rub with pressure. No abrasive compound or material is used when burnishing (See also buff).

**Butt joint:** The type of joint formed when two pieces of material (wood, metal, etc.) come together flush and edge-to-edge.

**Braille:** A system of small raised dots that represent the alphabet, punctuation and numbers for the visually impaired. The ADA stipulates the use of Braille on signage in certain instances.**Building Code:** A governmental regulation of a structure's construction or maintenance. See also **Sign Code**

**Building Fascia:** The part of a building that extends vertically from the grade to the top wall or eaves and horizontally across the width of the building. Signs may be affixed to the fascia.

**Building-Mounted Sign:** The broad category for signs that are attached to a building; within this category are a number of other signs, which more specifically label where the sign is mounted (fascia, wall, roof, etc.)

**Bus Art Vinyl:** A 4mil flexible white vinyl coated with a repositionable/removable adhesive. Bus art is removable for up to 1 year. It is designed for full or partial wraps. A conformable film construction for compound curves.

## C

**Cabinet Sign:** A sign structure comprised of a frame and face or faces. Though a cabinet sign may include electrical components or support structure, the cabinet sign refers only to the frame and face.

**CAD (computer aided design) software:** Advanced software used in engineering and manufacturing to create and modify complex 3D technical drawings of a device and its components.

**CADD:** Acronym for Computer Aided Drafting and Design

**CAS (computer-aided sign making):** Acronym; a general term for the use of design software and computer controlled manufacturing equipment in the sign-making process.

**Cabinet Sign, Illuminated:** A fabricated sign that is internally illuminated with florescent lamps or grid LEDs. See also **Light Box**.

**Candela:** symbol: **cd**) is the base unit of luminous intensity in the International System of Units (SI); that is, luminous power per unit solid angle emitted by a point light source in a particular direction. Luminous intensity is analogous to radiant intensity, but instead of simply adding up the contributions of every wavelength of light in the source's spectrum, the contribution of each wavelength is weighted by the standard luminosity function (a model of the sensitivity of the human eye to different wavelengths). A common wax candle emits light with a luminous intensity of roughly one candela. If emission in some directions is blocked by an opaque barrier, the emission would still be approximately one candela in the directions that are not obscured.

The word *candela* is Latin for *candle*. The old name "candle" is still sometimes used, as in *foot candle* and the modern definition of *candlepower*.

**Canopy:** A permanent fixture, often made of metal or glass, that is attached to a structure. It differs from an awning in that its aim is not to provide shelter.

**Canopy Sign:** This term refers to either a building-mounted sign that serves as a marquee, or a sign mounted on a canopy or marquee.

**Canvas:** Cotton, linen, or synthetic in heavy weights with an even firm weave, great for digital printing art reproductions.

**Canvas Artist Stretch:** These are gloss and matte canvases for use on ink jet digital printers. Each is designed with a base and coating formulation to optimize performance and various applications on wide format ink jet printers such as: photo reproductions, fine art, maps and heavy signage. The color of the canvas base is an attractive feature for author limited edition reproductions.

**Cartesian Plane (Drafting):** is defined by two perpendicular number lines: the x-axis, which is horizontal, and the y-axis, which is vertical. Using these axes, we can describe any point in the **plane** using an ordered pair of numbers. Vector graphics are based on cartesian coordinates.

**CAS:** Acronym for Computer Aided Sign manufacturing

**CDR: (Computing)**The DOS file extension for a Corel Draw file. CDR files are not **forward compatible**.

**Center Line (Drafting):** Lines on a technical drawing consisting of alternating long and short dashes. It indicates the axis of symmetrical parts and features, bolt circles, and paths of motion. Symbol is  $\text{CL}$ .

**Changeable Copy Panel:** A sign composed of individual letters or numbers that are mounted on or in a track system. Also known as a **Readerboard**.

**Channel Letter:** A three-dimensional letter that may include a light source. It is fabricated and has a return. There are many types of channel letters.

**Chloroplast (substrate):** A brand name of corrugated plastic substrate

**CL (Drafting):** Abbreviation for Center Line

**Chaser Bulbs or Chaser Lights:** Incandescent or LED light bulbs that border around copy on a sign that is animated by sequential powering. The animated illusion is seen as a light bar that runs around the copy

**Coated Tubing:** Clear glass tubing that is coated with a phosphorous powder on its interior. This produces a variety of different light colors, depending on the mixture of the powders used. Most neon tubes are coated and appear white when not energized.

**Cold Cathode:** A generic term referring to custom interior lighting using a large-diameter tube. Also refers to lighting that uses an electrode to emit electrons, such as neon tubing.

**Colored Tubing:** Transparent glass that is manufactured with color, mostly in primary colors.

**Compass Rose (Drafting):** An element of an aerial view, plot plan or site plan which designates cardinal directions.

**Completion Drawing:** A drawing consisting of a series of photographs of a completed sign project.

**Conforming Sign:** A sign that meets federal, state, and local laws and ordinances.

**Conspicuity:** What sets a sign apart from its surroundings. Easily seen or noticed; readily visible or observable

**Content Neutral:** Sign regulations that are made without reference to the content of the sign, including where, when and how a sign can be displayed. This may include height, size and location limits.

**Contrast:** The difference between things having similar or different colors. High-contrast signs are easier to read whereas combinations with lower contrast – such as yellow on white—are more difficult.

**Copy:** The words or letter characters displayed on a sign.

**Copy area:** The area that contains the words on a sign.

**Corel Draw (software):** is a vector graphics editor developed and marketed by Corel Corporation. It is also the name of the Corel graphics suite, which includes the bitmap-image editor Corel PhotoPaint as well as other graphics-related programs. CorelDraw is designed to edit two-dimensional images such as signs, logos and posters. It can draw to scale and can also render full size production patterns

**Cornice (Architecture):** A horizontal decorative molding that crowns a sign. Cornices are used frequently on **Monument, Pole** or **Pylon signs**. It usually copies the cornice designs used on the shopping center buildings. It is typically manufactured from aluminum, or foam covered in **Dryvit**. Note: foam cornices should only be used on signs 8 feet above grade as the foam is frangible and easily damaged.

**Cost Approach (Valuation):** A method of determining how much a real property is worth, minus depreciation. This will include the costs of construction as well as softer costs such as interest paid and permitting fees. In signage, this also includes the message delivered to viewers and the costs of replacing it.

**Cost Per Thousand (CPM):** The costs for an advertiser to reach 1,000 readers or viewers. This is determined by the amount of money spent on the advertisement divided by the number of people it reaches. Signs typically have a lower CPM, meaning they cost less for every 1,000 people they reach.

**Coverage:** A marketing term that applies to the percentage of the total population reached with a particular advertising message. This is measured monthly.

**Criteria, Sign:** A written document that details the rules for signage at a shopping center. It is meant to maintain sign consistency in case the landlord uses multiple sign companies for the tenants. See also **Sign Program**

**Cropping:** Altering the boundaries of a photograph, negative or digital image to improve the composition, remove unwanted elements, or to fit a method of display.

**Customer Acquisition Costs:** A calculation that measures the total cost versus the potential return, or how much it costs to bring in a new customer.

