

2.11 Submittal Guidelines for Emergency Evacuation Signs (2022)

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 19, Section 3.09, the California Health and Safety Code Section 13220; 2022SFFC, Section 404.2.3.2 .

Purpose: The purpose of developing comprehensive guidelines is to provide consistent methods to assist designers in attaining rapid approval of proposed signage, and to explain the approval process for these signs.

Scope: The guidelines in this administrative bulletin shall apply to both new buildings and the replacement of signs in existing buildings where evacuation signs are required. Previously approved signs in existing buildings may remain unless floor remodeling results in the sign having incorrect information. Existing signs that can be modified to clearly denote minor changes may remain as well. The information provided herein details the San Francisco Fire Department's minimum requirements for emergency evacuation signs. Any additional information provided will be reviewed on a case by case basis prior to approval. NOTE: Additional information may not be desirable as it can complicate the sign and add confusion.

Approval Process: Prior to fabrication the layout of the sign must be approved by the San Francisco Fire Department (SFFD) Plan Check Division. The approval process requires a building permit which shall be obtained at the Department of Building Inspection, located at 49 South Van Ness Ave. St. Evacuation signs for construction projects which have any amount of public funding, involve buildings owned or leased by the city, or projects being funded or enabled by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, the Mayor's Office of Community Investment, or the Mayor's Office of Housing must also be reviewed by the Mayor's Office on Disability (MOD). Designers should note that MOD may have more stringent requirements, and should consult with representatives from that agency prior to designing signage for these occupancies.

- I. **Where & What Content is Required.** Evacuation Signage and Emergency Procedure Information is required as follows:
 - A. Office buildings two or more stories in height (except high-rise buildings) shall have one of the following:
 1. An approved emergency procedures information handout (pamphlet, brochure, or leaflet) available upon entering the building that provides the same information required for evacuation signage; or,
 2. Evacuation signs (floor plans) as detailed in the submittal guidelines below. Signs shall be posted at the entrances to all required exit stairs, every elevator landing, and immediately inside all public entrances to the building. On a case-by-case basis, and where the elevator lobby is located near the entrance to the building, the omission of the sign at the building entry may be approved at the discretion of the plan reviewer.
 - B. Hotels, motels and lodging houses shall provide evacuation signage as stated in subsection A.2 above, and additionally:
 1. Every guest room shall have emergency procedure information printed on a floor plan and posted on the interior of or immediately adjacent to the entry door to the room. This floor plan shall be posted with its bottom edge at approximately, but not more than four feet from the floor.
 2. People who are blind or have low vision shall receive instructions of a type they can utilize such as audio taped instructions or large print format.
 3. The management shall provide a place on the registration so that guests with disabilities may be identified who require special emergency evacuation assistance. A roster listing rooms assigned to these guests shall be kept at the registration desk.
 - C. High-rise office buildings – Evacuation signage as listed in section A.2 above is required, and additionally:
 1. Owners/operators of high-rise buildings shall maintain a list of all permanent tenants who have special emergency evacuation needs.
 2. This list shall indicate the permanent work location of these individuals. The list shall be available in the building manager's office, or other location approved by the Department.
 - D. Apartment houses two stories or more in height that contain three or more dwelling units, and where the front door opens into an interior hallway or an interior lobby area:

