PrintPak

ALPHA™
PrintPak™
Software

for Microsoft® Windows™

ALPHA ™ ELECTRONIC DISPLAY PERFECTION

PrintPak™ Software Introduction

Welcome to
ALPHA™ PrintPak™ Software
for Microsoft Windows!

PrintPak™ software works with all your
favorite Window's word processing programs
such as Write, Word and WordPerfect.

With PrintPak™, you can
create and send messages quickly . . .
simply by using a word processor
and the print command.

For electronic display transmission . . .
nothing could be easier than –

PrintPak™ Software!

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System Requirements

The following are system requirements for using *PrintPak* software with Windows 3.1 standard and enhanced mode.

Minimum

- 386 (or higher) compatible computer
- 1.6 MB of RAM
  (640K conventional + 1024 extended)
- 8 MB of free hard disk space
- EGA video graphics
- RS232 Serial Port (PC Card)

Recommended

- 386 (or higher) compatible computer
- 4 MB of RAM
  (640K conventional + 3456 extended)
- 10.5 MB of free hard disk space
- VGA video graphics
- RS232 Serial Port (PC Card)

Electronic Message Center to PC Requirements

The following are requirements for connecting your ALPHA Electronic Message Center (EMC) to your PC for use with *PrintPak* software. See pages 2-3 for ALPHA/PC connection instructions and illustrations.

- ☑ 1 - 25 Pos. Sub-D/ to 6 Pos. RJ11 Adapter
- ☑ 1 - 25 ft. 6-Conductor Data Cable

ALPHA to PC Installation Instructions

RS232/RS485 Configurations

To connect ALPHA EMCs to your PC, the "jumper" located inside the message center's right endcap may need to be adjusted. If you are using *PrintPak* software with:

- a single EMC, a RS232 configuration is recommended.
- multiple EMCs, a RS485 configuration is required.

Most EMCs are pre-set to the RS485 configuration, However, to check and/or adjust the settings on your sign, see page 4.

Note: if you are using a 200 or 300 Series sign, the RS232 or RS485 adjustment is made automatically.

Single EMC

To connect a single ALPHA EMC to your PC, follow these instructions.

1. Connect the message center to a 25 ft. 6-Conductor Data Cable. Make sure you plug the end of the cable with the "ferrite" into the RS232 port on the message center.

2. Connect the 25 ft. 6-Conductor Data Cable to a 25 Pos. Sub-D/to 6 Pos. RJ11 Adapter. Then connect the adapter to the RS232 serial port on your PC.

Data Cable   Adapter

ALPHA EMC
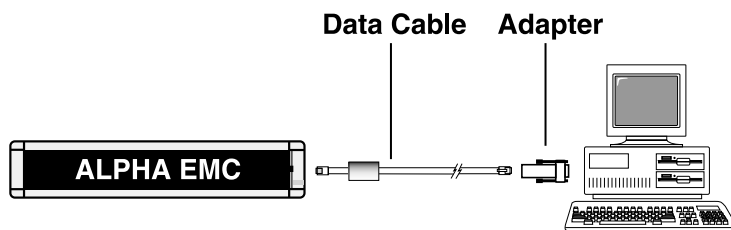
ALPHA to PC Installation Instructions, continued

Multiple EMCs

Note: Use this configuration to program the same message to multiple EMCs. No modem or address capabilities are available when using PrintPak. Also, instructions for preparing T-Connectors and Modular Network Adapters are packaged with each item.

To connect multiple ALPHA EMCs to your PC, follow these instructions.

1. Connect the message center to a Modular Network Adapter using an 8 foot 4-conductor Data Cable.
2. Connect the Modular Network Adapter to a T-Connector using RS485 cable.
3. Connect the RS485 cabling to the Converter Box.
4. Using a Type "A9" Cable, connect the Converter Box to the serial port on your PC.
5. For each additional message center on your network, use one 8 foot 4-conductor Data Cable, one Modular Network Adapter, and RS485 cable as needed.