**Custom Sign:** A sign designed to meet the requirements of a specific location. Unique signage.

**Cutoff Switch:** An electrical switch that allows for on-off control of all electrical current to an illuminated sign. Also known as a **Disconnect Switch**.

## D

**Daily Effective Circulation (DEC):** A method of calculating the cost per thousand (CPM) of a sign. This is calculated by averaging the number of daily potential exposures to a sign, counting only the vehicles traveling towards a sign's face, then multiplying that figure by the average number of passengers in a vehicle.

**Dacron:** Fabric used for dye-sublimation. Fire retardant is available. Outdoor use recommended for short-term use. Finishing rating: Excellent. Fabric does have a slight "stretch". Liner recommended when double-sided. Cleaning-Dry clean or wash. Multiple cleanings will cause fading. Interior durability: UV exposure will cause fading. Folding will cause creasing. Can be steamed or ironed (cool setting) from backside.

**Deck Cabinet:** An electrical enclosure that provides mounting and a background for a sign.

**Detail Drawing:** Also known as an **Engineering Drawing**. a type of [technical drawing](#) that is used to convey information about an object. A common use is to specify the geometry necessary for the construction of a component

**Dibond® :** A popular brand of **Aluminum Composite Material** sign substrate.

**Dimensional Letter:** A letter, logo, or symbol that has been cut-out, cast, fabricated, or molded from material such as metal or plastic. A dimensional letter has depth.

**Dimensions:** On a technical drawing, lines and numerical values used to define geometric characteristics, such as lengths, diameters, angles and locations.

**Directional Sign:** Points the way for pedestrians or drivers and can be especially useful when a business is not clearly seen from the entrance to a complex.

**Directory Sign:** Used in an office complex or building to identify the tenants.

**Disconnect Switch:** An electrical switch that allows for on-off control of all electrical current to an illuminated sign. Also known as a **Cutoff Switch**.

**DOT (Department of Transportation) symbols:** The set of standardized symbols developed by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for use in traffic signs.

**Double-faced sign:** A sign having two faces mounted in opposite directions. Typically used for Pole and Pylon signs. (Also called a **Back-to-Back Sign**.)

**Dots Per Inch (D.P.I.):** The number of pixels in a raster image that will occur in one line in the span of one inch. The higher the PPI, the greater the resolution and the less distinguishable each pixel becomes. Also known as **Pixels Per Inch (P.P.I)**

**Duet:** Fabric used for dye-sublimation. Fire retardant is available. Outdoor use recommended for short-term use. Finishing rating-Good. Liner recommended when double-sided. Heat sealed edges may wave. Possible puckering along stitches. Cleaning-Dry clean or wash. Multiple cleanings will cause fading. Interior durability: UV exposure will cause fading. Water may cause spotting. Folding will cause creasing. Can be steamed or ironed (cool setting) from backside.

**D/F Sign:** Abbreviation for Double-Face Sign

**Downsizing:** A change in law or regulation that requires alteration in size or height of any existing sign. Downsizing of an outdoor advertising structure (or "billboard") requires compensation as a regulatory taking.

**Downward Compatible:** See **Backward Compatible**.

**Drafting:** A language using drawings to communicate thoughts and ideas. See also **Technical Drawing**.

**Drain Hole:** A ¼ inch hole in the bottom of a channel letter to allow for water to drain. Only used on exterior internally illuminated signs, especially channel logos and channel letters.

**Drive by Shooting:** Slang for a cursory initial photographic survey of a site where signage is to be placed. The photos are taken casually from the surveyor's vehicle. Photos from these surveys are used to make proposal drawings and are difficult for designers to scale properly.

**Dryvit®:** A popular brand of **EIFS**

**Dynamic Digital Signage:** A large screen or series of screens which display a message, image, or series of images.

## **E**

**Egg Crate Light Diffuser:** A grid of plastic material used on the bottom of illuminated canopies.

**EIFS:** EIFS is marketed as a cost-effective replacement for stucco. Exterior Insulation and Finish System (**EIFS**) is a general class of non-load bearing building cladding systems that provides exterior walls with an insulated, water-resistant, finished surface in an integrated composite material system Signs must be attached through EIFS to the structural building elements behind.

**Electric Sign:** Any sign that contains electrical wiring.

**Electronic Message Center:** A sign that uses computer-generated messages or some other means of changing the words. These signs also include lamps, LEDs, LCDs, or flipper matrix. Also known as a **Message Center**.

**Elevation (Drafting):** The front view of an architectural structure; a geometrical projection on a vertical plane.

**Embellishment:** Anything—ranging from an image to vicinity landscaping—that enhances the appearance of a sign’s ability to convey its message.

**Eminent Domain:** The power of a governmental agency to take property for public use.

**Engineering Drawing:** A **technical drawing** that outlines designs and components of a sign project that requires stamped approval by a registered structural engineer.

**Encapsulated PostScript (EPS) (Computing):** A Document Structuring Conventions-conforming (DSC) PostScript document format usable as a graphics file format. EPS files are more-or-less self-contained, reasonably predictable PostScript documents that describe an image or drawing and can be placed within another PostScript document. An EPS file is essentially a PostScript program, saved as a single file that includes a low-resolution preview "encapsulated" within it, allowing some programs to display a preview on the screen.

**Escutcheon Cover:** Aluminum covering over a mounting plate, used to hide anchor bolts. Used on wall-mounted blade signs and hanging blade signs

**Expansion Anchor:** are used to connect structural and non-structural elements to the concrete. The connection is made by an assembling of different components such as: anchor bolts (also named fasteners), steel plates or stiffeners. Anchor bolts transfer both types of load: tension forces and shear forces.

**Extensions:** An area cut out of a design that extends beyond the basic rectangular space of a sign face or message.

**Exterior Illuminated Sign:** A sign that is illuminated by a light that is directed towards and shines on the face of a sign; also called direct illumination.

## **F**

**Façade:** The face of a building, usually the main face. Also known as the **Fascia**

**Face:** The surface of the sign where a company’s message is displayed.

**Fascia:** The face of a building where a company’s sign is displayed. The vertical surface that runs from the grade to the roofline and horizontally the width of the building.

**Fascia Sign:** A sign installed on a building’s face, the vertical surface that runs from the grade to the roofline and horizontally the width of the building.

**FCO Letters:** Acronym for Flat Cut Out Letters

**Fence Sign:** A sign affixed to or painted upon a fence.

**Field Welds:** Welds made at a project site and not made in a shop or at the place of initial construction.

**File Extension:** is an identifier specified as a suffix to the name of a computer file. The extension indicates a characteristic of the file contents or its intended use. A filename extension is typically delimited from the filename with a full stop (period), but in some systems it is separated with spaces.

**Finial:** A **finial** or **hip-knob** is an element marking the top or end of some object, often formed to be a decorative feature. Finials can be seen on the ends of mounting brackets for projecting signs and as decorative elements of monument signs. Commonly used on flagpoles and fenceposts.

