SＣ•))) Sign Command™

SignCommand.com User Manual

This manual describes the operating functions and features of the SignCommand.com cloud-based software for your LED sign. Please visit www.signcommand.com/support for further information. Video tutorials on software use are available at www.signcommand.com/support/videos.

SCUserManual-SS200901

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Table of Contents

The Information boxes located within this manual contain additional important notes.

Alert boxes contain instructions that must be followed to ensure proper performance of the software or sign.

What is SignCommand.com?

SignCommand.com is an advanced cloud-based web application that controls the message on your LED sign. With it, you can add text, images and video clips that can be scheduled at the time and date of your choice.

The software also offers a suite of diagnostic tools and hardware controls that allow you or a technician to fine-tune the performance of your sign.

> *Due to the variety of matrix sizes and colors that are compatible with this software, the examples contained in this manual may not reflect the capabilities of your sign.*

Software Requirements

Only a major modern web browser and a computer with an internet connection is required to run the SignCommand software. We officially support the following web browsers. Other browsers may work, but are not officially supported for use with the software.

- Google Chrome (recommended) – version 52 and later
- Microsoft Internet Explorer – version 11.0.9600.17801 and later
- Mozilla FireFox – version 47 and later
- Apple Safari – version 9.1.2 and later

Sign Network Requirements

To fully utilize the SignCommand.com application, you must have an always-on internet connection that is accessible to the sign. This is usually achieved by connecting the sign to the same network used by the other computers or devices in your organization. However, it is not necessary for the sign to be on the same network; only the internet connection is required. See our New Sign Setup section below for more information.

Getting Started

> ⚠️ *You must have a SignCommand username and password in order to use the application. If this information hasn't been provided to you, please contact us at* www.signcommand.com/support

1. Log into the SignCommand application by going to the following location:
   https://my.signcommand.com

2. Enter your email address and password. If you have forgotten your password, click the "Forgot Password" button after your login attempt. A password reset email will be sent to the email address.

3. Once logged in, you'll see the main navigation to the left. Your account information is available to edit in the My Profile button under your name. Note that if you change your email address within your profile, it will become the address that you use to log in the next time you access the website.

4. We recommend that all users turn on "two factor authentication" for their account when accessing SignCommand for the first time. This security feature will prevent others from being able to log into your account, even if they know your email address and password. Check the "two-factor authentication" box and provide a cell phone number for receiving text messages. When an unrecognized computer attempts to log into your account, a code will be sent through text message to the phone number provided. This code must be entered to complete the login process, and the computer or device can be remembered for future use.

5. We also recommend logging out of your account whenever it's not in use. You can do this at any time by clicking the Sign Out button.

Playlists

The first step in creating content for your sign is to create what's called a playlist. This is simply a list of all messages, images and video clips to be shown on your sign, as well as any special effects or scheduling information. Only one playlist can be playing on your sign at any time. By creating multiple playlists within the application, you can have a different message ready to be sent to your sign when the conditions are right.

To create a new one, click on the button. You'll be asked to give your playlist a name, as well as select which sign this playlist is for. If you only have one sign, you can leave this set to the default option. If you have multiple signs, select which one will be using the new playlist. Click the Save button to complete the process.

To open the playlist for editing, click on the Edit button. Playlists can also be copied or deleted from your account. Be careful, though, deleting a playlist is permanent and cannot be undone. We'll learn more about the options of sending and downloading your completed playlist later in the manual.
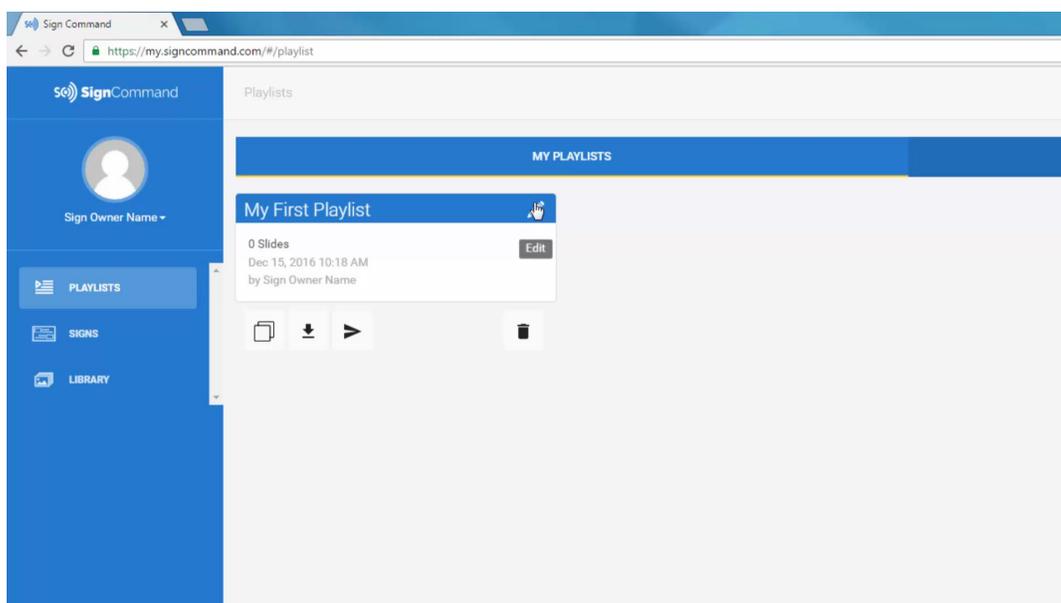
Another available option is to share your playlist. If more than one person in your organization has a SignCommand account, you may give them access to it here.

