
**Public information guidance
systems —**

**Part 3:
Guidelines for the design and use of
information index signs**

Systèmes de guidage destinés à l'information du public —

*Partie 3: Lignes directrices pour la conception et l'utilisation de
panneaux d'information*





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Contents

Page

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Foreword | iv |
| Introduction | v |
| 1 Scope | 1 |
| 2 Normative references | 1 |
| 3 Terms and definitions | 1 |
| 4 General | 2 |
| 5 Preparation | 3 |
| 5.1 Need | 3 |
| 5.2 Brief | 3 |
| 5.3 Information to be included in the brief | 4 |
| 5.4 Gathering data | 4 |
| 5.5 Positioning | 4 |
| 6 Design principles, characteristics and layout of visual elements | 5 |
| 6.1 Design principles | 5 |
| 6.1.1 Legibility | 5 |
| 6.1.2 Conspicuity | 5 |
| 6.1.3 Consistency | 6 |
| 6.1.4 Simplicity | 6 |
| 6.1.5 Prioritization of messages | 6 |
| 6.1.6 Use of languages | 6 |
| 6.1.7 Use of jargon and abbreviations | 6 |
| 6.1.8 Inclusivity (for all potential user groups) | 6 |
| 6.1.9 Environmental sensitivity | 7 |
| 6.2 Characteristics | 7 |
| 6.2.1 Graphical symbols | 7 |
| 6.2.2 Text and numerals | 8 |
| 6.2.3 Colour | 8 |
| 6.3 Title | 8 |
| 6.4 Location information | 9 |
| 6.5 Content information | 9 |
| 6.6 Layout | 10 |
| 6.6.1 Zoning | 10 |
| 6.6.2 Prioritization | 10 |
| 6.6.3 Sequencing | 11 |
| 7 Sign carrier | 11 |
| 7.1 Materials | 11 |
| 7.2 Glare and reflections | 11 |
| 7.3 Illumination | 11 |
| 7.4 Sustainability | 11 |
| 7.5 Non-static application | 11 |
| 8 Inspection and updating | 12 |
| Annex A (informative) Examples of information index signs in typical environments | 13 |
| Annex B (informative) Guidance for the uses of codes on different floors and open areas | 18 |
| Bibliography | 19 |

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 145, *Graphical symbols*, Subcommittee SC 1, *Public information symbols*.

A list of all parts in the ISO 28564 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

Continued growth in travel and mobility within and between countries has generated a growing range of wayfinding guidance systems and styles containing a wide variety of information. Such systems serve various purposes, such as enabling users to:

- understand the range of facilities and points of interest present;
- understand the physical relationship between these facilities and points of interest; and
- determine the best way to reach a required facility or point of interest given their mobility circumstances.

This document is concerned with information index signs used to support wayfinding.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the design and use of information index signs to enable users to assimilate required information swiftly and accurately and act upon the information shown safely and conveniently in multi-floor buildings and open areas. It is not the intention to limit design freedom unnecessarily, but to set guidelines and, where appropriate, specifications which reflect relevant research and best practice.

Where appropriate, as part of an integrated wayfinding system, information index signs are used in association with fixed location plans, maps, and diagrams (see ISO 28564-1), location signs and direction signs (see ISO 28564-2), hand-held maps, and IT applications, as well as human assistance.

This document is intended to be used in conjunction with other parts of ISO 28564.

Public information guidance systems —

Part 3:

Guidelines for the design and use of information index signs

1 Scope

This document specifies requirements and gives a range of guidelines for various stages of preparation, design, construction, inspection and updating that comprise an information index signs used in public places.

This document is applicable to the design and use of information index signs used in public places such as bus and railway stations, airports, shopping centres, stores, hospitals, exhibition halls, sporting and entertainment complexes, urban areas, parks, gardens and countryside, public attractions, museums and commercial office buildings. The design and use of information index signs in working areas can also use the content of this document for reference.

This document is not applicable to those sectors (for example, traffic signs on a public highway) which are subject to regulations or specified design principles. However, in a given public environment or within a wayfinding and signing design brief, where there is sometimes a need for public information to be associated with other messaging, many of the principles contained in this document can be relevant in the planning of a coordinated scheme.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 3864-1, *Graphical symbols — Safety colours and safety signs — Part 1: Design principles for safety signs and safety markings*

ISO 3864-3, *Graphical symbols — Safety colours and safety signs — Part 3: Design principles for graphical symbols for use in safety signs*

ISO 7001, *Graphical symbols — Public information symbols*

ISO 7010, *Graphical symbols — Safety colours and safety signs — Registered safety signs*

ISO 9186-1, *Graphical symbols — Test methods — Part 1: Method for testing comprehensibility*

ISO 9186-2, *Graphical symbols — Test methods — Part 2: Method for testing perceptual quality*

ISO 9186-3, *Graphical symbols — Test methods — Part 3: Method for testing symbol referent association*

ISO 22727, *Graphical symbols — Creation and design of public information symbols — Requirements*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>

— IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1 information index sign

sign used to list the information of facilities and services within a given floor or zone in a systematic way

4 General

Normally, the information index signs should cover all floors of multi-floor buildings, or all divided zones in open areas. When facilities or open areas are complex, information index signs may sometimes only cover certain parts (for example, a separate information index sign can be designed to provide departure information in an airport) (see [Figure 1](#)).

