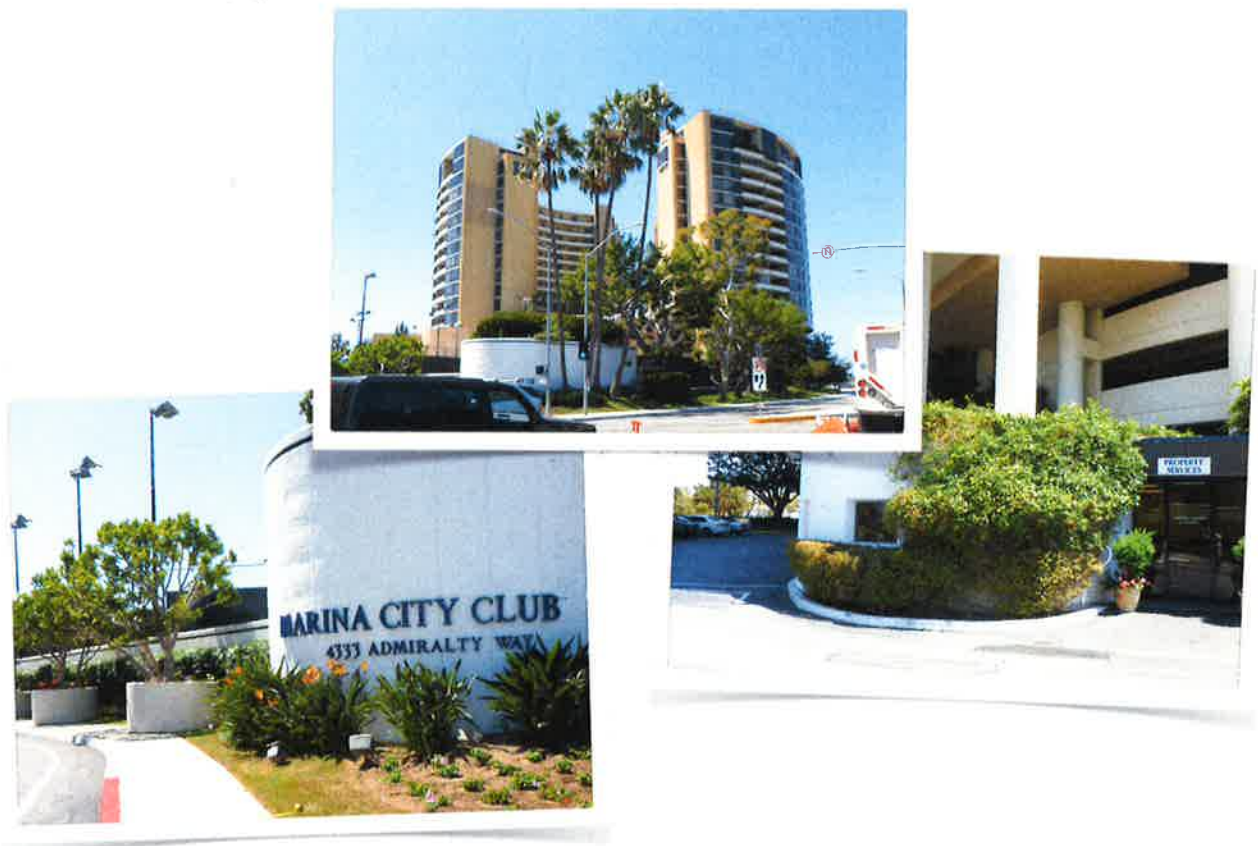


# Marina City Club

## A Plan to Communicate Access



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# Accessible Communications



## An Action Plan

### Prologue

It does not take long, while walking through the various areas of the Marina City Club property to become aware of one fact: Many of the full-time residents and owners are disabled. Their disabilities are almost all the complex disabilities that come with aging, and many are the "invisible" disabilities that involve the senses -- hearing, seeing and understanding their environment.

proximity to the water, and the wonderful fitness facilities, tennis courts, and pools.

However, there are also investor owners who might buy if they could be sure that they did not have to discriminate and turn away potential long-term lessees with disabilities. Some owners may even use their units as vacation facilities, moving their families in during school vacations, and leaving them vacant other times. If your family includes someone who uses a wheelchair or scooter, you may hesitate.

