

# SIGN REGULATIONS

## *Summary*

For Commercial Areas Outside the Downtown Area

When designing a sign, it is advisable to check with a Planner in the Planning Division to make sure that it meets City standards. The complete Sign Regulation Ordinance is available at the Permit Center and online as part of the Municipal Code at [www.hayward-ca.gov](http://www.hayward-ca.gov).

### Number of Signs

Up to **two wall signs** per business and **one freestanding** (monument-type) sign per parcel.

### Size of Signs (Square Footage)

- **1-1/2 square feet of sign area for each lineal foot of building frontage wherein the business is located.** For example, for a 50-foot-wide building, 75 square feet of sign area is permitted.
- For very small buildings, at least 25 square feet of sign area is permitted.
- The greatest amount of space that can be devoted to signs is 100 square feet when a building, regardless of its size, has only one major entry facing a street or parking lot.
- A business with more than one establishment frontage (for example, a main entry facing the street and another facing a parking lot) can have up to 50 percent more permitted sign area upon approval by the Planning Director.
- For signs on walls, the largest sign is 36 square feet for building less than 25 feet wide. If a building is wider, a single wall sign may be as large as 50 square feet.
- Freestanding or monument signs may not exceed 36 square feet per face.

### Height of Signs

Freestanding signs may be up to **12 feet high**. These signs must be 1 foot lower for every 1 foot closer to property line. For example, a 12-foot-high sign must be at least 12 feet from the property line; however, if a sign is 10 feet from the property line, then it can be only up to 10 feet high.

Wall signs may not exceed the roofline of the first story element.

## Location of Signs

Corner Lots: For safety (visibility) reasons, freestanding or monument signs higher than 3 feet may have to be lowered or situated so as to not block the visibility of motorists.

Signs must also be located at least 2 feet from driveway flares.

## Types of Signs Allowed

- Special Event Signs
- Awning Signs Up to 30 percent of the valance of an awning.
- Freeway-Oriented Signs A freeway-oriented sign is allowed for businesses along a freeway that provide food, fuel, or lodging.
- Projecting Signs (Blade, Hanging, Shingle) One projecting sign per business
- Promotional Event Signs The requirements for these signs are as follows:
  1. Keep promotional and grand opening signs out of the public right-of-way (including sidewalks, planter strips, tree wells, sound walls, fences, and street medians), on public property, or in any location which interferes with vehicular, bicycle, or pedestrian circulation or safety.
  2. Pennants, flags, streamers, searchlights, and banners (maximum 50 square feet each) may be displayed for two 14-day periods per calendar year and an additional four weekends or federally recognized 3-day holiday weekends. The weekend or federally recognized 3-day holiday weekend display is limited to 1 per every 3 months. A weekend display is permitted Friday evening to Sunday evening (or Monday if a federally recognized 3-day holiday.)
  3. For grand openings pennants, flags, streamers, searchlights, and one banner not to exceed 50 square feet in area may be displayed one time for a maximum of 30 days. All signs must be removed within 5 days the grand opening ceases.

Scrolling Signs Scrolling signs are permitted on major arterials.

## Sign Design

Signs need to be appealing and look attractive on the building. For example, signs should be sized so that they do not overlap windows or architectural wall treatments. You should consider visual obstructions, such as trees, in the placement of a sign. Where possible, use “lexan” because it withstands vandalism. Before installing a sign on a wall, repair, patch, and/or clean the wall if another sign has been removed from it.

Neon lighting may be used on the exterior of buildings, whether for signs or decorative artwork, but the Planning Director must first review and approve its use. Neon intended for advertising and which is within 2 feet inside a glass window or door of a business counts toward the sign area permitted. Neon used for decorative artwork or to represent a product sold on the premises does not count toward total signage allowable, and may cover up to 25 percent of a window or door, as long as there is no flashing or intermittent light.

## Special Sign Requirements for Five or More Business on One Property

The City of Hayward desires that the signs in shopping areas harmonize with one another. In order to achieve this, a MASTER SIGN PROGRAM is required for any project that has five or more business or office uses, and which requires site plan review, a use permit, variance, or is a planned development. No permit will be issued for an individual sign until a Master Sign Program for the property has been approved by the Planning Director. The cost of a Master Sign Program is \$890.00.

In some instances a master sign program may include a unique freestanding sign that is typically not permitted. For example, such a sign may be a freestanding architectural element with four walls, designed specifically to support the sign identifying a shopping center. Such an architectural feature is permitted, subject to the review and approval process called for in this section, as long as they are intended to be an integral part of the design of the project.

See special requirements for auto dealerships and shopping centers and service stations and fast food restaurants.

## Signs Allowed Without Permits.

- Flags of any nation. A flag pole must not be over 25 feet high and the flag cannot be over 6 feet long
- Barber poles
- Religious symbols

- Seasonal displays (for example, Santa painted on windows)
- Directional signs that are less than 6 square feet (for example, 2' x 3')
- Addresses up to 4 square feet
- Automatic Teller Machine Sign up to 4 square feet in area per machine.
- Balloons (non-mylar) up to 14 inches in diameter
- Banners and Decorative Art Work (maximum 15 square feet per banner, 2 banners per light pole)
- Change of copy of a legal sign.
- Decorative art work and murals
- Time and Temperature devices with no advertising and not larger than 20 square feet per face.
- Signs regarding authorization to tow vehicles from property
- Window Signs that cover no more than 25 percent of the total surface of a window.

### PROHIBITED SIGNS.

- Roof signs or signs beyond any vertical corner edge of a wall.
- Advertising banners, except for decorative art work and promotional event and grand opening banners.
- Dilapidated signs.
- Flashing signs.
- Any sign relating to a business, commodity, service, entertainment, or event not conducted, sold, or offered on the premises on which such sign is located.
- Signs which visually obstruct ingress or egress from a building or which adversely affect traffic (vehicular, bicycle, or pedestrian) safety.
- Inflatables and mylar balloons.
- Moving signs.
- Signs attached to or painted on a tree, rock, or other natural object.
- A sign, including its supporting structure, which no longer advertises a business on the premises where the sign is displayed.
- Pennants, flags, or emblems, except for promotional and grand opening events.

- Pole signs, except for freeway signs.
- Portable signs.
- Streamers, except for promotional and grand opening events.

### Sign Permits

Sign permits are required before erecting signs, except those exempted above. The cost for a sign permit is \$330.00 for one business and \$128.00 for each additional business on the same application. Fees for building permits and electrical permits are based on current Master Fee Schedule. Most sign permits are processed within a week. Check with a planner at the City of Hayward Permit Center for a sign permit application.

### Sign Restrictions

- Do NOT place signs in the following locations:
  1. In the street, sidewalk, planter strips, tree wells, sound walls, fences, sidewalks, and street medians
  2. On any public property.
  3. In any location which interferes with vehicular, bicycle, or pedestrian circulation safety.
- If your sign contains foreign alphabet characters, it must also include some English alphabet characters. They are not required to be translated into English as long as the sign contains English alphabet characters.

### EXCEPTIONS TO SIGN REGULATIONS (VARIANCES).

There are instances when it may be appropriate to grant exceptions to the Sign Regulations. This may be done by the Planning Director when there are special conditions related to the property, others in the area enjoy the privilege that is being sought, and granting the exception would not also grant a special privilege.