Modular Network Adapter

ALPHA EMC

RS485 cable

ALPHA EMC

Converter Box   **Type "A9" cable**
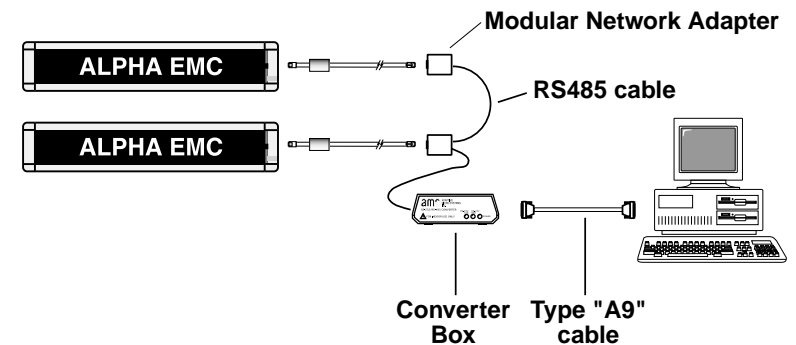
Jumper Adjustment

Note: This adjustment is required when using the ALPHA 4000 and 7000 Series Electronic Message Centers.

1. Disconnect the unit from its power source. Then, facing the front of the sign, remove the message center's right endcap. (See photo 1.)

2. Find the "Jumper" located below the EPROM and above the IR receiver (See illustration 1.)

   Note: Use caution when installing the jumper so as not to drop it inside the case. If it falls inside the case, service may be required for removal.

Photo 1.

3. Remove the existing jumper from the RS485 position. Then, place it onto both prongs of the RS232 position using your fingers or a needle nose pliers. (See illustration1.) Push the jumper downward until it is secure. Note: The middle pin is used for both positions.

EPROM

232
485 Jumper

IR Receiver
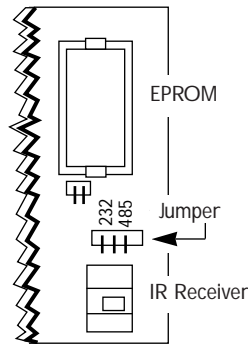
Illustration 1.

4. Replace the endcap and restore the power to the unit.

Installing PrintPak Software

To install *PrintPak* follow these steps:

1. Insert the *PrintPak* software disk.

2. From *Windows*, select **Program Manager**.

3. From the *File* menu, select **Run**. The *Browse* window appears.
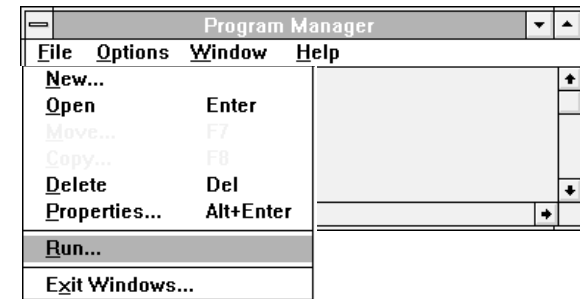
4. Select the *A* (or *B*) drive. Then select *Setup.exe* from the directory and press ⬚ OK ⬚ . The **Run** window appears. Press ⬚ OK ⬚ again to begin installation.

5. Prior to installation, the following informational message appears about the COM Port Please see the README file at the end of the installation process.

Installing PrintPak Software, continued
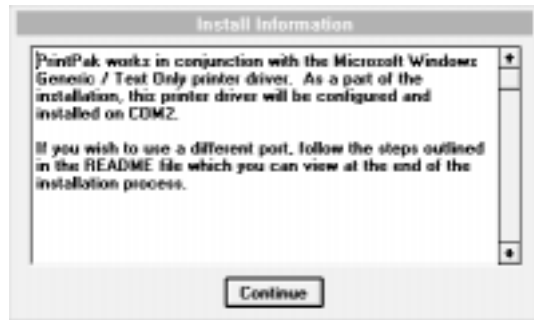
6. *PrintPak* software will be installed in the *PrintPak Directory* on the
    C drive. If you want to install *PrintPak* software on a different
    directory and/or drive make the change in the *PrintPak Installation*
    window. Then select from the following:

    ☑   Do not overwrite existing files that are newer.
    ☑   Install all files (overwrites existing PrintPak files)

