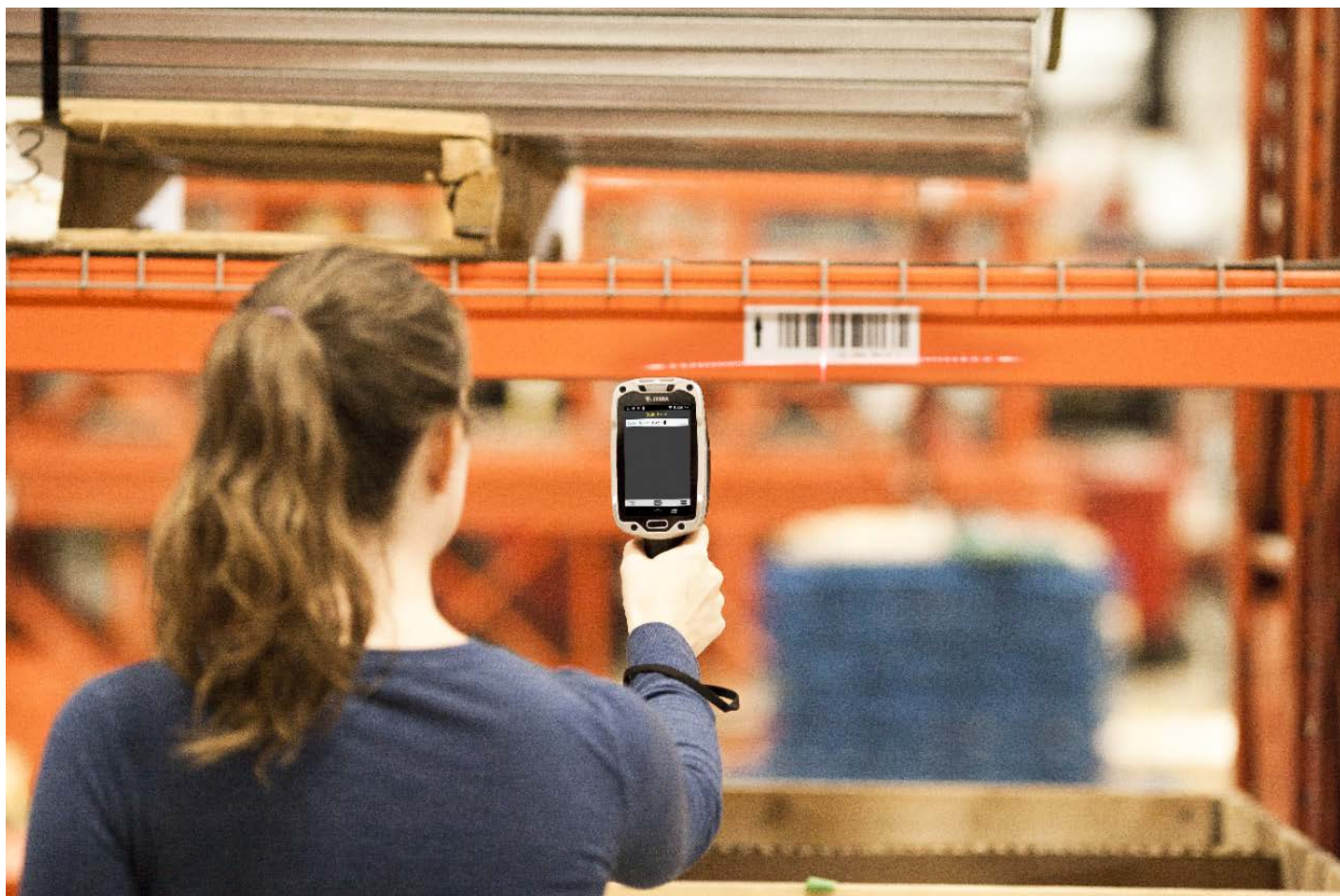




# Warehouse Location Labels and Placards



There are many options for marking locations in your warehouse. Shelf labeling, hanging placards, floor mount label kits, aisle signs, etc. Having a single source that can produce, print, and mount the labels is a huge advantage to you during this hectic time of starting up or remodeling your warehouse. EMP Tech Group is your single source for all the products and services you will need to successfully, quickly, and economically mark all your warehouse locations. Whether you choose bar coding, human readable, or even RFID enabled labels and placards. Below are some of the key considerations for tackling a warehouse location signage project.

