

**Sign Fab's Sign Industry Reference Guide:  
Chapter One**

This reference guide is to help gain understanding about the types of products in the sign industry and the type of terminology used as well as some new products that are now available. We want to share the knowledge we gained throughout the years with you and keep everything coherent among different regions across the nation. We hope you use this guide as a reference point and would love to incorporate your suggestions if you think we left anything out. Let us know at [advertising@signfab.com](mailto:advertising@signfab.com), and we'll give a shout-out to your company when we use that information.

Chapter One of the Reference Guide covers sign types and terminology. There are many different types of signs, but we kept this limited to what we manufacture just so this Chapter isn't exceedingly long. All sign types are alphabetically ordered and have an image associated with the text for better understanding.

**SIGN TYPES**



**BLADE SIGN** - A type of projecting sign mounted such that the face of the sign is perpendicular to the normal flow of traffic.



**CABINET** – This type of sign uses a shaped box to encase the sign. The shape may be as simple as a rectangle or as intricate as you can create. Cabinets are often double-sided and contain either square tube railing or a false back in the center of the can to illuminate both sides.



**CHANNEL LETTER** – Channel Letters are currently the number one choice of sign identification for business professionals. These products can be used for internal and external storefronts. Sign Fab

offers a complete range of channel letter products, typestyles, and custom logos. Our channel letter accessories offer you diversity, providing your customer with a wide range of options.



**CONTOUR CHANNEL** – This is almost like the standard channel letter sign, but the main difference is the letters of the sign are all on one piece of acrylic; the letters or cans are not separated. Our machines are capable of producing a large variety of contour channel signs.



**CUSTOM LOGO** – This is constructed from aluminum, has an acrylic face, and is most often in the form of a custom contour logo (the shape of the can follows the shape of the logo). Sign Fab can produce almost any custom logo regardless of the shape or size.



**FRONT/BACK LIT** – This form of sign can fall under any of the above categories, but also has light shining through the back, similar to a reverse channel sign. The face is acrylic, and the backs are typically clear polycarbonate. Two different colors of LEDs can be accomplished by adding a false back – a divider – in the can.



**OPEN CHANNEL** – This sign incases neon lighting for a specific effect. The return and backs are aluminum, and the face is usually clear polycarbonate.



**PUSH-THRU** – A cabinet or capsule made from aluminum with a routed cut-out that allows for routed acrylic to push through the cut-out. This allows for a glow right around the pushed through acrylic onto the aluminum surface.



REVERSE CHANNEL – This sign features an aluminum face and return, but a clear polycarbonate back allows the lighting to create a halo effect around the letters or logos.



SELF-CONTAINED - Self-Contained Letters are ideal for large channel letter projects generally between 3' and 10'. Each letter contains its own transformers and is pre-assembled for easy installation.

## SIGN TERMINOLOGY

**ACRYLIC:** Type of rigid plastic material used to form faces. This material is popular in the sign industry due to its ability to easily be machined and shaped.

**BALLAST:** An electrical device required to operate fluorescent lamps. Its primary function is to provide sufficient starting voltage for the lamp, but is also used to control the amount of power to the lamp once started and heat the lamp electrodes.

**BLADE SIGN:** A type of projecting sign mounted such that the face of the sign is perpendicular to the normal flow of traffic.

**CABINET SIGN:** A sign structure consisting of the frame and face(s), not including the internal components, embellishments or support structure.

**CAPSULE:** A box, oval, or custom shape that usually accompanies a sign to add a different style or emphasize a certain part of a sign.

**CHANNEL LETTER:** A fabricated or formed three-dimensional letter that may accommodate a light source.

**FLAT CUTOUT LETTER:** A dimensional letter cut from sheet or plate stock.

**FRONT/BACK LIT LETTER:** A channel letter or logo lighting through the face and back side.

**H CHANNEL LETTER:** A dimensional letter with baffles at the center of the cross-sectional shape for support of LED or neon tubing and mounting of transformers.

**INTERIOR SIGNS:** Signs that are located inside a building or other facility.



**INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED SIGN:** A sign that is illuminated by a light source that is contained inside the sign.

**LED:** Light Emitting Diode

**MONUMENT SIGN:** A ground sign with low overall height.

**NEC:** National Electric Code.

**OPEN CHANNEL LETTER:** A dimensional letter that has no face and illuminated with the light source visible (usually exposed neon). Open channel letter signs should have a clear face for physical protection of internal components.

**PAN-FORMED FACE:** A plastic sign face molded into a three dimensional shape. Also referred to as molded face, molded and embossed face, molded and debossed face.

**PHOTOCELL:** A dusk-to-dawn sensor that powers a sign on and off.

**PRE-ASSEMBLED:** Includes letter, face, LED; installed - customer to complete wiring to light.

**PREFORMED/NOTCHED:** A term used to describe a machine notching method used in the way channel letters or box signs are manufactured.

**PREWIRED:** Includes letter, face, LED; installed and wired with whip ready to install.

**RACEWAY:** An electrical enclosure that may serves as a mounting structure for a sign and is ready for primary power.

**REMOTE:** A channel letter or logo that is installed directly to fascia, no wire way included.

**RETURNS:** Channel walls that make up the body of the channel.

**REVERSE CHANNEL LETTER:** A fabricated dimensional letter with opaque face and side walls, back side non-illuminated or (halo) illuminated. Also referred to as a backlighted letter or a halo effect.

**SELF-CONTAINED:** A channel letter or logo that is prewired with the power supply located inside the channel.

**TRIMCAP:** Typically a plastic trim bonded to the face of a sign providing a means of connecting the face to the letter or sign. The width of the trim cap determines how far the trim goes on the return, not forward past the face.

**UL:** An abbreviation for Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory.

**WIREWAY:** An enclosed mounting structure made to house essential electrical connections, but not necessarily all electrical components.

