01 · HOW IT WORKS

Using the Zone Framework

The Zone Framework plans signage in the order a visitor experiences a building. Rather than starting with products, you start with the journey and give every sign a clear job.

Where am I?

Answered by identification, directories and maps.

Where do I go next?

Answered by directional signs at each decision point.

Am I on the right path?

Answered by repeated directional and confirmation signs.

Information in layers

Good wayfinding gives people only what they need at each point. Broad information at arrival, more specific directions as they move through, and confirmation at the destination. Too much too early creates confusion.

Principle of sign specification

Each sign is specified as a type that names its purpose. This lets you work through the space through the eyes of a visitor, before getting into details, materials and final sizes.

The four zones

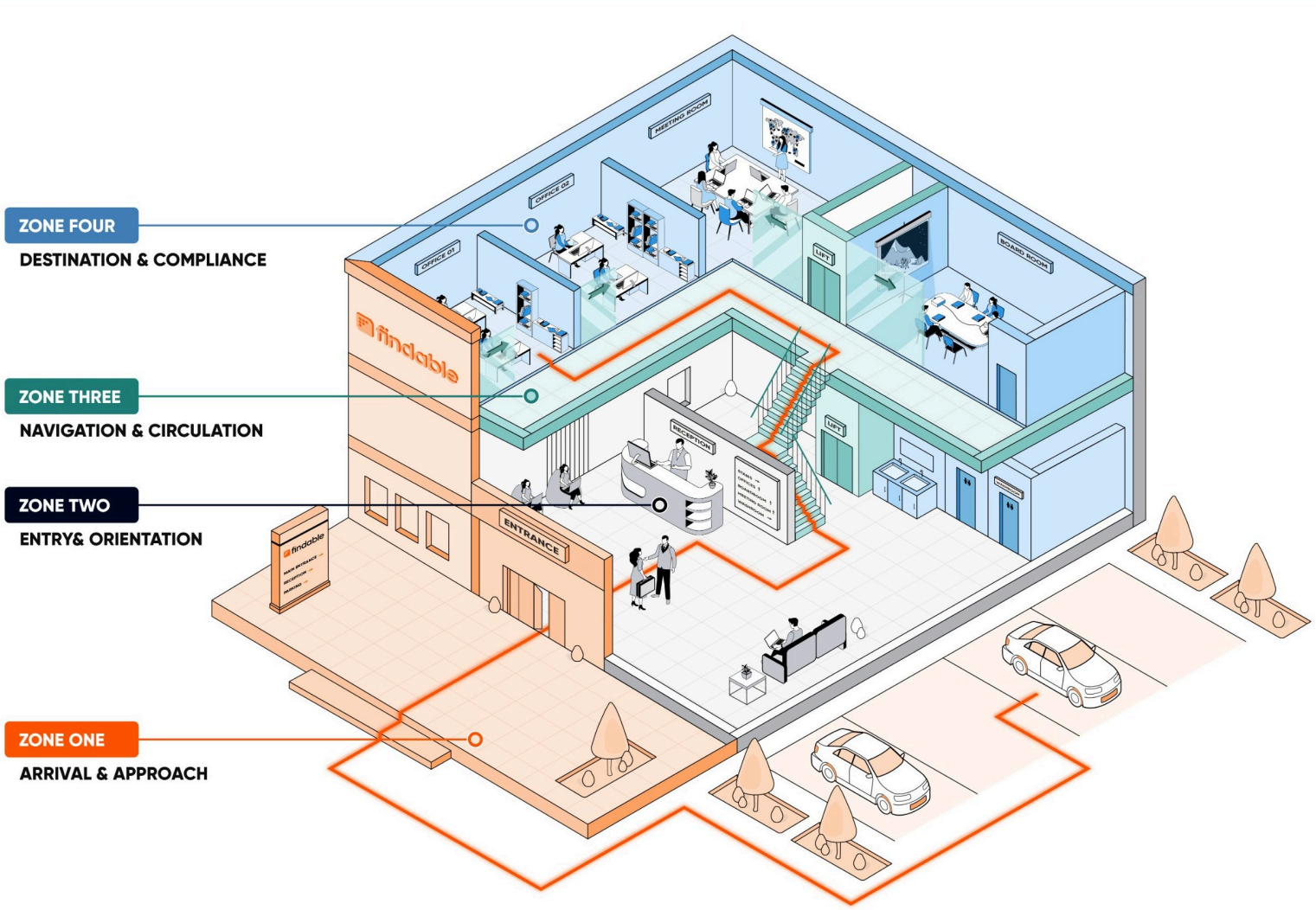
ZONE	THE VISITOR ASKS	TYPICAL SIGN TYPES
Zone 1 **Arrival & Approach**	Is this the place? Where is the entrance?	Façade identity, pylons, external wayfinding posts, external screens
Zone 2 **Entry & Orientation**	Where am I, and how is the building laid out?	Directories, maps, internal screens, level identification, feature wall text
Zone 3 **Navigation & Circulation**	Which way now? Am I still on track?	Blade, suspended and wall directional signs, interpretive panels, glass manifestation
Zone 4 **Destination & Compliance**	Have I arrived?	Room and facility identification, controlled access, compliance and building information

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02 · OVERVIEW

The four zones at a glance

Each zone is a stage of the visitor's journey. Follow the route from the car park to the desk, and the signs change job as people move from one zone to the next.