7. Press [Continue] to install *PrintPak*. A message appears when
    the installation has been completed.

8. Restart your computer.

9. From Window's Program Manager, open *PrintPak*.

PrintPak Toolbar Options

After selecting the *PrintPak* software icon from Windows, the PrintPak
Toolbar appears and displays the following options: **Modes, Characters**,
Display Options and **Help Screens**. Click on the desired icon to
access the appropriate screen.
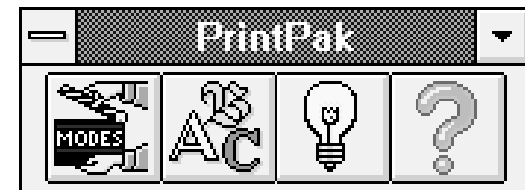
Mode   Character   Display   Help
Menu   Menu   Options   Screens

Modes Menu Information

PrintPak software offers 25 different modes to choose from when creating
a message. The modes and the desired colors (multi-color signs only) can
be mixed throughout your message. *Note: Mode availability varies depending
on the sign in use.*

To choose a mode, simply click on the desired mode. If you do not select
a mode, your message will automatically appear in *Automode.* Individual
modes and a description appear on the following pages.
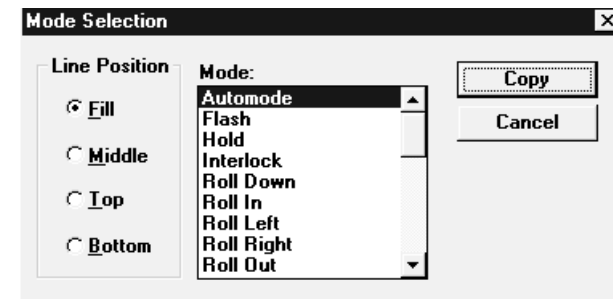
Mode Descriptions

Automode
Turns on the Automode function. Your ALPHA Message Center automatically selects modes for your messages.

Flash
Your message flashes on the screen.

Hold
Your message holds on the screen for several seconds.

Interlock
Alternating rows of dots interlock your message into the center of the display from each end.

Roll
Rolls your previous message off the display while rolling the new message on.

Rotate
Rotates your message from the right to the left horizontally across the display.

Scroll
Your message scrolls upward one line at a time, pushing the previous line(s) upward. Note, the line positions are not available when using scroll.

Slide
Your message slides onto the display from the right to the left, one character at a time.

Snow or **Turn Page** *(Available on AlphaVision Modular Displays only)*
Writes a new message over the current message with a snowing effect from top to bottom. Turn Page displays a special effect when changing entire screen message.

Mode Descriptions, continued

Sparkle
Your new message sparkles onto the display over the current message.

Spray
Your message sprays onto and across the display from the right to the left, one character at a time.

Starburst
Random starbursts explode your message onto the display.

Switch
Alternating characters of your message slide off the display in different directions (first character slides up, the next down, etc). New characters appear on the display in the same manner.

Twinkle
Your message is displayed in a twinkling effect.

Wipe
Your new message is wiped over the current message.

Condensed Rotate *(Available on BETA-BRITE, 215C, 215R, Big Dot, 320, 330)*
Rotates a condensed version of the message from right to left horizontally across the screen.

Trailing Mode
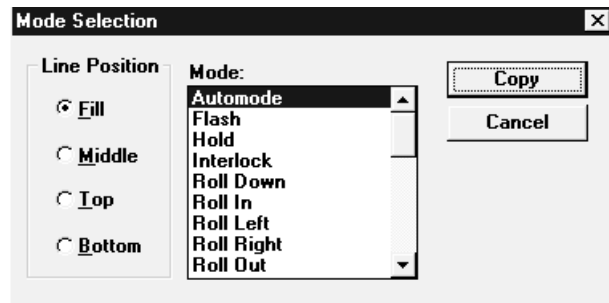A mode placed at the end of, or a section of, a message if a particular effect is desired as the message exits the display. All modes can be used as a trailing mode except the following: Condensed Rotate, Scroll, Slide, Snow and Spray.
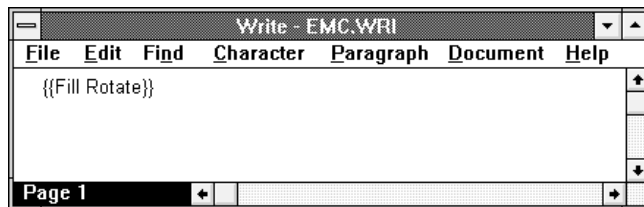
Inserting Modes into a Message

To insert a mode into your message follow these steps:

1. Click on the **Modes** icon. The *Mode Selection* dialog box appears.

2. Click on the desired **Line Position**. (See *Understanding Line Positions* on the next page.)

3. Highlight the desired **Mode** in the *Mode Listbox.*

```
Mode Selection                                    ×

 Line Position      Mode:
                    Automode          ▲        Copy
  ⦿ Fill            Flash
                    Hold                        Cancel
  ○ Middle          Interlock
                    Roll Down
  ○ Top             Roll In
                    Roll Left
  ○ Bottom          Roll Right
                    Roll Out          ▼
```

4. Click on the **Copy** button to copy your selection to the clipboard. *Note: Double clicking on the desired mode will copy that mode to the clipboard. This may be used instead of the Copy button.*

5. Switch to the word processing document that the mode will be copied to.

6. In the document, place your cursor where the mode should appear.

7. From the application's *Edit* menu, select **Paste**. The selected mode appears in the document in double brackets.

```
—                    Write - EMC.WRI              ▼  ▲
 File  Edit  Find   Character  Paragraph  Document  Help

   {{Fill Rotate}}                                      ↑




 Page 1         ←                                   →
```

8. Return to *PrintPak* to add other selections.

Understanding Line Positions

The *Line Position* option lets you display your message in several different areas on all multiple-line ALPHA Message Centers. The positions include: *Top, Bottom, Middle* and *Fill.* Each position refers to the location of your message when it is displayed on the message center.

For example, if you select the *Top* position, your message will be displayed at the top of the message center. The *Middle* and *Bottom* positions also work exactly as their names imply. However, the *Fill* position displays as much of your message as possible within both lines until you change positions.

If you do not select a mode/position and you have a two-line sign, your message center will automatically display your message in both lines, (*Fill* position) and *Automode.* A one-line sign automatically displays a message in the *Middle* position. See the illustration below for an explanation of all four positions.

```
┌──────────────┐          ┌──────────────┐
│  MESSAGE     │          │              │
│              │          │   MESSAGE    │
│              │          │              │
└──────────────┘          └──────────────┘
  Top position              Middle position

┌──────────────┐          ┌──────────────┐
│              │          │ MESSAGE FILLS│
│              │          │OUT BOTH LINES│
│   MESSAGE    │          │              │
└──────────────┘          └──────────────┘
  Bottom position           Fill position
```
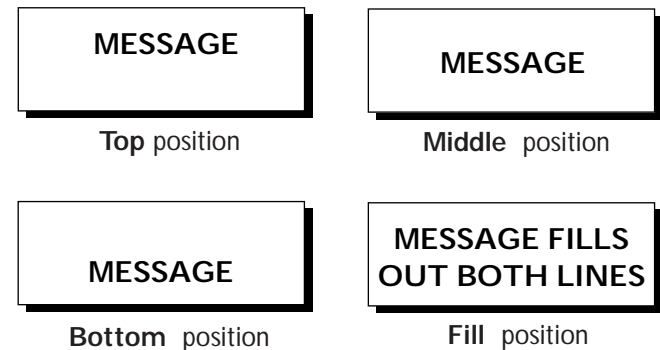
Note: If you have a 7000 Series or AlphaVision Modular Display System, the above line positions also apply. However, a minimum of 8 rows are automatically reserved at the Top or Bottom position to fill out the 3rd line. The rows will be reserved at the bottom if you begin your message at the top, or at the top if you begin your message at the bottom.

Character Menu Information

The *Character* menu displays a list of available *Character Sets*, *Styles* and *Colors.* Not all *Character* menu selections are available on every sign. For individual sign capabilities, see pages 22-24.

To choose a character, click on the droplist and select from *Character Set*, *Character Style* or *Color*. Then click on the desired item in the *Character* menu. If you do not select a character your message will automatically appear in *Seven Row*. Individual modes and a description appear on the following pages. See page 00 for step-by step instructions.

Character Set Descriptions

15/16 Row Normal*

Text is displayed in full display height. Full height, either15 or 16 Row, varies depending on the sign.

15/16 Row Fancy*

A decorative version of the regular 15/16 Row.

Ten Row (Available on *AlphaVision Modular Displays* only)

Text is displayed in ten dot high characters.

Seven Row Normal

Text is displayed in seven dot high characters.

Seven Row Fancy

A decorative version of *Seven Row*.

Five Row

Text is displayed in five dot high characters.

*15/16 Row can only be used on two-line signs with the *Middle Line Position* selected.

