

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

A

ADVERTISING MEDIA: The means by which an advertising message is carried to potential customers; including Internet, magazine, newspaper, radio, signage and television

ABS (Acrylonitrile-Butadiene-Styrene): A family of resins, created by polymerizing two liquids and a gas. The result is a thermoplastic which is strong, longwearing and resistant to stains and chemicals.

ADVERTISING MEDIA: The means by which an advertising message is carried to potential customers; including Internet, magazine, newspaper, radio, signage and television

AESTHETICS: A term dealing with form, design, and/or quality of construction of a particular sign, building, site or structure, that presents a judgmental statement concerning the level of beauty or artistic value

AIRBRUSH: A device utilizing compressed air to generate a fine spray of paint. As air passes through the head of the airbrush, a vacuum is created, siphoning the paint up from its container. Airbrushes come in a variety of sizes with different heads and tips depending on the use.

AMBIENT LIGHT: The light in a given area. May be natural or man-made, but does not include direct or internal illumination.

AMORTIZATION: 1) In accounting terms, this refers to the method in which an intangible asset is depreciated over a specified period of time. 2) In terms relevant to signage and urban planning, it conveys the "grace period" beginning on the date a sign owner is notified that removal of a previously conforming sign has been ordered, and ending on the date removal is required. This process makes a structure, which was legally erected with all permits, legally non-conforming for period of time. After an amortization period, the sign becomes illegal and non-conforming. Amortization has often been found to be a form of regulatory taking. The legality of amortization depends on state law and numerous other conditions, and is frequently unenforceable.

ANCHOR: Any device that holds something else secure and keeps it from giving way and the process of installing those devices. In signmaking, refers particularly to the fasteners used to secure awnings and fascia signs to

ANCHOR BOLTS: In installing signs with concrete foundations, a base plate is welded to the column which supports the sign. The anchor bolts are vertical steel rods (with 4 to 10 inches of thread) which secure the base plate to the foundation, using mounting nuts and washers. (Also known as J-bolts.)

ANGLE IRON: Describes any piece of structural iron or steel bent to a right (90 degree) angle for use in sign

ANIMATED SIGN: A sign depicting action, motion, light or color changes through electrical or mechanical means. Although technologically similar to flashing signs, the animated sign emphasizes graphics and artistic display.

ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC (ANNUAL ADT): Measurement representing the total number of vehicles passing a given location each day. These counts can usually be obtained from your State Highway Department

ANTIOXIDANT: An additive substance which prevents or slows down oxidation of materials exposed to the air (rusting in the case of metals; other forms of degeneration in the case of plastics.)

APPROACH: The area along a street or sidewalk from where a sign first becomes visible until the display is no longer readable as the viewer passes by.

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ARGON: A gas which, when mixed with mercury, is used in fluorescent lamps and neon tubes. In neon tubes, the combination of gases creates a blue color. In a neon tube by itself, argon is a pale lavender.

ART: All copy, graphics and logos used in preparing a job.

AUGER: Drilling equipment, with bits of various diameters, used in excavating for caisson foundations.

AWNING: A shelter constructed of non-rigid materials on a supporting framework which projects from and is supported by the exterior wall of the building. An awning may or may not be illuminated and/or decorated with

AWNING SIGN: A building mounted sign that provides additional functionality as shelter.

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B
BACK BRACE: A supporting structure placed behind a sign, and separately anchored to the column support, or to
BACKLIGHTED LETTER: An illuminated reverse channel letter (open or translucent back) so light from the letter is directed against the surface behind the letter producing a halo lighting effect around the letter. Also referred to as Silhouette lighted or halo lighted.
BACKLIGHTED SIGN: A sign consisting of a cabinet containing a light source surrounded by one or more translucent faces which may be illuminated for visibility.
BACK-TO-BACK: This does not mean two sign faces mounted in one cabinet, but rather a pair of single face signs mounted on a common structure but facing in the opposite directions.
BAFFLE: A technique for directing light to emphasize a particular area of a sign. For example, a baffle holds light in on the sides and back, thus directing it to the desired area of the front. In a neon sign, the term baffle is used for the metal portions which cover up any tubing--such as that between letters--which is not intended to be seen.
BAKED ENAMEL: A special paint coating, heat-treated to create a hard, durable surface.
BALLAST: An electrical device required to operate fluorescent lamps.
BANNER: A sign composed of lightweight material. Promotional banners include those used to announce open houses and grand openings, make special announcements, or communicate events. Ornamental banners use images or colors of a decorative nature.
BASE: A concrete footing, such as that used to support a freestanding sign.
BASE COVER: A box-shaped metal housing used to conceal and decorate the bottom of a sign support where it attaches to the base.
BASE PLATE: A flat, thick piece of steel (usually square or rectangular), welded to the bottom of a sign support. The base plate adapts the support to the concrete foundation, to which it is secured with anchor bolts.
BENCH SIGN: A sign located on the seat or back of a bench or seat placed on or adjacent to a public right-of-way. A type of street furniture.
BETWEEN-POLE MOUNT: Type of mounting in which the sign or sign box is installed between two supporting columns. (Readerboards, for example, are usually mounted in this way.) Also see mount.
BILLBOARD: A large outdoor board used for posting advertising. The name comes from the age-old practice of posting bills, or pre-painted messages. In the 19th century, it became common for businesses to lease separate board space for their bills, hence the name billboard.
BLANK: Most commonly, an undecorated face. May also refer to a sign face without any framing or cabinet.
BLEED: In the graphics business, this means to give up color when in contact with water or a solvent. In plastics, it refers to the undesirable movement of certain ingredients in a blend (for example: plasticizers in vinyl). This unwanted movement (also called "migration") can be to the surface of the plastic or into adjacent material.

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BLISTER: The end result of poor adhesion by either paint or vinyl to a substrate, leaving the surface covered with bumps of various sizes and indeterminate shapes.
BLOCK FOUNDATION: see Footing.
BLOCKOUT: A liquid type of mask used to seal holes in the stencil in areas not intended to be screen printed.
BLOCKOUT PAINT: A type of paint used in the production of neon signs to blockout the crossover connections between letters. Special enamel paints have been formulated for this purpose that offer a high degree of adherence to glass, as well as resistance to weather, heat, light, high voltages and corona discharge. In a pinch, it's not necessary to use special blockout paint, however paints with metallic bases should be avoided because of their ability to conduct electricity.
BLOW MOLDING: The usual method for making plastic bottles and other hollow items.
BLOW UP: To increase art to a working size. In the past, blowing up art was done through mechanical means, such as using a pantograph or projector. Today, the same results are possible with the computer.
BOMBARDER: Properly, a bombarder transformer. A bombarder provides a high voltage and higher current than is ordinarily used with a neon tube for purposes of bombarding.
BOMBARDING: The process of heating the glass and metal portions of a neon tube to a high temperature to throw off all absorbed gases and other impurities. Improper bombarding may result in a decrease in illumination and darkening of the tube.
BONDERIZED: A process where sheet metal is zinc-coated, than treated to allow for paint to adhere. Used in creating baked enamel signs.
BOOM: A beam used to lift heavy objects. Popular expression for a crane.
BOOM MOUNT: Type of mounting in which the sign or sign box is suspended from a horizontal support. Also see mount.
BORDER: Most commonly a line or repetitive design used to emphasize or set apart all or portions of a sign's art. In electric signs, illuminated tubes or arrows, or decorative molding may also serve as borders.
BRAND EQUITY (Branding): The intangible, but real, value of words, graphics or symbols that are associated with the products or services offered by a business. Developing branding of a site includes the presentation of signage and architecture to create a unique awareness and memory by the potential customer of the products or services offered at that site. Brand equity for a particular business is similar to the goodwill of an enterprise.
BRUSHED FINISH: A non-glossy, textured finish applied to metal for decorative purposes.
BUILDING CODE: State and/or local regulations governing public health, welfare and safety of construction and maintenance.
BUILDING FASCIA: That portion of any elevation of a building extending vertically from the grade to the top parapet wall or eaves, and horizontally across the entire width of the building elevation, including slanted wall surfaces sometimes referred to as a mansard.
BUILDING MOUNTED SIGN: A sign that is applied or attached to a building.