If they share a playlist with you, it will show up under the Shared Playlists tab. You can edit and send these shared playlists just as if you had created them yourself.
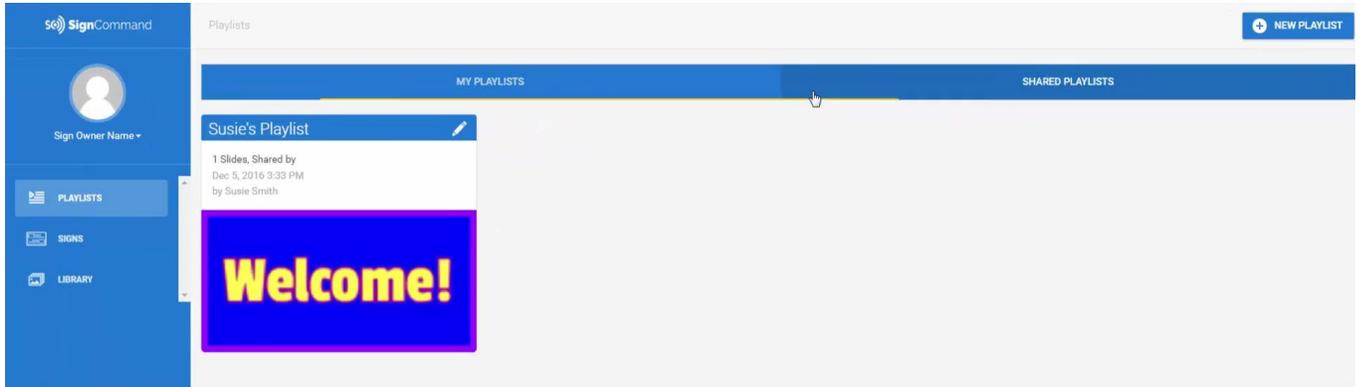
Slides

A slide is a single message that will be shown on your sign for a set length of time. These messages may contain text, images, and video clips. Dynamic information such as date, time and temperature can be added to special types of slides. The slide can also be set to have a transition effect for when it first appears, adding some eye-catching movement to your sign.

To add a slide, click the New button within your opened playlist. There are several different types of slides including Text & Media for your own custom text, images and video clips, Date & Time for current time information, and Temperature for current temperature information. A blank slide of the type that you've selected will be added to the end of your playlist. Additional information and settings can be found on the back of each slide card. Click the button to flip the card over to adjust these settings.
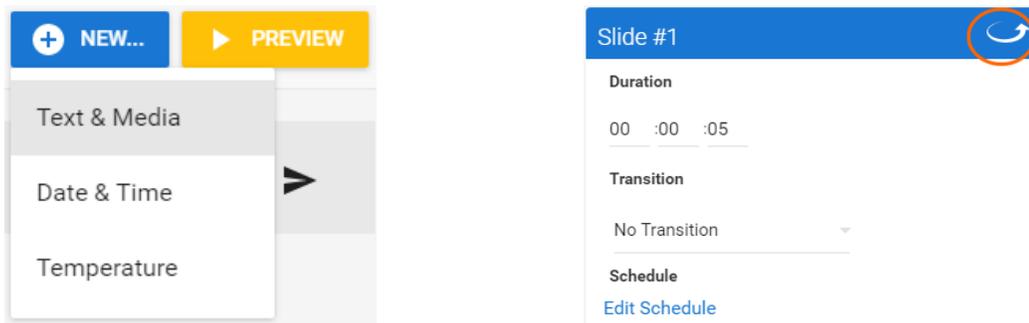
The duration is how long you'd like the slide to be shown on your sign. It's listed in hours, minutes, and seconds. By default, each new slide is set for a duration of five seconds, but can be adjusted as necessary. However, if you are using a video clip or scrolling text within your slide, the duration will not be selectable. This is because the slide will be set to automatically play for the entire length of the video clip or scrolling text.

A transition is a special effect added between slides, and there are many options to choose from. If no transition is selected, the slide will appear on your sign without any effect.
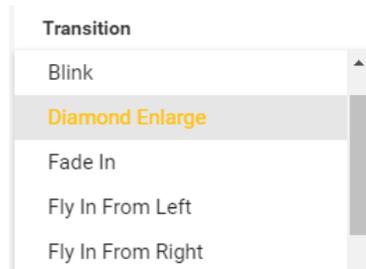
The order of the slides within the playlist can be changed by dragging and dropping them into their new location. The number at the top of the card will indicate their order. As we'll see later, the slide content is changed through the editor.
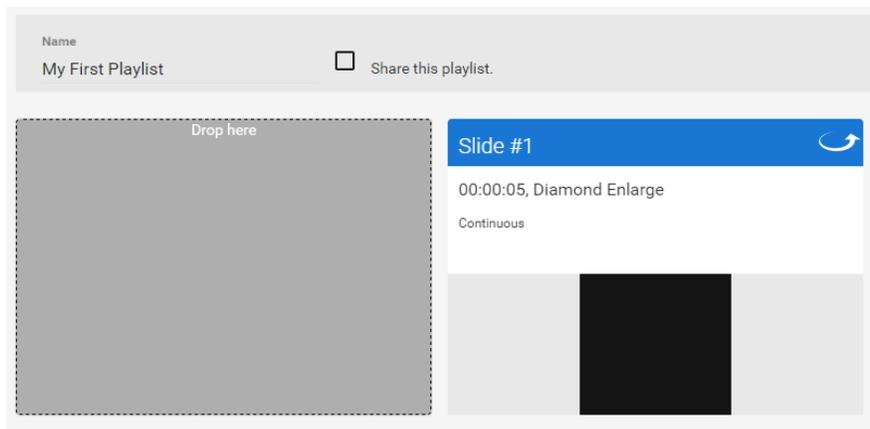
Slides can also be copied both within and between playlists, allowing you to quickly build up your sign messages. Once editing is complete, you can preview an individual slide along with any selected transition effects. And of course, you can delete your slide. As with deleting a playlist, this is permanent and cannot be undone.

One thing you may have noticed is that there's no Save button. This is because saving is done automatically after every change that you make. You'll never need to worry about losing your changes in SignCommand.