1. The owner or operator shall provide specific emergency procedures to be followed in the event of fire, including procedures for persons with mobility disabilities.
 2. Evacuation signs as described in this bulletin shall be provided in every elevator lobby or at the landing, at an intermediate point of any hallway exceeding 100 feet in length, at all hallway intersections, and immediately inside all public entrances to the building.
- II. **Submittal Requirements.** Two sets of conceptual drawings shall be submitted with an application for a building permit. The architect or Designer/Contractor is required to stamp and sign on the plans. The signs may be reduced on the submittal plans provided the minimum sheet size is 11" X 17" and the finished dimensions of the sign are shown on the plan. Changes or alterations to signs or tenant spaces will require submission of revised drawings. The emergency evacuation signs permit shall be a "FIRE" permit only. The permit valuation cost shall be determined based on the current "DBI" cost schedule.
- A. The following information shall be included as part of the submittal package:
1. The name and phone number of the owner or manager of the property.
 2. The address of the building including block and lot number.
 3. The company name, address and phone number of the sign manufacturer.
 4. A copy of the most current approved architectural plan(s) for the floor or floors for which signage is being submitted. When no approved plans are available, this item may be omitted.
 5. A floor plan, for all floors where signs are to be installed, shall be provided showing the exact location of the sign installation including an elevation view showing the height of the sign above finished floor (bottom edge of sign shall be not more than 48" above the floor per Title 19).
 6. Signs shall include the following information: (see three attached examples)
 - a) A floor plan which meets the requirements of Item 7 below and which depicts the building address and represented floor and identifies the location of exits, fire alarm initiating stations (if the building is required to have a fire alarm), areas of refuge (if the building is required to have such areas), additional areas where assistance for people with mobility impairments will be available (for example, where evacuation devices for people with mobility impairments are located), if the building has such areas, and such other information. Floor plans shall be oriented to the position of the viewer. A single sign may be submitted that shows a typical configuration, when applicable, for multiple floors with a descriptor "TYP FLOORS 1-5". Each finished sign must indicate the actual floor it serves. When this option is used a textual note adjacent to the "YOU ARE HERE" symbol shall state that the finished sign will have the symbol in the appropriate location.
 - b) If the building has a fire alarm system, what the audible component of the fire alarm sounds like and what the visual component of the fire alarm looks like.
 - c) Emergency telephone number 911 for Fire/Police/Medical.
 - d) The prohibition of elevator use during emergencies (see example 1 & 2). If the building is equipped with elevators for self-evacuation (see example 3).
 - e) Information directed to people with disabilities instructing them what to do and/or where to go in the event of an emergency. Such information shall include reference to areas of safe refuge and/or other areas where assistance for such individuals will be available (for example, where evacuation devices for people with mobility impairments are located), if the building has such areas. The locations of these areas should be depicted on the evacuation sign floor plan.
 - f) A directional arrow pointing "North" shall be provided.
 - g) Location of Two-Way Emergency Communication System/s call Boxes or Emergency Phones.
 7. Plans will be accepted with the following variations from those listed in Section 8 below: (see examples)
 - a) Black and white signs will be accepted, provided the colors of the symbols on the finished signs, are designated with a text notation.
 - b) The text sizes may be described with a text notation.
 8. The signs shall comply with all of the following specifications:
 - a) Signs shall comply with standards for informational and directional signs in the California Building

Code regarding non-glare surfaces, high contrast between text and symbols and background, and non-decorative typesyles.

- b) Signs shall either be enclosed by a frame a minimum of 1/2" wide or have a header and footer color strip a minimum of 1/2" wide that contrasts both with the wall on which the plan is mounted and with the plan background. Header shall comply with item D below
- c) All text shall have a stroke width which is a minimum of 20 percent of character height
- d) Signs shall have a solid header with the text "EVACUATION PLAN" in contrasting uppercase letters no less than 3/4" in height
- e) The building address and floor level being depicted, the text "CALL 911, FIRE/POLICE/MEDICAL" and the admonition to use the stairs instead of the elevator in the event of an emergency shall be a minimum of 5/8 inch font. The text "DURING EMERGENCIES USE EMERGENCY PHONES" shall be accentuated by a solid band background with light or white colored text, solid lines above and below the text, or other approved method to emphasize the text.
- f) Instructions to persons with disabilities shall be represented with a minimum 5/8" font for the words "PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES" with the remainder of the instruction in minimum 3/8" font. The text "PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES" shall be accentuated by a solid band background with contrasting text, solid lines above and below the text, or other approved method to emphasize the text. All text shall be in uppercase text or upper and lower case, except for the admonition to use the stairs instead of the elevator, which shall be all uppercase
- g) Information regarding the appearance and sound of the fire alarm, if one is required, shall be a minimum of 3/16 inch high in upper and lower case text
- h) Plans shall have a background of white, off-white, or warm white with black or dark gray (minimum 75% contrast) text. Floor plan and corridors shall be outlined with a black stroke a minimum of 1/16" width
- i) The floor plan shall include street labels for any streets that border the building and shall be a minimum 1/4" high font in all upper case text
- j) Floor plan key labels shall be a minimum of 3/16" high in upper and lower case text. Symbols in the plan key shall have a width, height, or diameter of at least 5/8". Stroke on stair symbol and elevator symbol shall be a minimum of 1/16" wide. Arrowhead on exit route symbol shall be a minimum of 1/4" wide at its base
- k) Symbols on the floor plan for fire alarm pulls, elevators, exit stairs, and areas of refuge shall have a width, height or diameter of at least 1/2". The "You Are Here" symbol shall have a diameter of at least 5/8". The stroke on the symbols for the exit stairs and the elevators shall be a minimum of 1/16" wide. Arrowhead symbols indicating the exit route shall be a minimum of 1/4" wide at its base, and the stroke on the path of travel symbols shall be a minimum of 1/8" wide. Each arrow symbol shall be a nominal 3/8" long from tip to end of stroke, and 1/8" shall separate each arrow from the next. All symbols used on the plan shall be included in the symbols legend
- l) The following symbols shall be used:
 - i) "You Are Here" shall be represented by a goldenrod-colored circle with a black symbolic representation of a human figure enclosed within
 - ii) The location of fire alarm pull stations shall be represented by a bright red square with radius corners with a white bold uppercase letter "A" enclosed within
 - iii) Exit stairs shall be represented by a series of a minimum of six parallel bright green lines, bisected by one green line
 - iv) Elevators shall be represented by a rectangle outlined in black except at the door opening, and shaded in gray, with black diagonal lines crossing to each corner
 - v) Areas of refuge shall be represented by a "Federal Blue" square with radius corners with a white International Symbol of Accessibility enclosed within. (Note: The ISA symbol shall also be included elsewhere on the plan to accompany any additional text that gives special instructions for evacuation to persons who cannot use stairways during an emergency.) The exit route shall be represented by a bright green arrow followed by a series of bright green dashed lines