The fact is, that we do have an aging population and a significant number of the people who are ready for retirement do have the funds to be able to live in such luxurious surroundings. There are many older people who prefer to live in a community of mixed ages. They like seeing children at play and having younger people to talk with. The ability to have such close access to the recreational facilities and the water, to have no yard to care for or major home upkeep to concern them, is a huge selling point. However, there needs to be some way to improve physical access without demolishing huge segments of the existing infrastructure.

### **How Can Accessible Communications Help?**

So, as a consultant service that specializes in communication, what can we suggest? Signs cannot remove physical barriers.

What signs can do, however, is to

1) **communicate measures** management is willing to provide that will be the next best thing to independent access,



2) **be easily readable by more people** with aging vision, hearing impairments or cognitive issues that make it more difficult for them to hear or understand verbal directions,



### **Think About a Shuttle Service**

If the management were to purchase and staff one or two shuttle vehicles that accommodate at least two people and their wheelchairs or scooters, and either be available on short notice, or make regular rounds, with scheduled stops, accessibility would be increased many-fold for residents and visitors.



Attractive and easy to read signs with the “wheelchair” pictogram would call attention to the shuttle stops, and also to the efforts that are being made to accommodate those who are disabled. Such a shuttle would even open up the beautiful Marina Promenade to more senior residents. Of course a shuttle that could take prospective buyers or lessees from their cars right to the sales office would be an important sales and marketing tool, as well.

### **Accessible Path of Travel Throughout**

A visitor coming onto the site using a wheelchair or scooter is at a huge disadvantage. There is no safe accessible path of travel from Admiralty Drive to the entry kiosk, or from there to any of the facilities or residences, or to the leasing office. Although a sign company can certainly provide a sign with a phone number for a person to call on their cell phone, so that an escort can meet them and get them safely to a point of entry or elevator, a shuttle making regular rounds would take care of the problem more efficiently. Even if you are being dropped off by an Access van, you may not know exactly how to get to the most convenient location to access your destination.



Third, and even more expensive, but of great assistance not only to those with walkers, scooters and wheelchairs, and even their caregivers, but to parents with children in strollers, would be to completely refinish and level the walking paths and sidewalks. Widening the sidewalks, providing curb cuts at crossings for wheelchairs, along with detectable warning surfaces for the blind and visually impaired would provide a much safer path of travel for everyone, since almost all access to the facilities is along vehicular ways or through garages, where the cars often seem to zoom around the curves.



### **And Now, On to Signs!**

But of course, our particular task is to describe the kinds of signs that will provide as much access as possible, both because they are themselves faithful to the state and federal accessibility standards for signage, and because they are carefully designed to communicate what is accessible, and how people may get to those accessible features.

### **Wayfinding 101**

The basic rule for effective wayfinding design is that you present “the big picture at the entry points, and then provide more and more detailed information as you move from major destinations to the final room or space that the visitor is seeking.

The map that is provided at the entry kiosks is very small, with too much detail, but the biggest objection is that it is on the back of the parking permit, and must be left in the vehicle. Furthermore, it is not a helpful map for walkers, and at some point, everyone leaves his or her vehicle and proceeds on foot. Our first suggestion, then, is that a

at central locations, and a smaller paper version can be handed to those arriving by car or public transportation. In terms of disabled access, a map like this will not only help people who have trouble walking, but people who are hard of hearing. An elderly person, or in fact anyone who is hard of hearing, can look at a well designed map and use it as an aid, rather than trying to understand someone speaking to them.

The purpose of such a map is not to detail a lot of very specific interior final destinations, but to get people to the building entrance that is correct. Once you get to the building, or inside the parking garage attached to the building, you should be able to readily locate more specific directions to what you'll find inside.

### **Wayfinding Maps for Building Interiors**

There are two types of wayfinding maps for building interiors: 1) a floor map that serves one purpose only: guiding people through the building; 2) an evacuation plan that can do double duty, both as a wayfinding aid, and as a way to guide people to safety during an emergency.



Currently, most of the elevator lobbies in the towers have evacuation plans posted, but many of them are out of date, some show no path of travel at all, and some would take people in the wrong direction during an emergency. The map shown is a good example of that. The exit is just a few feet to the right, but the path would take you instead to the tennis courts, which are not even on the grade level. Bringing the maps up to date is crucial, and correctly designed signs can also be very helpful for general wayfinding within the towers.

