

DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE - Local Law 47 of 2012

Local Law 47 of 2012 (*LL 47/2012*) ensures that people with disabilities are able to appropriately access and use buildings throughout our City. The law adds additional provisions to the NYC building code for signage indicating a building's nearest accessible entrance, public toilet, and elevator, where a limited number of such building elements are required to be accessible. The text of the law may be viewed at the following link: http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/buildings/local_laws/ll47of2012.pdf¹ LL47 is included in the 2014 New York City Building Code under Chapter 11, Sections 1101.3.3 and 1110.2.

Signage indicating accessible building elements is already required by both New York City building code and the federal 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design. The innovation of *LL 47/2012* is that it uses signage to make buildings more accessible, not merely to indicate accessibility. For example, signage at lockable accessible entrances must include a telephone number or other instructions to gain access. And, signage at inaccessible elements directing people to accessible elements must be placed close enough to the path of travel such that people with disabilities will not be required to retrace the approach route from the inaccessible element.

LL 47/2012 is retroactive (on or before August 1, 2013) for entrance signage, which means that all existing buildings that do not have all entrances accessible (with accessible and inaccessible entrances) must have code-compliant directional signage at the inaccessible entrances, and accessible entrances must have code-compliant accessible signage. In existing buildings where an inaccessible public toilet room, bathing facility, or an elevator without signage is undergoing renovations, or where such elements become subject to the 2008 or 2014 NYC Building Code because of a change in occupancy or other reasons, directional signage is triggered and must be installed to indicate the route to the nearest accessible element that provides the same function within the building.

SIGNAGE TYPES:

- I. **International Symbol of Accessibility** (NYC updated symbol, summer 2013)



Example (ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCE)

¹ Please note that the code text added by *LL 47/2012* to **Section 28-101.4.3** of the 2008 *NYC Administrative Code* has been moved to **Section 1101.3.3** of the 2014 *NYC Building Code*.

- International symbol of accessibility
- Text in English/Spanish with corresponding Braille strip below

WHERE TO POST	ADDITIONAL INFO REQUIRED
Accessible entrances where not all entrances are accessible	Contact telephone number or instructions to gain access if entrance is locked at all times or locked when building is otherwise open
Accessible toilet/bathing room where not all toilet/bathing rooms are accessible	Unisex symbol, where an accessible, unisex toilet room is permitted. Family/Assisted-use toilet room, where such toilet room is required.
Accessible elevators where not all elevators are accessible	Accessibility signage not required, but recommended to avoid confusion

II. Directional Signage²



Example (INACCESSIBLE ENTRANCE)

- International symbol of accessibility and large directional arrow facing the same way
- Text in English/Spanish with corresponding Braille strip below
- Several of these signs may be required along the route

WHERE TO POST
Inaccessible entrances where an accessible entrance exists
Inaccessible toilet/bathing room where not all toilet/bathing rooms are accessible
Inaccessible elevators where not all elevators are accessible

LL47/2012 Reference Documents

- *New York City Building Code* (2008 and 2014); **Section BC 1110, Signage**. This section of the code contains additional information regarding required sign locations, directional signage and other signage. **Chapter 11** is the accessibility chapter of the building code.

² Directional signage must comply with either **Section 703.2 (VISUAL CHARACTERS)** or **Sections 703.3 (RAISED CHARACTERS)** and **703.4 (BRAILLE)** of *ICC A117.1*.

A117.1 (2003) and (2009) *Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities*; **Section 703.2** through **Section 703.6**. This document contains technical requirements for accessible signage: case, style, character height/width/stroke, spacing, height above floor, location, finish, contrast and other relevant information.

Directional Signage Installation Example:



FAQ's

Q. What if I do not install accessible/directional signage?

A. Accessible and Directional signage requirements are enforced by the NYC Department of Buildings. You may be issued a violation and subject to a fine if accessible/directional signage is not provided.

Q. I have one accessible entrance and one inaccessible entrance, what do I have to do?

A. The accessible entrance must be provided with an accessible entrance sign and the inaccessible entrance with a directional sign pointing to the accessible entrance. In cases where the accessible entrance is not within sight, directional signs should be installed as needed along the route from the inaccessible entrance to the accessible entrance.

Q. I have already installed an accessible entrance sign at the accessible entrance and a directional sign at the inaccessible entrance because of the 2010 ADA Standards. Do I have to do anything else?

A. If the accessible entrance is not subject to locking during normal business hours, and the sign(s) comply with the 2010 ADA Standards, those sign(s) are considered acceptable. However, if the accessible entrance is subject to locking during normal business hours, or is locked all the time, and the accessible entrance sign that you installed does not include contact telephone number or instructions to gain access, such information must be added either to the sign you installed, or onto a separate sign adjacent to the current sign.

Q. Where can I obtain compliant signage?

A. Compliant signage can be easily obtained on the internet or through local sign shops.

Q. What determines the use of visual or tactile signage?

A. Visual signage is unreadable by people with sight disabilities. People who are blind read either tactile characters or Braille, but many of them do not read both. Tactile signage is recommended for directional signage with visual signage used as a supplement.

Q. Where can the technical requirement for signage be found?

A. The technical requirements are located in the 2014 NYC Building Code reference standard ICC A117.1-2009 Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities (or A117.1-2003 for the 2008 NYCBC), Section 703 Signs. Copies may be purchased through the International Code Council online bookstore {{{Insert link}}}.

Q. What are the mounting location requirements?

A. Tactile requirements may be found in the following sections of A117.1-2009: 703.3 Raised characters; 703.3.10 Height above floor; 703.3.11 Location. Braille requirements may be found in the following sections: 703.4 Braille, 703.4.5 Mounting Height. Visual signage requirements may be found in the following sections: 703.2 Visual Characters; 703.2.9 Height Above Floor.

At a viewing distance of less than 6 feet (for greater distances see Table 703.2.4), visual sign characters shall be 40 inches minimum above the floor of the viewing position, measured to the baseline of the character. Raised characters shall be 48 inches minimum above the floor, measured to the baseline of the lowest raised character. Locate signs alongside a door at the latch side so that a clear floor area 18 inches by 18 inches minimum adjacent to the opening and centered on the characters. See the above referenced sections for additional information and figures.

Q. What size should the sign be?

A. Overall size is not specified, but visual and raised character specifications are. Overall size is determined by the content and compliance with the specific component and aesthetic considerations such as the amount of negative space used for background.

Q. What are the finish, contrast, material, and color requirements?

A. Characters and their background shall have a non-glare finish. Characters shall contrast with their background, with either light characters on a dark background, or dark characters on a light background.

Material is not specified and may vary depending upon the building aesthetics. Color is not specified, but generally a blue background with white characters is commonly used.

Q. How often or how many directional signs are required?

A. Starting at the inaccessible entrances, toilets and elevators, enough signs should be installed to provide sufficient continuance guidance to the nearest accessible entrance, public toilet, and elevator, where a limited number of such building elements are required to be accessible. Each facility varies regarding size, configuration, stories and level changes, distance from non-accessible to the accessible element and other factors.

Q. Is there a lighting requirement?

A. There is no lighting requirement, but both exterior and interior directional signs should be visible under ambient light levels.

Q. Does the content need to be updated?

A. Yes, if necessary to keep the information accurate (e.g., a phone number to gain access may change).

Q. I have an accessible Restaurant and have included directional signage, is there a way to promote my business as wheelchair-friendly?

A. Yes through the MOPD Restaurant Access Program (RAP). RAP is designed to provide a restaurant with the opportunity, if it chooses to do so, to advertise the fact that it is wheelchair-friendly.