- m) The floor plan shall have all enclosed areas lightly shaded, without interior walls or details. Corridors shall be a minimum of 1/2" wide. Exit doors along the exit route shall be represented architecturally, in the direction of opening. All exits to the exterior shall be marked with the word "Exit" in uppercase characters a minimum of 3/16" high

III. Additional Design Considerations: Designers of Evacuation signage shall be aware of the following items:

- A. Exit paths for tenant spaces shall not pass through locked elevator lobbies.
- B. Signs shall be installed with correct orientation as viewed from occupants' perspective.
- C. Subsequent requests to lock elevator lobby doors after evacuation sign approval and or installation will require evacuation signage to be verified for accuracy.

Although not mandatory, the designer may elect to meet with the district Fire inspector prior to fabrication of the sign at the jobsite to verify that the layout and orientation of the sign are correct. This is highly recommended when the plan submittal does not include the approved architectural plans.

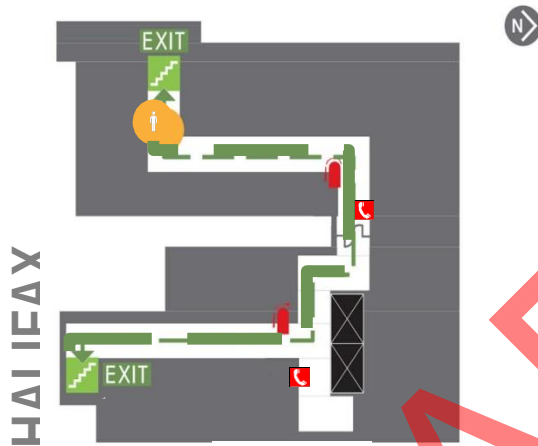
Final Approval: Prior to final approval of your building permit, a District Fire Inspector will inspect the installation, verifying that the signage is representative of the actual floor plan and consistent with the submittal. After the sign is installed, you may request an inspection at (415) 554-8927.

**SAMPLE EVACUATION PLANS
ON NEXT THREE PAGES**

EVACUATION PLAN

555 BIRCH TREE ST - FLOOR 2

BIRCH TREE STREET



PINE LANE



YOU ARE HERE



EXIT



EXIT PATH



EMERGENCY TELEPHONE



ELEVATORS



EXTINGUISHER



HORIZONTAL EXIT
(IF APPLICABLE)