ZONE 1

Arrival & Approach

From the street and car park to the front door.

ZONE 2

Entry & Orientation

The entry, lobby and reception, where people get their bearings.

ZONE 3

Navigation & Circulation

Corridors, stairs and lifts that connect the building.

ZONE 4

Destination & Compliance

Rooms and facilities, where people confirm they have arrived.

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03 · PLANNING A SCHEME

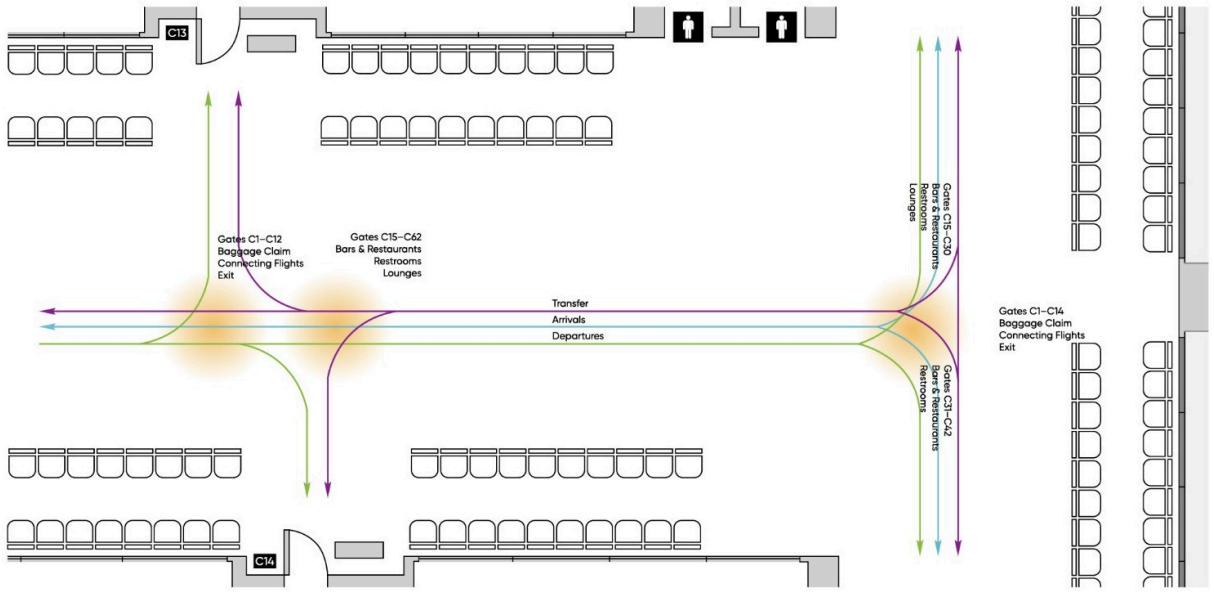
Start with the journey

1 **Map the journeys**
Trace the main routes from arrival to each key destination. Include visitors, staff, deliveries and accessible routes.

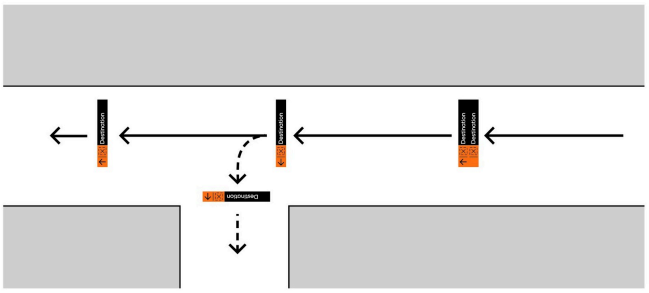
2 **Mark the decision points**
Circle every point where people must choose a direction. Each one needs a sign, unless the destination is clearly visible from there.

3 **Assign a sign type**
Choose the zone, then the sign type whose purpose fits what people need at that point. Mark its code (Z1.1, Z3.2 and so on) on the plan.

