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## 4.3B Tactile Signage: Sign System and Installation Guide

FIP Manual (Interim Guide), October 1997

### Preface

Universal Design principles have been applied to develop a Government of Canada tactile signage system that is to be implemented in federal facilities as a requirement of the *Treasury Board Manual*, Chapter 1-6, Accessibility Policy originally issued in 1991.

Based on the principles of CAN/CSA B-651 95 Barrier-Free Design, the tactile signage system incorporates raised pictograms, lettering and dome braille. Information is in a bilingual format and is in a black and white colour combination.

The signage was developed by a Working Group on Tactile Signage chaired by Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC). The Working Group has partnering representatives from the Treasury Board Secretariat's Federal Identity Program (TBS FIP), the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the Canadian Council of the Blind, the Status of Disabled Persons Secretariat, the National Capital Commission and the Fire Prevention Branch of Human Resources Development Canada. 3M Canada Incorporated assisted in the development of prototypes for the signage system. Results from the detailed evaluations of the prototypes guided the TBS FIP design advisor in final design refinements.

Although originally developed for installation in federal buildings, given the uniqueness and proven excellence of the signage as well as the current consumer and market demand, the TBS Federal Identity Program will be approaching the Canadian Standards Association and other levels of government to have the signage adopted as a national standard.



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## Introduction

### Purpose of the Tactile Signage Installation Guide

This Installation Guide has been prepared to assist the Facility Managers of Government of Canada-occupied facilities in the acquisition and installation of tactile signage and to do so in an efficient and affordable manner. Tactile signage is required to bring federal facilities into compliance with Treasury Board requirements for accessibility (see 1.2).

This Installation Guide assists Facility Managers in undertaking the following tasks:

- Determining where and how many tactile signs are required
- Determining when tactile signs are not required
- Ordering and installing the tactile signs
- Resolving unique installation conditions

For ease of use, the Installation Guide has attempted to address the questions that may arise, and provided answers by means of illustrated scenarios.

### Treasury Board Requirements for Tactile Signage

The implementation requirements for tactile signage in federal work areas of Crown owned, lease-purchase and leased federal facilities is identified in *Treasury Board Manual*, Chapter 1-6, Accessibility, Appendix B, Barrier-free Design: Implementation Requirements which states: *Tactile signage must be*

*used for washrooms, emergency egress, elevators, stairwells and doors off main corridors.*

The Treasury Board Secretariat's Federal Identity Program (TBS FIP) has approved the design and fabrication standards for the washroom, stairwell and emergency egress signs included in this guide. The scope of this document has been limited to tactile signage for washrooms, stairwells and emergency egress since tactile signage standards for 'doors off main corridors' are to be developed by the *TBS FIP Working Group on Tactile Signage* at a later date. The tactile identification of controls and floor designation signage in elevators is already identified in Appendix C: Elevator Requirements of CAN/CSA B651-95 Barrier-Free Design (an extract from the CSA Standard CAN/CSA B44 M94 elevator code).

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## Federal Facilities Requiring Tactile Signage

As indicated in 1.2, *Treasury Board Manual*, Chapter 1-6, Accessibility, Appendix B: Barrier-free Design: Implementation Requirements requires tactile signage in federal real property of Crown-owned, lease purchase or leased facilities to identify *washrooms, emergency egress, stairwells*.

Each custodian department under section 2 of the *Financial Administration Act* (FAA) is responsible for determining in which facilities or portions of facilities the Implementation Requirements are applicable. In this regard, the Barrier-free Design: Implementation Requirements state:

*2.2 Various new buildings or structures, due to their specialized design function or requirements, may be candidates for a reduced level of accessibility or can be completely exempted from barrier-free design requirements. Such facilities include, but are not limited to: naturally inaccessible facilities in remote locations, unattended monitoring stations, facilities which are designed and constructed to accommodate able-bodied personnel (i.e. where being able-bodied is part of the job requirement); and facilities where operational requirements preclude reasonable access by persons with disabilities. If the specialized design or operational requirement that justified the exemption from the policy changes, then the department must reassess the facility against the policy to ensure that the exemption is still justified.*

