

Chapter 17.75

SIGNS*

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*Code reviser's note: Ordinances 973, 995 and 1026, on file in the city clerk's office, provide interim sign regulations pending an update of the sign code.

17.75.010 Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide regulations and requirements governing the use and location of signs in order to protect the natural beauty of the city and promote flexibility and originality in business advertising. (Ord. 1198 § 22 (Exh. D), 2017; Ord. 744 § 2, 1995).

17.75.020 General requirements.

The following requirements apply to all signs except authorized traffic and informative signs, signals, or devices:

A. No signs of the flashing or animated variety are permitted in any district, including but not limited to strings of pennants, banners or streamers, wind or electrical animated objects, and balloons.

B. Signs of a commercial nature shall advertise only the business or activity being conducted on the immediate premises.

C. No sign shall be erected at any location where by reason of the position, shape or color of such sign it may interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device.

D. No sign other than public traffic signs or signals shall be placed within 10 feet of any intersection as measured from the nearest intersection of street right-of-way lines, except sandwich board signs when otherwise permitted by this title.

E. Signs shall be permitted as follows in residential districts:

1. In residential zones, no lighted signs shall be permitted;
2. Signs of not more than 20 square feet shall be permitted to identify multiple-family dwellings, hotels, clubs, lodges, hospitals, and public and similar uses when mounted against the building or more than 10 feet from any property line;
3. Signs identifying home occupations shall not exceed three square feet in area and shall be no closer than 10 feet to any property line or shall be flat against the building.

F. For sale, for rent, and for lease signs are temporarily permitted, not to exceed six square feet in area, if located on the subject premises and located no closer than five feet to any property line.

G. Subdivision Signs. Signs advertising the sale or lease of lots or buildings within new subdivisions of at least two and one-half acres are permitted, provided they are not illuminated and do not exceed 30 square feet in area. Not more than one such sign shall be located at each major approach to the subdivision. The display of such signs shall be limited to a period of two years. Prior to the expiration thereof, the applicant may request an extension from the hearing examiner. The sign shall be removed prior to the expiration of the two-year period or extension thereof. If

the sign has not been removed, the city may enter upon the premises upon which the sign is located and remove such sign at no liability of the city and at the expense of the owner.

H. Public Safety Signs. Temporary private ground or wall signs exclusively relating to the safety of the public (e.g., “no parking today,” “use covered walkway,” “do not enter,” “danger,” “loading zone”) may be located as needed for public safety without limitations as to number, size, or location so far as the requirements of this chapter are concerned.

I. Signs Permitted in Commercial and Industrial Zones. The following signs shall be permitted per property or separate business premises:

1. One sign located flat against a building or marquee shall be permitted per property or separate business premises, provided such sign does not exceed 20 square feet;
2. One post-mounted sign, provided such sign does not exceed 15 feet above the adjacent ground grade and which shall not exceed 20 square feet in area; or one projecting, suspended, or awning sign shall be permitted per property which does not exceed 10 square feet in area and is at least eight feet above the sidewalk, and not more than 15 feet above the adjacent grade, and does not project more than five feet into a public right-of-way;
3. One blade sign.

J. No sign shall be located upon a roof or parapet of a building or structure, except as specifically permitted by SMC 17.35.230; signs shall be located 50 feet or more from any lot in a residential zone and 100 feet from any school ground or public park.

K. No signs except those established and maintained by the city, county, state or federal government, or sandwich board or projecting signs otherwise permitted by this title and complying with all requirements for such signs, shall be located in, project into or overhang a public right-of-way. The owners of sandwich board and projecting signs, including blade signs, that are located in, project into or overhang a public right-of-way shall prior to approval of a sign permit execute and deliver to the city a hold harmless agreement in a form approved by the city attorney, holding the city harmless against any and all claims of any nature whatsoever arising out of the presence of such sign in or over the public right-of-way.

L. Construction Signs. During construction, repair or alteration of a structure, temporary signs which denote the architect, engineer, contractor or builder or which denote the name of the structure and its use or occupants-to-be may be placed within the required yard setbacks as ground or wall signs. Each sign shall be 20 square feet or less in size and no more than one such sign shall be permitted for each architect, engineer, contractor, builder, or denoting the name, use and occupants-to-be of the structure.

M. Bulletin Boards. Bulletin boards used to display announcements of meetings to be held on the premises on which such boards are located shall be permitted for churches, schools, community centers, and public, charitable or institutional uses. Unless otherwise permitted in the zone, such signs shall contain no more than 15 square feet in area. Such signs may be used as wall signs, or ground signs when located a minimum of 10 feet from any property line. One such sign shall be permitted for each use or activity.

N. Temporary Signs.

1. Agricultural Signs. Directional signs to seasonal agricultural crops shall be allowed for a maximum of 45 days. Signs shall maintain a “clear-sight triangle” which is typically a triangle with two 25-foot sides extending from the street corner along the curbs, and shall be out of the public right-of-way. A temporary sign permit shall be obtained for each sign. A sign plan shall be submitted justifying the proposed location(s) as the minimum necessary to direct traffic to the agricultural crop. Signs shall be no larger than 16 square feet.
2. Banners Placed on Street Light Poles. All temporary banner signs displayed on streetlight/road sign poles in the public right-of-way shall:
 - a. Only be attached to streetlight poles or road sign poles with brackets designed for the display of signs;

- b. Display noncommercial copy only;
- c. Require a temporary sign permit or special event permit;
- d. Be limited in duration to 21 days per permit; and
- e. Only be installed and maintained by city staff or the streetlight pole owner, with all installation, maintenance, and removal costs paid by the applicant.