Once again, it is vital to make sure that every map is oriented to its viewers, so the installation location must be determined, and each

main entry level, but that level is actually about three levels above grade, and reachable only by elevator or interior stairways. The same thing is true of the Studios. The level designated by a star actually exits to stairs or to the third level of the garage.

The situation is made more complex by the fact that the floors actually spiral around the building, so you are always moving up (or down) as you walk through the garage. Knowing which level you are on is tricky, and about the only indicator is the vehicle space numbers, which indicate the garage level you are currently on.

However, since the “Studio” units have different floor numbers than the garage levels right outside their doors, you can step out of what you thought would be the first floor, since that’s what the unit numbers indicate, as well as the floor indicators on the elevator that is inside the residential area, and find yourself on the third floor of the garage. The star symbol on the elevator hoistway does indicate that it’s the “main floor,” as we discussed above, but it isn’t really, since you can’t get to either the lobby or the exterior ground level when you leave the residential corridor on that level.



The designation of these units and the confusion about what they are called and labeled is emphasized by several prominent signs and by the unit numbers themselves. In the garage, there are several signs calling them the “Studios,” but on the doors, they are the “G” Suites. Then, although on the first and second levels the numbers use a “G,” on the third level, the units still use “S.” So, we have Studios, and G-Suites.



We have spent a good deal of time mulling over this problem, which is both a wayfinding puzzle, and even more importantly, a safety consideration. Think about the naming of the levels. “P,” for instance, has a legal meaning in the California State Building Code, and is supposed to be used to label “Parking” floors, which are often at ground level and below. In this complex, we see “P” used to label the “Plaza” floor, which is not the ground floor, but serves as the first floor of the major residential section of each tower. The residences on the Plaza Level are all designated with 100 and above. On the floor above, the residences begin with “200,” and so on up to the top floors.



The floor levels above the Plaza Level are assigned numbers “2” through “11,” and floors 12 and 13 are given over mostly to two-level penthouse units, which are designated with PH. There is another set of apartments that could be designated with “P” since they are the “Promenade” apartments. However, those apartments have no letter designations.

Therefore, the only use of the “P” or “Plaza” designation is in the stairwells, on the elevator hoist ways, the control panels, and on the evacuation plans, and “G” is used for parking levels.

Rather than stress over the fact that every level that connects with another does not have the same label, perhaps the most important task is to be sure that the same designations are used throughout the facility, and that the exit or egress floors that are accessible are clearly labeled. In other words, the “star” designations for elevator hoist ways and control panels, and for floor designators in stairwells need to be consistent and clear. Only an accessible egress level (one with a grade level door or a door leading to an accessible ramp) should be designated with the star.



## Getting to the Center Tower Public Amenities

Of course residents are not the only people who use the Center Tower, since many of the most important public amenities are either located there, or are accessed through that tower.

Club members would access the Fitness Center, the City Cafe, the Court Club -- by stair -- and adult pool on Level Two, or the restaurant and large meeting rooms on Level Three through the main lobby on the first floor of the Center Tower. Finding the entrance to the lobby, and accessing it if you are disabled, is not easy.

The sign that directs the visitor to visitor parking, and also to the lobby is mounted on a column at the entrance of the resident parking garage that is beneath the tower. It would be very difficult for most people to read from a vehicle, and is located so that it would be almost impossible for someone in a wheelchair or using a walker to get to a safe location to read it. As with most of the signs, italics are used, which are not allowed for accessible signs, all characters are uppercase, and the surface of the sign is very shiny. All of these make it difficult for people with any vision impairment to read.



To add to the confusion, there are arrows in three different directions, ahead and to the left for visitor parking, straight ahead for the lobby, and directly to the left for an unnamed accessible feature.

However, assuming you do find your bearings and head to the left toward the lobby entrance, you won't find any curb cuts, and will have to navigate a curb. The door itself is probably too heavy for ADA/Title 24 standards, but there is no wheelchair symbol, so it's not misrepresented. However, it also indicates that there isn't any legal accessible access to

and enclosed stairwells must also have an evacuation plan posted nearby, as well. In addition, tactile exit signs are lacking here, and generally throughout the entire complex.