**Fire Evac:** Synonymous with a fire evacuation map sign, required by the local fire code and usually inspected and approved by the local fire marshal. Fire evacuation signs should be as simple as possible and use standard icons for fire extinguishers, stairways, etc.

**Fire Evacuation Map:** A specialized floor plan shows the possible evacuation routes in the building. It is color coded and uses symbols and arrows to indicate the designated exit, fire pull boxes, location of fire extinguishers, etc. Fire Evacuation Maps are inspected and approved by the local Fire Marshal. Abbreviated as “**Fire Evac**”

**Flag Sign:** A flag except the flags of the United States, Texas or any other governmental entity, used for advertising, that contains or displays any written message, business name, pictorial representation, logo, corporate symbol, silhouette or other visual representation identifying or advertising a particular business, good, service or merchandise sold or available for sale on the premises where the flag is erected, displayed or maintained.

**Flashing Sign:** Is a sign with an intermittent flashing light source. Generally, a message is continuously repeated, with the sign used as an attention-getting device. One common example would be signage used by a state’s highway department to catch a driver’s eye.

**Flat Cutout Letter:** A one-dimensional letter cut from a sheet. It is abbreviated as **FCO Letters**.

**Flat Finish:** Is a paint finish that absorbs light and is not reflective. Flat finishes are not very durable and are easily contaminated by particulates. Flat finishes are usually used on interior signs only

**Flex Face:** A tensioned flexible PVC banner substrate that stretches across the face of the sign to create something that resembles the skin of a drum. Flex faces are commonly referred to as “skins” within the industry. Typically, backlit signs and awnings, with either spot or full color graphics. An abrasion resistant, antifungal durable scrim extruded within the fabric makes this an extremely durable outdoor material. Diffusion layer provides for brilliant graphics. May be sewn, seamed and grommetted to finish in a wide variety of methods and sizes. Made from Poly Vinyl Chloride (PVC).

**FlexiSign, Scanvec Amiable (Software):** is a software package designed for the commercial sign and print industry. It is designed for generating graphics to be cut using a vinyl plotter or printer using a variety of sign industry related wide-format printers.

**Fluorescent Lamp or Tube:** A lighting system that uses glass tubing manufactured in standard lengths.

**Font (Software):** The set of letters and characters that conform to a standard designs. It is synonymous with "typeface".

1. TrueType Fonts: is an outline font standard developed by Apple in the late 1980s as a competitor to Adobe's Type 1 fonts used in PostScript. It has become the most common format for fonts on the classic Mac OS and Microsoft Windows operating systems.
2. OpenType: is a format for scalable computer fonts. It was built on its predecessor TrueType, retaining TrueType's basic structure and adding many intricate data structures for prescribing typographic behavior. OpenType is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation.

3. **PostScript fonts:** are font files encoded in outline font specifications developed by Adobe Systems for professional digital typesetting. This system uses PostScript file format to encode font information.

**Font embedding** is the inclusion of font files inside an electronic document. Font embedding is controversial because it allows licensed fonts to be freely distributed. Font embedding has been possible with Portable Document Format (PDF), Microsoft Word for Windows and Corel Draw.

**Footing (Sign Engineering):** A sign foundation which is constructed with concrete, rebar and/or J-bolts that functions as a base to mount pole, pylon and monument signs to. The main function of the footing is to transfer the vertical loads of the sign directly to the ground. Sign footings must be approved by seal by a certified structural engineer.

**Forward Compatible (Software):** Hardware or software that is compatible with subsequent versions of the product. Also called "upward compatible." When a product or interface is said to be forward compatible, it is really a statement of intent that future versions of the product will be designed to be backward compatible with this one. For example, an older version of Word can also open a document that is saved in a newer format. See also **Backward Compatible**.

**Frangible Sign Mount (Engineering):** A type of sign foundation that allows a sign pole or other attached support structure to break away cleanly if struck by a motor vehicle, thereby reducing the force of impact to the occupants inside the vehicle. Required by law in many areas. (Also called a **Breakaway Foundation**).

**Frequency:** The average number of times a potential customer has the chance to see an advertising message over a set period of time, typically measured each four weeks.

**Front Lighted Letter:** An illuminated letter with a translucent face; typically used with channel letters. The faces are backlit by neon or LEDs inside the channel.

**Full Service Sign Company:** A sign company that handles the entire signage project, including design, surveys, permitting, engineering, manufacturing, installation, and maintenance.

## G

**Gatorboard:** A brand of corrugated plastic sign substrate. See also **Cloroplast**

**Gloss Finish:** A paint finish that is shiny and reflects light.

**Glulam:** Is a stress-rated engineered wood beam composed of wood laminations, or "lams", that are bonded together with durable, moisture-resistant adhesives. The grain of the laminations runs parallel with the length of the member. It is stronger than other types of engineered wood products. It is stronger than steel and has greater strength and stiffness than comparably sized dimensional lumber.

**Grade:** The tangent of an angle of a surface to the horizontal.

**Ground sign:** A freestanding sign with no visible support. A sign that is supported by uprights or braces in or upon the ground, including portable signs.

**Grandfather clause, Grandfathering:** A sign that can violate current sign code because it duplicates the sign installed prior to the implementation of the local sign code.

**Graphics Standard:** A master graphic that is used to design an entire **Master Sign Program (MSP)**. Includes Standard sign design pages that are technically detailed and drawn to scale. Not intended for use by client sales, as it includes manufacturing information. It is used by the sign designer to copy and paste into drawings of individual locations that are eventually used as shop drawings.

**Gusset (Engineering):** a triangular metal piece welded to a base plate and pole to add strength to the joint

## H

**Handy Box:** A synonym for **Junction Box**

**H Channel Letter:** A letter with baffles at the center to provide support for neon tubes and a location to mount transformers. A dimensional letter with a cross sectional shape (e.g. like an "H") that allows for the mounting of neon tubing within the lettering itself.

**HDU:** High Density Urethane, a **Substrate**

**Hidden Lines (Drafting):** On a technical drawing. Dashed lines that indicate the hidden areas of an object.

**Highway Beautification Act:** A federal law enacted in 1965 at the urging of then First Lady Lady Bird Johnson. The act provided limits on roadside signage on federal highways and interstates. The act limits signage to commercial and industrial areas.

**High-Rise Sign:** A tall freestanding sign.

**Horizontal Market Software:** Software packages, such as word processors and spreadsheets that are used in a wide variety of industries (banking, insurance, etc.). Such products are also called "productivity software." Contrasting with **Vertical Market Software**. Microsoft 360 (Office) is an example of horizontal market software.

**HPL Panel:** A High Pressure Laminate panel substrate, composed of a resin impregnated kraft paper, a decorative paper and a clear melamine overlay. These sheets are bonded at high pressures and temperatures. The sheets are bonded to substrates such as MDF (medium density fiberboard) or particle board.

## I

**I.D. or ID (Drafting):** Inner dimension

**Illegal Sign:** A sign that fails to meet the current codes and regulations when erected. It differs from a non-conforming sign, which is legal when created, but as laws and ordinances change, it no longer conforms to the codes.