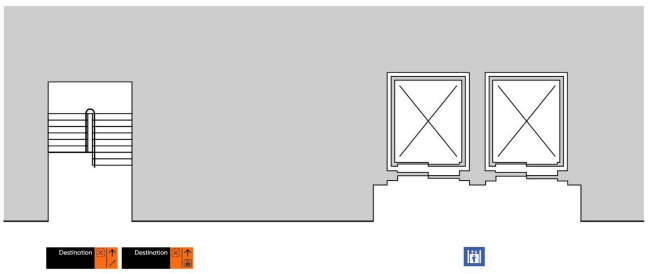
4 **Detail and specify**
Only then confirm content, sizes, materials, finishes and fixings, using the product data sheets.



Flow plan. Each route is drawn as a line. Decision points (highlighted) are where routes split. Sign only what people need at that point, and once a destination is signed, keep signing it until they arrive.



Long corridors. With no decision points, repeat directional signs for reassurance, about every 45 m where the destination is not in sight.



Stairs and lifts. Always identify vertical circulation, and confirm which destinations each stair or lift serves.

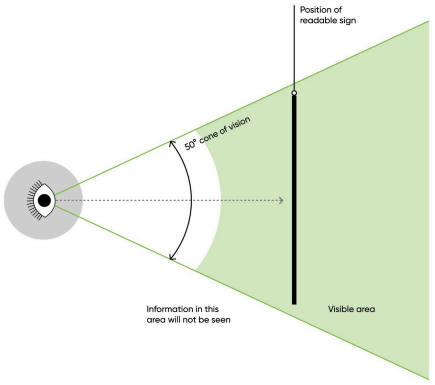
04 · PLACEMENT PRINCIPLES

Sightlines and mounting heights

Horizontal field of view

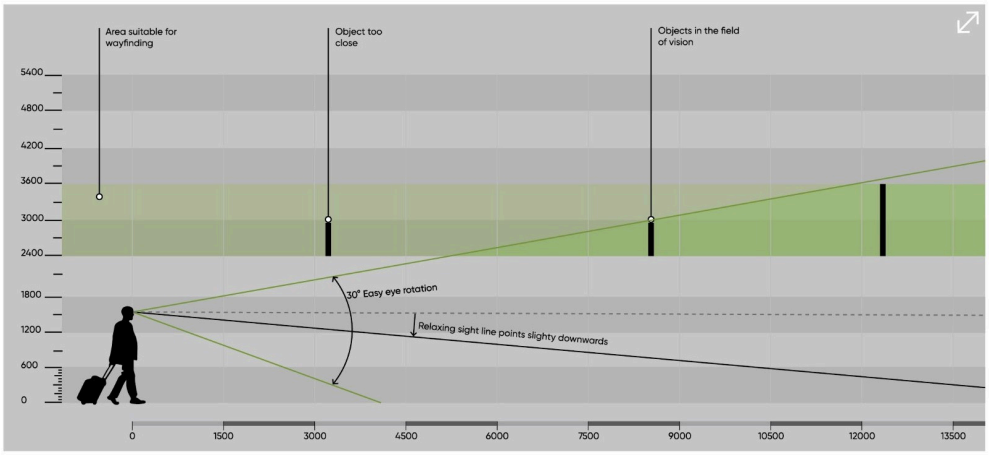
When walking, people rarely turn their heads. Looking ahead, they see about 25° either side, a 50° cone. Signs that sit close by but outside this cone are easily missed.

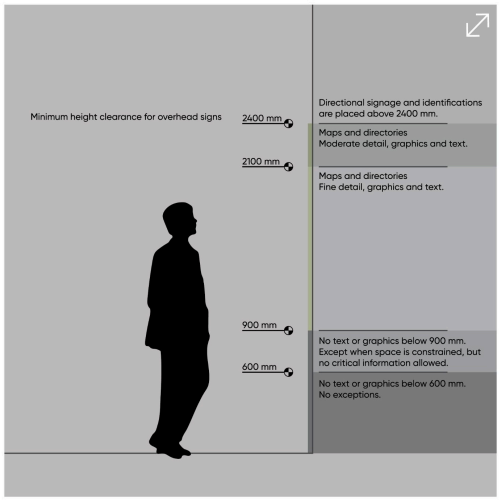
Place signs so they come into view as people approach, facing the direction of travel.



Vertical field of view

Standing eye level is about 1500 mm, or about 1100–1300 mm for a seated wheelchair user. The comfortable view runs about 10° above and 20° below the horizon. Overhead signs placed too close are looked under, so they work best when seen from a distance.