*2.3 In some cases, access need not be provided to certain parts of the facility such as boiler rooms, roofs, elevator pits, elevator penthouses, mechanical rooms, electrical vaults, piping or equipment catwalks, or areas of hazardous occupancy (as defined by the National Building Code or National Fire Code), unless the intended use requires public access or the job requirements are such that a person with a disability could meet these requirements.*

## Tactile Signage in Leased Facilities

Where the tactile signage is to be installed in buildings only partially occupied by federal tenants, the tactile signs are installed for those washrooms, exits and stairwells on those floors, or portions of floors, occupied by the federal tenant only. For example, if there are six stairwells serving a floor which a federal tenant only partially occupies, only those stairwells providing emergency exiting requirements for the federal tenant would be identified by a tactile 'Stairs' sign.

As indicated in 3.2 to 3.4, tactile stairwell or exit signs are also not installed for egress stairs or exits in, or from, parking garages, unless they are intended to meet the needs of specific user(s).

For leased facilities, there may also already be provision in the lease agreement to supply and install tactile signs and this should be verified. Unless the leased facility has been previously exempted or is eligible for exemption, tactile signs will be required and may be the responsibility of the owner of the leased facility.

## Tactile Signage in Heritage Facilities

The Heritage Facilities section of Appendix B, Barrier-Free Design: Implementation Requirements of

*Treasury Board Manual*, Chapter 1-6, Accessibility, states:

5.1 *The requirements for heritage facilities are the same as those for other Crown owned facilities except where these requirements will significantly reduce the heritage quality of the facility.*

Consequently, the installation of tactile signage in facilities designated by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO) should be coordinated with the appropriate FHBRO representative.

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## The Tactile Signs and their applications

The tactile signs illustrated below incorporate raised pictograms, lettering and dome braille. Information is in a bilingual, format with white lettering on a black background. All signs are available in English-French and French-English formats. Text information is repeated in black dome braille near the base of the black field.

The signs are finished in a plastic material complying with CGSB-109-GP-5MP and suitable for interior and exterior applications. The signs are provided with an adhesive backing tape for application to painted drywall, metal, concrete or wood, vinyl wall covering, etc. See 4.4 for installation on other surfaces.

Tactile signs have been developed as a Government of Canada standard and have been evaluated and approved by the Treasury Board Secretariat's Federal Identity Program, Public Works and Government Services Canada, Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) and other agencies. Therefore, duplication, fabrication and/or delivery through sources other than those noted in section 7.0 is discouraged.

### Washroom Signs

These signs shall identify the entrances for various configurations of men's or women's washrooms which may or may not contain toilet facilities accessible to persons with disabilities.

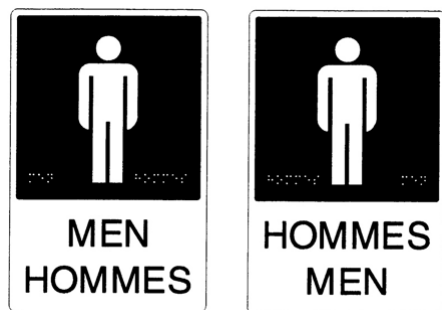
Although the washrooms may include inner vestibule or privacy doors, the tactile signs are required for the exterior entrance doors only unless secondary doors (e.g. to janitors closets, utility rooms, etc.) are also located inside the vestibules.

The signs are not generally installed for private or ensuite washrooms (e.g. in the offices of senior management) unless they are intended to meet the needs of specific user(s). The sign is also not installed for washrooms in areas already exempted from accessibility requirements (See 2.0 of this document).

The finished signs are 150 mm wide by 230 mm high, with the exception of the two signs required for accessible individual washrooms which, when combined, are a total of 300 mm wide by 150 mm high.

#### 3.1.1 Toilet for Men

This sign is to identify the entrance for men's washrooms which do not contain facilities for persons with disabilities.