The information index signs should include at least three components: title, location information, and content information (see [Figure 1](#) and [Figure 2](#)), as below:

- title: name of the information index sign;
- location information: specified floor or area;
- content information: the facilities or services located on the specified floor or area, which the location information refers to.

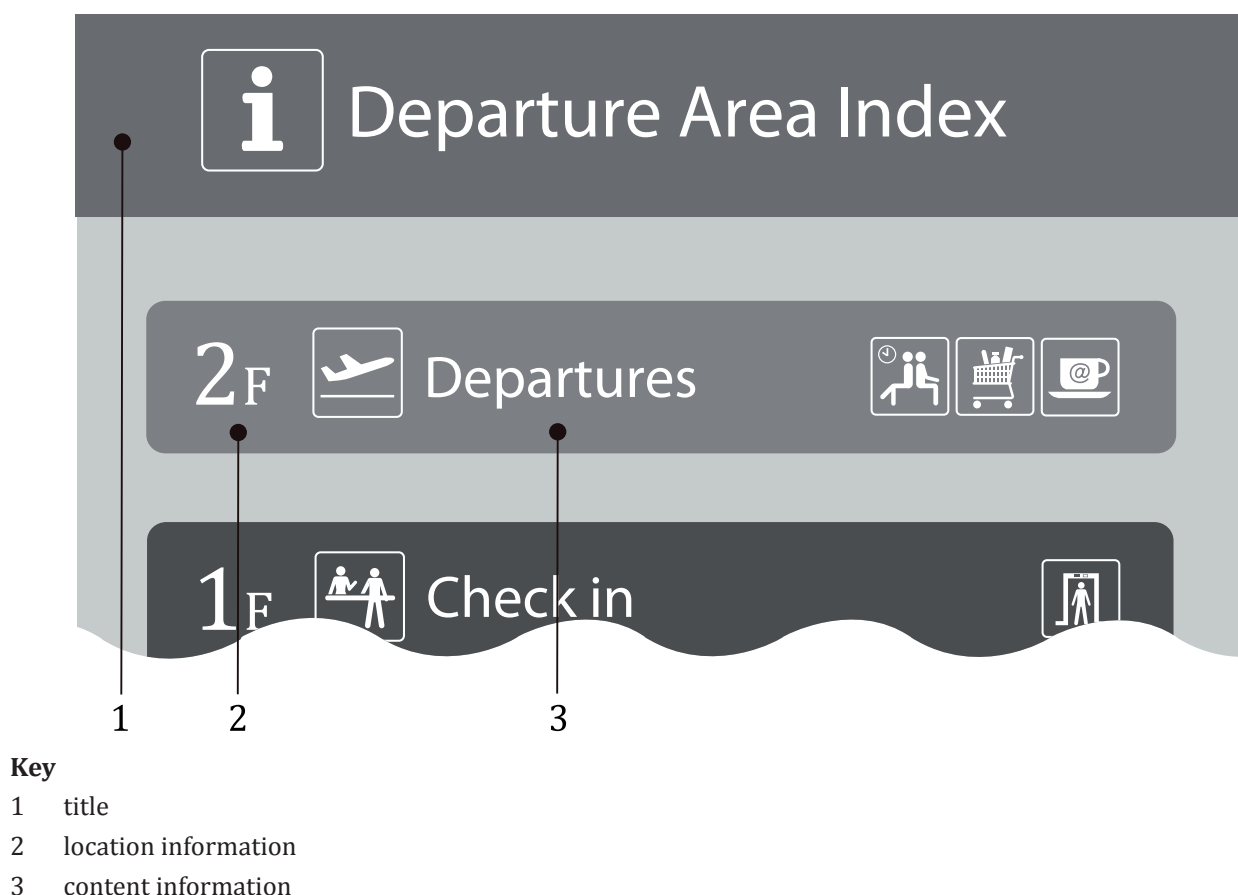
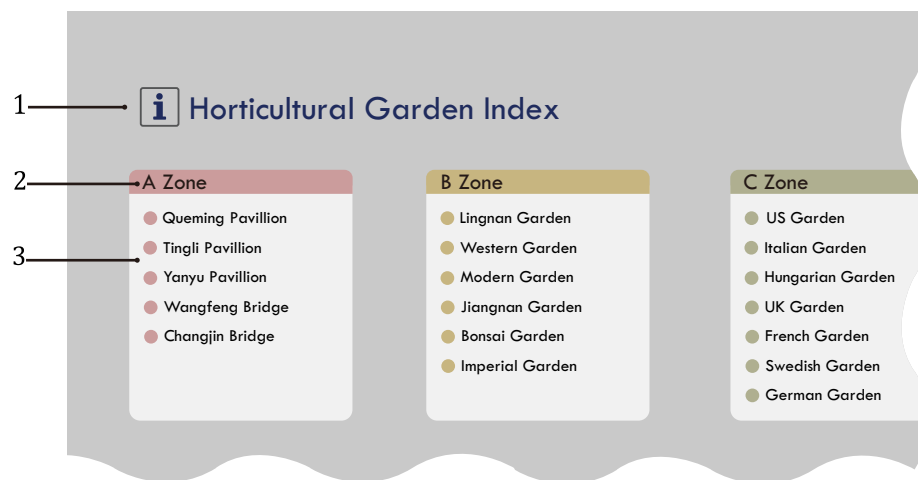