**Illustrator<sup>®</sup>, Adobe (Software):** is a vector graphics editor developed and marketed by Adobe Inc.

**Impulse Buying:** An unplanned purchase; studies show that as much as 55 percent of retail purchases are on impulse, making signage that draws customers into a retail operation important.

**Incandescent Bulb:** A light that applies energy to a wire filament, with its energy usage measured in watts. This is still the most common type of light bulb in everyday use, though use of energy-efficient compact fluorescent bulbs is growing.

**Insert:** An uninstalled sign panel with no lettering or graphics applied. Also called a **Blank**.

**Interior Signs:** Signs that are located inside a building, even though they may be visible from outside. Interior signs need no permitting.

**Internally Illuminated Sign:** A light source contained within the sign provides its illumination.

**Intrados (Architecture):** The interior curve of an arch.

**ISA:** The International Sign Association, the industry's leading trade association. Its website, [www.signs.org](http://www.signs.org), provides a membership directory that is searchable by those looking for sign companies and provides current information on news and legal issues.

**Isometric Drawing (Drafting):** A drawing with a projecting based on the procedure of revolving the object at an angle of  $45^{\circ}$  to the horizontal, so that the front corner is toward the viewer, then tipping the object up or down at an angle of  $35^{\circ}16'$ .

## J

**J-bolt:** A 'J' shaped bolt that is threaded on the long straight portion of the 'J.' It is used in sign footings

**Joint Tenant Sign:** Displays the various tenants of a business complex or shopping center and is most likely located near the entrance to the property.

**JPEG or JPG:** (Joint Photographic Exports Group) A common file format for color digital images. The JPEG standard utilizes a 'lossy' data compression method, meaning that in order to reduce the overall size of the file a small amount of sharpness from the original image is sacrificed.

**Junction Box:** A synonym for **Handy Box**.

**Just Compensation:** When property is taken by the government, the full monetary value—just compensation—must be paid to the property owner.

## K

### **Kelvin:**

1. A unit of measure expressed in degrees used to denote the color temperature of a light source
2. A unit of thermal temperature expressed in degrees.

## L

**Lag screws (US) or coach screws (UK, Australia, and New Zealand)** (also referred to as lag bolts or coach bolts, although this is a misnomer) are large wood screws. The head is typically an external hex.

**Laminate:** Laminated materials are made of two or more plies fused together under a combination of heat, pressure, and adhesives. There are many laminates designed to be used with specific materials for different purposes.

**lbs:** Abbreviation for pounds, an imperial measurement of weight.

**LCD:** (liquid crystal display): A type of flat panel display that recreates an image or message through the manipulation of electrically sensitive crystals suspended in a liquid medium. LCDs are commonly used in electronic message centers.

**LED** (light emitting diode): A small electronic device that emits light when electrically charged. In computer controlled arrays, LEDs can be used to create an electronic message center.

**Lead Shield:** An expansion anchor made of lead.

**LRV (light reflectance value):** An indication of the relative amount of light reflected by a given color. For example, yellow has a higher LRV than blue.

**LD Acrylic:** Light Diffusing Acrylic. Ideal material for signs and channel letters and any other backlit application requiring light diffusing properties. This type of light diffusing plexiglass helps diffuse the light to prevent visible hot spots and luminance fluctuations, without affecting the light transmission itself.

**Legibility:** How easy a sign is to read. This is based on the characteristics of letters, numbers, and characters that make it possible to differentiate one from another.

**Light Baffle:** An obstructing metal piece placed inside a channel letter over the drain hole to prevent light leaks through the hole. An alternate design uses an aluminum “hat” with scotchbrite material inside.

**Light Box:** A fabricated sign that is internally illuminated with fluorescent lamps or grid LEDs. A synonym for **Cabinet Sign, Illuminated**

**Light-Emitting Diode (LED) and Liquid Crystal Display (LCD):** Electronic devices that channel light through tubes to create patterns that can produce changing video displays. Both are becoming more common in signage. LEDs often provide more energy efficiency while LCDs provide sharper displays.

**Line Drawing:** An archaic term for a **technical drawing**

**Linear perspective:** In a drawing, the creation of depth in the picture plane; the extension of parallel lines to one or more vanishing points. Linear perspective is used to overlay sign drawing elements over an architectural photograph.

**Listed Sign:** A listed sign indicates that the manufacturer has produced signs in compliance with the applicable standards. These manufacturers are identified on a list published by a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratory (UL).

**Location Map:** A map included in a sign drawing which shows the overall location of a sign project on a map.

**Logo:** A unique artistic design or symbol that represents a product, identity, or service. Logos may be Registered Trademarks

**Logo Program (Federal):** Road signs that provide information about gas, food, lodging and attractions at an exit. The number of established listed is limited to six at any one interchange. These also are known as specific service signs and, in addition to featuring the logos of the businesses at the exit, provide directional information.

**Lords Adhesive LORD<sup>®</sup> Signlok<sup>™</sup> :** High strength sign adhesives formulated to meet UL standards in the Sign Industry

**Lumen(s):** The standard unit of measurement for lighting

**Luminance:** The perceived brightness of an illuminated sign. The standard measurement is **candelas** per square foot.

## M

**Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD):** A manual produced by the Federal Highway Administration that addresses three specific types of signs: guide, warning, and directional. The manual includes minimum size, height, and placement standards to achieve readability and prevent traffic accidents. Though intended for public agencies, the research contained can be used by private signage as well.

**Mansard:** A type of roof that includes two slopes on each of its sides.

**Marquee:** A permanent canopy often of metal and glass projecting over an entrance.

**Marquee Sign:** (1) A sign mounted on a permanent canopy.  
(2) A traditional industry term for the variable-message section of a canopy sign.  
(3) An integral sign and permanent canopy.  
(4) A sign attached to or hung from a canopy or covered structure projecting from and supported by a frame or pipe support extending beyond a building.

**Master Sign Program:** A set of drawings and text that standardizes and outlines an entire sign program for a client. Used as a guide and a sales tool. **See also Graphics Standards.**

**Match Plate: (Sign Engineering)** for attaching sign structural units together

1. A metal plate on the opposite sides of which the halves of a split pattern are attached.
2. one of two metal plates to which the halves of a split pattern are attached.

**Material Board:** A physical demonstration board consisting of samples of materials and colors for a sign project.

**MDF board:** Medium Density Fiberboard, is an engineered wood product made by breaking down hardwood or softwood residuals into wood fibers, often in a defibrator, combining it with wax and a resin binder, and forming it into panels by applying high temperature and pressure. MDF is generally denser than plywood.

**MDO (medium density overlay):** An exterior grade plywood sheet that has been given a resin-impregnated overlay on one or both sides to improve its durability and paintability.

**Mensuration (mathematics):** is the branch of mathematics that studies the measurement of geometric figures and their parameters like length, volume, shape, surface area, lateral surface area, etc. A branch of mathematics that deals with measurement of various parameters of geometric figures and many more. Mensuration calculations are necessary for designing curved objects and laying out flat pattern files for curved objects.

**Menu Board:** A variable-message sign that allows a retailer to list products and prices.

**Message Center:** An electronically or mechanically variable-message sign in which changes are made from locations other than at the sign. Also known as an **Electronic Message Center**.