## 1 NAMING SCHEME

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First, you will need a scheme for numbering your warehouse. Minimizing the number of alpha characters in this scheme is recommended by many warehouse pros. Having positions in the numbering sequence for the aisle, section, shelf level, and position are the most common. If alpha characters are to be used, the locations for staging, receiving, and shipping are probably the most applicable. Once you have the scheme figured out, getting all the locations into a spreadsheet is the next step. Separate columns for each type and size of label are required.



## 2 SHELF LABELING

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With your numbering scheme in place, you need to decide how you are going to label the shelf locations. One option is to put the label directly on the cross beams of the racking. An alternative is to put one placard down low with several smaller shelf location labels. The right decision for this step depends on the type of lifts you are using and the type of bar code scanners in your mobile computers. For the most part, labeling the actual location and avoiding multiple label placards is the best way to go.

## 3 LABEL TYPES

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Under no circumstances should you use paper labels for any of these applications. The overall cost savings is minimal and typically offset by the pain the paper labels will cause you down the road. Most applications call for a polypropylene label material, which is both tough and economical. Some applications, that require the label to wrap around an edge or go over a radius, will be better served with vinyl. The cost of vinyl is higher, but the polypropylene labels have memory and will want to curl if wrapped over an edge. Depending on the type of bar code readers you use, retro-reflective labels may be required for applications that need the labels to be read from long distances. New long range bar code imagers do not require retro-reflective labels to read labels from long distances, while conventional scanners do.

## 4 FLOOR LOCATIONS

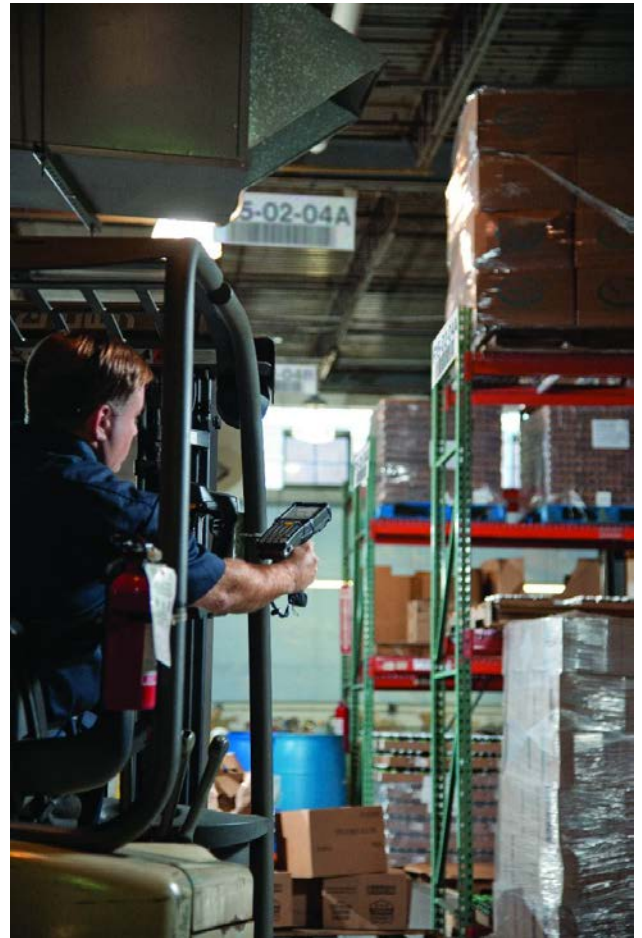
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This is an age-old dilemma. Many warehouses have a permanent reminder of a failed attempt to label floor locations by putting labels directly on the floor. Daily torture from forklift and pallet jack traffic quickly makes these labels unreadable. The alternative is to hang placards over the floor locations, but this can get expensive and complicated. There are now permanent floor location kits that use a beveled aluminum frame and clear plastic housing for the bar code label itself. These have proven to be tough and reliable in most applications.

## 5 WAYS TO HANG PLACARDS FOR FLOOR LOCATIONS

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The easiest and most cost-effective way to hang placards above floor locations is to mount them directly to roof joists using zip ties. This cannot always be done due to ceiling height and roof structure constraints. When it can be done, it greatly reduces the cost your project. If mounting directly to the ceiling is not possible, the next best approach is to hang conduit from chains. Other solutions can be considered, but this is typically the best and second most economical approach.