Character Style Descriptions

Wide On

Text is displayed one column wider. For example, 3 row characters would display in 4 rows. The extra row is added to the right side of the original character

Wide Off

Turns off double stroke characters.

Double Wide On

Text is displayed twice as wide. For example, 3 row characters would display in 6 rows. The extra rows are added to the right side of the original character.

Double Wide Off

Turns off wide characters.

Flash On (Available on *AlphaVision Modular Displays* only)

Individual characters, or groups of characters flash.

Flash Off (Available on *AlphaVision Modular Displays* only)

Turns off flashing character, or groups of characters.

Double High On (Available on *AlphaVision Modular Displays* only)

Doubles the selected character height. For example, if *Double High On* is selected with *Ten Row*, *Twenty Row* becomes the displayed height.

Double High Off (Available on *AlphaVision Modular Displays* only)

Turns off any previous Double High.

True Descenders On (Available on *AlphaVision Modular Displays* only)

Letters such as j, g and q are partially displayed below the main text line.

True Descenders Off (Available on *AlphaVision Modular Displays* only)

Letters such as j, g and q are displayed even with the main text line.

Fixed Width On

Text is displayed with a fixed width for individual characters and spacing. Note: *Fixed Width* will default to *Left Justified* on all message centers.

Fixed Width Off

Text is displayed in proportional characters. This is the default setting.

Character Colors *(Available on multicolor signs only.)*

This option allows you to select from multiple colors, *if* you have a multi-color sign. If you do not select a color, the sign will automatically display *AutoColor.* In *AutoColor,* colors are randomly selected and displayed. The following colors are available:

- Red
- Light Red
- Green
- Light Green
- Brown
- Orange

- Amber
- Yellow
- Rainbow 1
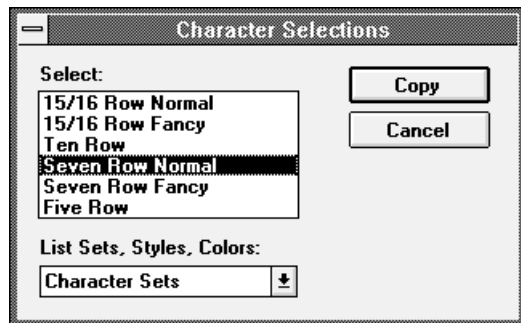- Rainbow 2
- Mix
- AutoColor

Note: Color selections on the 221C, 4120C, 4160C and 4200C signs include Red, Green and Amber, not Yellow. Select Amber to display Yellow.

Inserting Character Selections into a Message

To insert a Character into your message follow these steps:

1. Click on the **Character** icon. The *Character Selection* dialog box appears.

2. Click on the droplist and select from *Character Set, Character Style* or *Color.* Repeat this step as needed to display the menu options.

3. Click on the desired **Character**. (Character Set, Style or Color).

4. Click on the **Copy** button to copy your selection to the clipboard. Note: Double clicking on the desired Character will copy your selection to the clipboard. This may be used instead of the Copy button.

5. Switch to the word processing document that the *Character* will be copied to.

6. In the document, place your cursor where the *Character* should appear.

7. From the application's *Edit* menu, select **Paste**. The selected *Character* appears in the document in double brackets.
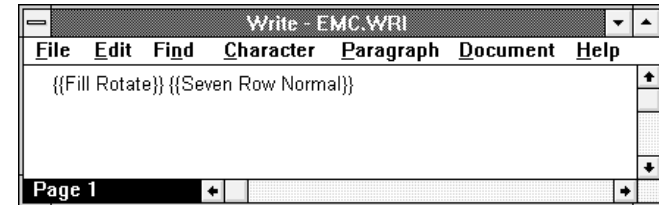
8. Return to *PrintPak* to add other selections.
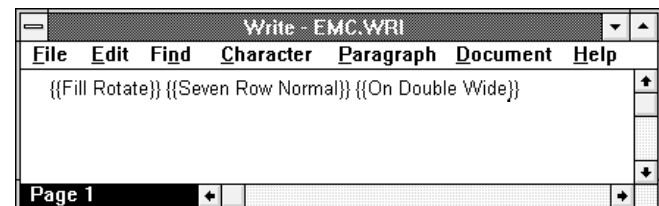
Display Option Information 🔅

The *Display Options* menu offers additional message enhancement selections. The menu displays a list of available *Miscellaneous Options, Speeds* and *Animations.* Not all *Display Options* are available on every sign. For individual sign capabilities, see pages 22-24.