**Message Board Sign:** A sign or portion of a sign containing a sign face designed to allow the removal or replacement of individual letters, words or symbols on the sign face for the purpose of changing an advertising message.

**Mobile Sign:** A portable sign mounted on a trailer.

**Molly Bolt:** A molly or molly bolt, often misspelled moly, is a formerly trademarked name for a specialized screw fastener that would reliably fasten objects to plaster or gypsum board hollow walls. Larger sizes permit reasonably heavy objects, such as shelving, flatscreen-TV mounts or central-heating radiators to be attached to drywall in locations where there is no stud behind the drywall. For heavy objects, multiple molly bolts may be required.

**Monument Sign:** A ground sign with low overall height. (See **Freestanding sign**.)

**Mow Strip:** The concrete base that is just above ground level that extends beyond the base skirt of a monument sign. It allows for grass mowing without damaging the monument sign's base skirt. Mow strips are usually about three to six inches above ground level.

**MSP:** Acronym for Master Sign Program

**Mullion:** Window framing made from aluminum. Signs can be mounted on mullions that are engineered to take the weight of said signage.

**Multi-Tenant Sign:** An on-premise sign displaying commercial advertising for two or more distinct commercial businesses or commercial service entities upon a single sign structure.

## N

**NEC (National Electric Code):** A set of codes and standards set forth by the National Fire Protection Association (**NFPA**) for the safe use of electrical wiring and equipment. A series of standards to which all electrified devices must comply. Many cities and states reference the NEC in their own codes, though the NEC is not a law in itself.

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**Neon Sign or Tube:** A sign that uses a cold-cathode gas-discharge tube that may be straight or formed. This is generally referred to as neon, though the gas contained inside may be a mixture of two or more inert gases, such as argon, helium, krypton, or xenon. Neon tube lighting is custom designed and may include letters, tubing, outline lighting, and decorative art. A cold-cathode tube has a relatively long life, compared to a hot-cathode fluorescent lamp or an incandescent bulb.

**Non-Conforming Sign:** A sign that was legally erected and maintained but does not comply with subsequently enacted sign restrictions. In these cases, the sign may be removed—with compensation provided by the governing agency—or be allowed to remain for a set period of years, called amortization.

**Not-to-Scale Dimension:** An altered dimension on a technical drawing that is not to scale with the rest of the object. It is indicated by a thick underscore. Example 8'-6"

## O

**O.C. or OC (Drafting Dimensioning):** On Centers. Measuring between **centerlines**

**Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA):** A U.S. federal government agency that monitors and enforces workplace safety laws.

**O.D. or OD (Drafting Dimensioning):** Outer Dimension

**Off-Premise Sign:** A sign that is not located on the property of the business which it is advertising. Also known as a third-party sign or outdoor advertising. This is considered out-of-home media.

**On-Premise Sign:** A sign that is located on the property of the business which it is advertising. On-premise signs are not considered out-of-home media.

**Open Channel Letter:** A fabricated letter that has no face, though a clear face may be used to protect internal components. If illuminated, the light source is visible. See also **Open Face Channel Letter**

**Open Face Channel Letter:** A fabricated letter that has no face, though a clear face may be used to protect internal components. If illuminated, the light source is visible. See also **Open Channel Letter**.

**Orthographic Projection (Drafting):** In a technical drawing, an object rendered in multiple views showing the front, top and side views.

**OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration):** A U.S. federal government agency that monitors and enforces workplace safety laws.

**Outside Panel:** Where two or more panels are positioned side by side, this is the advertising panel located closest to the edge of the street.

**Overlay (Snipe):** A paper strip or price designation, which is pasted on the face of an existing advertising panel.

## P

**Painted Wall Sign:** A sign painted directly on a building surface. If the sign is a third-party/outdoor advertising display, it may be several stories high and designed for high-impact visibility. (See **building-mounted sign**.)

**Pan Channel Letter (PCL):** One of the most common types of signage; each letter is constructed with four sides—a face, returns (sidewalls) and a back—making the letter a solid unit.

**Pan Face:** A plastic sign face molded into a three-dimensional shape. Also called a **molded face, molded and embossed face, or molded and debossed face**.

**Pan Formed Sign:** A shallow brake formed aluminum sign with 1" returns. Copy is plant-on the face. also known as a **Shoe Box Sign**.

**Pantone Matching System (PMS):** Internationally recognized print color coding system of pre-mixed colors, introduced in the 1960s. Each Pantone color is identified by a specific number.

**Paper, Photobase Bond:** These heavyweight matte papers are designed for graphic applications including trade show and boardroom graphics, posters, point of purchase artwork and photo enlargements. Easy to laminate for durable signage. Great for digital printing.

**Paper, Photobase High gloss and Low Glare:** When using light stable dye-based inks or pigmented inks, images can be archived for longer periods of time. The polyethylene resin-coated surface combined with ultra smooth ink jet coating prevent paper cockle and yield photo-realistic images. The high gloss and low glare surfaces provide for optimum viewing in any lighting environment.

**Paper, Photobase Semi-gloss:** Photo quality output on an economical photo-realistic paper. This nonresin-coated paper provides a rich, smooth texture for small or large quantity runs and easy lamination.

**Parapet:** A low wall around a building face which is above the roof line or similar structure.

**Parapet Sign:** A sign mounted on top of the building's parapet, which is a wall or railing that runs along the edge of a roof.

**PCL:** Acronym for Pan Channel Letter

**PDF (Computing):** The Portable Document Format (PDF) is a file format developed by Adobe in the 1990s to present documents, including text formatting and images, in a manner independent of application software, hardware, and operating systems. Based on the PostScript language, each PDF file encapsulates a complete description of a fixed-layout flat document, including the text, fonts, vector graphics, raster images and other information needed to display it. PDF was standardized as ISO 32000 in 2008, and no longer requires any royalties for its implementation.

**Perspective Projection (Drafting):** A method on a drawing that depicts a three-dimensional object on a flat plane as it appears to the eye.

**Plexiglas:** The trademark name for a brand of acrylic sheeting, which (like Kleenex or Band-Aid) is often mistakenly used as a generic term.

**Permanent Sign:** A sign that is attached in such a way that it enables the sign to resist wind and is difficult to remove or move. It may be attached to a building or to the ground.

**PhotoShop® (Software):** A raster (bitmap) graphics editor developed and published by Adobe Inc. for Windows and MacOS.

**Pipe Splice:** A mechanical system using welded steel plates that allows for a smaller diameter steel pole to be mounted to a larger diameter steel pole.

**PL:** Abbreviation for Property Line

**Plan:** design of an architectural complex, property, building, or part of a building in a horizontal projection, as though seen from above.

**Plot Plan:** A synonym for a **Site Plan**. An architectural drawing projected from above that shows a building in context with its property line, including parking spaces

**Point of Purchase:** A sign or display located at the point of sale. Studies have shown that the right signage can have a dramatic impact on a product's sales.