If we assume that the visitor can read the signs, and takes the elevator to the second floor in order to use the facilities there, some visitors will be able to access many of the areas, even if they use a wheelchair. However, that doesn't mean that all of those areas are actually legally compliant. And, it certainly doesn't mean that the signs are compliant, or usable by people with vision impairments. We need to mention again that people who are hard of hearing, deaf, or have certain kinds of cognitive impairments that often come with advancing age, particularly need very clear and easy to understand informational and directional signs. The signs on this floor are something of a jumble of various messages and formats. A carefully designed signage system is the best answer to both legal accessibility standards and common sense ease of use. A unified sign system would also make the area more aesthetically pleasing to visitors.

Obviously, there are many signs in the area in and around the Fitness Center and the City Cafe, and almost all of them need corrections of one kind or another, especially since most of the newer signs all use italics, which are not appropriate for tactile signs or visual signs, if they are to be legally compliant and also highly readable.

However, we get into even more problems if we go to the right from the elevators, toward the entrances to the Studio Suites, and the Court Club. There, the signs are completely misleading, as well as non-compliant.

local fire department requires it. If that is the case, the sign should be clearly directed to the fire department, along with a statement that there is no visitor or employee access to the restaurant from the stairway. A directional sign to the lobby area should give all the information needed as to what can be accessed from the elevators located in the lobby, including the restaurant, bar and meeting rooms.



The other door at this end of the corridor leads to the apartments that we suggest calling, as they are in the garage, the "Studio Suites," and designating with "S" rather than "G." We think using the "G" confuses the issue, since "G" stands for Garage in this complex, although it usually stands for "Ground Floor." That will distinguish the elevator within this area as being separate from the elevators located in the garage, since there is no connection at all between the two.

If you are in a wheelchair, you would be forgiven for thinking that, if you are visiting a friend in these apartments, you could go through this door and access their unit. Although the sign on the door tells you that you can access the apartments, and will also find an elevator within



so that you can get to the first and third levels of the apartments, that is not so. When you do open the door, you are confronted by a stairway.

Obviously, the sign needs to state clearly that there is no wheelchair access to any of the Studio Suites on any of the three levels through this door. You will have to return to the lobby area behind you, go to the elevator, actually leave the building and go through the garage to get to a doorway that will take you into the Studio Suites on one level, and the elevator within that set of units that will take you to the other two levels.

directly across from the elevators. On the way, they would pass the door leading to the stairway to the Court Club.

### **Signs for Public Areas**

If we return to the area on the second floor of the Center Tower that is the center of activity for people who are not residents, as well as for active residents, and look at the area around the elevators, we find that there is poor visibility from that area to the surrounding corridors, and virtually no directional or informational signs.



To the left, about all we can see is the entrance to the City Cafe, which has a logo sign. However, if we were to venture down that hallway, we would find public restrooms, a large beauty salon, and around the corner, the entrance to the swimming pool, along with more restrooms. The salon does have a logo sign that becomes visible as you proceed along the corridor, but no one would guess that there is another corridor to the left of that leading to the pool area. We suggest that a directional sign to these amenities be posted to the left of the elevators.



As you approach the salon, an additional sign will have to be posted directing to the swimming pool area, and accompanying restrooms. It's important to design the integrated system for the entire facility prior to doing this, and not order piecemeal signs that may or may not comply with the most recent accessibility standards. The hodgepodge of signs



public restrooms out in the corridor, since using the restrooms inside the Fitness Center requires walking through all the dressing room areas first. Encountering people in various states of undress can be a bit of a surprise to someone who merely needs to use the restroom, and was not aware of the public facilities out in the main corridor.



### **Swimming Pool Signs**

The signs in the pool that can be accessed from the second floor lobby are typical of the signs in all the pools. Some of them are commercially provided signs that are sold each year by swimming pool supply companies, to comply with changes in state pool health and safety regulations. Others are signs specifically for the specific pool, or for the City Club facilities in general.

Just as with all the other signs, there is no particular design standard, and there are a number of non-compliant elements. New 2010 standards, for instance, require that signs not be mounted lower than 40 inches above the ground or floor, so they can be easily read. Any information about the facility and its use, or directional signs must have minimum 5/8 inch high characters, and they must follow the general rules for visual characters.



