



Design for access and mobility

Part 4.2: Means to assist the orientation of people with vision impairment— Wayfinding signs

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Australia



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- Association of Consultants in Access Australia
- Australian Association of Occupational Therapists
- Australian Blindness Forum
- Australian Building Codes Board
- Australian Industry Group
- Australian Institute of Architects
- Australian Institute of Building Surveyors
- AUSTROADS
- Blind Citizens Australia
- Consumers Federation of Australia
- Deafness Forum of Australia
- Housing Industry Association
- Master Builders Australia
- Mobility Research Centre New Zealand
- Physical Disability Australia
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- The Blind Foundation

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Preface

This Standard was prepared by the Standards Australia Committee ME-064, *Access for People with Disabilities*.

The objective of this Standard is to assist in the provision of a built environment that is legible to all people with particular attention to people who are blind or have low vision, through the provision of tactile signs. Other forms of complementary wayfinding including new technologies are not addressed by this Standard.

This Standard provides minimum design requirements and additional design guidance for other types of tactile signs, not required by this Standard but which may be provided as part of a wayfinding system.

This Standard is part of a series that comprises the following:

- (a) AS 1428.1, *Design for access and mobility, Part 1: General requirements for access — New building work*
- (b) AS 1428.2, *Design for access and mobility, Part 2: Enhanced and additional requirements — Buildings and facilities*
- (c) AS/NZS 1428.4.1, *Design for access and mobility, Part 4.1: Means to assist the orientation of people with vision impairment — Tactile ground surface indicators*
- (d) AS 1428.4.2, *Design for access and mobility, Part 4.2: Means to assist the orientation of people with vision impairment — Wayfinding signs*
- (e) AS 1428.5, *Design for access and mobility, Part 5: Communication for people who are deaf or hearing impaired*

The term 'shall' has been used in this Standard for mandatory requirements and the term 'should' has been used for desirable (best practice) and/or other measures which, while recommended, are not considered to be mandatory.

The terms 'normative' and 'informative' have been used in this Standard to define the application of the appendices to which they apply. A 'normative' appendix is an integral part of a Standard, whereas an 'informative' appendix is only for information and guidance.

The use of notes in this Standard are of an advisory nature only to give explanation and guidance to the user on recommended design considerations or technical procedures, or to provide an informative cross-reference to other documents or publications.

Statements expressed in mandatory terms in notes to tables and figures are deemed to be requirements of this Standard.

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Foreword

All people in a community use wayfinding processes to navigate within the built environment. Use is made of visual cues, familiar building elements and formal visual information to understand location in an environment and determine an appropriate path to the desired destination.

Wayfinding is of particular importance to people who are blind or have low vision as they cannot utilize many of the visual cues available to people who are sighted. The ease and accuracy with which a person who is blind or who has low vision can find their way through a specific environment is dependent upon many factors including the complexity of the physical environment and the number of wayfinding decisions required to reach their destination.

Wayfinding systems serve various purposes, such as enabling users to —

- (a) identify a building or place and the range of facilities and points of interest present within a place or building;
- (b) understand the physical relationship between these points; and
- (c) determine an appropriate path of travel to reach a required destination or point of interest for their individual needs.

A developed wayfinding system for a building or place can enable continuous pathways that are legible to people with disabilities and should provide information for users to—

- (i) confirm they are at the correct start or finish point of an individual journey;
- (ii) identify their location within a building or an external space;
- (iii) reinforce they are travelling in the right direction;
- (iv) orient themselves within a building or an external space;
- (v) understand the location and any potential hazards; and
- (vi) identify their destination on arrival.

While this Standard will benefit many people in the community, it has been developed to specifically provide static wayfinding sign information for people who are blind or who have low vision.

As wayfinding decisions are generally based on more than just signs, the incorporation of other elements such as dynamic signs, architectural features, audible communication and tactile features should be considered as part of a wayfinding system.

Where static signs are used, people who are blind or have low vision need information that is provided in raised tactile text, symbols and braille formats that are consistently applied. Information that is visually clear and has a contrast with its background can also be used by people with low vision.

The development of this Standard has been informed by input from a wide range of community stakeholders including people who are blind or have low vision.

Australian Standard[®]

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Section 1 Scope and general

1.1 Scope

This Standard specifies the minimum requirements for tactile signs to enable adult pedestrians, particularly those who are blind or have low vision, to locate and enter buildings and facilities in an independent manner.

Additionally, this Standard specifies the minimum design requirements for tactile signs provided for the purpose of identifying rooms or facilities, and provides guidance on the design of tactile maps.

NOTE 1 The Disability (Access to Premises—Buildings) Standards (Premises Standards) and National Construction Code (NCC) set out requirements for signs and other features of the accessible built environment not covered in this Standard, such as lifts, hearing augmentation, tactile ground surface indicators, regulatory and safety signs, glazing, lighting, car parking and toilet numbers, and distribution.

NOTE 2 For more information about designing a wayfinding system see [Appendix A](#).

NOTE 3 For more information about the orientation and mobility needs of people who are blind or have low vision see [Appendix B](#).

NOTE 4 The requirements for assisting people to exit a building in an emergency are considered outside the scope of this Standard and are outlined in the general egress provisions of the NCC.

NOTE 5 Technology has been excluded due to its rapidly expanding nature.

1.2 Application

This Standard can be used by designers, wayfinding and sign designers, access professionals, facility managers, specifiers, developers and regulators.

1.3 Normative references

The following are the normative documents referenced in this Standard:

AS 1428.1 *Design for access and mobility, Part 1: General requirements for access — New building work*

AS 1428.4.1 *Design for access and mobility, Part 4.1 Means to assist the orientation of people with vision impairment — Tactile ground surface indicators*

NOTE Documents referenced for informative purposes are listed in the Bibliography.

1.4 Definitions

For the purpose of this Standard, the definitions below apply.

1.4.1

accessible

having features to enable use by people with a disability