Editor

The heart of SignCommand is the editor. This is where you'll create your sign content by adding text, images and video clips to your slides. A background color is selectable, and can be adjusted as needed. A border can also be added around the slide by selecting a border thickness and color .
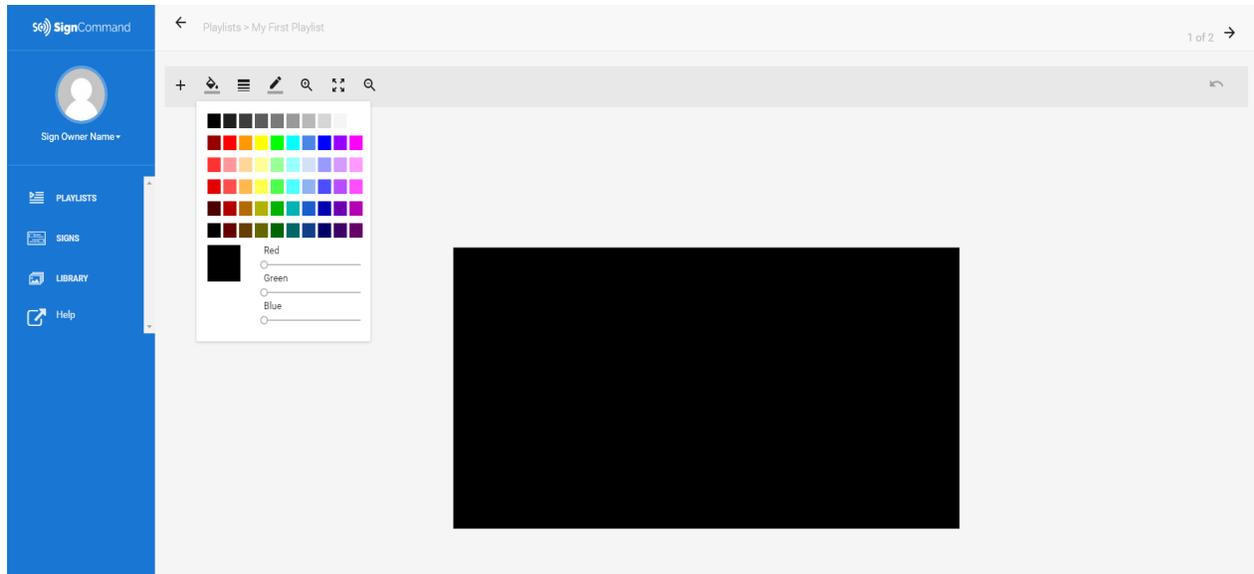
While working within the editor, it may be necessary to zoom in or out of the slide . For zoomed in views, scrollbars allow you to see different portions of the slide. You can also reset the zoom level to its default value. If multiple items have been added to the slide, they can be positioned in front of or behind other items. And when an item is no longer needed, it can be deleted through the toolbar or by pressing the delete key on your keyboard.

As with your playlists and slides, all changes made within the editor are saved automatically. However, an undo button allows you to revert your last several changes. Once you have completed your slide, click the back button to return to the playlist.

> *Because the editor requires the fine control of a mouse and keyboard, it's not available on small, touch devices such as phones. We recommend creating your playlists ahead of time on a desktop or laptop computer, so that they're ready to be sent from a mobile device when conditions are right.*

Text

One of the basic functions of SignCommand is to add text to your sign. We can do this within the editor for a Text & Media slide. Click the button to add an item ✚ to your slide. There are two different types of text for you to add: pixel text and the regular text item.
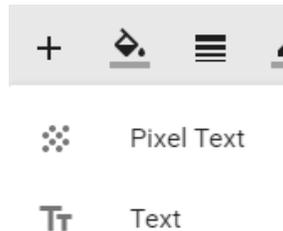
Pixel text is optimized to fit the maximum amount of characters onto your sign, and works best for smaller signs or when a large message is required. Once added, select the item with your mouse cursor to see the available options. Different styles of pixel text are selectable. This controls the size of the text. Color **A**, outline thickness ≡ and outline color ✎ are also selectable.

To change your message, double-click the item and type into the text box. Note that you can also change color and outline options for a part of the message by highlighting it with your mouse cursor. When you're ready to position the message, click out of the text box and then drag and drop the item to the desired location.

For larger signs or shorter messages, the regular text option is the preferred method for adding text to your sign. As with pixel text, various color and outline options are available, and can be selected for a portion of the message. Several font styles are also available, as well as bold and italic options for those fonts that support them.
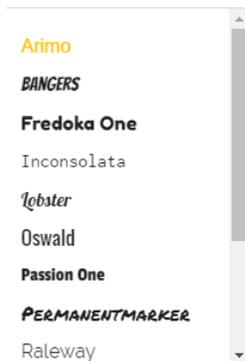
To resize regular text, click and drag the box at the bottom right. When making text smaller, SignCommand calculates a minimum size that prevents the text from becoming unreadable on your sign. After resizing, position the text by dragging and dropping the item.

Keep in mind that the amount of text you can place on your sign depends on its matrix size, which is the height and width of your sign in pixels. Speak with your sign provider to learn more about your sign's messaging capabilities.

A final option is to create a scrolling text message. This is done by entering a line of text that's larger than the slide size, and then turning on the scrolling option. Horizontal will move text from right to left, while Vertical will move text from bottom to top. You may also select from different scrolling speeds.

Scrolling your message is only recommended on small signs that can only support a single line of text. For signs that support multiple lines of text, it's more efficient to place your message on one or more slides.

Media & Library

A powerful feature of SignCommand is the ability to upload and manipulate your own images and video clips for use on your sign. Using this media within your playlist is a great way to attract attention and quickly communicate ideas.

Within the slide, click the Media button. This will bring you to your selection of previously uploaded images and video clips. To upload a new file, drag and drop it into the designated box, or click within the box and browse to the file's location.
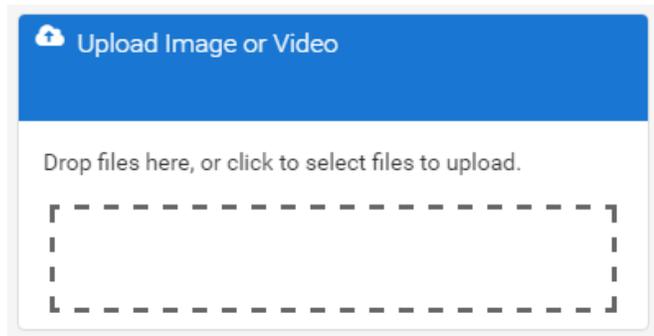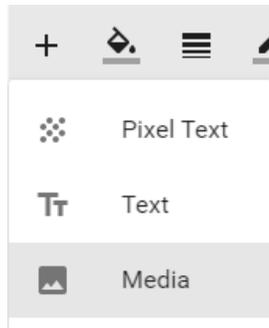
Image file formats supported:
- BMP
- GIF
- JPG
- PNG (recommended)
- TIF

Video file formats supported:
- AVI
- MOV
- MP4 (recommended)
- MPG
- WMV

Once processed, your image or video clip will appear as a thumbnail. How long this takes will depend on the file's size. For video clips, a preview button ▶ will allow you to view the full video. Click on the button to add ⊕ your media to the slide.