To choose a display option, click on the droplist and select from *Miscellaneous Options, Speeds* or *Animations.* Then click on the desired item in the *Display Option* menu. If you do not select an option for *Speeds,* your message will automatically display the default, *Speed 4.* Individual display options and a description appear on the following pages.

Miscellaneous Options Descriptions 🔅

New Line

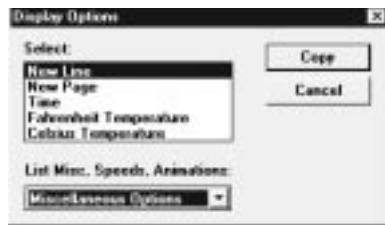This option allows you to make line breaks exactly where you want the message to break on the sign.

New Page *(Available on AlphaVision Modular Displays only)*

This option acts as a page break for all *AlphaVision Modular Display.* The sign will create a page break immediately after the *New Page* option. Note: This option is applicable to the *AlphaVision Modular Display* only.

Miscellaneous Options Descriptions, continued 🔅

Time

This option inserts the time directly into your message. The time displayed is based on the time stored in your computer. If your computer system time is incorrect, your sign will reflect the error as well.

Fahrenheit Temperature *(Available on the Alpha 790i sign only)*

This option displays the *Fahrenheit* Temperature.

Celsius Temperature *(Available on the Alpha 790i sign only)*

This option displays the *Celsius* Temperature.

Speed Options 🔅

The *Speed* menu displays *5* speeds and a *No Hold Time* selection. Each speed determines how fast the messages are displayed and then replaced on the sign by the next message.

Speed 1 is the slowest speed and *Speed 5* is the fastest. Use *No Hold Time* if you want your messages to display as quickly as each message can be written to the sign. Note: Only the *Hold* mode should be used when using *No Hold Time.* If no speed is chosen, the display speed automatically defaults to *Speed 4.*

Animation Options

This option offers nine preprogrammed graphic files that can be inserted anywhere within your messages. *If* you have a multicolor sign, the colors for the animation options are preprogrammed and cannot be changed. The files and their description are as follows:

Cherry Bomb
A cherry bomb complete with a fuse is displayed. The fuse burns down to the bomb and the bomb explodes. To have the next word explode out of the bomb, use HOLD as the trailing mode.

Don't Drink and Drive
A car collides with a bubbling cocktail glass and is replaced with the message "Please Don't Drink and Drive."

Fireworks
Exploding fireworks appear randomly in the display.

No Smoking
An image of a cigarette appears, is extinguished and then replaced with the No Smoking symbol.

Running Animal
An animal moves from right to left across the display.

Slot Machine
Slot machines randomly appear across the display.

Thank You
The words "Thank You" are written in script, moving left to right across the display.

Turbo Car
A car appears in the distance and then moves across the display.

Welcome
The word "Welcome" is written in script, moving left to right across the display.

Inserting Display Options into a Message

To insert a Display Option into your message follow these steps:

1. Click on the **Display Option** icon. The *Display Option Selection* dialog box appears.

2. Click on the droplist and select from *Miscellaneous*, *Speeds* or *Animation Options*. Repeat this step as needed to display the different menus.

3. Click on the desired **Option**. (*Miscellaneous*, *Speeds* or *Animation Options.)*

4. Click on the **Copy** button to copy your selection to the clipboard. Note: Double clicking on the desired *option* will copy your selection to the clipboard. This may be used instead of the Copy button.

5. Switch to the word processing document that the *Option* will be copied to.

6. In the document, place your cursor where the *Option* should appear.

7. From the application's *Edit* menu, select **Paste**. The selected *Option* appears in the document in double brackets.
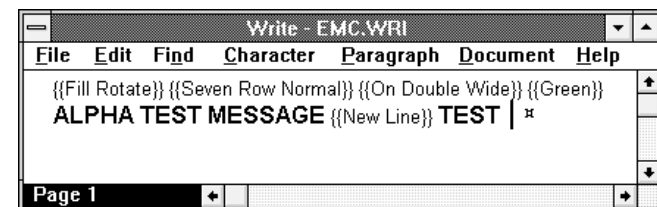
8. Return to *Printpak* to add other selections.

