

# SIGN BY-LAW GUIDE

## BUSINESS IDENTIFICATION SIGNS

SIGNS THAT IDENTIFY A BUSINESS





# ABOUT THE SIGN BY-LAW

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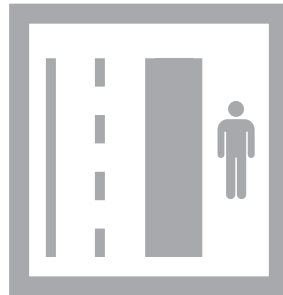
Signs in Vancouver are administered depending on their location on private property, public right-of-ways, or parks. This guide summarizes the rules and permitting process for private property only, which is regulated by the Sign By-law.

The Sign By-law Guide is a companion to the Sign By-law. It is not a substitute for the Sign By-law. The Sign By-law always takes precedence over this guide if there are any discrepancies.



## PRIVATE PROPERTY

The [Sign By-law](#) is a set of rules for signs on private property.



## STREET, BOULEVARD OR SIDEWALK

Signs on City sidewalks, roads, boulevards (including sandwich boards and posters on light posts) are regulated by the Traffic and Streets By-law and are managed by [Engineering Services](#).



## PARK

Signs on City Parks are managed by the Park Board, through authority granted by the Vancouver Charter.

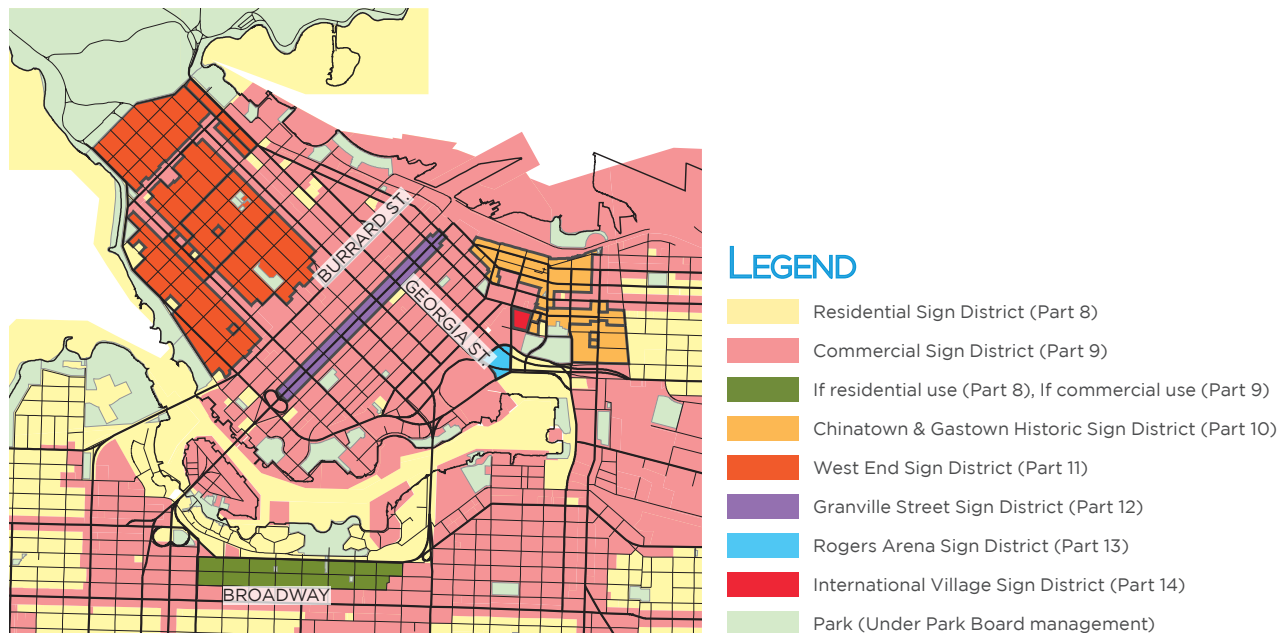
# FINDING YOUR SIGN DISTRICT

The Sign By-law organizes similar areas of the city into Sign Districts, and these correspond to groups of Zoning Districts. A property's zoning district can be found using the City of Vancouver map system called VanMap, available here: [http://vanmapp.vancouver.ca/pubvanmap\\_net/default.aspx](http://vanmapp.vancouver.ca/pubvanmap_net/default.aspx)

Standard zoning districts are assigned to sign districts in [Part 7 of the Sign By-law](#).