**Poly Duck:** Fabric used for dye-sublimation. Fire retardant is not available. Outdoor use recommended for short-term use. Finishing rating-Excellent. Fabric does have a slight "stretch". Liner recommended when double-sided. Cleaning-Dry clean or wash. Multiple cleanings will cause fading. Do not exceed heat 225F. Interior durability: UV exposure will cause fading. Folding will cause creasing. Can be steamed or ironed (cool setting) from backside.

**Polyester:** A synthetic fiber used for its strength and resistance to ultraviolet deterioration. It does not have the stretch and elasticity of nylon and, as a result, will often last longer. Used for dye sublimation, screen printing, or applique.

**Polyester Cloth:** A 13 mil semi-sheer polyester knit fabric with a silk-like feel after the 4mil paper backing is removed. This fabric is ideal for producing colorful printed strike-off samples may be used to create textile proofs and novelty short-term promotional garments. The fabric's ability to drape also makes the product suitable for flags, banners, displays, window decoration and partitions. It has a water-resistant coating and is designed for digital printing.

**Poplin:** A fabric used for dye-sublimation. Fire retardant is available. Outdoor use is not recommended. Finishing rating-Excellent. Fabric does have a slight "stretch". Liner recommended when double-sided. Cleaning-Dry clean or wash. Multiple cleanings will cause fading. Do not exceed heat 225F. Interior durability: UV exposure will cause fading. Wrinkle resistant. Folding will cause creasing. Can be steamed or ironed (cool setting) from backside.

**Pole or Pylon Cover:** An enclosure for concealing and/or decorating poles or other structural supports of a ground sign.

**Pole Sign:** A freestanding sign with visible support structure. There is no cover over the pole. The structural pole(s) are exposed.

**Portable Sign:** A sign not permanently attached to the ground or a building, and easily removable using ordinary hand tools. Any sign designed or constructed to be easily moved from one location to another, including signs mounted upon or designed to be mounted upon a trailer, bench, wheeled carrier or other nonmotorized mobile structure; a portable sign that has its wheels removed shall still be considered a portable sign hereunder. Trailer signs and signs on benches are portable signs.

**PPI (pixels per inch):** The number of pixels in a raster image that will occur in one line in the span of one inch. The higher the PPI, the greater the resolution and the less distinguishable each pixel becomes. Also known as **Dots Per Inch (D.P.I.)**

**PVC:** Polyvinyl Chloride. A plastic sheet substrate.

**Post and Panel Sign:** A sign which uses one or more visible posts and is unlighted.

**Presentation Artwork:** A drawing which conveys the appearance of a proposed sign in context with the building it is installed on and its surroundings. Used as a sales tool, presentation artwork does not include technical details and dimensioning. Also known as a **Proof Drawing**.

**Primary Colors:** is a set of colorants or colored lights that can be combined in varying amounts to produce a gamut of colors. This is the essential method used in applications that are intended to elicit the perception of diverse sets of color, e.g. electronic displays, color printing, and paintings. Perceptions associated with a given

combination of primary colors are predicted by applying the appropriate mixing model (additive, subtractive, averaging, etc.) that embodies the underlying physics of how light interacts with the media and ultimately the retina.

**Proof Drawing:** A sign drawing that is submitted to a customer for their approval of the design.

**Projecting Sign:** Is a building-mounted sign that projects from and is perpendicular to the building's fascia. A sign that is affixed to any building wall or structure and extends beyond the building wall or structure more than 12 inches.

**Property Line:** is the legal boundary of a tenant or landlord of a property. Property lines are drawn as a long line with two short lines in succession. The abbreviation is  $P_L$ .

**Provisional Sign:** A sign of light weight material to be used until permanent signage can be fabricated and erected.

**Push-Through:** A letter or logo that is cut out of a backing material as thick or thicker than the sign face. The material is then mounted on the inside of the sign face so that it is flush with or extends through and beyond the front of the sign face. Typically, 3/4 inches deep clear acrylic. Abbreviated as **Push-Thru**.

**Pylon Sign:** A freestanding sign with a visible support structure. It may or may not be enclosed by a pole cover.

**PVC :** A material made of polyvinyl chloride. A substrate used for flat cut out signs

## R

**Raceway:** An electrical enclosure which can also be used to attach a sign to the structure. Raceways are used only if necessary, in **Channel Letter** designs. For neon signs, 8 inches square.

**RAL Color:** RAL colors are used for information defining standard **colors** for varnish, powder coating and plastics. It is the most popular Central European **color** standard used today. The **colors** are used in architecture, construction, industry and road safety.

**Readability:** All of the characteristics of the letters, numbers, and symbols that allow the observer to perceive the right message.

**Reader Board:** A sign face with changeable copy on rails

**Recall:** The ability of a viewer or listener to remember an advertising message. Vehicle wraps offer one of the highest forms of advertising recall.

**Recognition:** The ability to connect a message with the particular advertiser.

**Reference Dimension (Drafting):** A dimension on a technical drawing that is shown for information only, and is not to be used or required for manufacturing or inspection purposes. It is enclosed in parenthesis. Example (5'-6")

**Regulatory Sign:** A sign used to convey information about rules, ordinances, or laws.

**Retainer:** A framing member designed to attach a face to the cabinet and/or to provide a decorative trim. It is mounted around the perimeter of a sign face and attached to the sign cabinet structure.

**Retroreflective:** The quality of a surface that reflects light directly back toward its original source.

**Return:** The side of a channel letter or dimensional letter. Returns on channel letters are used to allow for internal back illumination

**Reveal:** An indented detail on a sign. Designed to separate elements on a multiple tenant monument or pylon sign.

**Reverse Halo- Lit Channel Letter:** Letters that are backlit, mounted away from a wall, forming a halo behind the letters. Illuminated by neon or LEDs. The letter faces are aluminum and are therefore totally opaque.

**Right of Way (ROW):** The area adjacent to a public street. Permanent commercial signs are typically placed on the private land near the public right of way. Local codes may have requirements on how near or far away from the right of way a sign can be placed.

**RIP (computers):** Acronym for Routing Information Protocol, an interface between a computer and an output device.

**Roof Sign:** A building-mounted sign erected upon and completely over the roof of the building. Or, a sign that is affixed to any building wall or structure and extends beyond the building wall or structure more than 12 inches. Often prohibited by local sign code.

**RPC:** Acronym for Reverse Pan Channel Letter

## S

**Sandwich Board/Sidewalk Sign:** A sign not secured or attached to the ground or surface upon which it is located, but supported by its own frame, which is typically in the shape of an A.

**Satin:** Fabric used for dye-sublimation. Fire retardant is available. Outdoor use is not recommended. Finishing rating-Excellent. Liner recommended when double-sided. Cleaning-Dry clean. Multiple cleanings will cause fading. Do not exceed a heat of 225. Interior durability: UV exposure will cause fading. Water may cause spotting. Folding will cause creasing. Can be steamed or ironed (cool setting) from backside.

**Satin Finish:** A paint finish that is synonymous with **semigloss finish**.

**Schedule Number:** Numbers used by ANSI to designate all of 10 different pipe wall thicknesses. **Schedule 40 steel pipe** is commonly used in the sign industry.

