



Planning & Community Development

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Sign Standards

The purpose of regulating signs is to provide standards for effective use of signs for economic viability and aesthetics of business properties, to protect public interest and to minimize adverse effects of signage, and to establish regulations for the type, number, location, size and lighting of signs which are compatible with their surroundings.

Types of signs permitted

- Monument
- Building-mounted
- Under-awning
- Driveway entrance/exit
- Window Signs
- A-Frame
- Temporary Signs
- Exempt Signs under 20.50.610



A-frame and monument signs are allowable.

Permits required

All signs require a sign permit or temporary use permit unless specifically exempted. Signs that are exempt from permit must still follow the standards for that type of sign. Examples of exempt signs include:

- Building addresses
- Window signs which are not illuminated, maximum 25 percent of window area, and do not need a building permit
- A-Frame signs in nonresidential zones only
- Copy replacement when illumination standards are met
- Small signs for home occupations, day cares, adult family homes, and bed and breakfasts if not more than four square feet in area and maximum one sign per business

See SMC 20.50.610 for more exemptions.

Signs Standards

Sign standards are in sections 20.50.530 through 20.50.610 of the Shoreline Municipal Code (SMC). Table 20.50.540G details information such as allowable sign area and dimensions by zone. The Code sections relating to signs can be found online at:

www.codepublishing.com/wa/shoreline/.

Hours of Operation:

Monday 8:00 am-5:00 pm
Tuesday 8:00 am-5:00 pm
Wednesday 1:00 pm-5:00 pm
Thursday 8:00 am-5:00 pm
Friday 8:00 am-5:00 pm

Permit Processing Ends at 4:00 pm Daily

Prohibited Signs

- Spinning devices, flashing lights, searchlights, electronic changing messages or reader board signs*
- Portable signs*
- Outdoor off-premise advertising signs (billboards)
- Signs mounted on the roof
- Pole signs
- Backlit awnings used as signs
- Pennants, swooper flags, feather flags, pole banners, inflatables, and signs mounted on vehicles

*denotes that specific exceptions exist to these prohibitions



Pennants and swooper flags are prohibited in the City of Shoreline per SMC 20.50.550.

Nonconforming signs

A sign that was permitted under previous standard but is now larger, taller, or otherwise does not meet current standards is considered nonconforming. Nonconforming signs may not be changed in size, shape, height, location, or structural components without meeting current standards.

Repair and maintenance are allowable, but may require a permit if structural components require repair or replacement or if you need to take the sign down temporarily do to the work. Copy replacement within an existing cabinet does not require a permit; however the illumination standards must be met by the new copy.

Departures from sign standards

Departures from the sign standards in SMC 20.50.530 through 20.50.610 can be considered through an Administrative Design Review application (per SMC 20.30.297) where the proposal is consistent with the purposes or intent of the sign design standards or is justified due to unusual site constraints. In order for departures to be considered a full site signage plan must be submitted so that the departure can be considered in the full context of existing and future signage for the site. Modification of existing signs may be required for a design departure of a new sign.

Campaign signs

Campaign signs, similar to real estate signs, are temporary signs that must be removed within five days after the election, but are exempt from a temporary use permit. In addition, free standing campaign signs are permitted on City properties (such as Right-of-Way) in places where they do not conflict with City uses of the property or public safety. Please call our Customer Response Team at (206) 801-2260 if you have any questions about campaign signs.