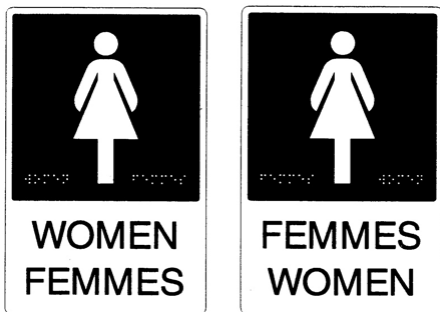
### 3.1.2 Accessible Toilet for Men

This sign is to identify the entrance for men's washrooms designed to accommodate persons with disabilities.



### 3.1.3 Toilet for Women

This sign is to identify the entrance for women's washrooms which do not contain facilities for persons with disabilities.



### 3.1.4 Accessible Toilet for Women

This sign is to identify the entrance for women's washrooms designed to accommodate persons with disabilities.



### 3.1.5 Toilet for Men and Women

This sign is to identify the entrance for a washroom that can be used by either men or women, but does not contain facilities for persons with disabilities.



### 3.1.6 Accessible Toilet for Men and Women

This combination of two signs is to identify the entrance for a washroom that can be used by either men or women with disabilities.



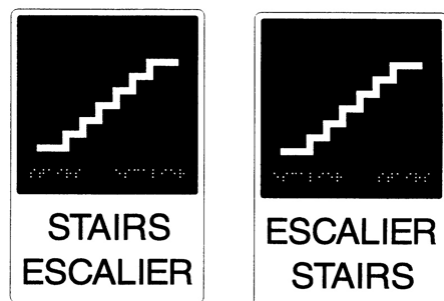
### Stairs Sign

This sign is to identify entrances to non fire-rated communications stairs only. It is NOT to be used for fire-rated egress stairs or open stairs along interior or exterior circulation routes (concourse stairs, etc.). The tactile identification of open stairs is addressed in the *Treasury Board Manual*, Chapter 1-6, Accessibility, Appendix B: Barrier-free Design: Implementation Requirements which states... *detectable warnings must be provided for all stairs except exit stairs in a separate stairwell.*

Prior to installation of the 'Stairs' sign, it is recommended that the actual life safety classification of the stairways being identified be verified with the appropriate life safety personnel.

This sign is not to be installed for entrances to/from stairs in parking garages, unless it is intended to meet the needs of specific user(s). The signs are also not installed for stairwell entrances located in areas already exempted from accessibility requirements (See 2.0 of this document).

The finished sign is 150 mm wide by 230 mm high.



### Exit Stair Sign

This sign is to identify entrances to fire-rated egress stairs only. It is NOT to be used for communication stairs or open stairs along interior or exterior circulation routes (concourse stairs, etc.). The tactile

identification of open stairs is addressed in the *Treasury Board Manual*, Chapter 1-6, Accessibility, Appendix B: Barrier-free Design: Implementation Requirements which states... *detectable warnings must be provided for all stairs except exit stairs in a separate stairwell.*

Prior to installation of the 'Exit Stair' signs, it is recommended that the actual life safety classification of the stairways being identified be verified with the appropriate life safety personnel.

This sign shall not be installed for entrances to/from stairs in parking garages, unless it is intended to meet the needs of specific user(s). The signs are also not installed for stairwell entrances located in areas already exempted from accessibility requirements (See 2.0 of this document).

The finished sign is 150 mm high by 450 mm wide.



## Exit Sign



This sign is to identify:

- exits directly to exterior safe areas (e.g. entrance vestibules exiting to the exterior),
- exits directly to fire-rated exit corridors which lead directly to exterior safe areas (e.g. exits which open into a concourse or lobby need not be identified with a tactile 'Exit' sign if no other doors are located within the exit), and
- exits to a separate building (e.g. adjacent buildings connected by a concourse or walkway).

Since the 'Exit' sign is not directional, the sign is not intended to identify interior doorways or open corridors leading to an exit doorway (even though they may be identified by overhead 'Exit' signs) or crossover floors.

Prior to installation of the 'Exit' signs, it is recommended that the actual life safety classification of the doorways being identified be verified with the appropriate life safety personnel.

The sign is not installed for exits leading from, parking garages, unless it is intended to meet the needs of specific user(s). The signs are also not installed for exit doorways from areas already exempted from accessibility requirements (See 2.0 of this document).

The finished sign is 260 mm wide by 75 mm high.