Figure 1 — Components of information index sign in multi-floor buildings



Key

- 1 title
- 2 location information
- 3 content information

Figure 2 — Components of information index sign in open areas

Examples of the design of information index signs are shown in [Annex A](#).

5 Preparation

5.1 Need

The need for an information index sign can arise for various reasons. Examples of potential needs include:

- a) in multi-floor buildings, users can experience difficulties in quickly locating facilities and services on different floors;
- b) in large open areas, users can experience difficulties in understanding the location of facilities and services; and
- c) changes in the location of facilities and services.

5.2 Brief

Before design work is undertaken, the requirements and objectives should be clearly understood and clarified in a brief. Even if only one floor or a certain area – or even a single sign – is involved, a brief should be prepared.

The brief is the responsibility of the client and should define:

- a) the physical area to be covered;
- b) its relationship to adjacent areas;
- c) the information to be shown as determined by the tasks that expected users wish to accomplish;
- d) any special requirements concerning presentation of information, the nature and constraints of the site.

If relevant, the brief should also define the requirements for maps and location plans (see ISO 28564-1), guidelines for location signs and direction signs (see ISO 28564-2), and guidelines or methods for coordination with information index signs.

5.3 Information to be included in the brief

The following information about the area covered should be included:

- a) the characteristics of the expected users;
- b) the types, specific content, positions, and classifications of the facilities and services in the area;

NOTE 1 Information index signs can provide particular facilities or service information, such as the company names located in different areas.

NOTE 2 Information index signs can also provide classification information related to facilities or services; for example, information index signs in shopping centres can provide classification information of goods (food, cosmetics, men's wear, women's wear, etc.) (see [Figure A.3](#)).

- c) the possible installation position of each information index sign and its anticipated normal viewing distances;
- d) accessibility and other user requirements;
- e) additional information (for example, codes of floor numbers or divided zones);
- f) the proportion of the expected users for whom the use of the local languages might be insufficient;
- g) any statutory or regulatory requirements.

5.4 Gathering data

When the facilities or services within the area to be covered are in the planning stage, information should be obtained, as appropriate, from architects, designers, engineers and other professionals with knowledge relevant to the task.

When the facilities or services are already in use, additional information can be obtained by:

- a) observing users' behaviour;
- b) consulting with target users as well as other groups who have wayfinding needs;
- c) consulting with local police, shopkeepers, reception, information desk staff and others who might have experience of wayfinding issues within the area to be covered; and
- d) reviewing any existing information index signs and other public information guidance elements in the area to be covered and in adjacent areas.

NOTE A site visit is normally useful to gain familiarity with the environment and, where possible, to observe and document relevant behavioural patterns.

Once gathered, the data should be reconciled with the brief.

5.5 Positioning

5.5.1 Information index signs should be positioned:

- a) fixed to surfaces;
- b) fixed to other existing structures; or
- c) free standing.

5.5.2 The setting of information index signs should ensure that placement of signs is such that users standing still to read the signs don't cause an obstruction.

5.5.3 The height and angle of the information index sign should be carefully placed to take into account whether users are standing or seated, and their direction of approach to the sign.

5.5.4 Information index signs should be placed where users expect to find them using the results of gathered data (see 5.4). Typically, information index signs are placed near entrances, at positions where users assemble, and where users need wayfinding assistance or reassurance.

Information index signs for multiple floors (see [Figure A.1](#) and [Figure A.2](#)) are recommended to be placed at locations such as:

- a) near the entrances to the buildings;
- b) near reception desks or information points;
- c) adjacent to stairs, lifts and escalators.

Information index signs for an open area (see [Figure A.4](#) and [Figure A.5](#)) are recommended to be placed at locations such as:

- d) near all entrances to a single large open area;
- e) near the entrances to divided zones within an open area;
- f) near reception desks or information points;
- g) near where transport facilities are located.