### **Third Floor Restaurant and Bar**

The restaurant is open in the evenings on a regular daily schedule, when it is open to the public and it can be rented for such functions as wedding receptions. There are frequent special entertainment events for the residents and guests as well. The restaurant can no longer be reached from the staircase located on the building exterior, but must be accessed

## Tower Residence Areas

All three towers have the same configurations for the residences that begin on the Plaza Level. There are three elevators that access the plaza,



and two of them go all the way to the penthouse level. Those two are entered through the garage. The elevator that is located in the circular open area that is reached by walking straight through the garage, and into a lobby has only two stops, the ground level, and the plaza level. It appears to be used chiefly by those with apartments on the plaza level that are close to the elevator. To get to the other elevator lobbies and go higher, you need leave the central lobby, and walk to the center of the north or south sections of the circle.

As you leave that central elevator lobby on the plaza level and walk out, you start to see signs directing to the other elevator lobby for that section. These signs are quite recent, and are attractive and if you have



normal vision and get close enough, are easy to read since they are an attractive dark blue on a white background.

Unfortunately, even though it is legally acceptable to have directional signs with tiny, 5/8 inch high characters, these are in italics, which is not compliant. On top of that, the arrows are sometimes misplaced or strangely placed, so that they don't always seem very helpful.

It is difficult to see the signs that show where the elevator lobbies are, and inside the lobbies, you have no idea, as a new tenant or a guest

## **Finding Your Way Behind the Towers**

Most of the residents who are ambulatory do eventually learn how to access the specialized areas of the site, such as the various swimming pools, tennis courts, and “Doggie Lands.” However, that’s either a trial and error task, or requires finding someone who knows how to wend their way through and around the massive garages to the areas behind and above. For instance, around the East Tower entry area, and behind the Doggy Land located there, there are numerous signs pointing to the “Monterey Room.” These signs are so plentiful, the uninitiated might



expect some kind of major destination, ready for a major meeting or luncheon, or perhaps some kind of crafts room. On the other hand, the signs are installed so low, that most people probably walk right by them. They certainly don’t meet the 40 inch ADA standard.

When you finally reach the end of the road, there is no sign at all over the door of the Monterey Room. You come upon a fenced in children’s play area, to which there are no directional signs at all, and one of the swimming pools. The Monterey Room is rather dark, and doesn’t appear to be ready for much of anything, other than storage.

## **Promenade Apartments**

If you walk further back, you enter the area of the Promenade Apartments, and the Promenade itself. That area is certainly a candidate for a major facelift, for some accessibility additions, and for new signs. The apartment units all end with “P” which is a little confusing, given that the elevators in the towers use “P” to designate the plaza level of the

would open up all these areas by providing the next best thing to actual independent access.



Each area of the apartments is served by a central circular tower that holds a staircase. Right at the same area is a unit with an elevator leading to a bridge that accesses floors two and three of the apartments, as well as the laundry facility for that set of apartments. The apartments themselves, especially on the ground floor, might be accessible, but the

walkways are quite uneven, with a lot of different materials making up each section of the walkways. Putting in new walkways would greatly improve the accessibility to the entire Promenade area.

## **Conclusion**

Although this report is extensive, we have not done much to touch on a number of areas that have problems. For instance, there are virtually no legal accessible parking signs, and there are no towaway signs. We observed that people generally ignore the accessible parking signs that are installed, and they will continue to do that unless the security guards take the laws seriously and first warn, then cite, and finally tow repeat offenders.

Without an accessible transportation system or a major change to the streets and curbs, independent accessibility to the interior areas is essentially non-existent. A great deal of detailed work needs to be done, and at that point, perhaps some “workaround” signs would finish the task, and find ways to get access for visitors and residents to some of the areas.



help designers and fabricators create signs for people with various kinds of vision impairments, including common "color-blindness," complete blindness, which we call functional blindness, people who are both hard of hearing and deaf, people who do not speak clearly, or understand speech, and people who are reluctant to approach strangers.

## **General Guidelines and Rules for Accessible Signs**

### **Directional and Informational Signs**

There are three classifications of directional signs that are needed to form a complete site-wide system. These are large signs meant to be viewed from moving vehicles, exterior signs to direct pedestrians around the site and interior directional signs for the various buildings. These signs are often accompanied by informational signs that provide additional information about using the facilities.