O. Parking Control Signs. Sandwich board signs as defined in SMC 17.75.025 used solely for the purpose of parking control or traffic control on private property may be placed upon the property of the owner of the sign without a permit, provided such signs shall comply with the requirements of SMC 17.75.025(C).

P. Governmental Signs. Governmental signs shall be exempt from the processes and development regulations required by this chapter, and shall be erected and maintained subject to rules and procedures established by the Community Development Director. In all cases, the city retains the right to remove any governmental sign at its sole discretion. (Ord. 1234 § 7, 2020; Ord. 1198 § 22 (Exh. D), 2017; Ord. 911 § 2, 2002; Ord. 769 § 31, 1996; Ord. 744 § 2, 1995).

17.75.025 Sandwich board signs.

A. For purposes of this title, a “sandwich board” sign shall mean a one- or two-faced A-frame style sign that is readily movable and has no permanent attachment to a building, structure or the ground, and may include other styles of freestanding one- or two-sided signs that otherwise meet the requirements for sandwich board signs.

B. In addition to other permitted sign types, one sandwich board sign may be permitted for any commercial purpose when completely upon private property and upon the business premises, provided such sign meets all other requirements of this section.

C. No face of a sandwich board sign, when permitted by this title, shall exceed 24 inches by 36 inches; and further provided, the foregoing notwithstanding, no sandwich board sign shall be of such a size that it intrudes into any area required to be free of impediments pursuant to the Washington State Barrier Free or Americans with Disabilities Act regulations as they now exist or may hereafter be amended. All signs shall be of sound construction and designed to the satisfaction of the building official to withstand high winds.

D. The permit shall be issued by the director, and the fee for the issuance of such permit shall be \$50.00; provided, the city council may from time to time by resolution establish a different fee. The application for such permit shall be upon a form prescribed by the director, and shall include the proposed location and dimensions of the sandwich board sign, a map drawn to a standard scale showing the location of the sign in relation to streets, sidewalks, buildings, and other features within 20 feet, and either a drawing or photograph of the sign. Applications for permits for sandwich board signs shall be exempt from the requirements of other provisions of this title, and shall be processed by the director or designee on an expedited basis. Such permits shall remain valid for an indefinite period so long as the permitted sandwich board sign meets the requirements of this section and is in compliance with any conditions of the permit; and further provided, that in addition to the permit, a valid sandwich board license has been obtained pursuant to SMC 17.35.235(B) and the license fee paid. A legible moisture resistant copy of the approved license shall be affixed to the underside of the sign at all times.

E. Sandwich board signs shall not be affixed to, mounted upon or placed upon vehicles parked within the public right-of-way.

F. 1. The director shall administer the permitting provisions of this section.

2. The building official, the code enforcement officer or any police officer may enforce the provisions of this section relating to unpermitted sandwich board signs.

3. Any sandwich board sign placed in violation of any of the provisions of this section may be summarily removed.

4. Any sandwich board sign removed pursuant to this subsection may be returned to the owner only upon the owner's securing of a permit, and a license if required; provided, any sandwich board sign removed from public or private property more than two times may be destroyed.

G. Willful violation of the requirement to obtain a permit or license for a sandwich board sign, as evidenced by three or more actions to enforce such requirements by removal of any sign owned by the same owner, shall constitute a misdemeanor. (Ord. 1198 § 22 (Exh. D), 2017; Ord. 911 § 3, 2002).

17.75.030 Sign permit – Application requirements.

All permit applications shall include a general land use application; drawings showing all dimensions (size and shape), types of materials, location of the proposed sign on the site, and illumination proposals; information demonstrating conformance with the Uniform Building Code requirements; and the permit fee. Signs within the historic district, except temporary signs, shall also address the design review board criteria for signs, SMC 17.35.230. Any off-premises sign application shall also include written approval by the property owner upon whose property the sign is to be placed. (Ord. 1198 § 22 (Exh. D), 2017; Ord. 744 § 2, 1995).

17.75.040 Variances.

The hearing examiner may issue sign variances upon receipt of written application and detailed plans, provided the subject sign(s) is in keeping with the intent and purposes of this chapter. (Ord. 1198 § 22 (Exh. D), 2017; Ord. 769 § 32, 1996; Ord. 744 § 2, 1995).

17.75.050 Sign permit – Review.

All proposed signs in the historic district shall be reviewed by the design review board except temporary signs, which shall be reviewed by the director. All proposed signs other than those requesting a variance from the requirements of this chapter or those located within the historic district shall be processed by the director following review and comment as specified above, and provided the proposed sign(s) is within the intent and purposes of this chapter, complies with this chapter's provisions, and will not be contrary to the public interest, detrimental to the public welfare or safety, or injurious to property in the vicinity. Signs must be inspected by the building official and must conform with the Uniform Building Code and Uniform Sign Code. (Ord. 1198 § 22 (Exh. D), 2017; Ord. 769 § 33, 1996; Ord. 744 § 2, 1995).

17.75.070 Blade signs.

A. For purposes of this section, a "blade sign" shall mean a rigid projecting or suspended sign that is perpendicular to the building facade, and for which the primary audience is pedestrians.

B. Blade signs shall meet the following requirements:

1. Have a size not exceeding four square feet;
2. Have a minimum vertical clearance of eight feet;
3. Be located under a canopy or awning if the building has one or otherwise be located at a maximum height of 10 feet above the sidewalk. If an existing canopy or awning is too low to allow for proper clearance, the blade sign may be located on the side edge of the canopy;
4. Contain only the business name and a logo or graphic;
5. Be constructed of wood, MDO, MDF or metal;
6. Be rigidly attached to a sign bracket; and
7. Be illuminated only by exterior incandescent lights. (Ord. 1198 § 22 (Exh. D), 2017; Ord. 911 § 4, 2002).