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## Installation of Tactile Signage

### CAN/CSA-B651-95 Barrier-Free Design Standard Installation Requirements for Tactile Signage

The installation of tactile signage proposed in this Installation Guide is based on the requirements of CAN/CSA-B651-95 Barrier-Free Design, Section 6.4, Signage unless site conditions require alternate locations. The following extracts from Section 6.4, Signage pertain to the installation of tactile signage:

6.4.3 *Illumination: The minimum illumination on signs shall be 200 lx.*

6.4.4 *Tactile Characters or Symbols: Characters, symbols or pictograms on tactile signs shall if wall mounted, have the centreline at a height of  $1500 \pm 25$ mm.*

*Commentary: Raised characters or symbols of identification greatly assist persons with visual impairments... Such identification should be located beside doors and openings to rooms within a building, and placed at a uniform height and distance from the door... Consistent location, such as at the door handle side, also makes identification easier.*

## Who does the Installation?

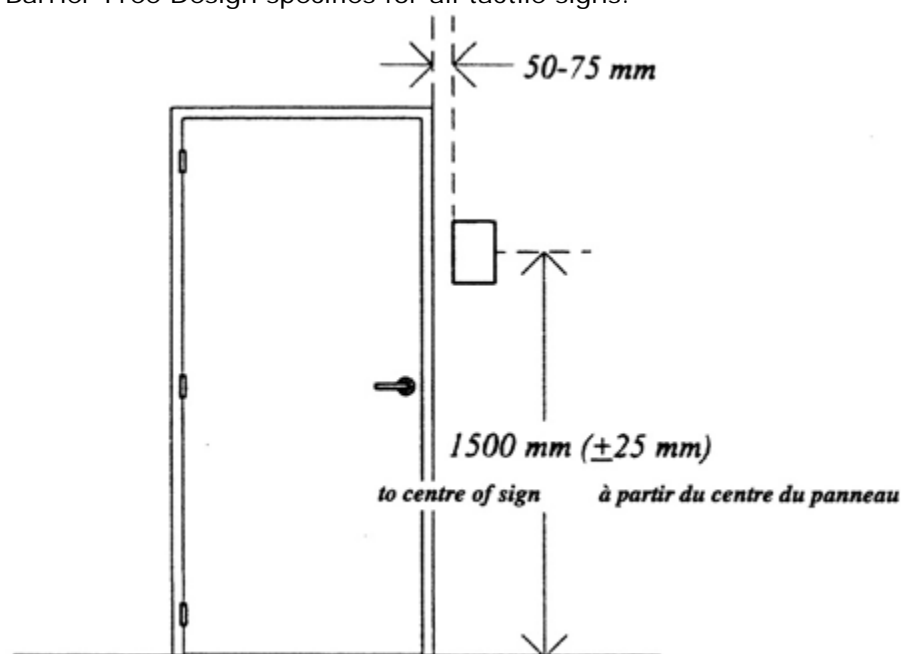
Generally, building maintenance staff with painting, drywall and/or carpentry skills should be able to follow the appropriate parts of this Installation Guide and install tactile signs at the locations prescribed by the Facility Manager. If these skills are not available in-house, the Facility Manager may wish to contract installation of the signage to a local signage company. In this case, the contractor should be directed to adhere to the procedures described in this Installation Guide.

## Standard Installation Procedures

Typical installation requires that tactile signs be located at a height of 1500 mm ( $\pm 25$  mm) on the wall adjacent to latch side of the doorway – not on the hinged side of the doorway. Refer to 5.0, Non-Typical Signage Installations if the wall space on the latch side of the door is inadequate or obstructed.

To install the tactile sign on smooth surfaces simply,

- a. Using a pencil (or other erasable marking instrument), lightly mark the wall on which the sign is to be installed with a horizontal line at a distance of 1500 mm ( $\pm 25$  mm) above the finished floor (using a level if necessary) on the latch side of the door. This is the height which CAN/CSA-B651-95 Barrier-Free Design specifies for all tactile signs.