### **Identification Signs**

There are two types of identification signs. The first type is the large sign that is attached to a building, or is included on a monument sign in front of a facility or outdoor area so that people can identify their major destination from a distance and head in the right direction as they walk around the site. It could also be a stand-alone post and panel sign that identifies an exterior area such as a parking lot.

The second type of identification sign identifies a final destination -- almost always a discreet room or space. This type of sign can also identify a floor level, a restroom or a designated exit door. These are the only signs that the ADA or California Building Code require to have raised text and braille so they can be read by functionally blind individuals. All the other signs mentioned above, including the directional and informational signs, are meant for visual readers only.

- Three: Signs that direct to or inform about accessible features, elements and paths of travel of the facility and site
- Four: Signs that are not impacted by laws or codes and do not have to be accessible (such as logos and the names of individuals or companies)

Several of the rules impact the first three categories.

**Non-glare Finishes:** All Category One, Two and Three signs must have non-glare finishes. The original ADA Accessibility Guidelines had a definition of non-glare that required that the glare as shown on a standard gloss meter could not be higher than 19. This put the sign finish at the same non-glare level as what is called “eggshell” paint. Certain brands of non-glare acrylic that we have tested, such as non-glare Mitsubishi Shinkolite or Acrylite test at 19 as well.

Why: Many types of vision impairment react strongly to glare. Anyone who is middle-aged and has started to develop incipient cataracts starts to notice the way the glare of street lights affect them at night. White streaks may seem to appear across shiny signs, so it is more difficult to read them.

**High dark to light contrast:** All Category One, Two and Three signs, as well as some other features such as stair striping and detectable warning surfaces must have a high contrast between two adjoining surfaces. The letters and symbols on signs must contrast with their backgrounds.

The misunderstanding of most people is that this is about “color contrast.” Actually, colors have nothing to do with the standards and codes, although of course different colors or hues are easier or more difficult to see. However, we are talking about people who have impaired color vision. They may not be able to tell one color from another if the shade of lightness or darkness is too similar.

black or charcoal gray. Red on black signs in elevators and for safety signs may be virtually invisible to some of these people.

There are, when added to this basic population of 8 percent color blind subjects who do not have other vision impairments, probably from 12 to 15 percent of the population that cannot distinguish various colors one from another. Aging vision is another source of defective color vision, since colors often acquire a yellowish tinge for older people.

Maps of all kinds are especially difficult for people who have some form of color blindness. Two cartographers who have studied the affect of color blindness on map reading have designed a free piece of software called Color Oracle that anyone can install on their computer ([www.colororacle.org](http://www.colororacle.org)). If you click on this software while viewing anything colored on your computer, it will show you how it looks to people with three different forms of color blindness. Although it's not meant for people with other forms of vision impairments, it is an aid in determining if something has enough dark/light contrast as well. One of the cartographers informed me by email that he often checks his own design work by copying it in black and white on a copier. If the shades of gray are too close together he assumes the colors he has used do not have adequate contrast. As he informed me, when something like an evacuation map is not readable, the mistake could be fatal.

### **Readable Typefaces, Sized Appropriately:**

The universal signs rules for typefaces are simple: No decorative typefaces, no italics, and no oblique letter styles. Reading of text is easier when "non-decorative" typefaces are used. Therefore, such typefaces should be used very seldom on signs, probably confined to logos and headings of promotional materials in order to enhance certain themes. They should never be used for code compliant signs. Italics and oblique typefaces are also not allowed, because they make both tactile and visual reading more difficult.

frames where maintenance and security personnel can see them easily, and design a more accessible system for the public. Both functionally blind and sighted people, including first responders to a hostage situation or a heart attack, will benefit from a well-thought out and highly visible consecutive numbering system.

Instead of "Lobby" or "Vestibule," provide the name of the area the person will be entering. A sighted person can tell right away that they are entering a lobby or vestibule, and a blind person will not get any useful information from such a sign. Always strive to use signs to provide useful information, as briefly and clearly as possible.

There are other rules that are effective for one or the other type of signs. We will cover those under the separate headings later in the report.

### **Specific Rules for Tactile Identification Signs (Type One Signs)**

Uppercase, sans serif typefaces: Tests have shown that people who read characters solely by touch benefit greatly from the shapes of all uppercase, sans serif typefaces. Sans serif typefaces have strokes that end abruptly, rather than with bars or "hooks" at their ends. There are many sans serif typefaces that are attractive and appropriate for various forms of architecture. It is not only not necessary to use Helvetica for all signs, but it is actually not the most readable tactile font available, because of the confusion that it causes between certain letters, such as "R" and "A." Characters are to be raised a minimum of 1/32 inch above the surface of the sign face. (Raising them more than that is not helpful to tactile readers, so keep the height at about 1/32 inch.) Italics should not be used at all for required information.

