

TITLE V - BUILDING AND PROPERTY REGULATIONS  
BUILDING STANDARDS

CHAPTER 131  
SIGN CODE

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**131.01 PURPOSE.** The purpose of this chapter is to protect the safety and orderly development of the community through the regulation of signs and sign structures. A sign shall not be erected in a manner that would confuse or obstruct the view of or interfere with official traffic signs, signals or devices. The regulations of this code are not intended to permit a violation of the provisions of other ordinances.

**131.02 DEFINITIONS.** For purposes of this code, certain terms, words and their derivatives shall be construed as specified in this chapter or as specified in the Building Code.

1. "Combination sign" is a sign incorporating any combination of the features of pole, projecting and roof signs.
2. "Electric sign" is any sign containing electrical wiring, but not including signs illuminated by an exterior light source.
3. "Fin sign" is a sign that is supported wholly by a one-story building of an open-air business or by poles placed in the ground or partly by such a pole or poles and partly by a building or structure.
4. "Ground sign" is a billboard or similar type of sign that is supported by one or more uprights, poles or braces in or upon the ground other than a combination sign, fin sign or pole sign, as defined by this code.
5. "Marquee" is a permanent roofed structure attached to and supported by the building and projecting over public property.

6. "Pole sign" is a sign wholly supported by a sign structure in the ground.
7. "Projecting sign" is a sign other than a wall sign, that projects from and is supported by a wall of a building or structure.
8. "Roof sign" is a sign erected upon a roof or parapet of a building or structure.
9. "Sign" is any medium, including its structure and component parts, that is used or intended to be used to attract attention to the subject matter for advertising purposes other than paint on the surface of a building. Noncommercial flags or any flags displayed from flagpoles or staffs will not be considered to be signs.
10. "Temporary sign" is any sign, banner, pendant, valance or advertising display constructed of cloth, canvas, light fabric, cardboard, wallboard or other light materials, with or without frames, intended to be displayed for a limited period of time only.
11. "Wall sign" is any sign attached to or erected against the wall of a building or structure, with the exposed face of the sign in a plane parallel to the plane of said wall.

#### 131.03 ENFORCEMENT.

1. Authority. The building official, or the building official's duly authorized representative, is charged with administration and enforcement of this code.
2. Board of Appeals. In order to provide for reasonable interpretation of the provisions of this code, appeals may be made to the Building and Housing Board of Appeals as provided in the Building Code.
3. Violations. It is unlawful for a person, firm or corporation to erect, construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, improve, remove, convert or demolish, equip, use, or maintain a sign or sign structure, or cause or permit the same to be done, contrary to or in violation of the provisions of this code.

131.04 PERMITS REQUIRED. A sign shall not be erected, re-erected, constructed, altered or maintained except as provided by this code and after a permit has been issued by the building official. A separate permit shall be required for a sign or signs for each business entity, and a separate permit shall be required

for each group of signs on a single supporting structure. Additionally, electrical permits shall be obtained for electric signs.

131.05 APPLICATION FOR PERMIT. Application for a sign permit shall be made in writing on forms furnished by the building official. The application shall contain the location by street and number of the proposed sign structure, as well as the name and address of the owner and the sign contractor or erector. Applications shall be signed by the applicant or the applicant's authorized agent.

131.06 EXEMPTIONS. A permit is not required for the following signs. These exemptions shall not be construed as relieving the owner of the sign from the responsibility for its erection, maintenance and compliance with the provisions of this code or other laws or ordinances regulating signs.

1. Official notices authorized by a court, public body or public safety official.
2. Directional, warning or information signs authorized by federal, state or city government.
3. Memorial plaques, building identification signs and building cornerstones when cut or carved into a masonry surface or when made of noncombustible material and made an integral part of the building or structure.
4. Religious symbols and seasonal decorations within the appropriate public holiday seasons.
5. Works of fine art displayed in conjunction with a commercial enterprise where the enterprise does not receive direct commercial gain.
6. Street address signs and combination nameplate and street address signs that contain no advertising copy and which do not exceed 6 square feet in area.
7. Signs less than 6 feet above grade.