- b. Mark in pencil the location for the top of the sign by calculating the distance from the centre of the sign to the top of the sign (you may also refer to the height of the sign being installed in Section 3.0), and gently scribe this distance above the line you have drawn in Step (a).
- c. Strike a vertical guideline 50 mm to 75 mm in from the edge of the door or door frame to locate the edge of the sign. Consistent spacing between the door and sign will assist persons with visual impairments in locating the signs as well as provide a more professional installation.
- d. Lightly trace guidelines for the remaining edges of the sign.
- e. For improved adhesion, clean inside the area to be covered by the sign, using sandpaper where necessary.

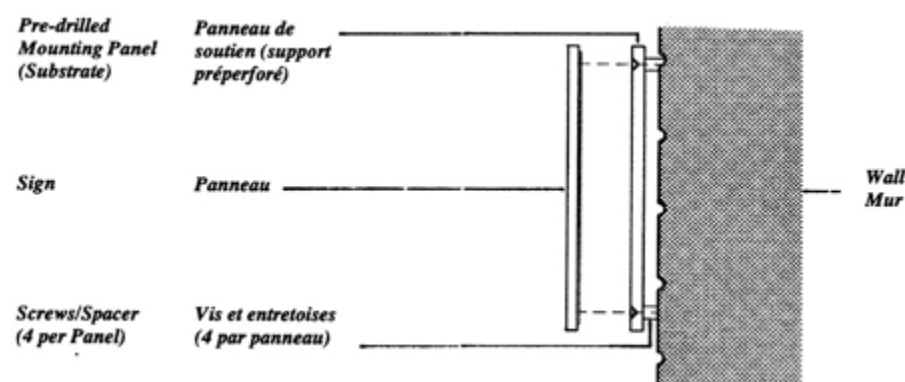
- f. Peel off the backing for the adhesive tape at the back of the sign.
- g. Lightly align the top and side of the sign with the guidelines. When properly aligned, apply pressure to the top of the sign. After the top edge has adhered, brush the sign from top to bottom, pushing lightly with your hand. Now push hard at the centre, working out towards the left and right.
- h. Using a light meter, verify that the level of illumination of the sign is a minimum of 200 lx. If the existing level of lighting is inadequate, relamp the fixtures.

Do not alter the legibility of the tactile information on the sign by drilling the sign for mounting screws, etc. See 4.4, Installation of tactile signage on rough/uneven surfaces for alternative mounting techniques.

To avoid irreversible damage to the finishes of heritage facilities designated by the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO), do not install tactile signage in these buildings without consulting the appropriate FHBRO representative. See also 2.2, Tactile signage in heritage facilities.

## Installation on Rough/Uneven Surfaces

In this method, a separate support panel (the same size as the tactile sign) is fastened to the wall by tap screws and spacers, with the screws set flush with the surface of the support panel. While these support panels can be ordered through the National Master Standing Offer described in section 7.0, purchase the proper type and size of screws and spacers at your local hardware dealer. The tactile sign is then applied to the support panel via the adhesive backing supplied with the sign. So as not to alter the legibility of the tactile information, never alter the finished face of the sign with any fastening devices such as screws, nails, etc.



## Installation on Glass Surfaces

Where building conditions require the application of the tactile sign to transparent or semi-transparent glass surfaces (e.g. an 'Exit' sign to identify doorways in a vestibule), backing panels the same size of the tactile signs identified in section 3.0 are also available through the National Master Standing Offer described in section 7.0.

The backing panels are intended for mounting to the glass surface behind the sign to hide the tape thereby providing a cleaner installation.

## Exterior Applications

Although the *Treasury Board Manual*, Chapter 1-6, Accessibility, Appendix B, Barrier Free Design: Implementation Requirements does not specify outdoor uses for the signs, some custodian departments may utilize the signs to identify such facilities as outdoor public washrooms. In these cases, the signs should be located as specified in Sections 4.0 or 5.0 of this document.

Although the signs have been fabricated to resist outdoor applications, more durable exterior-grade adhesives may be required in place of the adhesive tape supplied on the signs. See also 4.4, Installation on rough/uneven surfaces.