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BUMPER POST: A post, usually of metal, filled with poured concrete, erected to protect sign columns from
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BURNING IN: recommended to bring a neon tube to its proper brilliance, burning-in involves connecting the completed tube to a transformer similar to that which will be used in the installation and allowing it to remain lighted for approximately 15 minutes. Also called aging.

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C
CABINET: The sign "box," which houses the face panels and electrical components. Most cabinets are made of extruded aluminum. For larger, high-rise signs, skin-and-frame construction is preferable.
CABINET SIGN: A sign structure consisting of the frame and face(s), not including the internal components, embellishments or support structure.
CAD/CAM: Computer Aided Design/Computer Aided Manufacturing: The use of computers in the design and drafting processes, and subsequently to drive numerically-controlled manufacturing machinery.
CAISSON FOUNDATION: see Footing
CAN: A slang term for the sign cabinet.
CANDELA: A unit of measure indicating the amount of intensity displayed by artificial light. Abbreviated as cd.
CANOPY: See marquee.
CANOPY SIGN: 1) A building-mounted sign functioning as a marquee. 2) A sign mounted on a marquee or canopy.
CANTILEVER MOUNT: Type of mounting in which the sign or sign box is suspended off-center, to one side of the support column. Also see mount.
CASTING: One of the basic ways of shaping molten plastic resins. It's like baking a cake: instead of being squeezed into a mold, the resins are poured, in one of several ways: into an open mold, a double mold, or onto a moving belt, which is one of the ways sheet and film plastics are cast.
CAULK: A smooth, paste-like compound used to waterproof seams or joints, especially where water entry might cause rust or an electrical short.
CAVE IN: Sandy soil, or other unsuitable conditions, sometimes cause the sides or walls of the dug-out foundation area to fall in. This will usually generate a non-standard charge for the job.
CELL CAST: To "cast" is to form molten plastic by pouring it into a mold. "Cell cast" refers to a method which includes sealing the material between plate-glass sheets for curing. Cell-cast plastic sheets are somewhat inconsistent in thickness. A different method, continuous casting, gives greater consistency..
CENTER POLE MOUNT: The most common form of mounting, with the sign box centered squarely on top of the support column. Also see mount.
CHALKING: The unsightly, powdery residue on the surface which is the result of the degradation of some plastics.
CHANGEABLE COPY PANEL: A section of a sign that functions like a changeable copy sign.
CHANGEABLE COPY SIGN: A variable message sign composed of individual letters panel-mounted in or on a track system.
CHANNEL LETTER: Fabricated or formed three-dimensional letter that may accommodate a light source.

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CHASE: The illusion of movement in neon tubes or incandescent bulbs created by turning the light sources on and off in sequence.
CIRCUIT: The electrical supply to the sign from a power source. The circuit will always include one "hot" wire, one neutral wire and possible a ground wire. When signs require more than one circuit, they branch from the main circuit in a junction box.
CIRCUIT BREAKER: Electrical switch that literally breaks the circuit if it begins to overload. It can prevent damage to signs and other electrically-driven equipment by automatically disrupting the flow of current.
CLADDING: Encasing the sign column or supports in a decorative covering of plastic, metal or wood. A fully-clad sign is one that has been given state-of-the-art finishing touches; cladding is primarily a matter of good looks, rather than protection.
CLASSIC GLASS: Lead glass tubing to which metallic oxides have been added to create different colors.
CLEARANCE: The shortest distance between the lowest portion of a sign or awning and the grade. Also referred to as height above grade.
COATED TUBING: Clear glass tubing, coated on the interior surface with phosphorus powder. Coated tubing produces a variety of different light colors, dependent upon the specific mixture of phosphorus powders utilized.
COATING: The process of applying a protective film to a sign. Coating includes such diverse activities as applying a layer of varnish or Japan color over gold leaf to laminating clear vinyl over a digitally-produced graphic.
COAT-OUT: To paint the surface before the at is applied. In addition to new substrates, it's possible to coat-out an old sign and apply new lettering. The coat-out may be done with a roller, although on smaller signs, a cutter brush may be used.
CODE: Typically refers to a community's or country's sign code. A sign code may be part of the government body's land use planning regulations, or it may be a separate document designed to interact with other land use codes. As part of the police powers granted to local governments, a sign code normally seeks to promote the health, safety and welfare of the public. In some areas, sign codes may also regulate the morals and aesthetics of sign content and design, as well.
CO-EXTRUSION: New, basic plastics materials--"new base polymers" as an engineer would say--are expensive to develop and only come along about once in a decade. But new processing methods such as co-extrusion make it possible to combine existing materials--for example, in the manufacture of UV-resistant polycarbonates. Coextrusion makes it possible to combine different plastic polymers, producing a variety of colors, clarities and modifications (such as flame retardance, impact strength and weatherability).
COLORED TUBING: Transparent glass tubing manufactured with color pigments, typically color examples include ruby red, canary yellow, green, and midnight blue.
CONDUIT: Metal or plastic tubes or piping which protect wires from weather or impact damage. See PVC.
CONFORMING SIGN: A sign that is legally installed in accordance with federal, state, and local laws and
CONSPICUITY: The characteristics of the sign that enable an observer to differentiate the sign from its surrounding environment.

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<p>CONTENT NEUTRAL: 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.</p>
<p>CONTINUOUS CASTING: It was the introduction of a cell-cast acrylic in 1936 that launched the modern plastics industry. The development of an improved process, continuous cell-casting makes it possible to produce acrylic in long lengths, on reels--and with only moderate inconsistencies in thickness.</p>
<p>CONTRAST: The difference or degree of difference between things having similar or comparable natures, such as light and dark areas, colors, or typefaces.</p>
<p>"COOL" WHITE: A fluorescent lamp that emits light with a slight yellow tint.</p>
<p>COPY: The words or message displayed on a sign.</p>
<p>COPY AREA: Areas that enclose the actual copy on a sign.</p>
<p>CORRUGATED BOARD: A board created by gluing a corrugated piece to a flat face, or between two flat faces. Although corrugated board is made from a variety of materials and comes in a range of strengths and thicknesses, the most common corrugated board used in sign work is made of plastic.</p>
<p>COST APPROACH (Valuation): An approach to estimating the value of real property whereby the appraiser determines the production cost of the property, minus any accrued depreciation. This approach does not merely include the hard costs of construction, but includes all soft costs such as interest, permits, and fees. In sign appraisal this concept includes the cost of replacing the message delivered to viewers.</p>
<p>COST PER THOUSAND (CPM): Refers to the cost for an advertiser to send a message to 1000 receivers. The measure is calculated by dividing the amount of money spent for a given advertisement by the number of people exposed to it. (Based on this measure, signs are usually considered to be the least expensive form of advertising.)</p>
<p>COVE LIGHTING : A type of indirect decorative illumination that's created by placing either neon or fluorescent tubes inside a light box to produce a halo effect.</p>
<p>COVERAGE: A marketing term that refers to the percentage of the total market population reached by an advertising message displayed in a given medium; measured at least once a month.</p>
<p>CRAZING: Crazing is the development of fine cracks, extending in a network on the surface--or beneath the surface--of a plastics material.</p>
<p>CROSS BAR: A horizontal arm that is attached to a sign. The cross bar typically runs perpendicular to the sign's face and parallel to the building's facade. It is used with guy wires to help stabilize building-mounted signs.</p>
<p>CROSSOVER: The connection between two portions of neon tube that is not supposed to be seen in the finished sign. Typically, crossovers are coated with blackout paint, although they can also be wound with tape.</p>
<p>CURING: The process of effecting a chemical change in some inks and paints by the application of heat or ultraviolet light.</p>
<p>CURRENT: Any movement of charged electrons. In signmaking, current is most often used to describe the flow of positive ions in one direction and the flow of negative ions in the other through a gas. Current is measured in</p>