131.07 FEES. A sign permit fee shall be paid in accordance with the schedule established by resolution of Council.

131.08 MAINTENANCE. Signs and sign support structures, together with their supports, braces, guys and anchors, shall be kept in repair and in proper state of preservation. The display surfaces of signs shall be kept neatly painted or posted at all times.

131.09 INSPECTIONS. Signs for which a permit is required shall be subject to inspection by the building official. The building official may order the removal of a sign that is not maintained in accordance with the provisions of Section 131.08.

131.10 DESIGN. Signs and sign structures shall be designed and constructed to resist wind as specified in this section.

1. Wind Loads. Signs and sign structures shall be designed and constructed to resist wind forces as specified in the Building Code.
2. Allowable Stresses. The design of wood, concrete, steel or aluminum members shall conform to the requirements of the Building Code.

131.11 CONSTRUCTION.

1. General. Supports for signs or sign structures shall be placed in or upon private property, unless otherwise provided in this Code of Ordinances, and shall be securely built, constructed and erected in conformance with the requirements of this code.
2. Standards of Quality. Building Code standards are part of this code. Other recognized standards, compliance with which is *prima facie* evidence of compliance with the standard of duty to design and construct signs that are reasonably safe for persons and property.
3. Materials. Materials utilized for signs and sign structures shall be of quality and grade as specified for buildings in the Building Code.
4. Restrictions on Combustible Materials. Combination signs, roof signs, projecting signs and signs on marquees shall be constructed of noncombustible materials, except as provided in this section. Combustible materials other than approved plastics shall not be used in the construction of electric signs.

EXCEPTIONS:

- A. Roof signs may be constructed of unprotected combustible materials on roofs of combustible construction.
- B. Roof signs with a maximum surface area of 50 square feet and a maximum height of 5 feet may be constructed of combustible materials on roofs of any type construction.

C. Non-electric wall signs may be constructed of unprotected combustible materials on walls permitted to be of unprotected combustible construction.

D. Nonstructural Trim. Nonstructural trim and portable display surfaces may be of wood, metal, approved plastics or a combination thereof.

E. Anchorage. Anchors and supports shall be designed for safe bearing loads on the soil and for an effective resistance to pullout amounting to a force 25 percent greater than the required resistance to overturning. Anchors and supports shall penetrate to a depth below ground greater than that of the frost line.

F. Display Surfaces. Display surfaces of signs may be made of metal, glass or approved plastics. Glass thickness and area limitations shall be as set forth in Table A. Sections of approved plastics on wall signs shall not exceed 225 square feet in area. (EXCEPTION: Sections of approved plastics on signs other than wall signs may be of unlimited area if approved by the building official.) Sections of approved plastics on wall signs shall be separated 3 feet laterally and 6 feet vertically by the required exterior wall construction. (EXCEPTION: Sections of approved plastics on signs other than wall signs may not be required to be separated if approved by the building official.)

G. Approved Plastics. Substantiating data shall be submitted to the building official to justify the proposed use of plastic materials. If it is determined that the evidence submitted is satisfactory for the use intended, the use may be approved.

#### 131.12 PROTECTION AND CLEARANCE.

1. General. Signs shall conform to the clearance and projection requirements of this section and Tables B and C.

2. Clearance from High-voltage Power Lines. Signs shall be located not less than 6 feet horizontally or 12 feet vertically from overhead electrical conductors that are energized in excess of 750 volts. (Exception: when conductors are enclosed in iron pipe or other approved material covering of equal strength.)

3. Clearance from Fire Escapes, Exits or Standpipes. Signs or sign structures shall not be erected in such a manner that a portion of their surface or supports will interfere with the free use of any fire escape, exit or standpipe.

4. Obstruction of Openings. Signs shall not obstruct openings to the extent that light or ventilation is reduced to a point below that required by this Code of Ordinances. Signs erected within 5 feet of an exterior wall in which there are openings within the area of the sign shall be constructed of noncombustible material or approved plastics.

5. Projections over Alleys. Signs or sign structures shall not project into a public alley below a height of 14 feet above grade, nor project more than 12 inches when the sign structure is located 14 to 16 feet above grade. The sign or sign structure may project not more than 36 inches into a public alley when the sign or sign structure is located more than 16 feet above grade.