6 Design principles, characteristics and layout of visual elements

6.1 Design principles

6.1.1 Legibility

Legibility of visual elements can be achieved, for example, by:

- a) the use of standardized graphical symbols where available;
- b) the use of highly legible typefaces;
- c) appropriate spacing and scaling;
- d) sufficient contrast, as to luminance and colour, between the visual elements and their immediate background.

6.1.2 Conspicuity

Conspicuity of an information index sign can be achieved, for instance, by:

- a) sufficient contrast between the background upon which the sign is placed and the environment within which it is located;
- b) sufficient contrast with other environmental visual elements, including lighting, advertising or commercial signs and decorative colour schemes.

6.1.3 Consistency

When a series of information index signs is required, an integrated design philosophy should be followed by using the same terminologies and graphical principles throughout (for example, typeface style, size and weight, colour and layout).

The design of information index signs should be consistent with associated location plans, maps and diagrams (see ISO 28564-1), location signs and direction signs (see ISO 28564-2), hand-held maps and IT applications.

NOTE Consistency is important to promote user familiarity and comprehension of the signs.

6.1.4 Simplicity

The design of an individual information index sign should be as simple as practicable. The following should be taken into account:

- a) display only the number of messages which can be assimilated simply and accurately by the intended users;
- b) use of the simplest expression for each message to be conveyed;
- c) use of the minimum number of visual elements necessary for effective comprehension.

6.1.5 Prioritization of messages

The relative importance of different messages may be conveyed using varied techniques (for example, different typefaces, size, weight, colour, group rules, or sequential placement).

6.1.6 Use of languages

The use of the local languages might be sufficient when international users are not a concern. For situations that require international understanding, English should be used in addition to the official local languages (see [Figure 3](#)).

6.1.7 Use of jargon and abbreviations

Jargon should be avoided. Specialized terms and abbreviations should be used only where the intended users are known to be familiar with them.

NOTE In environments with multiple user groups, a sign provided for a specific audience is also read by others who could be confused by the use of unfamiliar or ambiguous terms and abbreviations.

6.1.8 Inclusivity (for all potential user groups)

The design of information index signs should optimize readability and legibility for all intended users, including those with reduced vision or cognitive impairments. Tactile elements (for example, Relief and Braille) should be used where appropriate.

NOTE 1 Information on technical specifications for tactile/raised characters, Braille and the design of signage and wayfinding that accommodates all users is provided in ISO 21542.

NOTE 2 In some countries, the requirements for information index signs to comply with the needs of disabled people are prescribed in statutes or regulations.

Colour combinations should take into account the needs of people who have colour vision deficiencies.

Where accessible routes or special accessible facilities are provided in a certain floor or area, these should be indicated in information index signs. Where appropriate, the relevant public information symbols shall be used:

- full accessibility symbol (ISO 7001 PI PF 006);
- slope or ramped access (ISO 7001 PI PF 022);
- accessible lift (ISO 7001 PI PF 031);
- other priority symbols, for example ISO 7001 PI PF 045 – 049, 051, 055 - 059, 062, 072, 073 and PI TF 041.

6.1.9 Environmental sensitivity

In many environments (for example, national parks and gardens, historic buildings, and some modern buildings), it is appropriate to use structures, materials, colours, and typefaces sympathetic to that environment. In all cases the design should not compromise the quick, accurate, and safe comprehension of the information.

In an environment yet to be designed or constructed, the building design and the plan for information index signs should be coordinated, as far as practical, to ensure that:

- a) the building's structure, services and other facilities do not compromise the optimum location for visual perception and clarity of signs;
- b) the building's structure allows for the fixing and erection of signs in necessary locations;
- c) the ambient and natural lighting conditions are optimum for viewing signs.

Changes should be made to the existing environment if the viewing of the sign is affected by:

- existing signs and other features (for example, advertising and posters);
- ambient and natural lighting;
- physical obstructions;
- vegetation.

6.2 Characteristics

6.2.1 Graphical symbols

Using graphical symbols can improve the understanding of a message expressed in text. If a language that is unknown to the reader of the message is used, adding graphical symbols can help to overcome the language barrier. When used alone, graphical symbols can allow a smaller sign size.

Graphical symbols shall be taken from ISO 7001 and ISO 7010. If a new graphical symbol is required, ISO 22727 shall be used to guide the design process. New graphical symbol shall be tested with the relevant testing methods, such as comprehension testing in ISO 9186-1, perceptual quality testing in ISO 9186-2 and symbol referent association testing in ISO 9186-3.

NOTE 1 Graphical symbols in ISO 7001 and ISO 7010 are included in the ISO online browsing platform (www.iso.org/obp).

NOTE 2 Information on procedures, criteria of acceptability and templates for public information symbols and safety signs are given on the website of ISO/TC 145/SC 1 (www.iso.org/tc145/sc1) and ISO/TC 145/SC 2 (www.iso.org/tc145/sc2).