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CUSTOM SIGN: A sign designed, manufactured and installed to meet the requirements of a specific location
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CUSTOMER ACQUISITION COSTS: Basic value calculation used to measure the cost versus return from the presence of signage; the cost of acquiring a customer.
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D
DAILY EFFECTIVE CIRCULATION (DEC): The average number of daily potential exposures to a display or group of signs determined by counting only those vehicles traveling toward the face of the sign, and then multiplying that number by the average number of people per car during the hours the sign is visible. Pedestrian and mass transit circulations are not included. This is the basic measure in establishing cost per thousand exposures on signs. The basic traffic numbers can usually be obtained from your State Department of Transportation.
"DAY" LIGHT: A fluorescent lamp that emits light with a slight blue tint.
DEBOSS: The process of producing depressed letters, particularly those produced by engraving dies or plates.
DECK CABINET: Similar in detail and use as a raceway except larger in cross section to provide a background
DEFINITION: The amount of contrast between a sign's art and background.
DELAMINATION: A problem encountered with laminated substrates. Failure of the adhesive may lead to separation of the layers. Lamination, for example, may be used to combine polycarbonate with an acrylic UV-inhibitor--but the two materials have different thermoforming temperatures. The heat required to form the polycarbonate may soften the acrylic; the softened acrylic may stick to the mold, causing delamination.
DENSITY: The quality of being close or compact; dense. In physics, density is a ratio of the mass of an object to its volume. In signmaking, it is a measurement used to express the weight of foam board, expressed in pounds-per cubic-foot.
DIMENSIONAL LETTER: A specification description of a letter, logo or symbol, either cut out, cast, molded or fabricated in material such as metal or plastic to create a raised condition.
DIRECT BURIAL: The term used for a sign support that is embedded in a concrete footing rather than attached by anchor bolts.
DIRECTIONAL SIGN: Signs designed to provide direction to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.
DIRECTORY SIGN: A sign that identifies the names and locations of tenants in a multi-tenant building or in a development made up of a group of buildings.
DISCONNECT SWITCH: A switch in or near the sign to control the flow of electrical current.
DISHPANNING: A sign face with low flexural strength, that is, lacking stiffness, may be subject to bowing inward, like a shallow dishpan, which of course spoils it's appearance. It does not take high winds to cause dishpanning; the force of gravity alone will do it to a sign face that is improperly mounted or lacks flexural strength.
DIVIDER BARS: Extruded-aluminum strips which divide a sign box into two or more sections, allowing for multiple face panels on a single sign.
DOUBLE BACK: A 180-degree bend used in neon tubes to produce such letters as R, E, F and G without ending the tube.
DOUBLE FACE: One sign with face panels on both sides.
DOUBLE-FACED SIGN: A sign with two parallel opposing (back-to-back) faces.

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DOUBLE TUBE: Two neon tubes running parallel to each other, often used for outlining or borders.
DRAW: In the manufacture of plastic letters and sign faces by embossing, debossing or vacuum-forming, draw is the depth of the shaped letter or face from the original plane.

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E
EDGE: The part of the sign that encloses the back and face or faces. The frame.
EGG CRATE: A patterned piece of plastic installed at the bottom of the arch and below the light source in illuminated awnings to protect the tubes, keep them clean and help soften the light.
ELECTRIC SIGN: Any sign containing or using electrical wiring, fixtures or connections.
ELECTRODE: Any electrical component which provides contact points to a power source. In the sign industry, this generally refers to neon tubing.
ELECTRONIC DISPLAY: A general term referring to any type of electronic programmable display.
ELECTRONIC CHANGEABLE COPY SIGN: A sign that utilizes computer-generated messages or some other electronic means of changing copy. These signs include displays using LED, LCD or flipper matrix.
ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTER: A variable message sign that utilizes computer-generated messages or some other electronic means of changing copy. These signs include displays using incandescent lamps, LEDs, LCDs or a flipper matrix.
ELEVATION: A plan or drawing made from ground level showing the features of one side of a structure or sign.
EMBELLISHMENTS: Any addition to a sign face that provides a three-dimensional effect. Cut-outs, push-throughs, neon strips and clocks are all examples of embellishments.
EMBOSSING: Design features of a sign face which are raised, that is, which protrude outward from the surface.
ENGINEERING-SEALED DRAWING: A detailed construction or installation drawing that has been reviewed and approved by a registered engineer, who affixes his state seal. Often required for permit and variance applications.
EPOXY: A strongly-adhesive glue used in sign construction.
ERECT: To place a sign-especially an electric one-in its final location; install.
ESCUTCHEON: A decorative metal covering designed to conceal mounting structures and base plates. Also see cladding.
ETO: "Engineered To Order"--refers to one-time, special or custom products.
EXTERIOR ILLUMINATED SIGN: A sign that is illuminated by a light source that is directed towards, and shines on the face of a sign. Also called direct illumination.
EXTRUDED ALUMINUM: Used extensively for sign boxes, retainers, and divider bars, the name comes from the formation process in which aluminum is forced (extruded) through a die.
EXTRUSION: One of the basic ways of shaping molten plastics resins. It's like squeezing toothpaste: the solid resins melt as a screw pushes them through a heating chamber.

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F
FACADE: To architects, this usually means the front or the most prominent "face" of a building. In the sign industry, its meaning extends to any area of a building where a sign may be installed effectively.
FACE: The surface area on a sign where advertising copy is displayed.
FACE BUMPERS: Added structural security for face panels. Normally, this takes the form of a piece of pipe welded to the internal steel of a sign box. It is positioned perpendicular to the face, supporting it with a rubber crutch tip at the point of contact. Like a face clip, its primary purpose is to prevent face movement, especially the bowing in or out of the face panel.
FACE CLIPS: Designed for the same basic purpose as face bumpers, face clips are usually plastic configurations, joined to the flange of a face panel, which lock the face into its container.
FACE PANEL: The primary display area of a sign. A sign face may consist of one or more face panels.
FAIR MARKET APPROACH: One of three appraisal approaches. The highest price at which a property could be sold given a reasonable exposure period in the market. The price is arrived at by a willing seller and willing buyer, neither being under duress to act.
FASCIA: A single-faced sign or architectural band on one or more elevations of a building. (Sometimes spelled "facia").
FASCIA SIGN: A building mounted sign.
FASTENERS: Items that help hold a sign together, including nuts and bolts.
FILLER: The sheet-metal sides of a sign cabinet. Also used for material between separate but adjacent sign cabinets, or between cabinets and the surface they're mounted on.
FILM: The term used for very thin plastics--no thicker than 0.010 (one-hundredth) of an inch.
FIRST ARTICLE: The first sign produced in any production run, used for the specific purpose of getting final customer approval.
FIRST SURFACE: The most external surface of a sign face; the surface most exposed to the elements.
FISH EYE: A defect in film or sheet plastic that results when one of the ingredients in the mixture does not blend completely with the surrounding material. Small globules formed of that ingredient cause flaws--"fish eyes"--in translucent or transparent surfaces.
FLAG MOUNT: A type of cantilever mount in which the sign is displayed suspended on one side of the supporting structure.
FLAGGING: Raising a target (temporary sign for evaluating location). See target survey.
FLAMMABILITY: The ability of a material to burn under certain conditions. Flammability becomes a concern with electric signs and some indoor displays.
FLANGE: The portion of a face panel that fits under the retainer, or, in some cases, under an adjacent panel.