When the media is first brought into the slide, it's automatically sized to fit the full height and width of your sign. You can resize it by clicking and dragging the control boxes around the item. Position the item by dragging it to your desired location. As with text, you can move the media in front of ↑ or behind ↓ other items through the controls in the toolbar.

You may also crop the image or video clip to only use a portion of it on your slide. Choose the Select Tool ⊡, and then draw a box around the section of media you wish to use. Click the Crop ⌐ button to remove the content outside of your selection. Switch back to the Resize Tool ✥ in order to size and position the media.

As with text, the amount of detail that can be shown on your sign depends on its matrix size. For the best results, it's recommended to use images and video clips that do not contain a high level of detail. Speak with your sign provider for more information about your sign's imaging capabilities.

For users with access to the built-in library, this resource will allow you to select from a large variety of pre-made media for your sign. Search through the library by providing a keyword in the search field, and view video clips by clicking the preview button ▶.

Search for media...
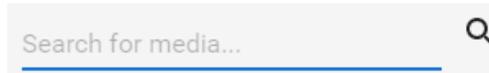
Once you've found the item you'd like to use, add the media to your slide. Remember that you cannot set the duration of slides that contain a video clip. This duration is automatically set to the full length of time it takes for the video clip to play.

As with shared playlists, any media items that another user has shared will show up under the Shared section of the Library. You may also choose to share your media by selecting this option within your uploaded files. You can browse the provided library and your own uploads at any time by selecting the Library menu item in the left navigation.

> ⚠️ *The amount of detail that can be shown on your sign is dependent on the matrix size. Media files that contain a large amount of detail may not show well on your LED sign.*

Special Instructions for Grayscale Signs

If your sign is only capable of showing shades of red or another color, special consideration must be made in selecting image and video clip files.

Because a grayscale sign cannot show multiple colors, different colors of similar brightness will all show as one color on the sign.

It is best to use a grayscale image or video clip that only uses black, white and shades of gray. Other high-contrast colors are also acceptable.

If you are using a full-color image or video clip on a grayscale sign, it is recommended to test it on the sign or convert it into grayscale using photo editing software.
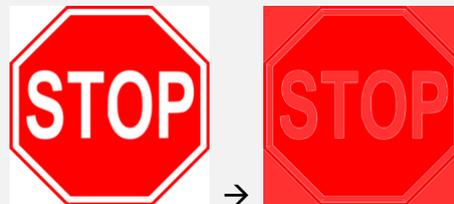
Because a grayscale sign cannot show white, this image is displayed as entirely red.
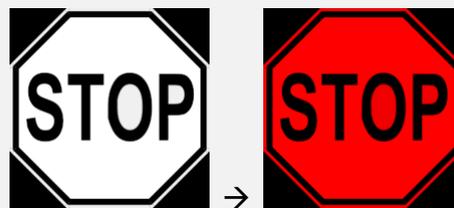
A high contrast image in grayscale works well for this type of sign.

Date & Time

You may wish to add the current date or time as a slide within your playlist. To do this, select Date & Time from the New Slide menu. This information is available in several formats and combinations. Select the format that you would like to be displayed on your sign.
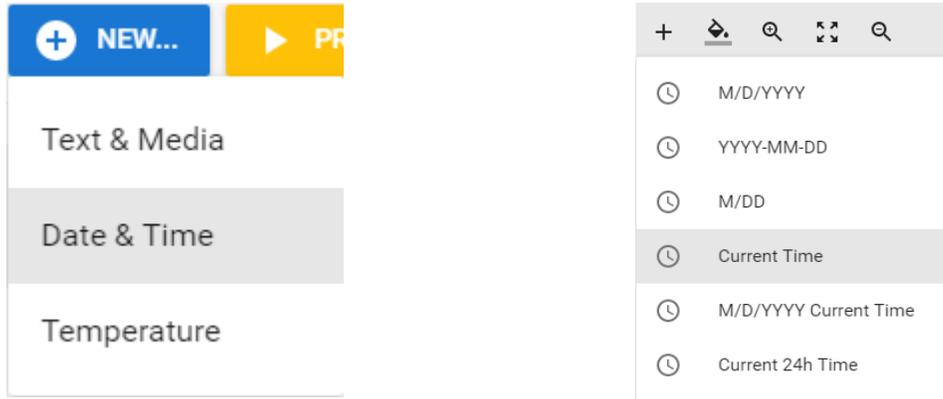

As with standard text, you may choose a font and color for your item, and resize it using the box at the bottom right. However, take care when choosing the size of this item, as it will need to accommodate dates or times of different lengths. We recommend sizing the text to fit with plenty of space around the edges of the slide. All date and time items are automatically centered within the slide. A background color can also be selected. Note that this dynamic information cannot be combined with other items.

Date and time information is provided from the computer running inside the sign. This information is updated regularly from an official internet time source. If your date or time is displaying incorrectly, see our support website for instructions on changing this setting.