## Removal of Existing Signage

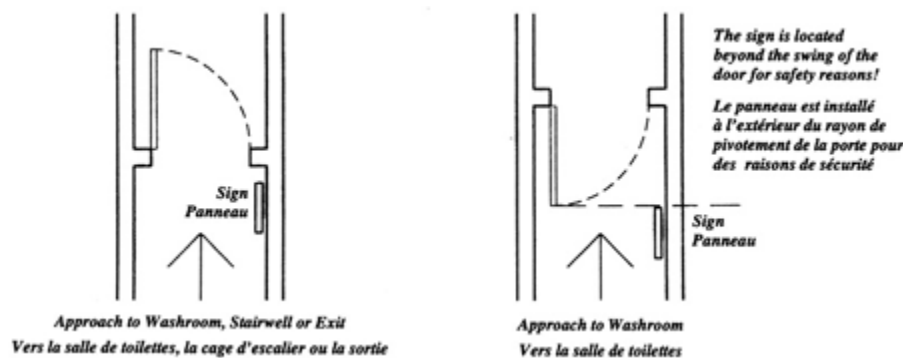
This Installation Guide does not deal with the removal of existing signage that may be made redundant by the installation of tactile signs or minor repairs that may be required by such removal.

A strategy to address those issues will have to be developed in consultation with the Facility Manager and/or building owner.

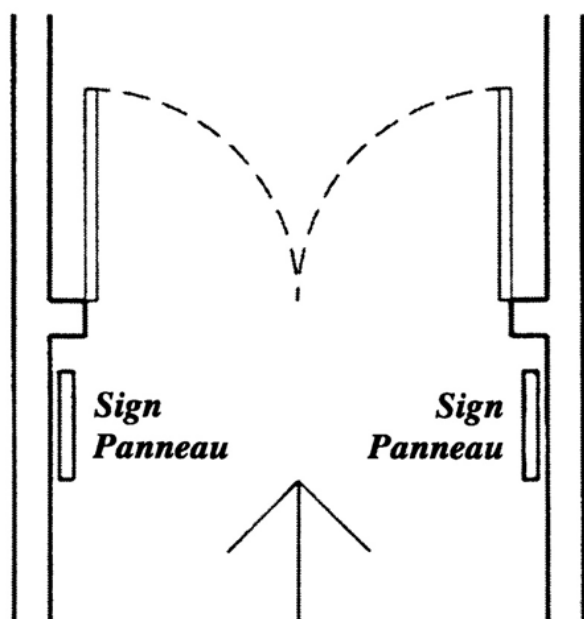
## Non-Typical Signage Installations

This section is intended to address unique conditions or situations where existing site conditions restrict locating the tactile signs on the hatch side of doors and/or at the 1500 mm  $\pm$  25 mm height (centre of sign) as required in CAN/CSA-B651-95 Barrier Free Design. These include double doors, multiple sets of exit doors, inadequate mounting space or obstructions on the latch side of doors, etc.