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<p>FLASHER: A mechanical device designed to interrupt the electrical current in a sign at regular intervals, turning the light source on and off to create a flashing image.</p>
<p>FLASHING: Metal strips used when attaching a fascia or canopy to a building. The flashings cover open spaces at top and bottom.</p>
<p>FLASHING SIGN: A sign with an intermittent or flashing light source. Generally, the sign's message is constantly repeated, and the sign is most often used as a primary attention-getting device. Government highway departments frequently use flashing signs to improve highway safety.</p>
<p>FLAT: Refers to substrates, particularly metal and plastic sheets, as they are received from the supplier. An undecorated substrate. Flat also refers to a finish that is duller than matte, and has little reflective quality.</p>
<p>FLAT CUTOUT LETTER: A dimensional letter cut from sheet or plate stock.</p>
<p>FLEX FACE: A sign face made of a flexible vinyl material reinforced with a fabric and then stretched over a frame.</p>
<p>FLEXURAL MODULUS: Flexural modulus is a measure of flexural strength (stiffness), in particular the strength of a material during bending.</p>
<p>FLUORESCENT LAMP OR TUBE: Electric-discharge lighting utilizing glass tubing manufactured to standard lengths. A type of lamp in which the light is produced by the fluorescence of phosphor coating in the tube. In a fluorescent lamp, the tube is coated with phosphors and then filled with a mix of argon and mercury gases. When electrical current passes between the electrodes at either end of the tube, the gas mixture emits ultraviolet light. The UV light is absorbed by the phosphors, which then radiate the energy as visible light. A starter and ballast within the lamp help provide the extra voltage necessary when the current is initially supplied to help ionize the gases in the tube. Fluorescent lamps are more efficient than incandescent bulbs and are a popular source of</p>
<p>FOAM BOARD: A type of lightweight, rigid board used for interior signs. Foam boards consist of foam center sheet laminated on one or both sides by a variety of substrates.</p>
<p>FONT: A set of letters, numerals, and shapes, which conform to a specific set of design criteria.</p>
<p>FOOTING OR FOUNDATION: The concrete substructure of a groundmounted sign. When of cube shape, it's referred to as a block foundation. When round or tube-shaped, it's called a caisson.</p>
<p>FORMED: Refers to a plastic face or letter that has been heated and shaped to give it dimension.</p>
<p>FREESTANDING SIGN: A sign that is not attached to a building.</p>
<p>FREQUENCY: The average number of times an individual has the opportunity to see an advertising message during a defined period of time. Typically measured over a four-week period.</p>
<p>FRONT LIGHTED LETTER: An illuminated channel letter with translucent face.</p>
<p>FULL SERVICE SIGN COMPANIES: Sign companies that complete the entire signage project, including surveying, designing, engineering, permitting, manufacturing, installing, and maintaining signs.</p>

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G
GALVANIZED: Indicates steel or iron that has been protected by a zinc coating. The galvanized coating protects the underlying metal 15-30 years, but requires a special primer before coating.
GAUGE: A method of measuring the thickness of sheet metal. In the sign industry, most sheet metal ranges from 10-26 gauge. Gauge also refers to the thickness of plastic sheeting used in the manufacture of sign faces which typically range between .060-.350 inches.
GLASS SLEEVES: On some neon tube installations, clear glass units designed to cover the electrodes and other wiring.
GLOSS: The shine on a smooth surface such as paint or vinyl.
GOLD LEAF: Gold manufactured into thin leaves; the gold used in gilding. Gold leaf comes between sheets of tissue, with each leaf 3 3/8" square. The leaves are packages in books of 25, and a cardboard box of 20 books is sold as a pack. Gold leaf comes in a range of colors and karats, with 14-18 karat for use on interior applications, such as glass. The best gold leaf, 23 karat, is often reserved for exterior work on vehicles and signs.
GRADE: The contour of the ground surface, whether in its natural state or after development. The placement of signs is often measured as height above grade.
GRANDFATHERED: In the sign industry, this refers to a sign considered illegal under an existing ordinance but allowed to remain because it was installed before that ordinance was enacted.
GRAPHIC: The pattern to lay out copy and artwork for a sign face.
GRID TUBES: Neon tubes laid out in parallel lines from a center for lighting translucent faces when fluorescent lamps cannot be used.
GROMMET: A reinforced metal eyelet found in banners used to receive cords or other fasteners.
GROUND SIGN: A freestanding sign with no visible support structure.
GROUT: A material (usually non-shrink) with the consistency of concrete. It is used under base plates to bond them to the foundation.
GTO: A single-wire, insulated, high-tension cable for neon signs.
GUSSET: In the sign industry this means a reinforcing bracket, usually of steel plate, often used at the weld between base plate and support structure.

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H
HALO: An attractive visual effect created when light from a source inside a sign with an opaque face is bounced off the surface on which the sign is mounted. Not to be confused with internal illumination. For example, a reverse channel letter.
HAND CUT: The manual cutting of masking material or vinyl for sign faces, done at the time of assembly.
HAND HOLE: Access to electrical components, usually at the bottom of the sign column.
HANGING BAR: A strip, usually plastic, attached along the inside edge of the top flange of a sign face. The result is that the sign face is locked to the top retainer, and the bottom flange doesn't have to carry all the weight. Important with some large signs. Also helps prevent "dishpanning".
HANGING SIGN: A double-face sign which hangs from a bracket or support and projects from a wall, building or pole. Also called a projecting sign.
HEADER: A separate board above the rest of a sign that gives it a headline or contains a different advertising message for the same product. Most often seen with point-of-purchase (P.O.P) advertising.
HIGH-RISE SIGN: A tall freestanding sign.
HINGED FACE: A sign with a face that can be opened for servicing. It is hinged to the top or side of the sign
HINGED SIDE: The face on a double face sign that swings open for service.
HORIZONTAL SLAB: A footing which has more width and length than it has depth. Primarily used to compensate for loose or sandy soil conditions. (Also called a "spread" footing).
HOUSING: Made from porcelain or pyrex glass, a housing is mounted in the sign and provides the contact between the electrode and the lead-in wire.
HUE: A particular variety of a color, such as a tint or shade.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

I
IDENTIFICATION SIGN: A sign giving the business' name only for purposes of identification. An identification sign can also be one provided by an advertiser with his name and/or slogan, as well as that of the business
ILLUMINATED SIGN: A sign which is lighted from either an internal (electric) source or external spotlights.
IMPACT RESISTANCE: The relative ability of a plastics material to withstand fracture by shock. See impact
IMPACT STRENGTH: The relative toughness of various plastics materials, that is, their ability to withstand fracture, is measured by various scientific tests that give specific numerical ratings for purposes of comparison. The "falling dart" test is just what its name suggests; the test result is expressed by a number indicating the foot-pounds of energy required to break a standard sample of the material. "Izod impact" is the name of a group of tests in which the samples are notched to create an area of greatest weakness, and then struck by a weighted
IMPULSE BUYING: An unplanned or shifted purchase.
INCANDESCENT: The common form of electric lamp which, unlike fluorescent or neon, generates light from a heated filament in a vacuum.
INCANDESCENT BULB: A lamp that produces light through the application of electrical energy to a wire filament, which glows as it is heated.
INCIDENTAL SIGN: Signs usually smaller in size and of noncommercial nature-that appear in almost every location the public might be found. Examples of incidental signs include hours of operation, location of rest rooms, and entrance and exit signs.
INDIRECTLY ILLUMINATED: Signs lighted from an external source, such as a spotlight.
INFLATABLES: Plastic signage that assumes a three-dimensional shape when filled with air under pressure or helium gas. A temporary type of sign often seen as part of a special promotion.
INTERIOR SIGNS: Signs that are located inside a building or other facility.
INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED SIGN: A sign that is illuminated by a light source that is contained inside the sign.
ISA: International Sign Association
I/U: Illuminated unit, that is, one illuminated sign box.
IZOD IMPACT TEST: A standard test for impact strength.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

J
J-BOLTS: See Anchor Bolts.
J-BOX: See Junction Box
JUNCTION BOX: A metal housing to enclose electrical splices. See circuit. (Also known as J-Box.)
JUNIOR PANEL: A 6' x 12' panel often used in settings receiving heavy foot traffic and in point-of-purchase displays. Also called an eightsheet.
JUST COMPENSATION: The full monetary value to be paid for property taken by the government in accordance with the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Just compensation is generally determined by obtaining an

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

K

KERNING: The process of moving pairs of letters further apart or closer together to make them appear more evenly spaced. Most signmaking software offers an automatic kerning feature which greatly reduces - if not eliminates - the need for manual kerning.