Temperature

The current temperature for your area is also available to add as a slide within your playlist. Select Temperature from the New Slide menu. When adding the item, choose the format that you wish to be displayed.
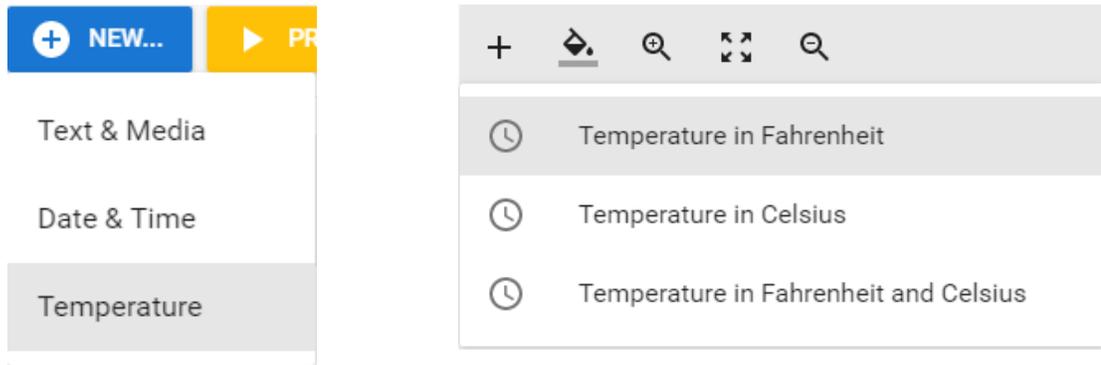
As with the date and time, you may choose font and color information, background color, as well as size the text to your liking. This information is automatically centered within the slide. As dynamic information, it cannot be combined with other items.


The temperature shown in both the editor and on your sign comes from an online weather service, and is updated on a regular interval throughout the day. Please note that there may be a delay, and therefore a difference, between the temperatures shown on the sign and from the online weather service.

Scheduling

A powerful feature of SignCommand is the ability to set a schedule for when you'd like content to be shown on your sign. This allows you to customize your message based on the date and time. To set this option, click the Edit Schedule button for the slide.
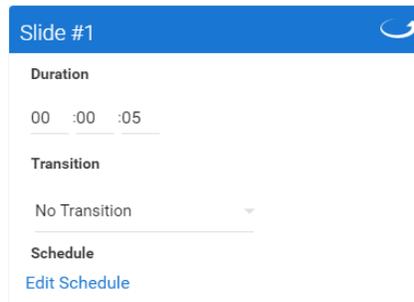
By default, all slides are set to the Continuous option. This means that they will be displayed on your sign throughout the day in the order that they appear in the playlist. To only show this slide at certain times, choose the Scheduled option.
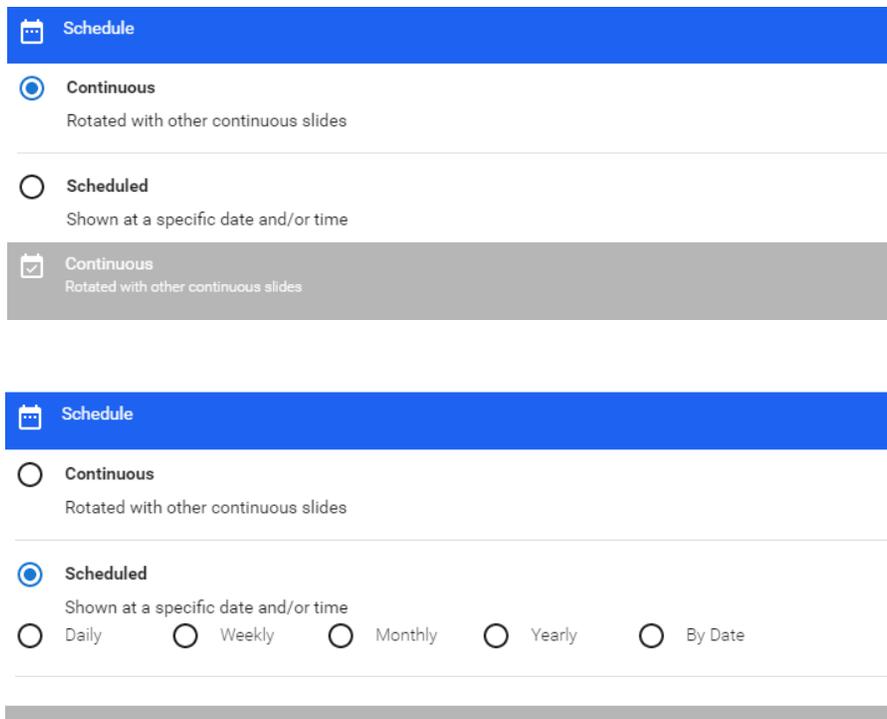
You will now be able to select from a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly recurring schedule, as well as a specific date. Each option can also be limited to certain times of the day by selecting starting and ending times. For daily, weekly and monthly schedules, you may also choose to only show this slide between the dates that you specify. This is helpful for when you have content that you'd like to start or stop on a certain day.

Finally, you may choose to mark the slide as High Priority. This means that it will override other content on the sign during the times that it's shown. If another high priority slide is scheduled during an overlapping time, they will both be shown on the sign during those times.

The result of your selections will be written at the bottom of the scheduling window, including the next time the slide will be shown. This easy-to-read result means that you'll never schedule a slide incorrectly with SignCommand.

There must be at least one slide in the playlist that does not have a schedule setting. This ensures that there is always something showing on the sign.

Previewing & Sending

Once your playlist is complete, you'll want to preview it to see how it will appear on your sign. Within the playlist, click on the ▶ PREVIEW button. This will generate a preview showing all of your slides in order including their effects and other settings. If you have any scheduled slides within the playlist, they will be shown here as well, even if they aren't set to be shown at the current time.

When you're ready to send your playlist, click the Send to Sign ➤ button. A list of your signs and their individual sides will be shown. This allows you to select which sides should receive the new playlist. Signs with a status of Online are currently communicating with the SignCommand servers, and are ready to receive instructions.

Send Playlist My First Playlist (64 x 128)

My Sign (64 x 128)
00:00:00:00:00:00
☁ Online

☑ Side A
☑ Side B

CANCEL   SEND

If a sign shows the Offline status, you may still choose to send it the playlist. The sign will download and begin playing the new playlist as soon as it resumes communication with the server. See the Offline Sign Help section below for more information on why a sign may be offline. Finally, if you have multiple signs of different sizes, you will only be able to send to those that match the playlist size.