### Single Doors Across Corridors

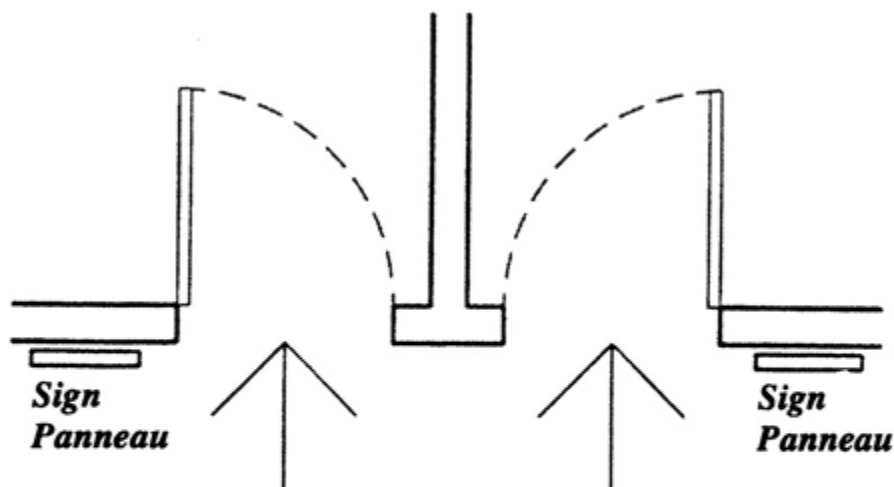


### Double Doors Across Corridor



*Approach to Stairwell or Exit  
Vers la cage d'escalier ou la sortie*

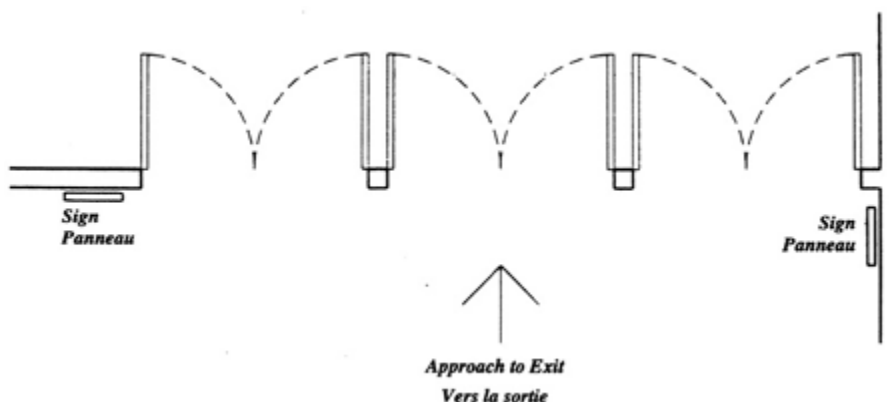
### Doors in Close Proximity



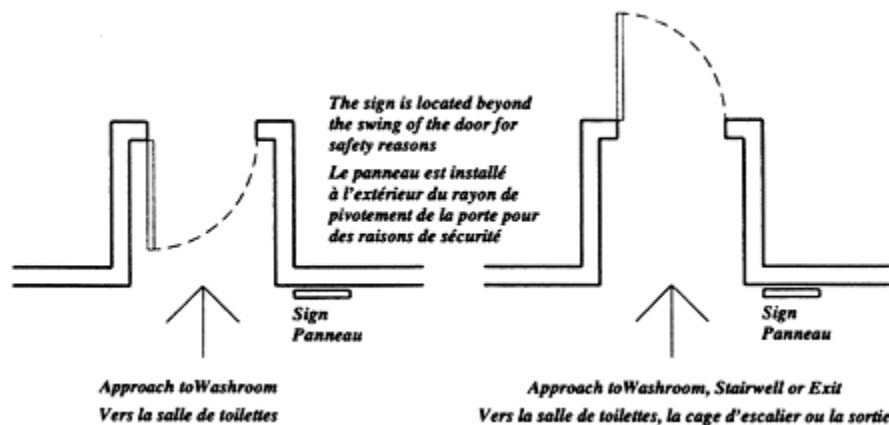
*Approach to Washroom, Stairwell or Exit*

*Vers la salle de toilettes, la cage d'escalier ou la sortie*

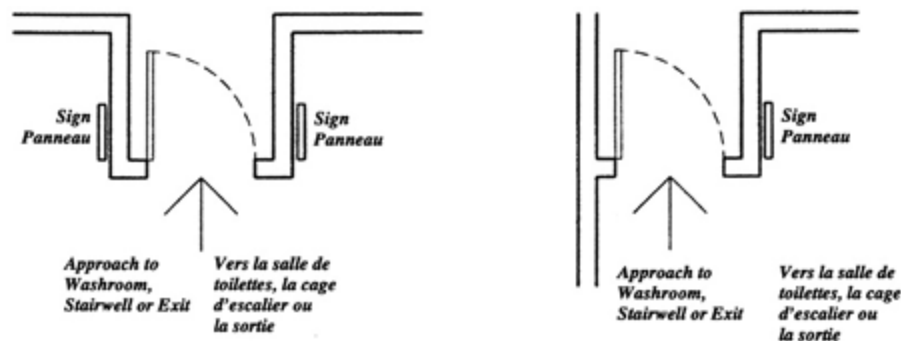
### Multiple Sets of Exit or Stairwell Doors