KIOSK: A small structure used for posting temporary signs and notices. May be portable or permanent.

KRAFT PAPER: A brown paper stock similar to a paper bag. Kraft paper is available in 3' and 4' wide rolls, and can be used both for producing large, durable patterns and wrapping small signs.

KYDEX: A type of plastic with high abrasion resistance and good formability characteristics. Its primary use is for neon letter casings.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

L
LACQUER: A type of clear finishing material similar to varnish and preferred by signmakers because of its abilities to dry quickly and not be affected by the presence of dust. May also be used as a binder with pigments such as silver dust.
LAMINATING: A method of processing plastic sheet, in which two materials -- with differing, desirable characteristics -- are bonded together with adhesive. Co-extrusion is a different process, which eliminates many
LAMPBANK: The part of a message center that the public sees; columns and rows or lamps.
LAYOUT: The total arrangement of a sign's graphics. Shows the overall plan of how the art and copy will be arranged on the face.
LCD (LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY): A type of electronic changeable copy sign utilizing liquid crystals that become opaque or clear when exposed to controlled voltage. Although LCDs are most common in calculators and digital watches, they are also used in some time and temperature displays.
LEAD-IN WIRE: The wire that connects an electrode to the power source.
LED (LIGHT-EMITTING DIODE): A type of electronic changeable copy sign that utilizes hundreds of light-emitting diodes-electronic-chip-and-colored-lens assemblies-in single and tri-color matrixes. LEDs are physically flexible and inexpensive to operate when compared with other message centers.
LEGIBILITY: The characteristics of letters, numbers, graphics, or symbols that make it possible to differentiate one from the other. See Conspicuity.
LIFTING ANGLE: A device affixed to a column or large sign box to facilitate lifting by a crane.
LIGHT-EMITTING DIODE: See LED
LIGHT REFLECTANCE VALUE: The amount of light reflected by a given color. For instance, yellow has a higher light reflectance value than purple. Abbreviated as LRV.
LIQUID CRYSTAL DISPLAY: See LCD
National Recognized Testing Laboratory as producing signs in conformance with the applicable American National Standard
LOGO: The specific, proprietary form in which a company or product name is always displayed. (Coca-Cola, for example. Like most logos, this is a registered trademark.)
LUMEN: The standard measure of light radiation. (For example, one candle emits 12.5664 lumens.)
LUMINOUS TUBE: Another name for a neon tube. A luminous tube consists of a sealed glass vacuum tube with an electrode at each end containing a specific gas. As an electrical current is passed between the electrodes, the gas is activated, emitting a color determined by the gas it contains.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

M
MAGNETIC SHEETING: Magnetized strip laminated to a flexible plastic sheet and sold in rolls. Cut to size and decorated, magnetic sheeting works well for temporary vehicle signs.
MAHL STICK: A baton-like piece of wood with a knob at one end utilized by sign painters. A mahl stick placed under a painter's brush hand provides extra support, aids in the production of smooth letter strokes and keeps the hand off already-painted areas.
MANIFOLD: The part of the neon pumping system to which the tubes are attached for pumping. The manifold is a system of glass pipes arranged so that one or more tubes can be attached to it.
MARQUEE: A projecting structure permanently attached to, but not a part of the roof. Also known as a canopy.
MASKING: In painting or screen printing, the process of covering--usually with tape or paper--areas to protect them from receiving subsequent layers of paint or ink.
MASONITE: A type of substrate made from wood chips that are pressed into boards.
MATRIX: The number and amount of lighting units in the display area of the changeable message sign. Also see lampbank.
MATTE: Having a dull surface, not shiny.
MECHANICAL ARM: A device for changing copy on a readerboard which is otherwise out of reach.
MEDIUM-DENSITY OVERLAY (MDO): A type of plywood considered an ideal base for paint and recommended for signs. MDO is an exterior-grade plywood with an average veneer on both sides.
MELT CALENDERED: To "calender" is to prepare sheets of material by pressure between counter-rotating rolls. When the plastic is in molten condition, the process is called melt-calendering.
MEMORIAL SIGN: A building sign or plaque noting such information as the name of the building, when it was built and by whom.
MENU BOARD: Similar to a readerboard, this is a smaller message center, usually at point of purchase, for display of product descriptions, prices and pictorials.
MERCURY VAPOR LAMP: Illuminates by an electrical discharge through mercury vapor in a vacuum tube. Compare to fluorescent.
MESSAGE CENTER: An electronically or mechanically variable message sign enabling changes to be made from locations other than at the sign. (See also variable message sign.)
MOBILE SIGN: A portable sign mounted on a trailer.
MOLD: A frame or cavity, typically constructed from wood, epoxy or aluminum, which is responsible for giving a substance its specific shape. A Female Mold is the cavity into which plastic material is forced, and from which it takes its form. A Male Mold is projected up into the plastic material, at which time a vacuum forces the material around the mold, giving it its desired form.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

MOLD MARK-OFF: Defects on a processed plastic surface due to imperfections of the mold, or to contamination by foreign materials between the plastic and the mold surface.
MOLD-SEAM: Where two mold parts meet, a line may form in the plastic surface. How obvious this mold-seam will appear depends on the accuracy with which the mold parts are matched.
MOLDING: Molding is one of the basic ways of shaping molten plastic resins. It's like making waffles: melted resin is squeezed into a mold. Three important types of molding are: compression molding, injection molding and blow molding.
MONOMER: A relatively simple compound which can react to form a polymer. Polymers are composed of long-chain molecules, and a monomer is one link in the chain. (For example: ethylene is a monomer made of carbon and hydrogen atoms; if you bond them together chemically you get polyethylene-- the lightweight and flexible compound used for bottles and insulation.)
MONUMENT SIGN: A ground sign with low overall height. (See freestanding sign.)
MOUNT: The way a sign is supported. For the various possibilities, see between-pole mount, boom mount, cantilever mount, center pole mount, flag mount, ground sign, monument sign, pole sign, portable sign, roof sign, side mount and wall mount.
MOVING LETTER SIGN: A long horizontal panel with incandescent bulbs. The lighting and darkening of the bulbs seems to make the letters move.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

N

NEC: National Electric Code. Electrical safety code adopted by many states, counties and cities around the United States.

NEON: To most of us, this word suggests the signs so popular in the '40s and '50s -- words formed of highly-visible colored tubing. Technically, this is properly called "exposed neon" -- and in many parts of the country its use is restricted by law. Its construction includes vulnerability to breakage and the difficulty of modifying the message once the sign has been installed. But neon is also extremely important for the internal illumination of channel letters and other signs with unique shapes. The name comes from the neon gas within the tubes, which glows brightly when stimulated with high-voltage electricity.

NEON SIGN: A sign manufactured utilizing neon tubing, which is visible to the viewer.

