

# Channel Letter Guide

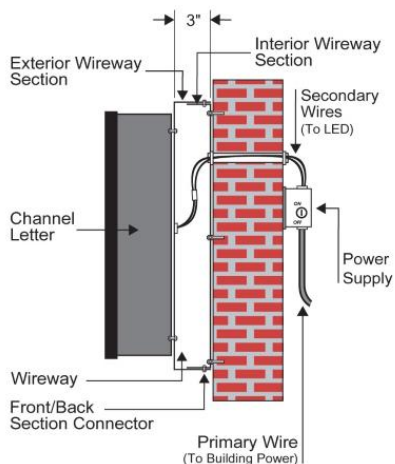
This guide is intended to be an initial source of information regarding the important factors to consider when purchasing a Channel Letter Sign. Applying this guide to your specific circumstances will make the design, permit and purchasing process much smoother. As always, we're here to help, call us anytime for further clarification.

**1. Size:** The overall dimensions and number of channel letters that make up your sign.

- Size and letter volume is the primary driver of cost.
- Dimensions and sizing are often mandated by landlord and/or your local municipality.
  - Allowable sign size is usually determined by a ratio of the storefront linear frontage.
  - Precise linear frontage measurements are usually in the leasing agreement.
- In general, you'll want to utilize the total size allowance. Remember, the objective is for your channel letters to be easily seen and read.
  - Your potential customers are usually driving at speed and from distance when viewing your signage.

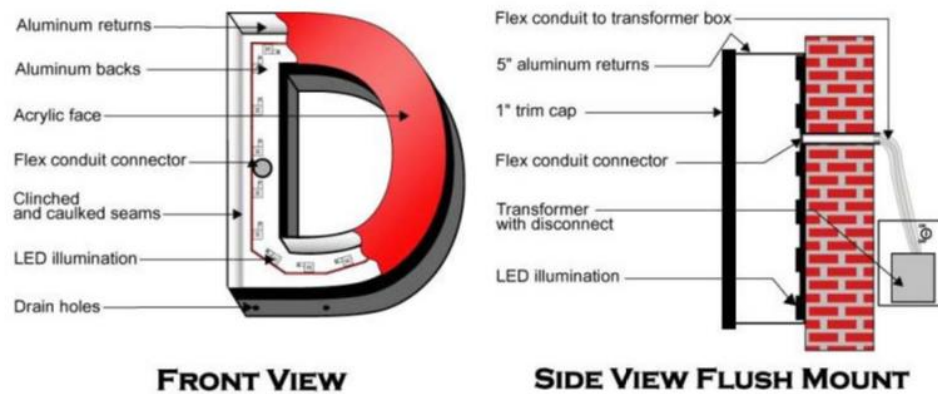
**2. Mounting Method:** This is how the letters will be attached to building wall.

- Often, if you're leasing, this is mandated by the landlord or property manager in the lease agreement.
- There are two types of mounting methods:
  - **Raceway:** Channel letters are attached to a narrow aluminum box that contains all the wiring and power supplies - also called **Wireway**. They allow for easier service and are painted to match the building facade while requiring significantly less holes in the wall. Click [here](#) for a detailed illustration.



**WIREWAY SIDE VIEW**

- **Direct Mount:** Channel letters are directly attached to the building facade. Individual letter wiring is fed through the wall to an interior cavity where the power supplies are located - also called **Flush Mount**. This option provides a cleaner look but requires more holes into the building facade. Click [here](#) for a illustration.



**3. Electrical:** The electrical considerations in preparing your storefront for Channel Letter install.

- Most multi-tenant buildings already have for electrical connectivity in place. However, it's important to validate that it is still functional. Better to confirm earlier, than later.
- If new electric is needed, a standard 120v 20 amp dedicated circuit will need to be run from the circuit breaker.
  - All our Channel Letter signs are UL labeled and meet the highest safety standards.
- We recommend a timer or light sensitive photocell sensor be used to control when the sign is illuminated.
- Most sign companies require functional electric within 10' of sign install location.

**4. Permit:** Most local municipalities require a permit for a new sign install and most sign companies will file all required signage permits - for an additional fee. Generally, if you're trying to save some money, most sign companies will allow you to file the required permits. Here's what you need to know:

- Every county / city varies with regard to what type of permit is needed (zoning / building). While it's not always easy, each municipality's requirements can be found on the respective entity's website.
  - Permit requirements can usually be found in the Planning / Zoning & Development section.

- Permits may be required for both county and/or city / township - every municipality is different.
- Usually, business owners are able to file for the required permit(s). However, most sign companies offer permit acquisition service for a fee which is often helpful during the hectic initial stages of opening business.
- Depending on the municipality, the actual permit cost averages \$100 - \$300 and a 3-5 business day turn around time can be expected.

**5. Design:** The best practices to ensure your sign captures attention and "Leaves a Lasting Impression".

- In general, you'll want to stick with background and foreground colors with high contrast. This increases readability at speed with distance as most sign viewers will be driving.
- The colors that generally produce the best contrast: red, blue, black & dark green.
- To increase readability, stick with sanserif, block font. Script or brush fonts, while attractive, should be avoided.
- If you have a logo or graphic in your business name, you may want to remove it from your channel letter design.
  - These elements tend to wastefully consume allowed signage area thus reducing the amount of space for text.
  - If allotted space is not as much of an issue, graphic inclusion should be less of a concern.

**6. Installation Lead Time:** Be sure your Channel Letters are ready for Show Time - The Grand Opening!

- Channel letters are handmade sign solutions and production times can widely vary depending on the size and complexity of the design layout.
- You should plan on at least a 4 week lead time for channel letter installation from the time the required local municipality permits are approved.

**7. Information Sources:** While not all inclusive, below are good sources for information on size restrictions, zoning requirements and design constraints for your business location. These details are unique to your location and will vary dependent on the local municipality requirements.

- **Leasing Agreement:** If you are leasing your space, the landlord (or property manager) will place any signage restrictions here. Most often, the signage specifications in this document will focus on design and mounting options.
  - For example, it might mandate that all Channel Letters be direct mounted. Or the raceway color must match the building facade.
- **Local Municipality Administration Website:** Generally, information regarding zoning and building permits can be found here. In addition, permit applications and fee schedules can also be downloaded from this site.
  - **Keywords:** When searching for signage information on the administration website, you'll generally want to search for one of the following keywords: "Planning & Zoning", "Planning & Development"
  - **Zoning District:** You'll first want to determine your location's zoning district - this usually dictates signage guidelines.
  - **Permits:** Which permits will be needed?
    - In some municipalities, the Zoning and Building permits are combined and only require one application / fee. While other require two separate applications and the respective individual fees.
      - **Building Permit:** Primarily concerned that the channel letters were properly mounted and won't fall potentially injuring someone.
      - **Zoning Permit:** Primarily concerned with the signage size and design (to some extent). Intended to ensure that signage is attractive and consistent with a communities appearance standards.
  - **Documentation:** The drawings / documents the city / township / county will require to apply for a permit.
    - **Sitemap:** Plot drawing illustrating signage locations and relative distances to street and building.
    - **Elevation Drawing:** Accurately scaled illustration that documents the building front with the proposed signage.
    - **Schematic Drawing:** Up close illustration of only the proposed channel letter signage with length and width as well as mounting details.
    - **Copies:** Multiple copies of all the drawings will be required - usually 3-5.