**Screen Printing:** Graphic application method capable of printing great detail and color on a variety of substrates such as paper, plastics, aluminum, vinyl, and banner materials.

**Semigloss Finish:** A paint finish that is synonymous with **satins finish**.

**S/F Sign:** A sign with a single face with copy and/or graphics. The other side is either blank or attached to the fascia. A **Single-Face Sign**

**Section View:** On a technical drawing, to show interior details of objects that re too complicated to be shown clearly in regular views.

**Self-Tapping Screw:** A screw designed to tap its own hole as it is driven into the material. A thread-cutting screw.

**Setback:** The measured distance of a sign from the edge nearest the road to the property line, street curb or sidewalk.

**Shoe Box Sign:** A shallow brake formed aluminum sign with 1” returns. Copy is plant-on the face. also known as a **Pan Formed Sign**.

**Shop Drawing:** A technical drawing of a sign project that is used to manufacture the sign. It includes materials, dimensions, paint colors, specifications and processes. See also **Technical Drawing**.

**Sight Triangle:** The distance is defined as a triangle, as each leg of the intersection requires sufficient sight distance to the adjacent approaches creating a triangle. A pole or monument sign is located within the sight triangle. Sight Triangles are shown on site plans.

**Sign:** A grand form of visual communications. Any device, structure, fixture, painting, or visual image using words, graphics, symbols, numbers, or letters designed for the purpose of conveying information or attracting attention. The term ‘sign’ comes from the Old French *signe* (noun), *signer* (verb) meaning gesture or motion of the hand. This in turn came from the Latin ‘signum’ indicating an “identifying mark, token, indication, symbol, proof, military standard, ensign, a signal, and omen, a sign in the heavens, or a constellation.

**Sign Band:** In a complex with multiple tenants, a sign band runs along the front or side of the building, above the entrance or windows, with room to accommodate each business’ signs. Usually, set a minimum of 10 feet from grade or finished floor.

**Sign Face:** The area of a sign on which words and images are placed.

**SignLab<sup>®</sup> (Software):** is a Computer Aided Design (CAD) software program for sign makers, SignLab tools are used for designing with text, line art, and images (i.e., bitmaps). SignLab also provides significant support for other design applications, so that unfinished or archived designs can be brought into SignLab for pre-production work.

**Sign Model:** A physical scale architectural model of a sign made from plastic, paper and other materials. Used as a sales and engineering tool.

**Sign Program:** A written document that details the rules for signage at a shopping center. It is meant to maintain sign consistency in case the landlord uses multiple sign companies for the tenants. See also **Criteria, Sign**.

**Sign Spinner:** A human being that is paid to stand in public waving and spinning lightweight chloroplast signs to get public attention. The human eye-brain system evolved to notice moving objects. Sign spinning is a way to work around local sign codes that prohibit moving or animated signs.

**Signature Building:** A building designed and/or painted to reinforce a traditional sign’s message or display. It may also be incorporated into advertising programs.

**Signcentric Design:** Building or site that is designed to make the on-premise signage the prominent visual feature.

**Signage:** is the design and use of signs and symbols to communicate a message. A signage also means collectively or being considered as a group. The word signage is documented to have come into use in 1975-

1980. The main purpose of signs is to communicate, to convey information designed to assist the receiver with decision-making based on the information provided. Alternatively, promotional signage may be designed to persuade receivers of the merits of a given product or service.

**Silk Screen:** Graphics accurately transferred to a background material or substrate through the use of screens cut specifically for the application. Ink is spread evenly over the top of the screen and "printed" onto the face of the substrate or material.

**Single-Face Sign:** A sign with only one face plane. Also known as a **S/F Sign**

**Sintra:** A popular brand of **PVC** sign substrate

**Site Plan:** an architect's line drawing of a project's location. See also **Plot Plan**.

**Snipe (Overlay):** A paper strip or price designation, which is pasted on the face of an existing advertising panel.

**Solar-Powered:** A product which derives its energy from the sun. Solar-powered signage may be a good option in certain circumstances, using 12 volt DC circuits with solar cells and batteries

**Space Frame:** A fabricated metal structure made from aluminum, steel or angle iron that supports multiple sign elements. Space frames can also be used on fascia signs as an artistic element.

**Spectacular Sign:** A sign that has one or more of the following as elements in its physical structure:

- (1) Automatically changing message that changes more often than once every five minutes;
- (2) Blinking, rotating, moving, chasing, flashing, glaring, strobe, scintillating or spot lights, or similar devices;
- (3) Lights or colored elements creating a continuously moving, shimmering or prismatic effect; or
- (4) Rotating or moving parts.

**Street Furniture:** Advertising displays, which may also serve as a public amenity, such as a bus bench. These are positioned in close proximity to pedestrians for eye-level viewing and at curbside to be read by those in vehicles.

**Styrene:** A polymer plastic substrate. Styrene can also be used to construct sign models.

**Subtractive Color:** Or "subtractive color mixing", predicts the spectral power distribution of light after it passes through successive layers of partially absorbing media. This idealized model is the essential principle of how dyes and inks are used in color printing and photography where the perception of color is elicited after white light passes through microscopic "stacks" of partially absorbing media allowing some wavelengths of light to reach the eye and not others. It uses the CMYK color model (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black). Externally illuminated signs show subtractive colors.

**Substrate:** The surface to which sign graphics are applied. Can be plastics, metals, vinyls, banners, fabrics, papers, glass and many more.

**T**

**T-bar Retainer:** Used to support tenant panels in a shared tenant cabinet sign

**Tagged Image File Format:** abbreviated TIFF or TIF, is a computer file format for storing raster graphics images, popular among graphic artists, the publishing industry, and photographers. TIFF is widely supported by scanning, faxing, word processing, optical character recognition, image manipulation, desktop publishing, and page-layout applications.

**Tapcon<sup>®</sup> screws** are a popular anchor that stands for *self tapping* (self threading) concrete screw. Larger diameter screws are referred to as LDT's. This type of fastener requires a pre-drilled hole—using a Tapcon drillbit—and are then screwed into the hole using a standard hex or Phillips bit. These screws are often blue, white, or stainless. They are also available in versions for marine or high stress applications.

**Target Audience:** The most desirable consumer for a particular product or service.

**TCO:** (Temporary Certificate of Occupancy): This typically allows a new building to be occupied before it is fully complete and therefore requires life safety signs to be in place to protect the public at large.

**TDD:** (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf) This communication system enables visual typographic messages to be transmitted and received over telephone lines. ADA requires use of symbols to show where TDD unit is available.

**Technical Drawing:** The expression of technical ideas or ideas of a practical nature. The main method of communications concerned with the design and manufacture of a product. See also **Shop Drawing** and **Line Drawing**.

**Temporary Sign:** Any sign intended to be used for a limited period of time, not for a permanent installation.

**Tex-Cote<sup>®</sup>:** A brand of textured architectural finish that is used to cover **EIFS**. On freestanding monument and pylon signs, tex-cote is sprayed onto aluminum or foam cladding to simulate the appearance of stucco.

**Time-and-Temperature Display:** A variable-message sign that displays current time and temperature in a stationary or alternating manner. Some also display simple messages.