Installing Printer Drivers for Sign Transmission

Note: The print drivers are automatically installed and configured for use with PrintPak Software upon installation. Use these instructions if you need to reset your existing configurations.

Before you can send a message to your sign, you must first install the *Windows Generic Printer Driver* on a serial (COM) port. To install the *Generic Printer Driver,* follow these steps:

1. Open the **Control Panel**.

2. Double click on the **Printer Icon**.

3. Click on the **ADD >>** button to add a printer driver.

4. From *"List of Printers",* select **Generic/Text Only** and click on **Install**.

5. Click on the **Connect** button to connect to the serial port.

6. In the *Ports* listbox, select the **desired COM port.**

7. Click on the **Settings** button.

8. Change the settings to the following:

9600 Baud	Even Parity	No Flow Control
7 Data Bits	2 Stop Bits	

9. Click [OK] twice to return to the *Printers Dialog Box.*

10. Click on the **Setup** button.

11. Click on the **Modify** button.

12. In the *Reset Line Edit Dialog Box,* type {{Begin Message}}

13. Close all *dialog boxes* and the *Control Panel.* This completes the driver installation.

Sending a Message to a Sign

Once the *Generic Printer Driver* has been installed, you transmit your message to a sign by printing your document to this printer driver.

To select a printer driver for transmitting messages, follow these steps:

1. From your word processing application's *File menu,* select **Print Setup**.

2. From "List of Printers", select **Generic/Text Only**.

3. From your word processing application's *File menu,* select **Print**.

   The message is then transmitted to your sign.

Sign Capabilities - Modes

Sign	Auto Mode	Flash	Hold	Inter Lock	Roll	Rotate	Scroll	Slide	Snow
200 Series	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
300 Series	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
4000 Series	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
7000 Series	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	❏	❏
Big Dot	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
AVMDS-FM	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	❏	❏
AVMDS-CM	■	■	■	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
790i	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Sign	Sparkle	Spray	Star Burst	Switch	Twinkle	Wipe	Cond. Rotate	Trailing Modes	Turn Page
200 Series	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	❏
300 Series	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	❏
4000 Series	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	❏
7000 Series	■	❏	❏	❏	■	■	❏	■	❏
Big Dot	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	❏
AVMDS-FM	■	❏	❏	■	■	■	■	❏	❏
AVMDS-CM	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
790i	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	❏

Sign Capabilities - Characters

Sign	15/16 Row	15/16 Fancy	Ten Row	Seven Row	Seven Fancy	Five Row	Wide On/Off	Flash On/Off
200 Series	❏	❏	❏	■	■	■	■	❏
300 Series	❏	❏	❏	■	■	■	■	❏
4000 Series	■	■	❏	■	■	■	■	❏
7000 Series	■	■	❏	■	■	■	■	■
Big Dot	❏	❏	❏	■	■	■	■	❏
AVMDS-FM	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
AVMDS-CM	❏	❏	■	❏	■	■	❏	■
790i	❏	❏	❏	■	■	■	■	❏

Sign	Double High On/Off	True Descenders On/Off	Fixed Width On/Off	Dbl. Wide On/Off
200 Series	❏	❏	■	■
300 Series	❏	❏	■	■
4000 Series	❏	❏	■	■
7000 Series	■	■	■	■
Big Dot	❏	❏	■	■
AVMDS-FM	■	■	■	■
AVMDS-CM	❏	❏	❏	❏
790i	❏	❏	■	■

Sign Capabilities - Display Options

Sign	Multi* Color	Time	Anima-tions	New Page	New Line	Faren. Temp.	Celsius Temp.	Speeds
200 Series	■	■	■	❏	■	❏	❏	■
300 Series	■	■	■	❏	■	❏	❏	■
4000 Series	■	■	■	❏	■	❏	❏	■
7000 Series	■	■	❏	■	■	❏	❏	■
Big Dot	■	■	■	❏	■	❏	❏	■
AVMDS-FM	■	■	❏	■	■	❏	❏	■
AVMDS-CM	■	■	❏	■	■	❏	❏	■
790i	❏	■	■	❏	■	■	■	■

*Note: If you have an ALPHA sign with the series number followed by an "R", such as a 320R, the multicolor option is not available. "R" indicates a Red only electronic message center. "C" indicates color.