If the zoning district is not listed on the chart in Part 7, it may have a unique zoning called a Comprehensive Development (CD-1) district. The Sign By-law assigns CD-1 district sign regulations as follows:

CD-1 District	Assigned Sign District
CD-1 districts listed on general <a href="#">Schedule A</a>	<a href="#">Part 9 - Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District</a>
CD-1 districts listed in general <a href="#">Schedule B</a>	One of: <a href="#">Part 10 - Chinatown and Gastown Historic Sign District</a> <a href="#">Part 11 - West End Sign District</a> <a href="#">Part 12 - Granville Street Sign District</a> <a href="#">Part 13 - Rogers Arena Sign District</a> <a href="#">Part 14 - International Village Sign District</a>
CD-1 districts not listed on any general Schedules	<a href="#">Part 8 - Residential Sign District</a>



# BUSINESS IDENTIFICATION

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Signs form part of the overall appearance of businesses within Vancouver neighbourhoods. Signage assists customers in reaching their destination, and reinforces business identities. The City of Vancouver supports commercial activity by allowing appropriate business identification and wayfinding signs, and discouraging sign proliferation and visual clutter to ensure the effectiveness of signs.

## DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

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Successful business identification signs are:

### **Contextual**

Signs contribute to a cohesive commercial identity. Signs that are similar to the pattern established by nearby businesses or by the district are encouraged. Signs should integrate well with into a building's architecture and not block architectural features. This can be achieved, for instance, by adding signs on an existing weather protection awning or canopy, or on blank sections of building walls.

### **Innovative**

Creative sign placement, colours and materials add vibrancy to an area. Expressing business identity through unique sign designs add architectural character and interest. High quality materials that are durable and easily maintained should be used.

### **Clear**

Signs should be focused, clear, and easy to read. This can be achieved through appropriately scaled lettering, simple graphics, channel letters, and colour contrast. Minimizing the overall number of signs on a building will help to focus attention on business signage. Using lighting that is focused and minimal will reduce impacts on nearby residents.

### **Well Located**

Careful sign placement improves wayfinding and creates a pleasant experience for pedestrians. Allow for appropriate space underneath and around signs to maintain safe, clear travel paths for patrons. Views into businesses should be maintained by minimizing obstruction of windows. Locate signs in visible areas, near entry doors to direct patrons toward the business.

# COPY TYPES

Copy is the letters, logos and graphics that make up the message on a sign. The photos on the adjacent page illustrate the different types of copy described in the Sign By-law.

When considering signage needs for a premise, use a type of copy that compliments a building's architecture. For instance, individual channel letters may minimize obstruction of architectural features and allow for clear business identification.