Images, icons and branding symbols may be used when:

- they can be perceived, read and understood at the relevant viewing distances and conditions;
- they are likely to be readily recognizable by the intended users;
- their use is not likely to compromise the effectiveness of the sign or the balance and priority of all messages on the sign.

6.2.2 Text and numerals

Text may be used:

- a) to support graphical symbols when the information conveyed by the graphical symbols requires qualification or expansion;
- b) when no graphical symbol is available;
- c) when the use of a graphical symbol is inappropriate;
- d) to ensure visual balance in signs with multiple messages.

When appropriate to the language used, using both upper and lower case letters (rather than all upper case) for text is recommended.

With alphabets where words are comprised of individual letters, the setting and layout of text should take into account the use of ascenders and descenders, even if a particular message does not contain them.

Arabic numerals should be used. Numerals may also be provided in the local script but should normally be supported by Arabic numerals.

6.2.3 Colour

Colour may be used to distinguish a sign from its background or the sign message from the sign face or for both reasons. Colour may be used for message elements or for the sign background to differentiate types of messages, floors or divided zones.

In all cases, the selection of colours should ensure good contrast. Excessive visual complexity should be avoided. The needs of people who have colour vision deficiencies should be taken into account in the selection of colours.

NOTE The perception of colour can be affected by ambient light sources and conditions (for example, street lighting).

If colour coded design features are used within a location plan (for example), the colours should be used as an element in the design of information index signs. For example, if a colour is used to identify floors or zones, facilities or points of interest, this should be reflected within the wayfinding strategy to promote user familiarity.

The combination of safety colours and shapes specified in ISO 3864-1 and ISO 3864-3 shall be avoided to ensure the user does not confuse an information index sign with a safety sign.

6.3 Title

The title of information index signs should be chosen carefully so that it can reflect facility features in the area covered. Normally, the title should be made up of the names of buildings or zones, such as “Shopping centre floor information” and “Flower exhibition zone index”. The title shall use the standard graphical symbol “Information” (ISO 7001 symbol PI PF001). If there are specific requirements, the title may also simultaneously use other graphical symbols. For example, in hospitals, the signs can also use the symbol “Hospital” (ISO 7001 symbol PI PF002) in order to draw attention to hospital information index signs.

6.4 Location information

The location information should include the code associated with the specific floor (or area). Guidance for the uses of codes on different floors and open areas is given in [Annex B](#).

NOTE A code can be, for example, a number, a letter, a colour or an icon.

If a name is available for a specific floor or area, it should also be included in the location information. It is recommended that the code and name used on the information index sign's location information be consistent with other elements of public information guidance systems and with the customary terms local people use for a given location.

In a floor index sign, floor numbers should be represented by Arabic numerals. However, if letters are used to represent floors, they should use the format for language as defined in [6.1.6](#).

The most popular forms for location information are:

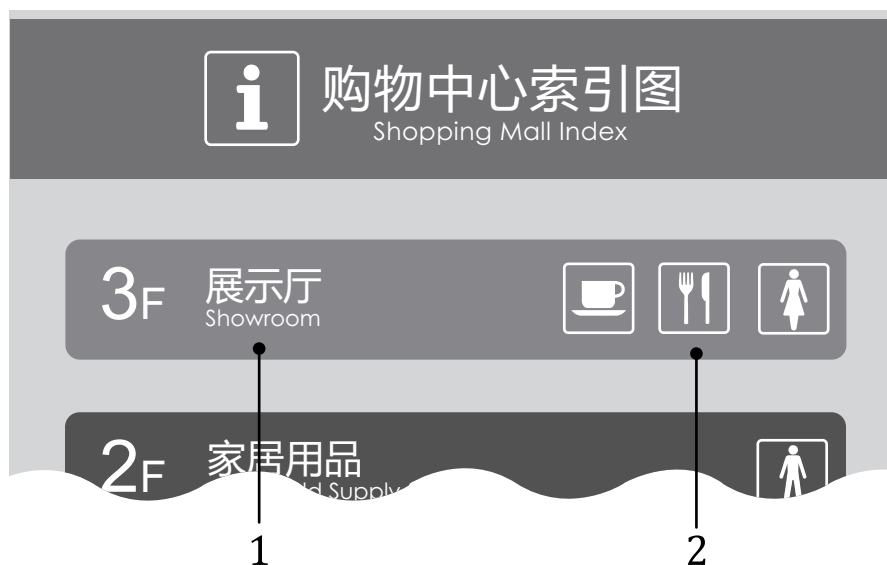
- for multi-floor buildings: floor number or the combination of floor number and letter;
- for a single floor: floor number or the combination of floor number and letter;
- for an open area: divided zone's name;
- for a divided zone: zone's name.

Guidance for the use of letters to designate floors and the naming of divided zones is given in [Annex B](#).

