DSW Channel Letter Glossary - 101

ACRYLIC - Type of plastic used for face of front lit letters
BACKER PANEL - Optional feature that can help optimize appearance of channel letters, typically aluminum or ACM
BACKS - Back of channel letters using router cut sheeting, in ACM, .040, .063, and .090 aluminum. Lexan for halo lighting
CHANNEL LETTER - Fabricated three-dimensional letter that can be lit or non-lit
CUTOFF SWITCH - Electrical on/off switch placed on a building's exterior, on a raceway or individual letter
DIRECT MOUNT (Flush Mount) - Letters are attached directly to building facade using a pattern. For halo letters are attached with 1.5” standoffs
DRAIN HOLES - Small holes placed at bottom of letter’s return to prevent water from accumulating in letter’s interior
ELECTRICAL SIGN - Any sign containing or using electrical wiring
FACE - The front surface area on a sign where advertising copy is displayed
FRONT LIT LETTER - An illuminated channel letter with translucent face, most popular product
FRONT & HALO LIT - This combo lit sign uses acrylic for the faces, and lexan backs to illuminate front and back of letters
HALO LIT - Channel letter style with aluminum for faces and returns and lexan for back of letters, allowing a “halo effect” surrounding the shape of each individual character. Also known as: reverse or backlit
LED - Light Emitting Diode, that is the light source for channel letters
LEXAN - Brand of polycarbonate for back of halo lit letters
LOGO BOX - A circle, rectangle, square, or custom shaped box that is built like a channel letter with vinyl or digital print on face for advertising of business
OPEN CHANNEL LETTER - A dimensional letter that has no face and if illuminated the light source is visible. Used for installing neon inside of cans alot of times
PATTERN - Paper template showing mounting and electrical holes for flush mounted signs
POWER SUPPLIES - Electrical component that regulates buildings power into sign, remote or inside raceway
RACEWAY - A electrical wire harness that allows for easy installation, flexibility, and management of wires and cables
RETURN - The aluminum sides of a channel letter
REVEAL EDGE - Vinyl that does not go to edge of letter, so that it has an outline that lights up a different color
STROKE WIDTH - The thickness of a font or logo, needed to produce letter. 1.5” stroke for front lit or halo lit, 2.5” stroke for front & halo lit on same sign
TRIM CAP - Creates a fastening surface to attach to it the aluminum return and gives letter face a finished appearance
UL CERTIFICATION - Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) is an independent product safety certification organization. UL approval means that all sign components meet UL standards for electrical safety. Often required by cities for permits
VINYL - Graphics material used to show non standard acrylic or multiple colors on a letter or logo
WHIP - Electrical wiring coming out of the backs of individual letters or logo box
WIREWAY - Two piece metal enclosure to house wiring, slimmer than raceway and can be oversized for design element

Want To Learn More About Channel Letters? Call Us Today - 866.278.5543