Send Playlist My First Playlist (64 x 128)

My Other Sign (100 x 200) **Incompatible size**
00:00:00:00:00:01
🔴 Offline ⑦

☐ Side A

My Sign (64 x 128)
00:00:00:00:00:00
☁ Online

☑ Side A
☑ Side B

CANCEL   SEND

Click the Send button and the playlist will be sent. It may take a minute or two for your sign to update and start playing the new message. Because your playlists are stored in the cloud, you can send them from any device by logging into your SignCommand account. This powerful feature makes sending a playlist from your mobile device as easy as sending it from your desktop computer.

Downloading for USB

One of the benefits of SignCommand is that it allows you to send a new playlist to your sign from anywhere in the world. However, there may be times when this isn't possible, such as if there's a communication issue at the sign site. In those instances, SignCommand offers a backup method of communication by placing a file onto a USB drive, and then plugging the drive into the sign.

To transfer a playlist using this method, find the one that you wish to place on your sign. Click Download for USB and select which sides should be updated. Click Next, and your playlist will be packaged. Now click Download, and a file will be downloaded by your browser. Where this file is placed on your computer will depend on your browser settings.

Download Playlist My First Playlist

✓ Side A
✓ Side B

CANCEL   NEXT

Your playlist is ready to download. Place the downloaded file onto a USB drive and plug it into the sign.
⚠ Remember to remove any other files from the USB drive.

CLOSE   DOWNLOAD

Find the downloaded file, which will end with `.package`, and copy it onto an empty USB drive. Take the USB drive out to your sign and plug it into the external USB port, if equipped. A confirmation message will briefly appear on the sign's display. Wait until the message says to remove the device, and take the drive out of the port. Your sign should now be updated with the new playlist.

The packaged message will remain on the USB drive, and can be used again in the future. Please note that these downloaded playlists are only for use with a USB drive, and cannot be uploaded back into the SignCommand interface.

Sign Settings

Your organization's signs are listed on the Signs page. Here you can view the specifics of each sign, as well as their connection status to the SignCommand servers. Information such as the name of the sign, as well as the names for each individual side, can be customized to your liking. These names will appear elsewhere in the application, and may help you to better identify your signs.
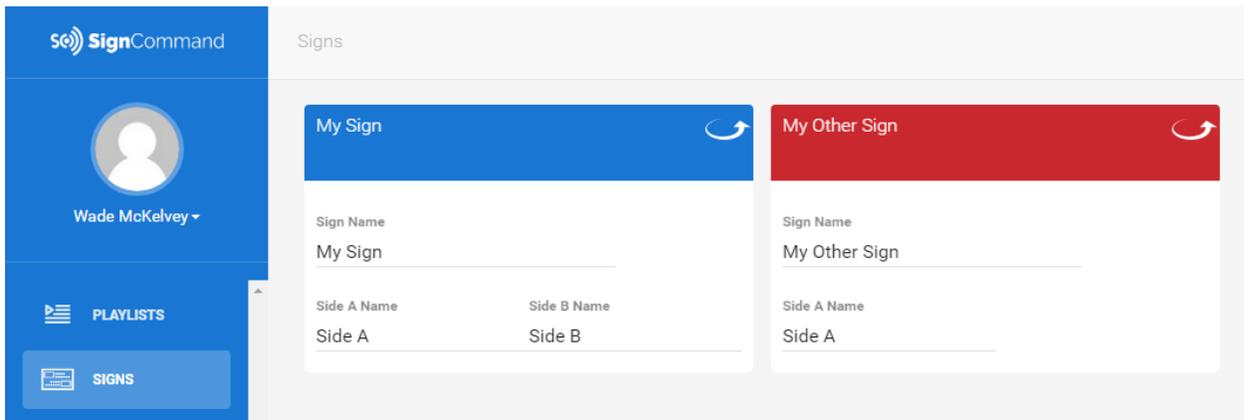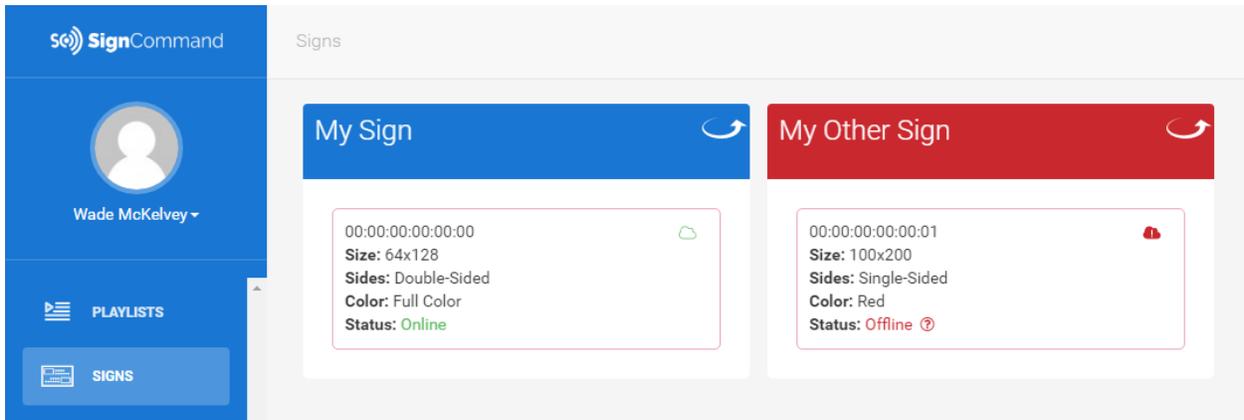
You may also change each sign's Brightness Settings and Play Schedule from this location. Please note that you cannot change sign properties such as the size and number of sides. If this information is incorrect, contact our support department to change these settings.

Brightness Settings

An important feature of your sign the ability to adjust the LED display brightness to the appropriate levels. This will allow your sign to be seen during daylight hours, but not become too bright for nighttime use. You can access the Brightness Settings ⊕ for each of your displays within the Signs page.

By default, your sign is set to automatically adjust to the local light conditions. It does this by taking measurements from an attached light sensor, and calculating the optimal sign brightness. We recommend leaving your sign on this automatic brightness setting whenever possible. However, it may be necessary to change it depending on zoning requirements or conditions specific to your location.