6.5 Content information

Content information should be conveyed by graphical symbols or by text (or both). Content information may be communicated:

- mainly with graphical symbols, using supplementary text to reinforce the meaning of the symbols (see [Figure 1](#));
- mainly by text, with graphical symbols used only to indicate common public facilities or services (such as toilets and service centres) (see [Figure 3](#));
- all by text (no graphical symbols) (see [Figure 2](#));
- all with graphical symbols (no text) (see [Figure A.1](#)).



Key

- 1 content information: conveyed with text (local language Chinese and English)
- 2 content information: conveyed with graphical symbols

Figure 3 — Example of the design of content information for an information index sign

When content information is mainly communicated by graphical symbols, the supplementary text should be consistent with the intended meaning of the symbol.

When content information is mainly communicated by text, and public information symbols are only used to indicate common facilities or services (for example ISO 7001 PI PF 005 “Toilets — female” in [Figure 3](#)), it is recommended that the symbols are not accompanied by supplementary text, to avoid complexity, and the symbols should be consistent in size.

Content information should be consistent with all elements of the public information guidance system.

6.6 Layout

6.6.1 Zoning

Location information and content information should be within discrete zones on the sign face, clearly associated with, but distinct from each other.

6.6.2 Prioritization

Colour or a “current location designator” should be used to communicate the floor or zone (see [Annex A](#)) where the user is located. However, if signs are set at non-fixed positions, for example inside lifts, such methods should not be used.

Different graphic techniques (for example, size, colour or typeface) should be used to communicate the relative importance or priority of messages.

Information that identifies similar facilities or services should be grouped together.

The visual impact of graphical symbols should not be reduced by the corresponding supplementary text.

6.6.3 Sequencing

Information index signs for multi-floor buildings should be represented in the actual order of the floors and should be arranged top-down in a single rank (see [Figure A.1](#) and [Figure A.2](#)) or multiple ranks (see [Figure A.3](#)). Alternatively, an alphabetical sequence (see [Figure A.4](#)) could be used with the floor or area shown alongside.

Information index signs for multiple areas should also be arranged top-down in a single rank or multiple ranks in accordance with the actual order of codes for the areas.

When arranged in multiple ranks, the next rank should be placed on the right of the previous rank.

7 Sign carrier

7.1 Materials

Various factors can determine the choice of materials. Examples of potentially relevant factors include:

- a) the expected environment;
- b) exposure to sunlight;
- c) exposure to weather;
- d) expected service life;
- e) safety requirements;
- f) geographic location;
- g) requirements for illumination;
- h) ease and frequency of cleaning, repairing, and updating.

The style should be carefully designed according to the choice of materials and visual identity requirements of the client.

NOTE Guidance on performance and durability is included in ISO 17398.

7.2 Glare and reflections

Illumination techniques and materials should be selected to avoid or counteract glare and reflection, which can make viewing of the sign difficult.

Assessments should be undertaken at different times of day and with different levels of natural daylight and, if appropriate, artificial light.

7.3 Illumination

Unless signs are to be read only in natural daylight, they should be designed with appropriate artificial illumination, whether by integrated, directed or ambient lighting.

7.4 Sustainability

Signs should be manufactured with sustainable resources.

7.5 Non-static application

Non-static technology, dynamic information that changes on the display, may be selected to enhance the design and use of information index signs.

8 Inspection and updating

After the signs are set, regular inspections should be conducted by the building owner to ensure that signs remain conspicuous, legible, comprehensible, accurate and correctly located.

Signs should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised to align with any relevant changes within the area covered.

