

A perfect sign
cannot fix an
inaccessible route.

A design and procurement checklist for accessible
signage on Indian commercial projects.

Start with the *Harmonised* Guidelines.

Review the current Harmonised Guidelines and Standards for Universal Accessibility in India alongside the applicable codes, local rules, client standards and whatever the approving authority requires for your project. This checklist helps you design. It does not certify anything.

Confirm these before you design a single sign

- A continuous accessible path runs from arrival to destination.
- The accessible entrance is identified clearly from outside.
- Directions exist to ramps, lifts, accessible toilets and assistance points.
- Information appears before a user commits to a route they cannot reverse.
- Tactile signs and maps have safe approach space to be read.
- The sign system describes the route that exists on site, not one from an old drawing.

Ten decisions that make or break legibility

01

Plain names

Familiar public terms, used identically everywhere.

03

Open letterforms

No condensed faces, no long runs of capitals, no tight spacing.

05

Never colour alone

Pair every colour with a number, word or symbol.

07

Tactile and Braille

Character form, spacing, height and reach. Get a specialist.

09

Control glare

Test a sample on site at different times of day.

02

One decision

Answer the current question. Not the whole campus.

04

Real contrast

Under the actual lighting, not on a calibrated monitor.

06

Consistent symbols

Verify every arrow by walking the route it points along.

08

Findable placement

Clear of door swings, queues, furniture and deep recesses.

10

More than one form

Visual, tactile, audible, human and digital, coordinated.

The worst sign on site is usually the *temporary* one.

Diversions during construction bypass every standard applied to the permanent family, and they appear exactly when the building is hardest to navigate. Design an accessible temporary-sign template before anyone needs it, and hand it to the site team.

Which signs get reviewed first

01 Entrance and route

Accessible entrance, accessible path, assistance points.

02 Vertical circulation

Lift, stair and floor identification.

03 Toilets and rooms

Toilet identification and permanent-space identification.

04 Emergency

Egress and emergency information.

05 Directories and parking

Maps, directories, parking and passenger drop-off.

Never tender accessibility on renders alone

- Sign-type drawings and the message schedule.
- Text case, typeface and minimum sizes by reading distance.
- Colour and contrast requirements, with the actual materials named.
- Symbol and arrow standards.
- Tactile character and Braille requirements where they apply.
- Mounting heights, offsets and approach zones.
- Substrate, finish, edge and glare requirements.
- Sample and inspection requirements, plus the governing standard.

Test whether a real person can do all six

- Locate the sign from the approach route.
- Read or perceive it at the intended distance.
- Reach the tactile information without obstruction.
- Understand the language, the symbol and the arrow.
- Follow the complete route, including every change of level.
- Recover after missing one cue.

Accessible does not mean visually *generic*.

A system can carry distinctive materials, pattern, landmarks and tone while protecting legibility and access. The constraint is useful rather than limiting: the identity must never sit on top of the information a person needs to move through the building.

Ask the vendor for a compliant *sample*.

Not a sentence confirming compliance. On accessibility-critical projects, design and sample approval should run through your appointed compliance specialist before anything goes to bulk production. We build to that gate.

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