The next brightness option is to set a daily schedule. By selecting this option and clicking Add Schedule, you can set the time and level of desired brightness. As many schedules as necessary can be added to this brightness setting. Schedules can also be removed if no longer needed. At the designated times, your sign will adjust its brightness to your specified value.
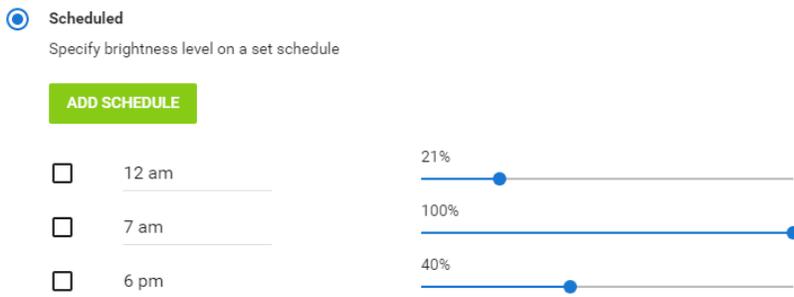
The last brightness option is to set a manual value that will not change over time. As with scheduled brightness, this value is set as a percentage. Please note that with both the Scheduled and Manual brightness settings, there will still be a faint message visible at the lowest levels of brightness. To turn your sign's display off completely at certain times, see the Play Schedule section below.

Once you've made your selections, click Save to send your new brightness settings to the sign. It may take a minute or two for your sign to update with the new settings.

> The "Automatic" selection uses an ambient light sensor to determine the sign brightness. This selection will automatically brighten the sign during the day to compete with the sun, and dim it for evening and night-time use.

Play Schedule

By default, your sign is set to show your message 24 hours a day. However, you may choose to only show your message during designated times on a daily schedule. This may be due to zoning requirements, or to save electricity during low traffic hours. To do this, select the Play Schedule option for your sign.

If there's no play schedule set, this results in the 24-hour operation. Add a new schedule item, and set the times that you would like for the sign to display a message. You may set multiple times by adding more scheduled items. Once you've made your selections, click Save to send your new play schedule to the sign.
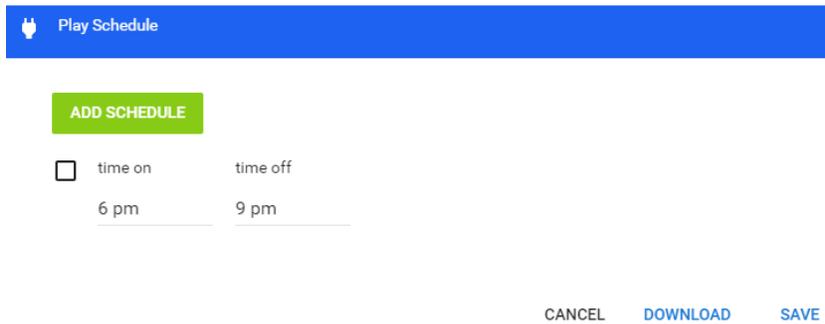
Please note that while setting a play schedule may reduce your electrical consumption, it does not shut off electricity to the sign components. The sign is still energized during this time, and should always be turned off at the circuit breakers or other designated electrical switch before opening the sign cabinet.

Browser Features

Because SignCommand is a browser-based application, some features are handled by the web browser itself. For example, if you wish to adjust the text size, your browser will have a Zoom feature available in the settings. Where this setting is located will depend on the type of browser you're using. Adjust this value up or down to increase or decrease the size of the text within the application.

You may also wish to print your playlists, or the slides within an individual playlist. This can be done through your browser's Print function. A page with the relevant information will be made available for you to print. We also recommend creating a bookmark or favorite for the SignCommand application for quick access. This can be done by clicking the Star button or equivalent within your browser.

New Sign Setup

As the newest member of the SignCommand family, we want to make the experience of setting up your sign as easy as possible. This section will describe the requirements and process of having your sign communicate with the SignCommand application. Please refer to your sign provider's instructions if you require information on the physical installation or electrical requirements of your sign.

SignCommand requires an always-on internet connection available at the sign site. This is usually achieved by connecting your sign to the same network used by the other computers or devices within your organization.
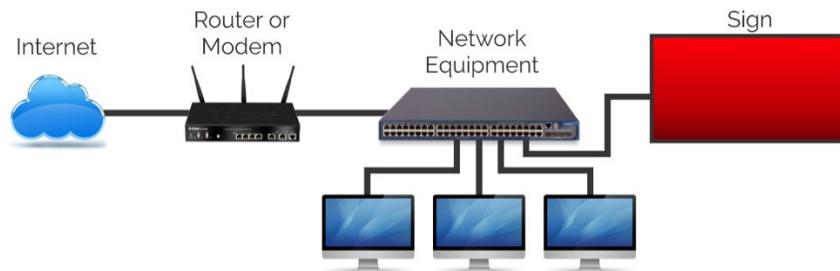
However, it is not necessary for your sign to be on the same network as the computer you will use to control the sign. Only the connection to the internet is required.
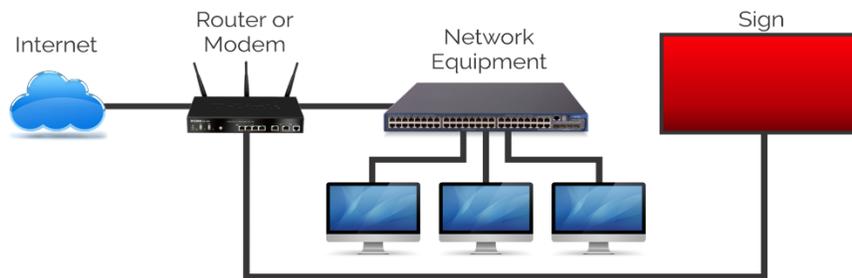
The first step is to physically connect any network cables or communication devices. While performing these actions, keep the sign power off at the circuit breakers or other designated power switch. How your sign physically connects to an internet source will depend on how it was purchased and installed.

If your sign uses a trenched network cable or other kind of line, make sure that the cable is connected to the sign at one end and your network equipment at the other.

