Sign Design

Sign Creation Guidelines

Sign design and layout is highly dependent upon location and application, however, some general assumptions may be made to assist in developing signs. The following outlines some of the general considerations for sign design.

Spacing

- Interline Spacing should be approximately ¾ the average of capital or uppercase letter heights in adjacent lines of letters.
- The spacing to the top and bottom borders should be approximately equal to the average of the letter height of the adjacent line of letters.
- The lateral spacing to the vertical borders should be essentially the same as the height of the largest letter.
- A spacing of approximately 1 times the uppercase letter height used in a line of cop should be applied in the following instances:
  - Between words
  - Between words and arrow
  - Between a letter and an arrow

Spacing between a word and numbers in a line of copy should be approximately 1 ½ times the upper case letter height used in that line of copy.

Fonts

Effective in 2014, the Iowa DOT will discontinue the use of Clearview fonts for new guide signs in favor of Standard Highway Font (Highway Gothic) 2K series fonts. Table 1-1 may be used as a guide for converting signs designed using the Clearview font series to Standard Highway Fonts. Existing signs using Clearview fonts shall be updated to Standard Highway Fonts during the typical sign replacement schedule.

Standard Highway Font (2k Series)	Clearview Font
B 2K	1-W
C 2K	2-W
D 2K	3-W
E 2K	4-W
E-MOD 2K	5-W
F	6-W

Table 1-1

Exit Direction Sign

A guide sign which repeats route and destination information shown on the advance guide sign and which is placed near the exit ramp to reassure the motorist of destinations reached from the interchange. An example of an exit direction sign is shown in Figure 1-1. Standard layouts for the Exit Plaques can be found here: Exit Number Panel Series.sgn

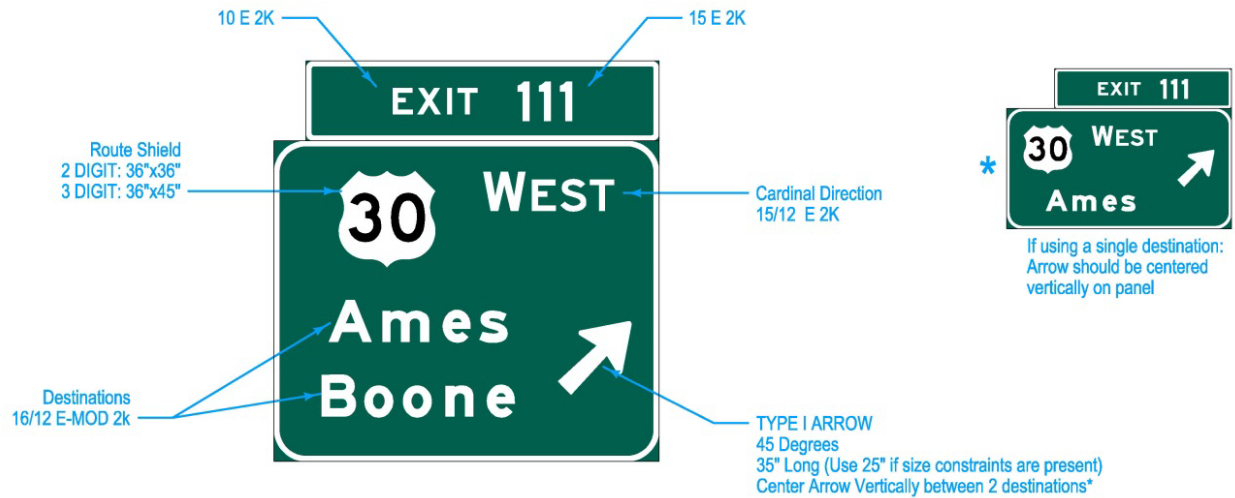**Figure 1-1**

Supplemental Guide Sign

Supplemental guide signs are normally installed between the advance guide sign and the exit direction sign and provide information on additional, approved supplemental destinations accessible from the next exit. An example of a Supplemental Guide Sign is shown in Figure 1-2.

Figure 1-2

Advance Guide Sign

A guide sign which is located well in advance (typically 1 mile) of an exit point and which gives notice of routes and principal destinations served by the next interchange and the distance to that interchange. An example of an Advance Guide Sign is shown in Figure 1-3. Figure 1-3 also shows an optional "EXIT ONLY" sign, for use at interchanges with "dropped lanes." Standard layouts for the Exit Plaques can be found here: Exit Only Series.sgn
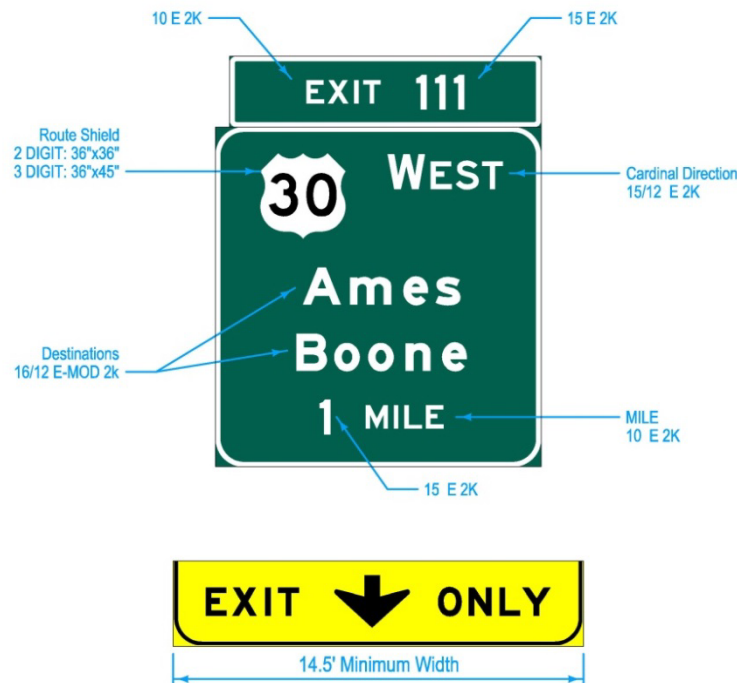
Figure 1-3

