UL 1638A

STANDARD FOR SAFETY

Visual Signal Appliances for General Signaling Use

UL Standard for Safety for Visual Signal Appliances for General Signaling Use, UL 1638A

First Edition, Dated June 22, 2016

Summary of Topics

This reaffirmation of ANSI/UL 1638A dated March 18, 2026 is issued to update the title page to reflect the most recent designation as a Reaffirmed American National Standard (ANS). No technical changes have been made.

Text that has been changed in any manner or impacted by ULSE's electronic publishing system is marked with a vertical line in the margin.

The requirements are substantially in accordance with Proposal(s) on this subject dated January 23, 2026.

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1

UL 1638A

Standard for Visual Signal Appliances for General Signaling Use

First Edition

June 22, 2016

This ANSI/UL Standard for Safety consists of the First Edition including revisions through March 18, 2026.

The most recent designation of ANSI/UL 1638A as a Reaffirmed American National Standard (ANS) occurred on March 18, 2026. ANSI approval for a standard does not include the Cover Page, Transmittal Pages, and Title Page.

Comments or proposals for revisions on any part of the Standard may be submitted to ULSE at any time. Proposals should be submitted via a Proposal Request in the Collaborative Standards Development System (CSDS) at https://csds.ul.com.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

1 Scope 5
2 General 5
2.1 Components 5
2.2 Units of measurement 6
2.3 Undated references 6
2.4 Electrical circuit terminology 6

CONSTRUCTION

3 Enclosure 6
3.1 General 6
3.2 Cast metal enclosures 7
3.3 Sheet metal enclosure 8
3.4 Nonmetallic enclosures 9
3.5 Ventilating and acoustical openings 9
4 Accessibility of Uninsulated Live Parts, Film-Coated Wire, and Moving Parts 10
5 Corrosion Protection 12
6 Field Wiring Connections 12
6.1 General 12
6.2 Field wiring compartment 12
6.3 Field wiring terminals or leads 13
6.4 Grounding terminals and leads 13
6.5 Grounded supply terminals and leads 14
7 Internal Wiring 14
7.1 General 14
7.2 Aluminum terminations 15
7.3 Wireways 15
7.4 Splices 15
7.5 Barriers 15
7.6 Bushings 15
7.7 Strain relief 16
8 Components 16
8.1 Mounting of components 16
8.2 Operating components 17
8.3 Current-carrying parts 17
8.4 Coil windings 17
8.5 Connectors and receptacles 18
8.6 Electrical insulating material 18
8.7 Printed-wiring boards 18
9 Adhesives Used to Secure Conductive Parts 19
10 Spacings 19

PERFORMANCE

11 General 21
11.1 Test samples 21
11.2 Test voltages 21
12 Electrical Measurements 21
13 Variable Voltage Operation Test 21
14 Temperature Test 21
15 Endurance Test 24

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16 Component Failure Test 24
17 Abnormal Operation and Burnout Test 25
18 Dielectric Voltage-Withstand Test 25
19 Rain Test 26
20 Variable Ambient Tests 30
21 Transient Tests 30
21.1 General 30
21.2 Supply line transients 30
21.3 Internally induced transients 30
22 Vibration Test 31
23 Jarring Test 31
24 Tests on Polymeric Materials 32
25 High-Temperature Exposure Test 32
26 Flame Test 33
27 Impact Test 33

INSTALLATION AND OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

28 General 33

MARKINGS

29 General 33

APPENDIX A

Standards for Components 36

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INTRODUCTION

1 Scope

1.1 These requirements cover electrically-operated visual signaling appliances, rated 300 volts or less, and intended for indoor locations, outdoor locations, or both, in accordance with the National Electrical Code, NFPA 70.

1.2 These requirements cover visual signaling appliances for use in ordinary locations. Visual signaling appliances for use in hazardous locations, as defined in the National Electrical Code, NFPA 70, are evaluated on the basis of their compliance with these requirements and further appropriate examination and tests to determine their acceptability for such use.

1.3 These requirements cover general signal use visual signaling appliances that are intended for non-emergency use. These visual signals do not contain any sensory functions and are intended to be connected to or controlled by other equipment.

1.4 When the appliance produces both a visual signal and an audible signal, the product shall also comply with the Standard for Audible Signal Appliances for General Signaling Use, UL 464A, or the Standard for Speakers for Commercial and Professional Use, UL 1480A, as appropriate.

1.5 These requirements do not cover visual signaling appliances intended for fire alarm use as defined in the National Fire Alarm Code, NFPA 72.

1.6 These requirements do not cover lamp or strobe-light assemblies intended for entertainment or room lighting.

1.7 These requirements do not cover emergency lighting or exit lighting visual signals.

1.8 These requirements do not cover annunciators that identify functions of a fire or emergency signaling system or relate information concerning portions thereof. Annunciators are covered under the Standard for Control Units and Accessories for Fire Alarm Systems, UL 864.

2 General

2.1 Components

2.1.1 Except as indicated in 2.1.2, a component of a product covered by this standard shall comply with the requirements for that component. See Appendix A for a list of standards covering components generally used in the products covered by this standard.

2.1.2 A component is not required to comply with a specific requirement that:

a) Involves a feature or characteristic not required in the application of the component in the product covered by this standard, or

b) Is superseded by a requirement in this standard.

2.1.3 A component shall be used in accordance with its rating established for the intended conditions of use.

2.1.4 Specific components are incomplete in construction features or restricted in performance capabilities. Such components are intended for use only under limited conditions, such as certain temperatures not exceeding specified limits, and shall be used only under those specific conditions.

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2.2 Units of measurement

2.2.1 Values stated without parentheses are the requirement. Values in parentheses are explanatory or approximate information.

2.3 Undated references

2.3.1 Any undated reference to a code or standard appearing in the requirements of this standard shall be interpreted as referring to the latest edition of that code or standard.

2.4 Electrical circuit terminology

2.4.1 For the purpose of these requirements, electrical circuit characteristics are defined as follows:

a) High-Voltage – A circuit classified as high-voltage is one having circuit characteristics in excess of those of a low-voltage circuit.

b) Low-Voltage – A circuit classified as low-voltage is one involving a potential of not more than 30 volts AC, 42.4 volts peak or DC.

2.4.2 The term "appliance" as used in these requirements refers to any equipment covered by this standard.

2.4.3 For purposes of this standard the terms “visual” and “visible” are interchangeable.

CONSTRUCTION

3 Enclosure

3.1 General

3.1.1 The enclosure of an appliance shall be sufficiently strong and rigid to resist the abuses likely to be encountered during intended service. The degree of resistance inherent in the appliance shall preclude total or partial collapse and the attendant reduction of spacings, loosening or displacement of parts, and other serious defects which alone or in combination constitute an increase in the risk of fire, electric shock, or injury to persons.

3.1.2 Enclosures for individual electrical components, outer enclosures, and combinations of the two are to be considered in determining compliance with the requirement in 3.1.1.

3.1.3 Operating parts, such as gear mechanisms, light-duty relays, and similar devices, shall be protected against fouling by dust or other material that may impair their intended operation.

3.1.4 Electrical parts of an appliance shall be enclosed to provide protection against contact with uninsulated live parts.

3.1.5 An appliance intended to be installed on a flush-device box, cutout box, or similar device, is to be evaluated with regard to compliance of the combination with the requirement in 3.1.4.

3.1.6 The enclosure of an appliance shall be provided with means for mounting in the intended manner. Any fittings, such as brackets or hangers necessary for proper mounting shall be furnished with the appliance. The mounting means shall be accessible without disassembling any operating part of the

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