NEON TUBING: Electric discharge, cold cathode tubing manufactured into shapes that form letters, parts of letters, skeleton tubing, outline lighting, and other decorative elements or art forms, in various colors and diameters and filled with inert gases.

NESA: National Electric Sign Association, the previous name of the International Sign Association (ISA).

NON-STANDARD: Any aspect of installation which generates extra cost because work beyond original specifications is required. (For example: hitting rock or removing a previous foundation.)

NOTCH SENSITIVITY: Things fracture at their weakest points. How much is a plastic weakened by a crack, a narrowing, a notch? Engineers cut measured notches in identical specimens of different plastics, then subject them to identical impacts. This gives a standard of measurement for breakage-resistance, called notch sensitivity.

NOTCHED: Channel letters that are cut out at the back to fit over a raceway are said to be notched.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

O

OFF-PREMISE SIGN: Any sign that is not appurtenant to the use of the property, a product sold, or the sale or lease of the property on which it is displayed, and that does not identify the place of business as purveyor of the merchandise, services, etc., advertised upon the sign. Also known as Outdoor Advertising.

ON-PREMISE SIGN: A communication device whose message and design relates to a business, an event, goods, profession or service being conducted, sold or offered on the same property as there the sign is erected.

OPAQUE: Of course, this means the opposite of transparent, and may refer to the substrate itself or to painted or pigmented areas of a face panel which block light. Some plastics are translucent -- that is, somewhere between opaque and transparent.

OPEN CHANNEL LETTER: A dimensional letter that has no face and, if illuminated with the light source visible. A clear face for physical protection of internal components may be used.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

P
PACKAGE: A grouping of signs which work together to fulfill a facility's identification needs. (For example, a package might include a nearby highway sign and a large on-site sign, plus readerboards, menuboards and
PAINTED WALL SIGN: See building mounted sign.
PAN CHANNEL LETTER: A dimensional letter that is constructed with side walls, back and a face making the letter a solid integral unit with the side walls and back having a pan-shaped cross section.
PAN FACE: A plastic sign face molded into a three dimensional shape. Also called molded face, molded and embossed face, molded and debossed face.
PANTONE MATCHING SYSTEM (PMS): Standardized series of thousands of colors, each with specific color formulations and identification number. PMS colors are duplicated in swatch books and in computer-graphics programs to allow exact duplication of colors in printing and other marking processes, such as signmaking.
PARAPET SIGN: A sign mounted on top of the parapet of a building. (See building mounted sign.)
PATTERN: A full-sized layout of the work to be done. May refer to the design into which neon tubes will be bent, how the vertical sides of channel letters may be constructed, or for painting and installation.
PEGGED OUT: Mounting letters so they are separated from the surface on which they're being attached. Although an important part of affixing reverse channel letters, metal, plastic or wood letters may also be pegged out to keep stains from washing down on the letters or for visual impact.
PERMANENT SIGN: A sign attached to a building, structure, or the ground in a manner that enables the sign to resist environmental loads, such as wind, and precludes ready removal or movement of the sign.
PERMIT: A license granted by the appropriate authorities to allow a sign to be erected.
PHOTO CELL: A light-sensitive timing device for controlling the illumination of a sign.
PICTORIAL: A picture on a sign that does not involve animation. Common pictorials can range from one-color graphic symbols and posterized pictures to full-color scenics and portraits. Menu boards are a good example of a sign containing pictorials.
PIER FOUNDATION: A round or tube-shaped masonry footing. Another name for caisson.
PIGMENTED: The desired color is impregnated throughout the plastic material, not merely applied to its surface.
P-K HOUSING: A glass cylinder used in neon installations. When they neon tubing and the transformer are on opposite sides of a wall, P-K housing encases the connection between them.
PLASTIC: Most of us use this word at least two ways: to mean "made of plastic" or to mean "capable of flow under pressure or stress." At some stage of processing, anything we call plastic is capable of flowing, under the necessary amount of heat and/or pressure, into the desired final shape. (To chemists and engineers, plastic also means "made of certain kinds of molecules" -- see polymer.)
PLASTIC-FACED LETTER: Channel letter in which the front of the channel is covered by a plastic face, hiding the neon tube from view.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

POINT-OF-PURCHASE (P.O.P): In-store advertising designed to sell to more and different products to shoppers once they are in the store. The term applies to a store's internal sign system, as well as special displays and dispensers created by and for
POINT-OF-PURCHASE SIGN: Signage that advertises a product at its point of sale, or "point of purchase"
POLE OR PYLON COVER: An enclosure for concealing and/or for decorating poles or other structural supports of
POLE SIGN: A freestanding sign, usually double-faced, mounted on a round pole, square tube or other fabricated member without any type of secondary support.
POLYMER/POLYMERIZING: Polymer means "many parts". A polymer is a substance composed of long chains of simpler units called monomers. Almost all the things we call "plastics" are polymers, and it is the long-chain molecule that gives them their useful characteristics. Stated very simply, polymerizing means the chemical linking of monomers (simple compounds) to form the wide variety of polymers (with long-chain molecules) which are the basis of the modern plastics industry.
POLYPROPYLENE: A type of plastic used in banners, noted for its flexibility at low temperatures and its resistance to chemicals.
POLYURETHANE: A type of hard foam product used in sign production. Urethane has the density and characteristics of wood, but only one-third of the weight. It can be used for carving and sandblasting signs much
POP (Point of Purchase): Signage that advertises a product at it's point of purchase.
POP RIVET: A metal-headed pin for uniting two metal pieces. The shank is passed through a hole in each piece, and then the plain end is crimped to make a second head.
PORCELAIN SIGN: A traditional type of metal sign utilizing porcelain enamel paints topped by a ceramic slip to create a durable, glass-like surface that's impervious to the environment. After each color is applied, the paint is dried. The completed work is then coated with the slip, dried a final time, then fired at extremely high heat. Porcelain signs were among the more popular on-premise signs of the early 20th century.
PORTABLE SIGN: A sign not permanently attached to the ground or building, with a power-cord for connection to an electrical source, and readily removable using ordinary hand tools.
POSITIVE SPACE: They copy and art on a sign face. The opposite of negative space.
POST AND PANEL SIGN: An unlighted sign fabricated by using one or more visible posts to support the sign body.
POUNCE PATTERN: An actual-size pattern used to transfer a design to the sign surface by painting, cutting or drilling.
PRESSURE-SENSITIVE: An adhesive that reacts when pressure is applied to the surfaces it is between. Sometimes used to refer to vinyl with a pressure-sensitive adhesive.
PRIMARY COLORS: The three colors from which all other colors can be created. In painting, the primary colors are yellow, red, and blue. In process color, the three are yellow, magenta (red) and cyan (blue). In light, the primary colors are red, green and blue.
PRIMARY WIRING: Electrical wiring that directly connects a transformer to the breaker box.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

PRIVILEGE COPY: Nonstandard copy added to a standard sign to customize it to the needs of a particular business. The term usually refers to directional signs. For example, to a standard sign that says "ENTER," privilege copy might be added: "BUS & RV PARKING IN REAR LOT."
PROJECTING SIGN: A building mounted sign with the faces of the sign perpendicular to the building fascia.
PROTOTYPE: A full-sized example to serve as a model from which other similar or identical signs will be produced. A trial model.
PSF: "Pounds per Square Foot" -- that is, the pounds of wind pressure per square foot which a sign is designed to withstand.
PUMPING SYSTEM: The heart of neon tube production, the pumping system removes all the undesired gas from inside the tube, as well as removes impurities from the walls of the glass and the electrode shells. It needs to create an excellent vacuum. Also called an exhaust system.
PUSH-THROUGH: A letter or logo cut out of a backing material that is as thick or thicker than the sign face material, and mounted on the inside of the sign face so that the backing material's thickness extends flush with or through and beyond the front plane of the sign face.
PVC: Polyvinyl chloride. A thermoplastic which is strong and especially resistant to water, acids and abrasion. Commonly used for pipes and to insulate electrical wiring.
PYLON: A large on-site sign, usually the primary logo identification.
PYLON SIGN: A freestanding sign with visible support structure or with the support structure enclosed with a pole cover.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