### **Small characters with slender strokes and open shapes**

Tactile characters should be fairly small, so they can be read quickly by touch much the same way braille is read. The size is to be 5/8 inch minimum and 2 inches maximum. Two inch high characters should be used only on such signs as elevator hoist ways and identification signs



rule when you bevel the characters. If the top of the characters is only 15 percent width and the spacing between characters is 1/8 inch, the space at the base of the characters can be only 1/16th inch. This gives a definite advantage for the provision of beveled characters. The lines of type also have rules as to how close and far apart they can be. The minimum distance is 135 percent of the height of the uppercase character "I." The maximum is 175 percent.

### **A "Hybrid" Type of Sign for People Who are Visually Impaired**

It became obviously very early after the passage of the ADA that the two generally different types of blindness were not well served by the sign guidelines for tactile door or room identification signs. Those two general types are those who test as "legally blind" but who use their vision to get around and even to read, and those who have no usable vision, or perhaps are just able to distinguish a little light and shadow, and therefore can only read by touch. These are the people we describe as "functionally blind."

As we have pointed out, touch readers require small, slender stroked characters, all uppercase, and all sans serif. Visual readers benefit from larger, bolder characters, upper and lower case, and can read serif typefaces. They are obviously also not as limited in the exact placement of the signs.

Consequently, the rules that were finally approved by the Department of Justice in 2010, and that became legally enforceable on March 15, 2012 throughout the United States (the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design or "ADA SAD") now allow information to be duplicated so that there is one set of text with raised characters and braille, and a corresponding set that is visual only, and follows the visual rules. The sets of text can be on two different signs or can be on one sign. That means that visual readers can benefit from larger, bolder characters with upper and lower case, while tactile readers can have smaller, beveled raised text that is all uppercase in a sans serif font. Only the

## **Larger Bolder Characters for Visual Readers**

Although the minimum character size for visual characters is also 5/8 inch, only a few informational signs or informational text on tactile signs ought to be that small. Most directional signs should be somewhat larger. Use the new visual size chart as a guide for minimum sizes, but provide minimum sizes only when you are dealing with a lot of text that can be viewed very close. Use the exceptions in the code only when necessary. It is also usually best to use the bolder stroke widths. Remember that most visually disabled readers do have usable vision.

## **Visual Size Chart**

The rules for stroke widths are slightly different for visual characters than for raised characters. The stroke width can be 20 percent of the character height maximum, and the minimum can be 10 percent. The character widths are the same -- a maximum of 110 percent of character height, and a minimum of 60 percent. Combine wide character widths with bolder strokes whenever possible.

## **Inter-character and Interline Spacing**

The spacing between characters is allowed to be a little tighter for visual characters than for tactile ones. The average is just 10 percent of character height. Remember that for tactile characters that are also visual, the spacing can go down to 1/16 inch if the spacing at the top of the character is maintained at 1/8 inch. The spacing between lines is the same as for raised characters.

When text is provided for signs that use the Symbols of Accessibility (Type Three signs), follow the text rules for Type Two visual signs whenever possible. Symbols of Accessibility are not accompanied by raised type or braille. In most cases, those who use wheelchairs or text telephones must have usable vision in order to do so independently. Therefore, there is no point in accompanying them with raised text and braille.

## **Pictograms and Symbols of Accessibility**

There has been a lot of confusion between these two sections of the ADA standards. Pictograms are a special type of pictographic symbol that conveys meaning through a simplified picture of an object, an animal or plant, or a human figure. A simplified symbol of some coins and bills would be a pictographic symbol for money, a bank, ATM or money exchange whereas a dollar sign is a typographic symbol, since it does not look anything like a piece of money. By coincidence, all four of the “Symbols of Accessibility” are pictograms. However, the U.S. Access Board chose to treat them differently from other pictograms.

Both pictograms and Symbols of Accessibility must follow the universal sign rules for non-glare surfaces and high dark/light contrast. The implication is that they must be sized appropriately to their viewing distance. However, there is a clear distinction between pictograms that are located at eye level to identify doors and doorways, and those that are used as part of informational or directional signs.