Height bands

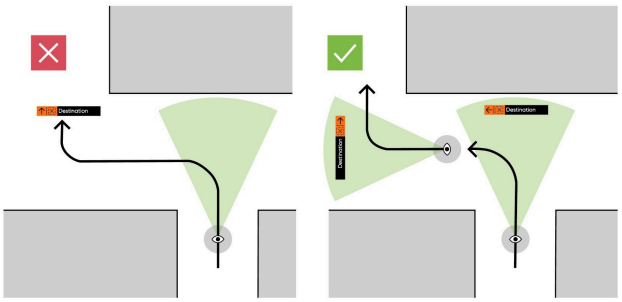
2400 mm +	Directional and identification signs. Underside of overhead signs.
2100–2400	Maps and directories with moderate detail.
900–2100	Maps, directories and fine detail read up close.
600–900	Non-critical information only, where space is constrained.
Below 600	No text or graphics.

Heights above finished floor level.

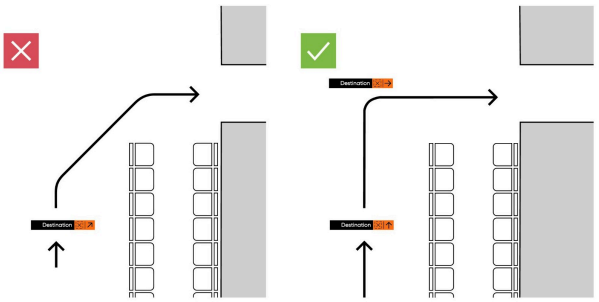
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05 · PLACEMENT PRINCIPLES

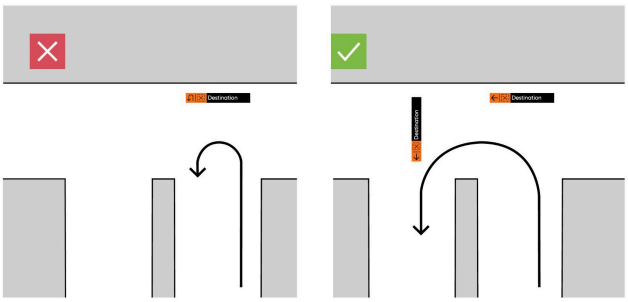
Decision points and legibility



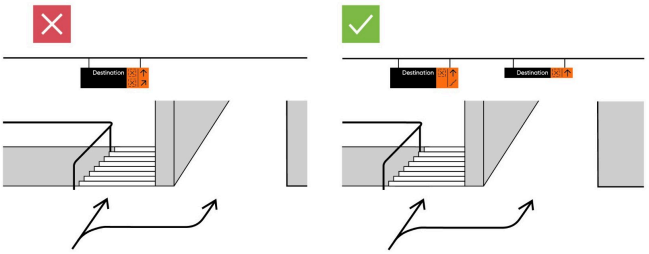
Sign at the turn. Place signs where the decision is made, inside the field of view and facing the direction of travel.



Signal turns early. Prepare people for upcoming turns early. Use a sign for each step, at the junction location.



Avoid U-turn arrows. They are hard to read. Lead people round in simple steps instead.



Sign each route where it starts. When the destination has route options, give each option their own signs, rather than combining them.

Text and legibility

Size for the reading distance

Size text for the furthest point it must be read from. Our data sheets set a minimum letter height of 15 mm at 1 m. Overhead signs need larger text.

Sentence case, clear typeface

Use sentence case and a clean sans serif. Use the same name for a destination on every sign.

Keep views clear

Signs must not block each other, or hide exit and emergency signage.

Keep it short

No more than four destinations on a directional sign. If there are more, split them across signs.

Contrast and finish

High contrast between text and background, and matte finishes. Keep signs away from bright lights that cause glare.

Out of the flow

Place freestanding signs beside the main walking route, not in it, and where they can be maintained.

This is general guidance only. Confirm requirements for each project against the NZ Building Code (F8/AS1) and NZS 4121.

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06 · NEXT STEPS

Every site is different

Wayfinding is a complex discipline. Every site, building and space is unique, and so are the people who use it. The principles in this guide are a starting point, not a substitute for advice specific to your site.

A Findable Wayfinding Audit

Our advisors use the Zone Framework to assess how people move through your site, then recommend where signs should go and how the wayfinding system should be designed. Working alongside the architecture, we make sure signage fits the fabric of the building and responds to cultural needs in a considered way.

It is most valuable in complex public spaces where people move between walking and transport.

WHEN TO TALK TO US

- Reviewing plans for a new building
- Planning changes to an existing space
- When wayfinding issues have been identified in an existing space

HOW WE WORK

- **With owners and operators,** through our direct audit process.
- **With design teams on new projects,** through the architect or as a separate consultant on the design team.

Scope and cost depend on the project and how we are engaged. This ranges from advice for architects specifying our signs, to an ongoing audit engagement with owners of public spaces.

TALK TO US

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