Individual letters or numbers



Logos



Sign with a border, frame or background



Electronic message sign

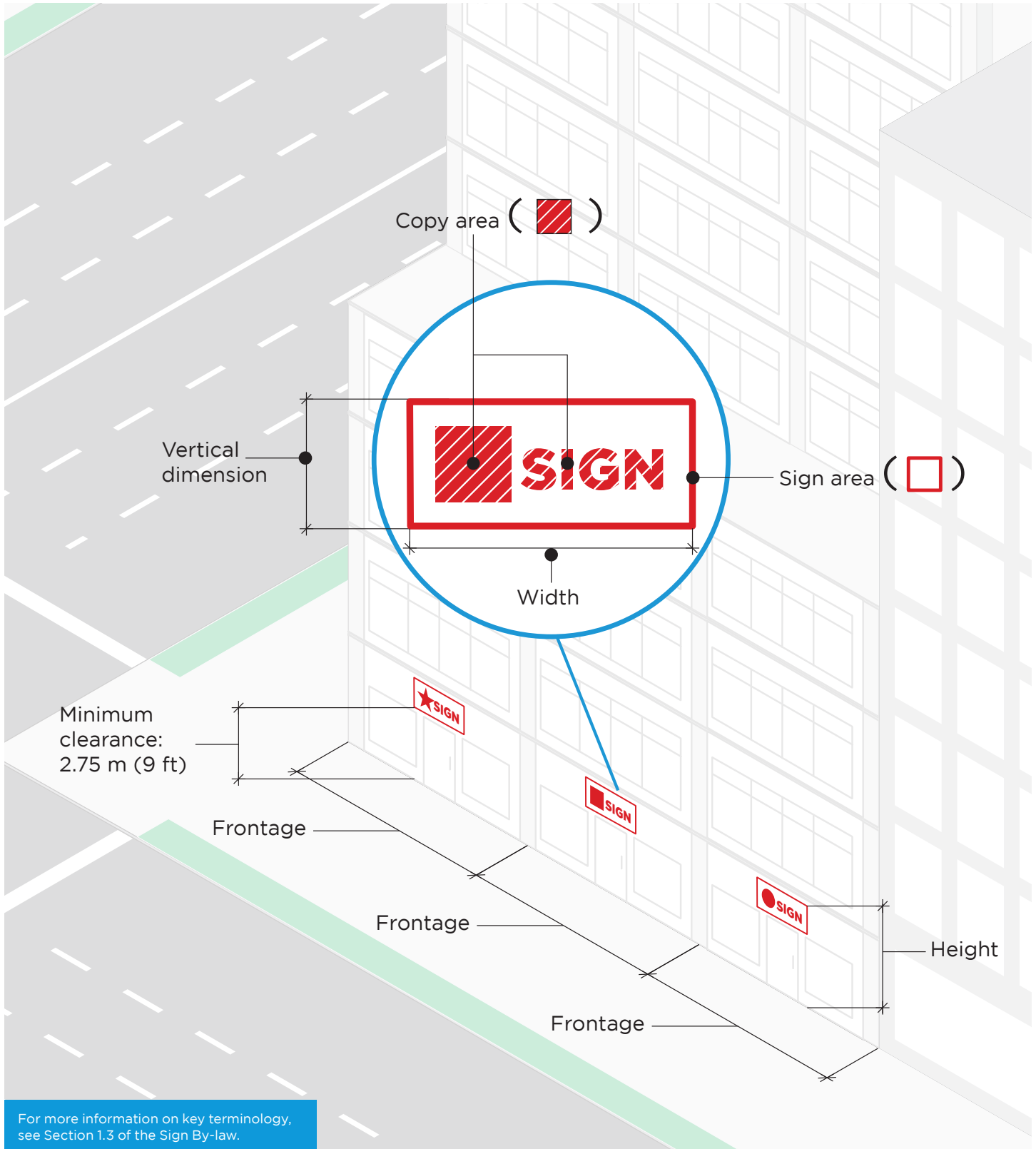


Electronic static image sign



Electronic video sign

# KEY TERMINOLOGY



# SIGN DISTRICTS

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Private property is assigned to one of seven sign districts in the Sign By-law. There are two standard sign districts that apply to the majority of the city: the Residential Sign District and the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District. Five additional sign districts apply to unique areas of the city.

## RESIDENTIAL SIGN DISTRICT

The Residential Sign District allows signs that are complimentary to residential city neighbourhoods, including signs for neighbourhood grocery stores. Regulations for the Residential Sign District can be found in [Part 8 of the Sign By-law](#).



## COMMERCIAL, MIXED USE AND INDUSTRIAL SIGN DISTRICT

The Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District promotes business identification and wayfinding for many commercial and industrial properties in the city. Regulations for the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District can be found in [Part 9 of the Sign By-law](#).



## CHINATOWN AND GASTOWN HISTORIC SIGN DISTRICT

The Chinatown and Gastown Historic Sign District enhances the authentic historic character of Chinatown and Gastown. Regulations for the Chinatown and Gastown Historic Sign District can be found in [Part 10 of the Sign By-law](#).





## WEST END SIGN DISTRICT

The West End Sign District integrates signage complementary to the residential character of the West End. Regulations for the West End Sign District can be found in [Part 11 of the Sign By-law](#).



## GRANVILLE STREET SIGN DISTRICT

The Granville Street Sign District reflects the historic retail and entertainment role of Granville Street by encouraging colourful, vibrant, and neon signage. Regulations for the Granville Street Sign District can be found in [Part 12 of the Sign By-law](#).