R
RACEWAY: An electrical enclosure that may also serve as a mounting structure for the sign. This term has two fairly distinct meanings. In reference to sign cabinet construction, a raceway is a continuous metal housing containing the electrical leads from ballasts to lampholders. Raceway also refers to "raceway letter set" -- a distinctive form of signage which resembles channel letters, but in which the characters are not individual units. In a raceway letter set, all the characters which make up a sign (usually an external logo) are mounted on a continuous raceway that houses the electrical leads for each of them.
READABILITY: (Also conspicuity.) The quality that enables the observer to correctly perceive the message. In transportation engineering, this word is being replaced by conspicuity.
READERBOARD: A sign with easily-changeable copy. Usually mounted in association with a company's logo, it can be changed by employees to list featured items. Sale prices, etc.
REBAR: The reinforcing steel used in concrete foundations.
RECALL: In signage, this refers to the ability of a viewer to remember the message even when they are not viewing
RECOGNITION: Refers to the ability of a viewer to identify the message.
REGISTRATION: In screening, the correct placement of the image to be printed on the substrate. In multi-color screening, registration also refers to the correct alignment of the colors with one another.
REGULATORY SIGN: A sign having the primary purpose of conveying information concerning rules, ordinances or
REMOTE TRANSFORMER: The type of transformer located outside of a neon sign box, and commonly used with individual letters.
RENDERING: An artist's sketch demonstrating how a sign will look when installed on-site. Helps the sign-user to decide among two or more possibilities. Sometimes required when requesting a permit or variance.
RETAINER: A framing member mounted around the perimeter of a sign face, and attached to the sign cabinet structure. It is designed to attach the face to the cabinet and/or intended to provide a decorating trim piece.
RETROFIT: In the sign industry, this usually means adapting a new face design to an existing sign box.
RETURN: The sides of a channel letter.
REVEAL: An indented detail on a sign.
REVERSE CHANNEL LETTER: A fabricated dimensional letter with opaque face and side walls.
REVOLVING SIGN: A sign which has the ability to turn 360 degrees because of the presence of an electric motor to drive its moveable parts. All or a portion of the sign may revolve at steady or variable speed depending on the
ROCKWELL HARDNESS TEST: A test for resistance to indentation, using a diamond or steel ball, under pressure, to pierce the test specimen. The degree of penetration under varying kilograms of pressure-loading is carefully measured. This gives engineers a set of comparable ratings with which to describe the relative hardness

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

"ROOF BEAM": The special meaning of this term is a decorative fixture, often illuminated, which is affixed to a roof exterior and designed to appear as an actual structural member.

ROOF SIGN: A building mounted sign erected on the roof of a building.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

S
SAG RODS: Supports inside a sign box, extending from the primary support structure, which uphold the weight of the box.
SANDBLASTING: A method for decorating glass, hard foam products, wood or stone. A rubberized stencil of the artwork is either hand-or-computer-cut and applied to the substrate, which is then sprayed with a pressurized stream of sand or synthetic particles to texture the areas unprotected by the stencil. Once the desired depth has been achieved on the item being blasted, the stencil is removed, and if required, the surfaces may be painted.
SANS SERIF: Any font or typeface that lacks serifs. In most sans serif fonts, there is little differentiation between the width of strokes within the letter. Helvetica and Futura are familiar sans serif fonts.
SCREENING: The method used for repeated application of painted copy to a sign face. A separate screen is used for each color. Also see silk screen.
SECOND SURFACE: The inside surface of a sign face, not exposed to the elements.
SECONDARY SIGN: A supplementary sign, usually installed in conjunction with one carrying the logo. For example, the "drive-thru" sign under a fast-food logo.
SERIF: A small line or embellishment finishing off the strokes of letters in some fonts. Well known serif fonts include Souvenir, Times Roman and Garamond.
SERVICE: The general maintenance of a sign. It may include cleaning, repainting, replacement of bulbs or lamps and repairs.
SERVICE COVER: In an electric sign cabinet, a panel that allows ready access to the bulbs or lamps and the electrical connections for their replacement and maintenance.
SETBACK: In a sign or development code, the distance between the primary face of the sign and the property line opposite it, measured in a straight line from the base of the sign. Most governments require that signs meet specified setbacks or their owners obtain variances from the regulations.
SHEET METAL: Aluminum or steel in sheets or plates used as a sign substrate.
SIDE MOUNT: Same as flag mount.
SIDEWALK/SANDWICH SIGN: A moveable sign not secured or attached to the ground or surface upon which it is located, but supported by its own frame and most often forming the cross-sectional shape of an A.
SIGN: Any visual display with words or symbols designed to convey information or attract attention.
SIGN BAND: A horizontal area above a multi-tenants' building's entrances, architecturally designed to accommodate signage in a signcentric manner.
SIGN BOX: Usual term for the cabinet which houses the face panels and electrical components.
SIGN FACE: The area of a sign on which copy is intended to be placed.
"SIGN" WHITE: A fluorescent lamp that emits a color tint intermediate between "day" light and "cool" white.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

SIGNAGE: A system of signs.
SIGNATURE BUILDING: Architectural design of a building or structure that reinforces signage.
SIGNCENTRIC DESIGN: Building architectural design which makes the signage the prominent visual feature.
SIGNING SCHEDULE: Supplied by the architect, designer or contractor on major projects. Lists of all the signs to be installed, the locations where they are supposed to be placed and the information they should contain.
SILHOUETTE: The overall shape of a sign, or a block of copy within a sign.
SILK SCREEN: Technique for screening sign faces. Photosensitive material is applied to a screen and then exposed to the desired copy. The resulting screen can be used to guide the application of paint in reproducing the copy on the sign face.
SINGLE-FACE SIGN: A sign with only one face plane.
SKELETON: The metal frame on which a sign is installed.
SKIN-AND-FRAME: The type of cabinet construction preferred for heavy-duty, high-rise signs -- especially those so large that a maintenance man can work inside them. The "skin" is of sheet metal; the "frame" is of angle-iron
SNIPES SIGN: A sign added to a structure where it is neither the main nor permitted sign.
SOIL BEARING: Refers to the ability of uncompacted soil to support a weight, such as the footing for a sign. The figure usually has to be obtained from an engineer, and is expressed as pounds per square foot.
SPACER: Any device used in mounting letters or signs which separates them from the surface to which they are being installed. A spacer allows a letter to be pegged out.
SPECTACULAR: An extra-large outdoor sign that incorporates special lighting and/or motion effects, or an interior sales display that also includes special lighting and motion elements.
SPINNER SIGN: A sign, either freestanding or wall-mounted, whose message rotates in the wind. A spinner sign is not considered an animated sign.
SPOTLIGHT: The source of illumination for an exterior illumination sign. A lamp with strong, focused beam directed toward a sign.
SQUEEGEE: In screen painting, a flexible blade mounted in a wood or metal handle and used to force paint through a stencil mounted on a screen. In signmaking, a hard plastic or nylon blade used to apply pressure to increase surface adhesion between the vinyl and sign face.
STANDARD FRAME: The structural supports found inside a cabinet.
STAT: A black-and-white layout of copy, used by sign production artists for manufacturing privilege copy.
STATIONARY SIGN: A sign with a power-cord for attachment to a source of electrical power that is not readily moveable or portable.
STOP BLOCKS: Structural components strategically placed to prevent movement or dislodging of sign panels.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