## 6 BAR CODE TYPES

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The days of long 1D bar codes on 12" long labels are coming to an end. 2D Data Matrix bar codes with large element sizes can be read from very long distances and the size of the bar code is much more conducive to many installations. This assumes that you have upgraded your bar code scanners in your mobile computers to long range imagers. These imagers allow you to use 2D bar codes in your warehouse labeling, and allow for 360 degree read orientation for better ergonomics and more efficient bar code scanning. Long range imagers also do away with the need to use expensive retro-reflective labels for your upper locations to allow for floor reading.

## 7 LABEL TESTING

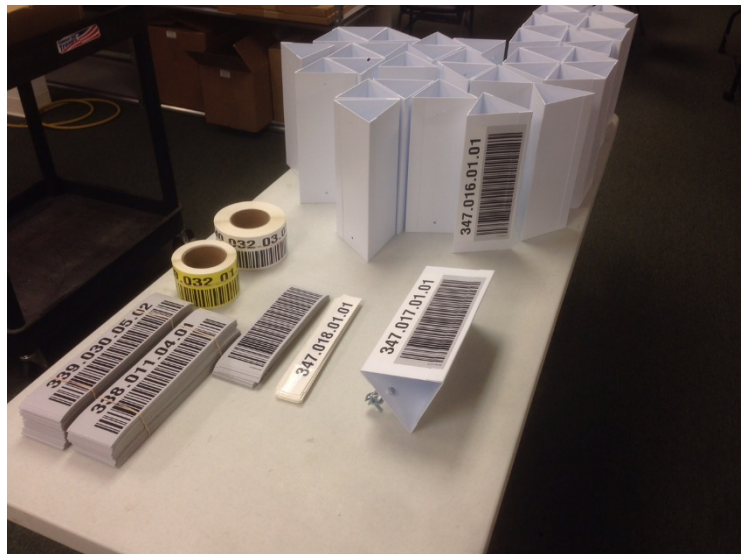
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One step that is frequently missed is testing the labels you are designing in the actual location with the actual bar code scanners that you plan to use. If you skip this step, you would not be the first to mount thousands of labels only to find that you are having scanning issues. It is important to mount to the actual rack or placard heights that you will be using. Scan angle and lighting conditions can play a role in successful bar code scanning.

## 8 PRINTING THE LABELS

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Once your spreadsheet with all the locations is complete and your label material type is selected, you are ready to have your labels printed. Try to keep your labels the same height, or at least one or two heights and all the same label material type, to minimize costs. If you are opting to do this printing work yourself, most label printing software will easily step down the spreadsheet and print all your locations. We use continuous label material and label printers with built-in cutters, so varying length labels are not a problem. If you are printing yourself and do not have a cutter on your label printer, die cut labels are the way to go. Be sure to print the labels in the correct order and separate them by zone and aisle before packaging the printed labels.



## 9 MOUNTING LABELS ONTO PLACARDS

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After your labels are printed and the placard material has arrived, the laborious step of mounting labels onto placards begins. We have found that printing the bar code and the human readable on two separate labels saves time compared to one large label. The smaller labels are easier to handle and much easier to apply to the placards without bubbles or wrinkles. One important tip if you are doing your placard labels this way is that you must include the human readable in very small print on the bar code labels. You cannot tell what the bar code number is without this and it will be very easy to mismatch the bar code and the human readable labels.





## 10 MOUNTING RACK LABELS AND HANGING PLACARDS

It's time to mount and apply everything that you have carefully prepared. You will need a scissor lift, probably more than one, to complete this step. If you have lifts already, make sure they have good batteries that can run a full shift. We have had several customers try to save money by having us use their lifts, only to find out the battery lasts an hour. Two people per lift is usually the right mix, with one person on the ground for every one or two lifts. The person on the ground, usually the supervisor, feeds labels and placards to the worker on the lift in the correct order as they progress through the warehouse. Also, don't forget lift certifications. OSHA requires anyone working on the lift to be certified. There are online courses for this certification that take about an hour to complete. If you are using temporary labor to do any of this work, lift certifications are a big deal. The certification will narrow your list of candidates and will cost you a premium for the labor.

We have helped many of our customers with their warehouse labeling projects. We have seen the pitfalls and have helped guide our customers to success in this very important process. Call or email us today and we will come on site to help you evaluate what is needed to mark your warehouse locations.