6. Clearance from Streets. Signs shall not project within 2 feet of the curb line.

**TABLE A – SIZE, THICKNESS AND TYPE OF GLASS PANELS IN SIGNS**

MAXIMUM SIZE OF EXPOSED GLASS PANEL		MINIMUM THICKNESS OF GLASS	TYPE OF GLASS
Any Dimension	Area		
x 25.4 for mm	x 645.2 for mm <sup>2</sup>	x 25.4 for mm	
30 inches	500 square inches	1/8 inch	plain, plate or wired
45 inches	700 square inches	3/16 inch	plain, plate or wired
144 inches	3,600 square inches	1/4 inch	plain, plate or wired
Over 144 inches	Over 3,600 square inches	1/4 inch	wired glass

**TABLE B – PROJECTION OF SIGNS**

CLEARANCE	MAXIMUM PROJECTION
x 304.8 for mm	
Less than 8 feet	Not permitted
8 feet	1 foot
8 to 16 feet	1 foot plus 0.5 foot for each foot of clearance in excess of 8 feet
Over 16	5 feet

**TABLE C – THICKNESS OF PROJECTING SIGN**

PROJECTION	MAXIMUM THICKNESS
x 304.8 for mm	
5 feet	2 feet
4 feet	2.5 feet
3 feet	3 feet
2 feet	3.5 feet
1 foot	4 feet

**131.13 ROOF SIGNS.** Passage clear of all obstructions shall be left under or around, and immediately adjacent to, signs exceeding a height of 4 feet above the roof thereunder. Such passages shall be not less than 3 feet wide and 4 feet high and shall be at parapet or roof level. There shall be one passage or access opening as follows:

1. For each roof sign upon a building.
2. An access opening for every 50 lineal feet of horizontal roof sign extension.
3. Within 20 feet of walls and parapets when roof signs are at right angles to a face of the building.

**131.14 WALL SIGNS.** Wall signs shall not project over public property or beyond a legal setback line greater than the distances specified in Section 131.12, nor shall they extend above an adjacent parapet or roof of the supporting building.

**131.15 COMBINATION SIGNS.** The individual requirements of roof, projecting and pole signs shall each be applied to combination signs incorporating any or all of the requirements specified in this chapter.

**131.16 MARQUEES.** Signs may be placed on, attached to or constructed in a marquee. Marquee signs, for the purposes of determining projection, clearance, height and material, shall be considered a part of and shall meet the requirements for a marquee as specified in the Building Code.

**131.17 ELECTRIC SIGNS.**

1. General. The enclosed shell of electric signs shall be watertight, except that service holes fitted with covers shall provide access into each compartment of the sign.

2. Installation. Electrical equipment used in connection with display signs shall be installed in accordance with City Code regulating electrical installations.

3. Erector's Name. Electric signs projecting over a street or alley or public place shall have painted on the surface of the sign the name of the sign erector and date of erection. The name and date shall be of sufficient size and contrast to be readable from a reasonable distance. Failure to provide the name of the erector and date shall be grounds for rejection of the sign by the building official.

#### 131.18 TEMPORARY SIGNS.

1. General. Temporary signs shall not exceed 100 square feet in area. Temporary signs of rigid material shall not exceed 24 square feet in area, or 6 feet in height, nor shall any such sign be fastened to the ground. Temporary signs may remain in place for a period not exceeding 60 days.

#### 2. Cloth Signs.

A. Support. Temporary cloth signs shall be supported and attached with wire rope of 3/8-inch minimum diameter. Strings, fiber ropes or wood slats shall not be employed for support or anchorage purposes. Cloth signs and panels shall be perforated over at least 10 percent of their area to reduce wind resistance. (Exception: Temporary cloth signs over private property not exceeding 60 square feet shall be supported and attached with wire rope that meets the requirements of this code.)

B. Projection. Cloth signs may extend over property. Cloth signs that extend over a public street shall maintain a minimum clearance of 20 feet.

C. Clearance. Cloth signs may extend across a public street only by permission of City Council and shall be subject to related laws and ordinances.

Temporary signs, other than cloth, when 8 feet or more above the ground, may project not more than 6 inches over public property or beyond the legal setback line.

*(Chapter 131 added by Ord. 874 – Oct-03 Supp.)*