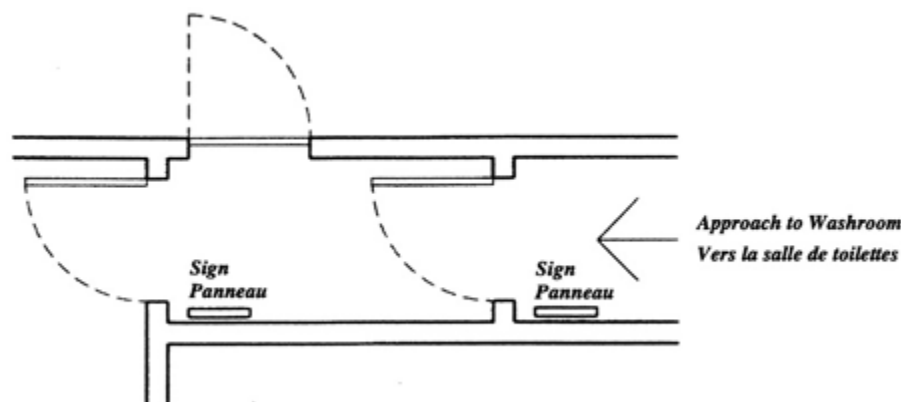
### Recessed Doors



### Protruding Doors



## Utility Doors Inside Washroom



## Installation Summary

The key points to remember in installation of the signs are:

1. Install the signs beside the doorway to be identified. Never install the signs DIRECTLY on doors.
2. Install the signs so the centre of the sign is at a height of 1500 mm and the edge of the sign is 50-75 mm away from the edge of the door or door frame.
3. Always locate the sign on the wall beside the hatch side of the door if possible. Refer to section 5.0 if the wall space beside the door is limited.
4. Do not alter the legibility of the tactile information on the sign by drilling the sign for mounting screws, etc. See 4.4, Installation of tactile signage on rough/uneven surfaces for alternative mounting techniques.
5. Prior to installation of 'Exit' or either of the 'Stairwell' signs, it is recommended that the actual life safety classification of the stairways and/or doorways being identified be verified with the appropriate life safety personnel.
6. Prior to installing the signs in heritage buildings, coordinate the location and installation of the signs with the appropriate representative of the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office.

We trust that this guide will assist in the successful installation of the Federal Identity Program tactile signage. However, should you require assistance in determining your signage requirements, you may wish to contact the PWGSC Architectural and Engineering Services Accessibility Coordinator in your region.

## How to Order Tactile Signage

A multi-year National Master Standing Offer (NMSO) agreement for the supply of the TBS Federal Identity Program tactile signs illustrated in section 3.0 of the FIP Tactile Signage Installation Guide has been awarded to:

### Eye Catch Signs

2482 Maynard Street

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Canada B3K 3V4

Telephone: (902) 423-3309

Facsimile: (902) 423-6144

Internet Address: [eyecatch@atcon.com](mailto:eyecatch@atcon.com)

The NMSO, which went into effect January 1997, is effective for one year with an option to renew for two additional one year terms.

When ordering the tactile signs, please specify:

- NMSO number EJ116-6-0001/001/CM
- the reference code for the signs required (located below the sign illustrations in section 3.0)
- the quantities of signs required (i.e. ATM-EI, TAH-F1, etc).
- any support panels required for installation of signs on rough surfaces (refer to section 4.4).
- any backing panels required to install the signs on glass (refer to section 4.5).
- If you require further assistance in placing an order for
- the tactile signage, you may also contact:

### Signage Coordinators

Buildings Directorate

Architectural and Engineering Services

Real Property Services

Public Works and Government Services Canada

Telephone: (819) 775-4501 or 775-4502

Facsimile: (819) 775-4081



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## Bibliography

CAN/CSA-B651-95 *Barrier-Free Design: Public Safety A National Standard of Canada*, Canadian Standards Association, September, 1995.

CAN/CSA-Z321-96 *Signs and Symbols for the Workplace*, Canadian Standards Association, 1996.

*Federal Identity Program Manual*, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 1992.

*Treasury Board Manual*, Chapter 1-6, Accessibility, November 15, 1993.

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