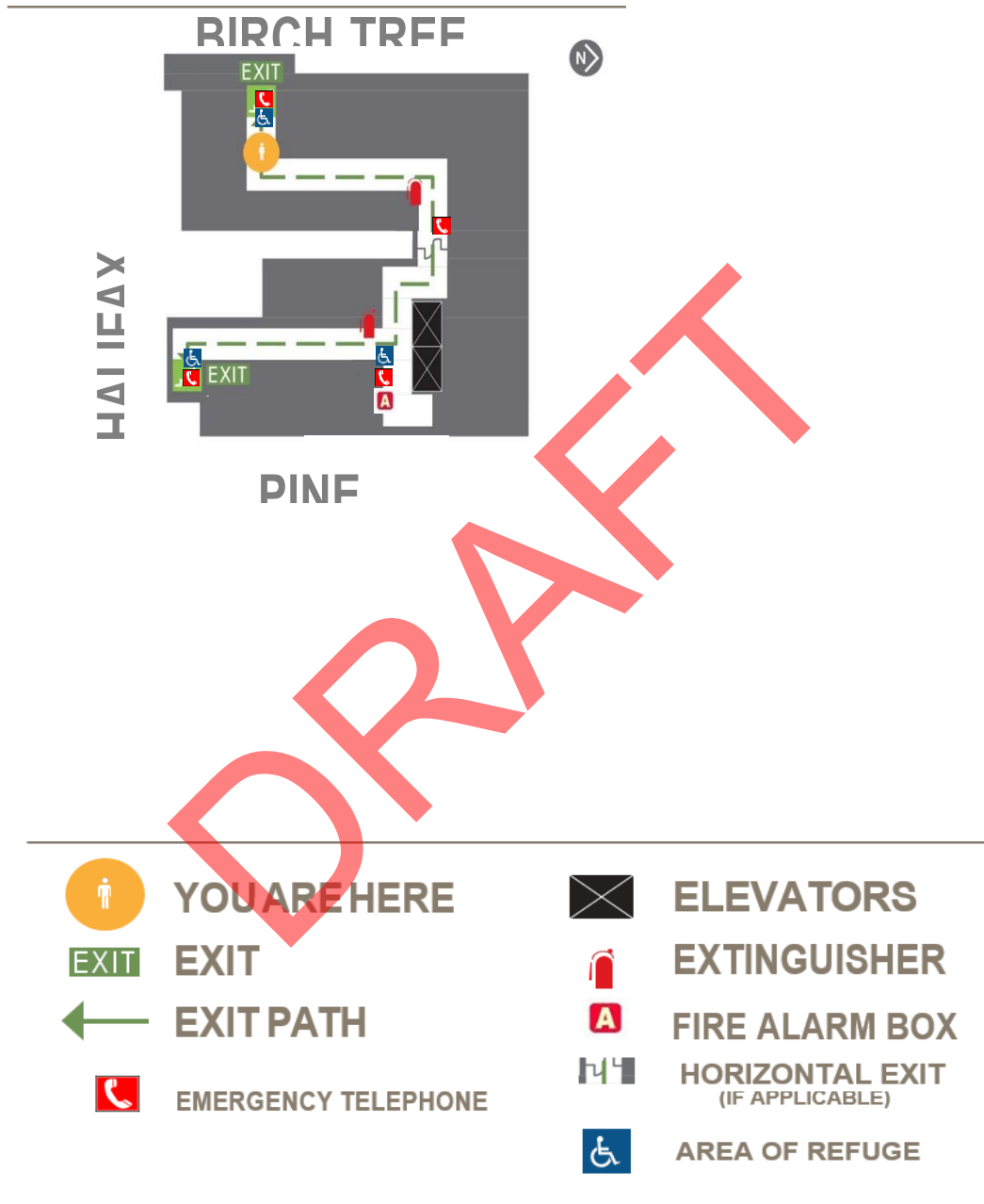
**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY USE EMERGENCY
TELEPHONE OR CALL 911 FOR FIRE/POLICE/MEDICAL**

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, PULL FIRE ALARM, USE EXIT STAIRS, DO NOT USE
ELEVATOR.

FIRE ALARM SOUNDS LIKE A THREE PULSE HORN AND STROBE LIGHTS WILL FLASH

EVACUATION PLAN

555 BIRCH TREE ST - FLOOR 2



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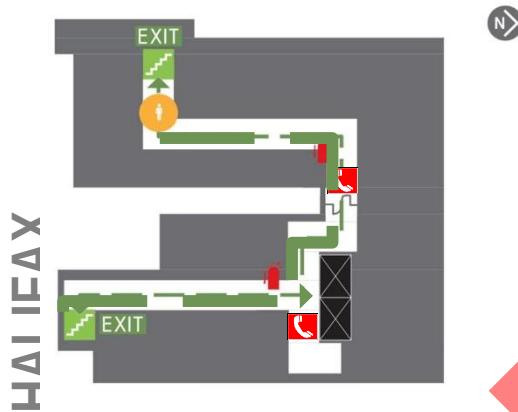
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

PROCEED TO AREA OF REFUGE AND USE EMERGENCY TELEPHONE
OR CALL 911 FOR FIRE/POLICE/MEDICAL

EVACUATION PLAN

555 BIRCH TREE ST - FLOOR 2

BIRCH TREE STREET



PINE LANE



YOU ARE HERE



EXIT



EXIT PATH



ELEVATORS
(FOR SELF-EVACUATION)



EXTINGUISHER



HORIZONTAL EXIT
(IF APPLICABLE)



EMERGENCY TELEPHONE

THIS BUILDING IS EQUIPPED WITH ELEVATORS FOR SELF-EVACUATION DURING EMERGENCIES. IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY, USE ELEVATORS OR STAIRS TO EVACUATE BASED ON VOICE AND DIGITAL DISPLAY SIGNS ANNOUNCEMENTS.

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY USE EMERGENCY TELEPHONE OR
CALL 911 FIRE/POLICE/MEDICAL**