**Title Block (Drafting):** Margin notes on a drawing containing the drawing number, the name of the firm or organization, the title or description, and the scale. It is located on the right corner, side or bottom of a drawing.

**Toggle Bolt:** also known as a butterfly anchor, is a fastener for hanging objects on hollow walls such as drywall. Toggle bolts have wings that open inside a hollow wall, bracing against it to hold the fastener securely. The wings, once fully opened, greatly expand the surface area making contact with the back of the hollow wall. This ultimately spreads out the weight of the secured item, increasing the weight that can be secured compared to a regular bolt.

**Tolerances (Engineering):** Indicated by the linear and angular dimensions to ensure proper assembly and function of a product. Tolerances should be as liberal as possible in a project to keep costs to a minimum.

**Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs (TODs):** A federal sign program that provides business identification and directional information for businesses and activities that appeal to travelers. Sign content is limited to the identification of the business, service or activity, and directional information. TODS do not include promotional advertising.

**Trade Area:** The fixed area from which most business is derived, typically either the home or work of a potential client or customer. For most small businesses, the trade area is three to five miles, though a highly mobile society is making clearly defined trade areas difficult.

**Trademark (Service Mark):** A symbol ® that distinguishes a business and its products from the competition. This may include a name, symbol, word, or any combination thereof. Trademarks are protected by the federal government and considered to have financial value.

**Transformer:** Electrical equipment that converts incoming voltage and current to a different outgoing voltage and current. For example, an LED transformer converts 120 Volts AC to 12 volts DC.

**Transom Window (Architecture):** A window that is above a door.

**Truss Structure (Engineering):** Metal framework forming triangles to support a sign. Frequently used in **Space Frame** designs.

**TIFF (Computing)** (Tagged Image File Format): Standard uncompressed graphics file format used for scanned bit-mapped raster images.

**TPM:** (time, place and manner) regulations: Consistently applicable non-discriminatory sign regulations that specify, without reference to the content of the message, when, how and where a sign can be displayed, with physical standards, such as but not limited to height, size and location, that allow the sign to be readable.

**Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD):** This communication system enables visual typographic messages to be transmitted and received over telephone lines. The ADA requires use of symbols to show where TDD unit is available.

## U

**UL:** Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. A nationally recognized testing laboratory that provides safety certification.

**Under-Canopy Sign:** A sign mounted underneath a canopy.

**UV resistance:** Ability to withstand decay due to the damaging effect of the ultraviolet rays of the sun.

## V

**Valance:** on an awning or canopy, the front portion of a canopy that hangs or faces perpendicular to the ground

**Variable-Message Sign:** A sign that allows the message to be easily changed.

**Variance** or **Variance Hearing:** A formal appeal made by a sign company or its agent to install a sign that is not in conformance with the local sign code. An allowance that provides an exception to zoning rules.

**Vector graphics:** Computer graphic images that are defined in terms of points on a **Cartesian plane**, which are connected by lines and curves to form polygons and other shapes. Vector graphics have the unique advantage over raster graphics in that the points, lines, and curves may be scaled up or down to any resolution with no aliasing or loss of resolution. The points determine the direction of the vector path; each path may have various properties including values for stroke color, shape, curve, thickness, and fill.

**Vehicle Wraps:** A vinyl graphic applied to a car, truck, van, or trailer, essentially creating a rolling billboard.

**Vertical Market Software:** Highly specialized software used for limited application in specific industries. In the sign business, FlexiSign and Signlab are examples.

**Vinyl:** Thin adhesive backed material that is used to make die cut letters for sign faces, or as an entire adhesive substrate for digital printing.

**Vinyl, Flexible Face:** A substrate upon which an advertising message is rendered, either by computer production or hand painting. It is made from reinforced plastic and is stretched taught over a framing system.

**Vinyl, High Performance Cast:** Opaque, adhesive backed vinyl. **Used for non-backlit signs or for** vehicle wraps. Cast vinyl conforms to rivets and curves. Many grades and brands are available with various purposes and warranties.

**Vinyl, Intermediate:** Opaque, adhesive backed vinyl. Indoor or outdoor applications with either spot or full color graphics. An excellent choice for short or medium term outdoor signs such as industrial site signs. Many brands and grades available for different purposes and with different warranties.

**Vinyl, Perforated Window:** A perforated white vinyl composite (black on reverse side) designed for view through window graphics. A 1 mil optically clear laminate should be used for extra durability. Many brands are available. Generally warranted for 1 year.

**Vinyl, Reflective:** For outdoor applications; adhesive backed vinyl. Reflects light at night allowing by add 40% more visibility to your message. Many different brands and warranties are available.

**Vinyl, Super Cling Low Tack:** Vinyl designed for those applications requiring reliable bonding but easy removability without leaving an adhesive residue.

**Vinyl, Translucent:** Adhesive backed vinyl that is engineered so that light can be transmitted through it.

**Visible Opening:** The area of a sign face that is exposed to the outside. The edges of the sign face are hidden by retainers. Abbreviated "V.O" on dimensions.

**Visibility:** The physical attributes of a sign and its contents that allow the sign to be seen—if not fully legible—at a given distance.

**Visual Communications:** The use of visual elements to convey ideas and information which include but are not limited to signs, typography, drawing, graphic design, illustration, industrial design, advertising, animation and electronic resources.

**Voile:** A fabric used for dye-sublimation. Fire retardant is standard. Not recommended for outdoor use. Finishing rating - Good. The heat sealed edges may wave. There is a possible puckering along stitches. Cleaning is accomplished by dry clean or wash. Multiple cleanings will cause fading. Do not exceed 225 F heat. Interior durability: UV exposure will cause fading. Folding will cause creasing. Can be steamed or ironed (cool setting) from backside.

## W

**Waterproof:** The use of the term in relation to treated cotton ducks is prohibited by the "Fair Trade Practices Act" unless the product shall be impervious to the passage of any water so long as the fabric may endure". "Water Resistant" is the proper designation for cloths treated to resist water penetration and leakage.

**Wall Mural:** A display applied directly to a building's exterior. Painting may be the most common method, though a painted or printed vinyl substance may be applied as well.

**Wall Sign:** A building-mounted sign attached to, displayed, or painted on an exterior wall in a manner parallel with the wall surface, and not projecting more than 16 inches from such surface.

**Wayfinding:** A type of sign that allows users to find their way, using information provided along the travel path.

**Webbing:** A sturdy fabric woven in narrow widths for use where strength is required, such as seat belts or head bands. Often used in banners, where heavy duty usage is required, like over-the-street banners.

**Welding Symbol:** A method of representing welds in a technical drawing.

**Window Sign:** A sign that is painted on, attached to, or suspended directly behind or in front of a window or the glass portion of a door.

**Window Splash:** Hand painted temporary promotional copy and graphics painted on store windows.

**Wireway:** Similar but smaller than a **Raceway**, a small metal enclosure behind channel letters that contains wiring and LED transformers that unitizes the letters for easy installation and minimal wall penetrations.

## **Z**

**Zoning:** A method of dividing large drawings into segments for easy reference.