Exit Gore Sign

Exit Gore signs are normally installed in the area between the main roadway and a ramp, just beyond where the ramp branches from the main roadway. Standard layouts for Exit Gore signs can be found here: Exit Gore Series.sgn

"Type B" Sign Number

The alphanumerical code used to identify a Type B sign as used on letting plans. An example is shown below in Figure 1-4. Type "B" Sign Number is typically shown on Tabulation 190-50, plan view layout sheets, cross section sheets, and sign detail sheet.

 A Typical Type B Sign Number appears as follows:

29-78-3 M107

Whereas:

29	Route number
78	County Number
3	Exit Number
M	Roadway Designation (M = Mainline, R = Ramp, S = Sideroad)
107	Sequential Number

- Sequential Number is determined by the prevailing direction of travel, starting with the first sign applicable per exit.

  o Northbound/Eastbound Travel: e.g. 001, 002, 003…
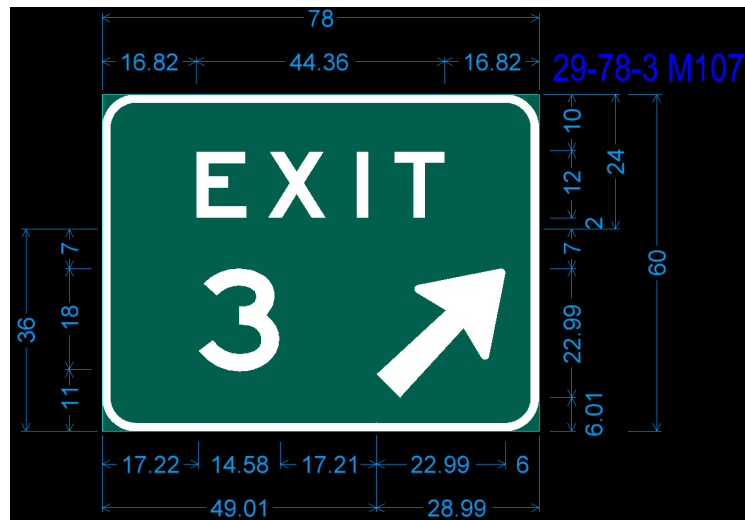 o Southbound/Westbound Travel: e.g. 101, 102, 103…

Figure 1-4

Sign numbers should be added to sign cross sections and detail sheets using the "Place Sign Number Text" tool located in Geopak Design and Computation Manager, shown in Figure 1-5. The fields of the Sign Number tool should be filled in with respect to the sign number to be labeled. Text should be offset vertically and horizontally from the top right corner of the sign equal to ½ the text height. The appropriate text size and offset may be selected in the tool by designating the Text Size by usage (Sign Detail or Cross Section), and Text offset On/Off.
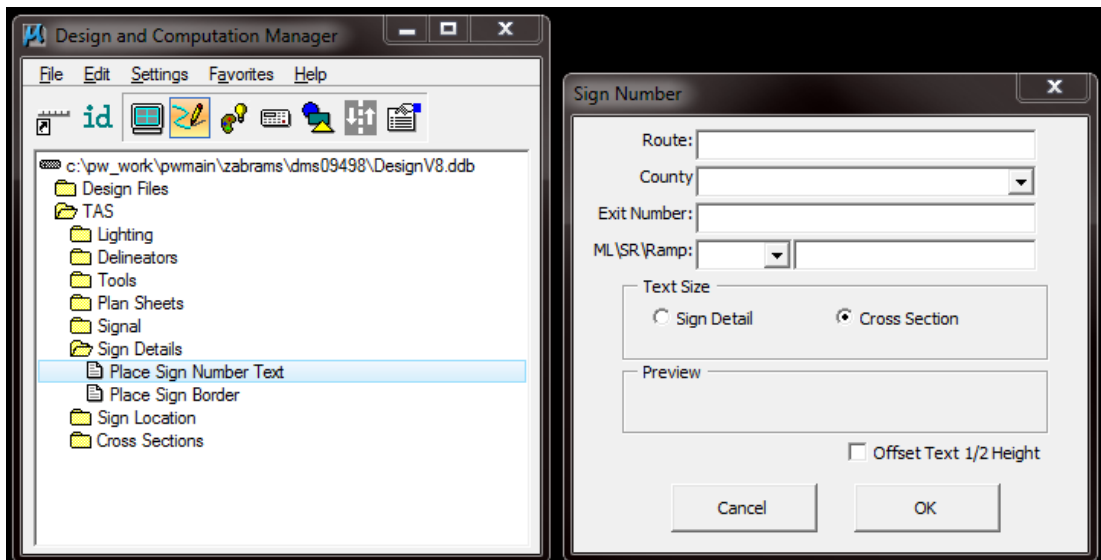

Figure 1-5

Additional information
Information related to selecting Control Cities, Primary Destinations, and Supplementary Destinations can be found in the Iowa DOT Policies and Procedures Manual: Policy 620.10.