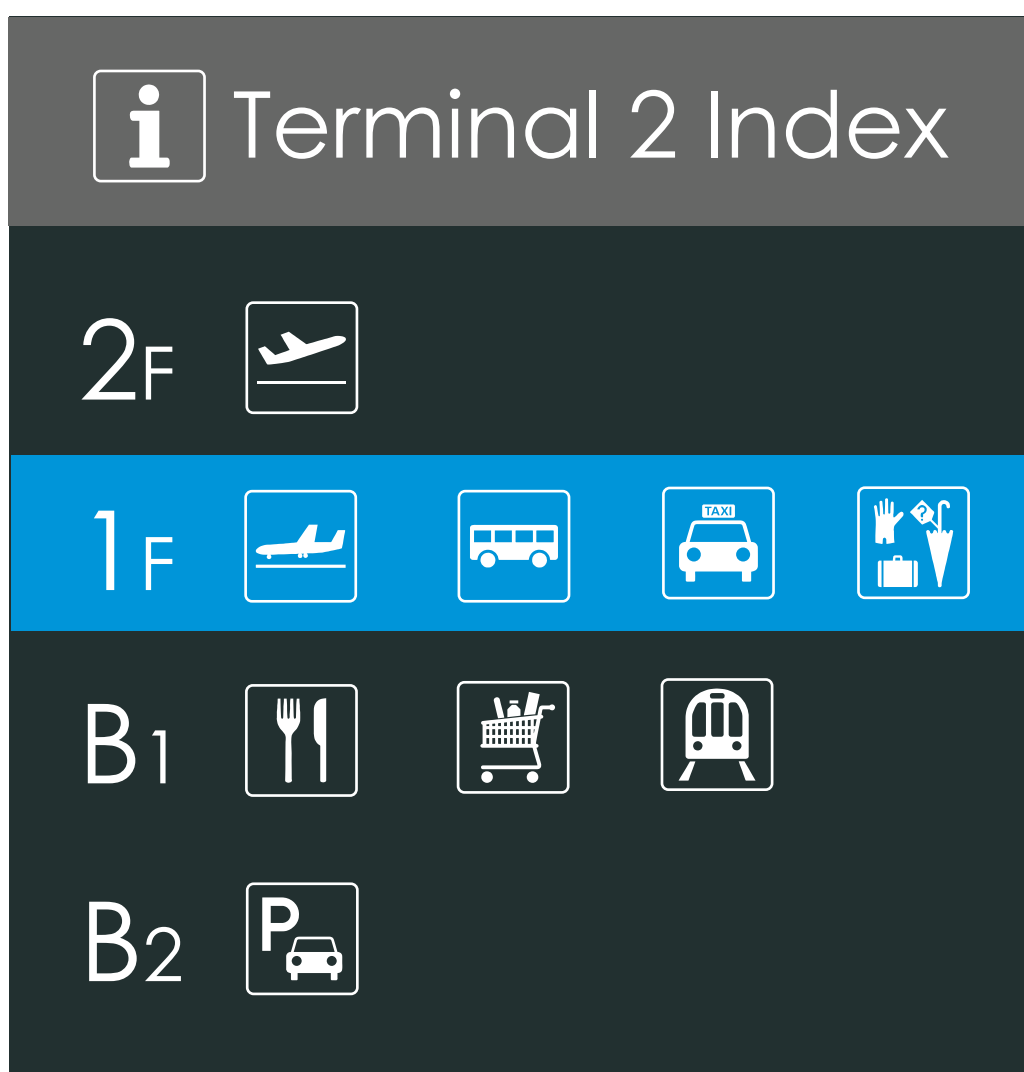
NOTE An inaccurate sign can be more confusing to users, and therefore misleading, than having no sign at all.

Annex A (informative)

Examples of information index signs in typical environments

The five examples in this annex are provided to illustrate various design considerations and are indicative only. The illustrations are given as an aid to designers in creating actual information index signs and should not be presumed to be exhaustive.

The colours, texts, shapes and structures used are similarly only illustrative, although the graphical symbols shown are all taken from ISO 7001:2007.



NOTE The current floor is the ground floor.






































Figure A.1 — Information index sign without text of a single rank



NOTE The current floor is the second floor.

Figure A.2 — Information index sign with text of a single rank

i Building Index

| A Building | | | | B Building | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Furnitures Gifts |  |  | 6F | XXXXXXXXXX Company |  | | | |
| Men's Wear Men's Accessories |  |  | 5F | XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Company |  | | | |
| Women's Wear |  |  | 4F | XXXXXXX Company |  | | | |
| Women's Wear |  |  |   | 3F | XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Company |  | | |
| Women's Shoes |  |  |   | 2F | XXXXXXXXXXXXX Company |   | | |
| Cosmetic |  |  |   | 1F | XXXXXXXXXXXXX Company |   | | |
| |  |  |   | B 1 | |  |  |   |
| | |   | B 2 | | | | |  |

NOTE The current floor is the first floor of B building.