The reason is, that if a facility like a restroom is identified only by a gender pictogram, for instance, a person who is functionally blind has no way to know that it is a restroom, or what gender is served by that restroom. People who are functionally blind do not, on the whole, understand visual symbols, and have not learned to read them by touch. Even if they are raised, there is no standard set of such pictograms that could be recognized by everyone.

That is why there is a rule that pictograms that identify doors must be located within a six inch high space or “field” and the corresponding raised message must be placed below the field, and accompanied by braille. For instance, a pictogram of two gender figures may designate a staff restroom, but the proper text would be either “restroom” or “staff restroom,” but not just “staff,” because the “meaning” of the pictogram is that a restroom is behind the door that can be used by either sex. “Staff” could describe a break room, a workroom, or a special entry as well as a restroom reserved for staff.

manufacturer, other than the training they must provide for their designers, fabricators and installers. After their staff is trained, it should become second nature for them to produce signs that will not only reduce the risk of a lawsuit, but will actually help everyone find their way around the Marina City Club site

## Photo Gallery



There is no walkway wide enough for one wheelchair, let alone two, entering the site.



The accessible parking signs are outdated, and use the objectionable term “handicapped.” There are no towaway signs installed at any of the entrances, and parking does not seem to be enforced.

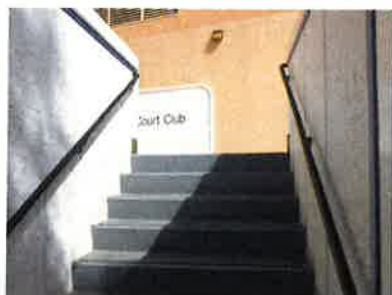
The lack of compliant parking signs is a major cause of official legal action in California.





Although all the signs shown can be seen from cars, only pedestrians can read them. The sign directing to the main lobby is far too small for most people to see until they are right there. The signs directing to the elevators in the garages are difficult to read, and can be confusing. For instance, you would never know that the numbers beneath the arrows on the purple sign are the street addresses of the buildings. The black sign is difficult to read and some signs are too close to the floor. There is no directional sign for the elevator in the garage. During the three days we were on site for extensive periods, we had several

tenants stop and tell us that they had a hard time locating the elevators because of the lack of prominent signs. A constant refrain from residents who asked what we were doing was, "please do something about signs so we know where things are. I still get lost."



Non-residents, especially those who are new members, get little assistance from signs. Locating the Court Club, the tennis courts, or even the guest parking is difficult, because signs tend to be haphazardly placed or difficult to read.



Both residents and members using the pools are confronted with a huge amount of sign clutter. In the center sign above, note that one sign says that the emergency number is 911, whereas the sign below directs people to “Dial 0” in an emergency. The photo on the right demonstrates the difficulty that a short person or someone using a wheelchair would have in reading the signs or using the emergency phone.



Tactile exit and exit stair signs are completely lacking throughout the entire facility. This is a major life safety issue.





This is a collection of stairway directional signs. To the left is a sign posted in the stairwell leading from the Restaurant.



There are a varied group of small sign problems that need fixing, such as the Fire Hose sign that needs replacing. The required "Shipping & Receiving" tactile sign at the side of the door would be difficult to locate, but a small one could be placed on the pillar to the left. The Mail Room sign needs to be redone without the italics.



The Fitness Center, the City Cafe, and the Restaurant and Bar upstairs are all venues that need to have unified, compliant and uncluttered sign systems installed. The Tower residence floors also need better directional signs, especially to direct to elevators and central services.



We've mentioned the many problems of the Promenade area. Chief among them is the virtual impossibility of getting there by wheelchair. Even for other elderly walkers, the walkway are dangerously uneven. The address signs aren't clear or self-explanatory, and there are commercial destinations that need to be accessible.

This seems like such an attractive area, that a facelift for the signs could do a lot of good, and also help bring the area into more ADA compliance.



Although the first photo is not an accessible curb cut, but a driveway meant for boats, it does show that some accessibility might be achieved. There is also a makeshift curb cut leading to the Central Tower elevator.



The counter in the City Cafe is too high. Until it is remodeled, a sign might offer wheelchair service.