## ROGERS ARENA SIGN DISTRICT

The Rogers Arena Sign District supports recreational and cultural activities through recognition of event sponsors, larger logos and wayfinding signs. Regulations for the Rogers Arena Sign District can be found in [Part 13 of the Sign By-law](#).



## INTERNATIONAL VILLAGE SIGN DISTRICT

The International Village Sign District encourages innovative, colourful, prominent signage to enhance the architecture of the Village Marketplace area. Regulations for the International Village Sign District can be found in [Part 14 of the Sign By-law](#).



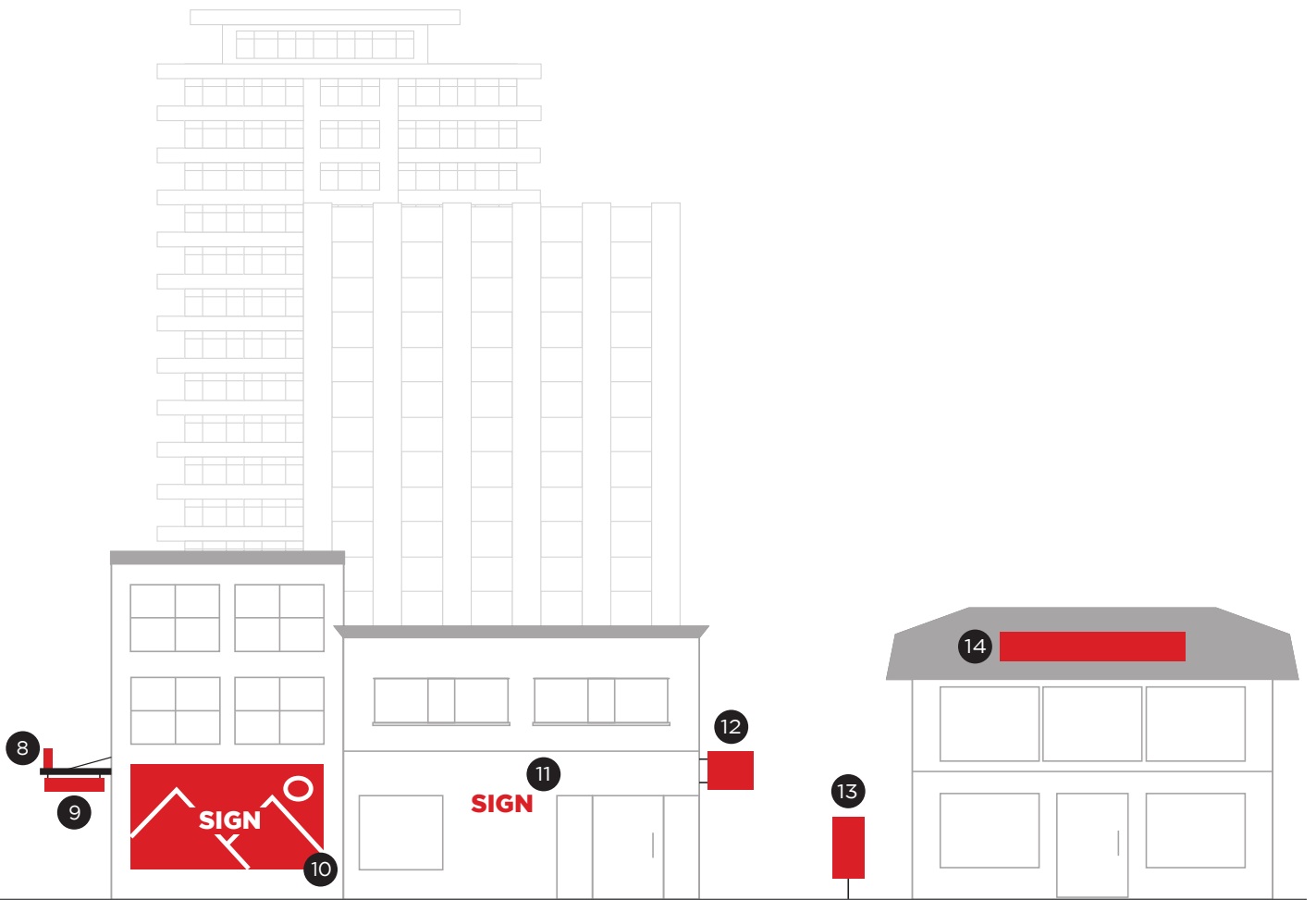
# SIGN TYPES



There are a number of sign types that can be used for business identification.