Figure A.3 — Information index sign of multiple ranks



Figure A.4 — Information index sign of an open area

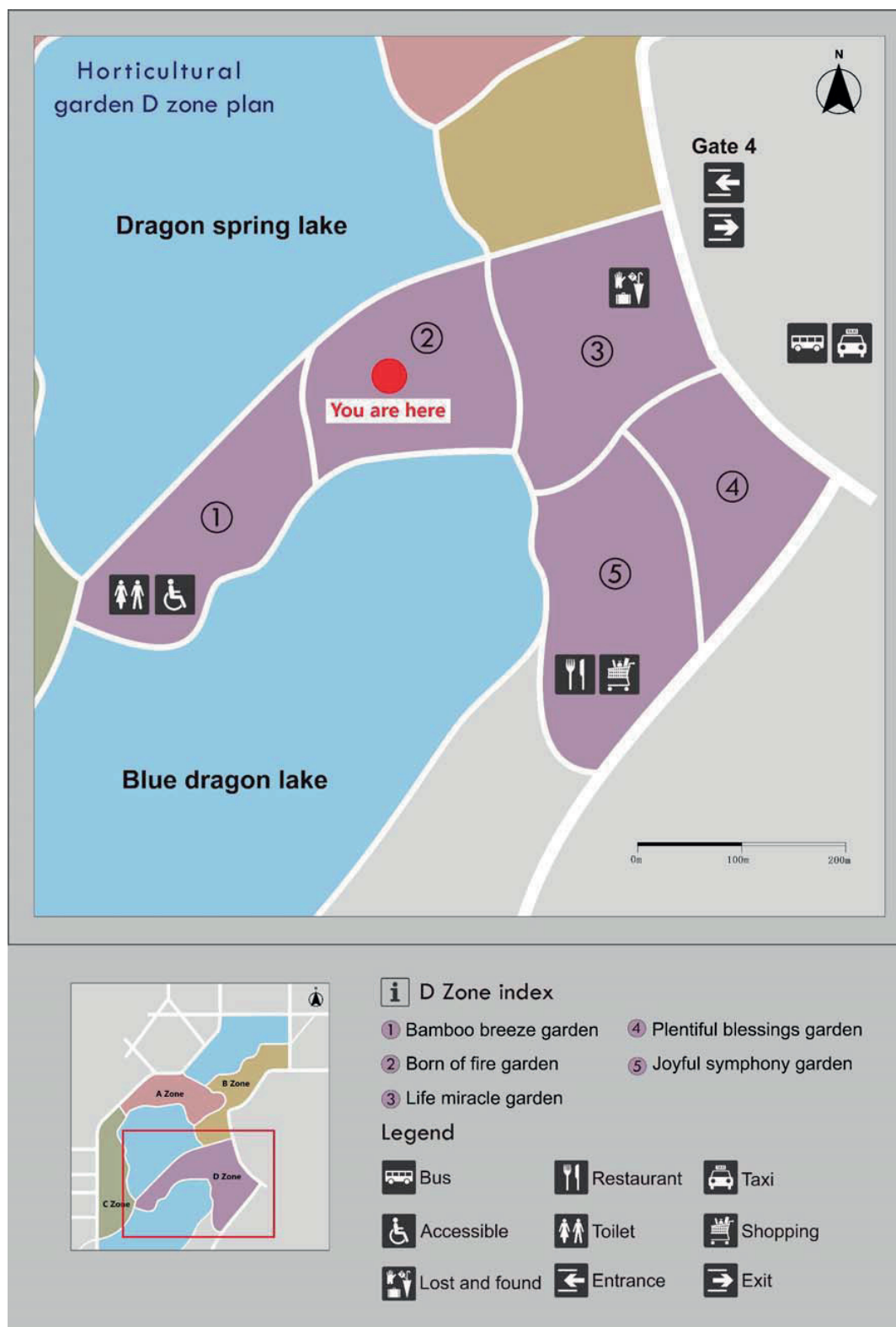


Figure A.5 — Information index sign of a single zone in an open area

Annex B

(informative)

Guidance for the uses of codes on different floors and open areas

B.1 Guidance for the use of letters to designate different floors and the naming of specific areas in English speaking countries is provided below. The following codes are provided as an aid to designers in creating information index signs. Consistent use of these rules will help to create global consistency and increased comprehension of the use of letters and names on information index signs.

B.2 When capital letters are used, the expression of floor level can be:

- a) F — means floor;
- b) B — means basement or underground floor;
- c) G — means ground floor;
- d) M — means mezzanine floor (the intermediate floor between main floors);
- e) R — means roof.

B.3 The combination of floor number and letter can be:

- a) numeral + "F" — means over-ground floor, for example, "2F";
- b) "B" + numeral — means under-ground floor, for example, "B2";
- c) "M" + numeral + "F" — means intermediate floor between main floors, for example, "M2F";
- d) "M" + "B" + numeral — means intermediate floor between basement floors, for example, "MB1".

NOTE Capital G, M and R are used only on their own.

B.4 The expression of area name can be:

- a) capital letter, for example, "A";
- b) capital letter with text, for example, "Area A", "A Zone";
- c) capital letter combined with numeral, for example, "A2";
- d) capital letter combined with numeral and text, for example, "2A Zone", "Area A2";
- e) geographical location with text, for example, "North Area";
- f) other names, for example, "Departures", "Food Area", "Exhibition Hall 1", "Primate Area".

Bibliography

- [1] ISO/IEC Guide 71, *Guide for addressing accessibility in standards*
- [2] ISO 14823, *Intelligent transport systems — Graphic data dictionary*
- [3] ISO 17398, *Safety colours and safety signs — Classification, performance and durability of safety signs*
- [4] ISO 21542, *Building construction — Accessibility and usability of the built environment*
- [5] ISO 28564-1, *Public information guidance systems — Part 1: Design principles and element requirements for location plans, maps and diagrams*
- [6] ISO 28564-2, *Public information guidance systems — Part 2: Guidelines for the design and use of location signs and direction signs*
- [7] ISO/TR 37152, *Smart community infrastructures — Common framework for development and operation*
- [8] ISO/AWI 39002, *Good practices for implementing commuting safety management*