If your sign uses a wireless radio to communicate, ensure that it is connected correctly to both a power source and network source, and that the device has a direct line-of-sight to the sign's antenna.
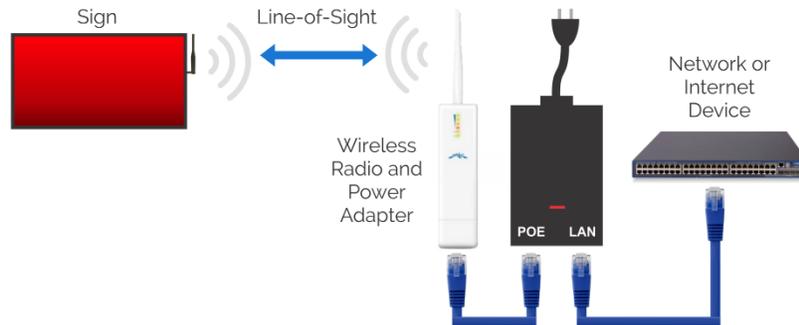
If your sign uses a cellular modem to communicate, you will only need to ensure that your data plan is activated and available on the modem. Speak with your sign provider if you require more information on your sign's communication method.

Once ready, turn the sign on at the circuit breakers or other designated power switch. Most signs are configured to automatically acquire the necessary network information. This means that the sign should connect to your network and begin communicating through your internet service provider. Allow the sign a few minutes to connect, and then log into your SignCommand account to check the sign's status.

If your sign shows a status of Online, congratulations! You are now ready to start using the application to control your sign message. If your sign continues to show an Offline status, check the connected network equipment or wireless radio. A network activity light should be flashing on the device.
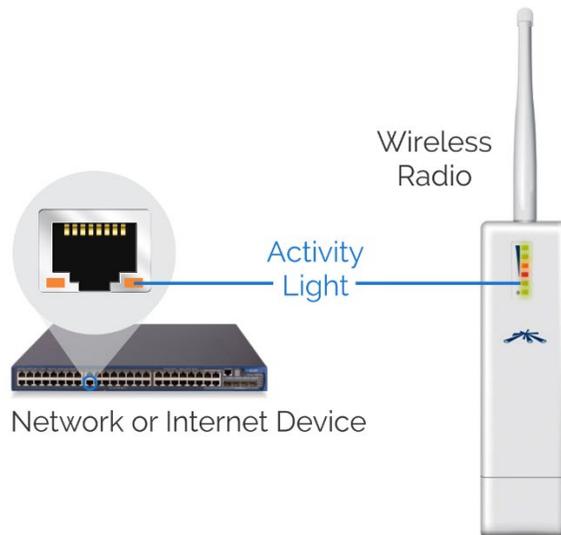
If you do not see any network activity, turn the power off and double check all network connection points between and within the sign. If you do see network activity on the device, refer to our Offline Sign Help section below for more information.

Getting Sign Diagnostic Information (SignInfo)

If you ever have an issue with your sign, we recommend that your first step is to retrieve the sign's diagnostic information. This includes all of the settings and current state information, and runs many automated tests to ensure that your sign is functioning properly. With the sign powered on, take an empty USB drive and plug it into the external USB port on your sign, if equipped. Wait until a message on the sign's display says to remove the device before disconnecting the USB drive.
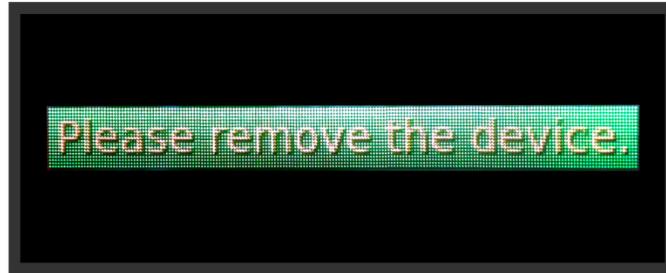
Plug it into a computer, open a file window and navigate to the USB drive. You should now see a text file called `signinfo.txt` on the drive. Open this file using any standard text editor, such as Windows Notepad, to read your sign's diagnostic information. The automated tests that are run on your sign will indicate any warnings or failures within this information. See our support website for a full list of error codes and how to resolve them. If you are communicating with a technical support representative, it's helpful to have this file available to email during your support call.

Offline Sign Help

In order for your sign to receive a new playlist or other instructions, it must be turned on and connected to the internet. If the sign hasn't communicated with our servers in a while, an Offline indicator will appear next to it. If this happens, don't worry! Your sign is capable of showing the existing playlist, including all scheduled slides, without an internet connection. As long as there's power at the sign, most likely your current message is continuing to play.

If you are attempting to connect your sign for the first time, please see our separate section on New Sign Setup. For established signs, the most common reason that a sign is offline is that the internet service is down. This is often a temporary issue that will resolve itself in minutes or hours. If your sign uses the organization's internet connection to communicate, make sure that the internet service is working at the sign's location. Try connecting to the internet with a computer or other device while it's using the same internet service. If you cannot connect to any websites, contact your organization's Internet Service Provider to resolve the issue.

If internet access is available, the next step is to check the sign and all communication devices. As with any electronic device, we recommend first turning the sign off and back on using the circuit breakers or other provided electrical switch. This may correct any temporary issues that the sign software is experiencing. If you use any equipment such as a wireless radio or router between the sign and your internet connection, make sure that they are powered on and have an indicator light showing a network connection. These lights will typically flash as new network traffic is received. As with the sign, it's best to turn each of these devices off and back on to try to clear any temporary software issues.

Of course, you will also want to check that your sign is receiving power. If the sign is off, check the circuit breakers or other electrical switches to ensure that they are in the on position. If the sign is receiving power but is not displaying any kind of message, this may indicate a hardware issue. Speak with your sign provider if you require assistance with your sign hardware.

For more advanced troubleshooting, see the section on retrieving your sign's diagnostic information. Automated tests are run on your sign, and will indicate any warnings or failures within this information. Our support website has a reference list of potential error codes and how to resolve them. If you are near the sign and must change the message before the connection is restored, you can download a playlist to a USB drive and plug it into the external USB port on the sign, if equipped. See the section on Downloading for USB for more information.