STREET FURNITURE: Advertising displays, many which provide a public amenity, positioned at close proximity to pedestrians for eye-level viewing or at a curbside to reach vehicular traffic. An example is a
STRETCHING: The process of securing a flex face to the sign's retaining system.
STRUCTURE: In the sign industry, a structure designed for and capable of supporting a sign.
STUB UP: In reference to underground electrical conduit, the "stub up" is the turning up of the power supply at the point on the surface where a ground sign is to be installed.
SUBSTRATE: The material out of which the face is made. Plastic, foam boards, metal and paper are all sign substrates.
"SUGAR SAND": Very fine, sandy soil. Horizontal slab footing is helpful, but this soil condition may also necessitate special engineering certification and other expenses. "Sugar Sand" is common along parts of the Eastern Coast, especially Florida.
SUPPORTS: Insulators that support a neon tube, as well as hold it away from the background surface and provide some impact resistance. Also known as standoffs.
SURVEY: Analysis of a location to determine the best sign application. Factors involved include short- and long-range visibility, space, mounting conditions and local codes that might restrict sign installation. Also see target and target survey.
SWING ARM: A horizontal sign-support that will swing or pivot, thus avoiding destruction of the sign if struck by a vehicle.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

T
TACTILE SIGN: A sign--or area within a larger sign--that conveys its message through raised or engraved art, making it accessible to the visually impaired.
TARGET AND TARGET SURVEY: A "target" is a mock-up, similar in size to a sign to be actually installed. When elevated by a crane to determine the ideal size and elevation, the operation is called a target survey. It's most often done for high-rise signs when visibility from a thoroughfare is a critical factor.
TARGET AUDIENCE: The profile of the most desired consumer prospects for a product or service, listed by characteristics such as demography, lifestyle, brand or media consumption, purchase behavior, etc. This is common to all media.
TEMPLATE: A pattern, often made of then metal or wood. Often used in drawing and wood-working.
TEMPORARY SIGN: Any sign not intended for permanent installation, such as banners and signs at construction sites. They may be incidental or miscellaneous in nature, such as political and real estate signs.
THERMOFORMING: Any process of forming thermoplastic sheet which consists of heating the sheet and forcing it onto a mold surface. Also known as pan forming. See vacuum forming.
THERMOPLASTIC: Thermoplastic materials can be melted again and again. They melt when heated to a certain temperature, but harden again as they cool. Widely used thermoplastics include ABS, Acrylic, Polycarbonate and Polyvinyl Chloride(PVC).
THERMOSETTING: These plastics can be melted only once. After melting, they harden as heat is added. Widely used thermoset plastics include Epoxy, Polyester, Silicone and Urethane.
THUMBNAIL: A type of rough sketch. Some sign artists prepare several thumbnail sketches of a job, varying their layouts and fonts, before preparing one or two more-complete ideas to take to a client.
TIE BACK: The wires used to brace or secure a sign in a temporary position.
TIME AND TEMPERATURE DISPLAY: A variable message sign which displays current time and temperature in a stationary or alternating manner. Some also display simple messages.
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.
TIME SWITCH: A switch which utilizes a clock or timer to automatically turn on and off electric signs at set times each day.
TINT: A color made lighter than the original by adding white to it.
TONE: The effect on a color brought about by blending it with another color.
TOOLING: The forms or dies required to make sign faces, including those used to shape extrusions and to form pan faces.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

TRADE AREA: Most retail businesses have a relatively fixed area that customers come from to do business at their store. In general, the trade area is either the living or work locale for the customer. The selling zone of place-based retail business will be dynamic for two reasons; the customer is moving residences or jobs or the customer is passing through on a trip that intersects the trade area. The trade area for most small businesses is 3 to 5 miles.
TRADEMARK: Used by a business to distinguish itself and its products from the competition. A trademark may include a name, symbol, word or combination of those. Protected by the federal government and considered to have financial value. The circled "R" or "Reg. T.M." printed with the mark indicates that it is a registered trademark. See United States Trademark Act 15 U.S.C. Section 1127 (1988).
TRAFFIC COUNT: The recording of the vehicles and pedestrians passing a given point, usually in a day.
TRANSFORMER: Electrical equipment that converts input voltage and current to a different output voltage and
TRANSLUCENT: A substrate with light-transmitting qualities somewhere between transparent and opaque.
TRI-COLOR: An LED that displays the colors red, yellow and green.
TRIPLE MESSAGE SIGN: A type of sign consisting of rotating triangular louvers. The louvers turn in unison, showing three different messages as the three faces are exposed.
TUBE COLORS: Tubing for neon signs is produced as a clear glass, or in ruby, blue or noviol colors. Different tube colors serve as filters and change the color of the light transmitted from the tube.
TUBE DIAMETER: The standard measurements for neon tubes, expressed in millimeters.
TYPEFACE: The design of a given set of letters, numbers and symbols, without reference to size or width. See

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

U

"U" LAMP: A fluorescent lamp in which the glass is bent into a "U" shape.

UL: An abbreviation for Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory.

ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT (UV): Part of the spectrum adjacent to short wave, and closest to violet in visible light, UV has both a negative and positive influence on the sign industry. When UV falls on certain surfaces, such as the phosphors in fluorescent tubes, it creates visible light. UV is also used for curing some screen printing inks. On the other hand, ultraviolet light is the prime cause of pigment failure in some paints and vinyls, especially red one.

UNDER-CANOPY SIGN: A sign designed to be mounted underneath a canopy.

UP AND BURNING: A sign that is fully installed and illuminated.

UV STABILIZER: Ultraviolet radiation will degrade most plastics. A UV stabilizer is any chemical compound which, when admixed with a thermoplastic resin, will selectively absorb UV rays.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

V

V-3: A sign face or readerboard material of thermoplastic alloy, corrugated to enhance its stiffness. The name comes from its profile: every 3 inches of surface include a "V" indentation, 7/8 of an inch deep. The "V" is 3/4 of an inch wide at the top and therefore the flat surface between the "V"s is 2 1/4 inches. V-3 is usually manufactured in 4-foot widths, with matching male and female interlocks, so that wider faces may be easily assembled.

VACUUM FORMING: Method of forming sign faces in which a plastic sheet is clamped in a stationary frame, heated, and forced down by a vacuum onto a mold. See thermoforming.

VALUE ENGINEERING: Assessing a sign based on the cost of its materials, design, installation and maintenance, with the goal of getting the best value for the money

VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGN: A sign that includes provisions for message changes. Also called changeable copy panel, changeable copy sign, time and temperature sign, electronic message center, menu board.

VARIANCE: Special administrative procedure by which one may obtain an exception to zoning rules such as height, setback and type of use. (See the "Legal Considerations" section.)

VERTICAL SLAB: A footing design with more depth than either width or length. The most common type of sign foundation. Compare to horizontal slab.

VISIBILITY: The quality of a letter, number, graphic, or symbol, which enables the observer to distinguish it from its surrounds or background.

SIGNAGE GLOSSARY

W

WALL FLAT: Refers to a single-face sign designed for mounting flush against a wall.

WALL MOUNT: A single-face sign mounted on a wall. Another name for a wall sign.

WALL PROJECT: Refers to a double-faced sign, designed for mounting from one end.

WALL SIGN: A building mounted sign. (See also Fascia sign.)

"WARM" WHITE: A fluorescent lamp that emits a color tinted with slightly more yellow than does a "cool: white

WAYFINDING: Enabling a person to find his or her way to a given destination through the use of effective signage.

WEEP HOLES: Holes in the bottom of a sign box to permit drainage of moisture from condensation.

WINDLOAD: The basic term for describing the design strength of a sign. Standard windload is 30 PSF (pounds per square foot), which can withstand winds up to approximately 90 MPH. Heavy windload is 55 PSF, which can withstand approximately 110 MPH.

WINDOW SIGN: A sign that is displayed in a window.