Sign types are described in the definitions found in [Section 1.3 in the Sign By-law](#) and are illustrated generally here.

- 1 Banner sign, p.22
- 2 Under awning sign, p. 14
- 3 Second storey fascia sign, p. 26
- 4 Window sign, p. 38
  - Electronic message sign, p. 38
- 5 Awning sign, p. 12



6 First storey fascia signs, p. 25

7 Upper level fascia sign, p. 27

8 Canopy sign, p. 16

9 Under canopy sign, p. 20

10 Sign in conjunction with a mural p. 34

11 Painted fascia sign, p. 28

12 Projecting sign, p. 32

13 Free-standing sign, p. 36

14 Mansard roof sign, p. 30

# PERMITTED SIGNS

On this chart, the dots indicate the types of signs that are permitted in a Sign District.

Some sign types have additional criteria such as minimum site area or zoning. Review the specific regulations in the Sign By-law for each sign type to determine if it is allowed on your property.

Illustrations from pages 12 to 38 depict regulations for signs in the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District. Be sure to check the Sign By-law for exact requirements on a property.

Business Identification Sign Type	Permit Required	Residential Sign District	Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District
Awning and Under Awning	●		●
Canopy and Under Canopy	●		●
Banner		●	●
Fascia - First Storey	●	●	●
Fascia - Above First Storey	●	●	
Fascia - Second Storey	●		●
Fascia - Above the Second Storey	●		
Fascia - Painted up to 3 Storeys	●		●
Fascia - Upper Level	●		●
Freestanding	●	●	●
Freestanding - Wayfinding	●		●
Mansard Roof	●		●
Projecting	●		●
Sign in Conjunction with a Mural	●		●
Temporary Signs		●	●
Window			●
Signs with Animated Copy	●		
Electronic Message	●	●	●



# AWNING SIGNS

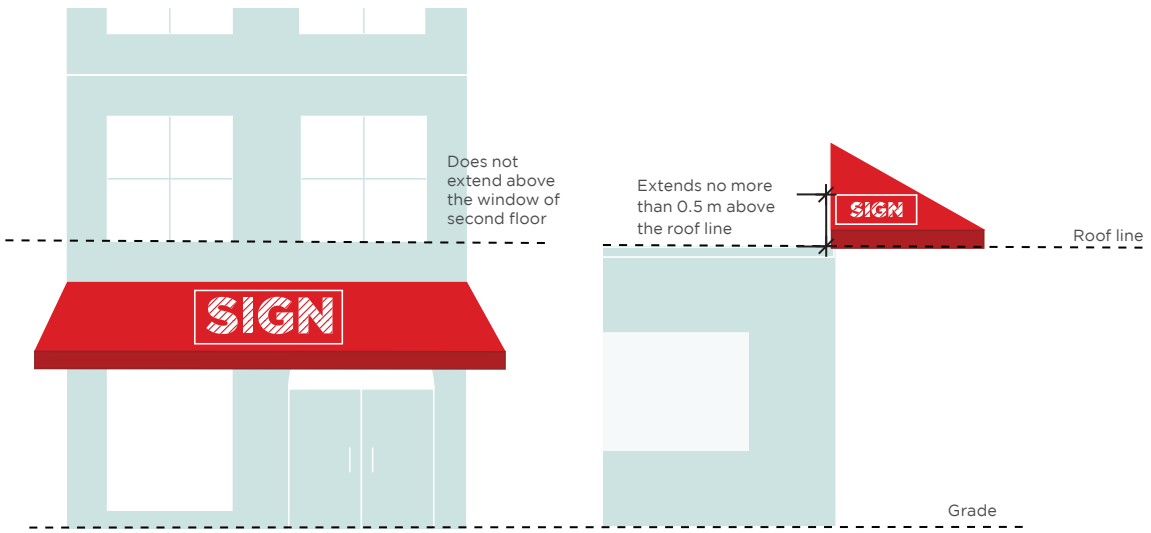
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Awnings are light, detachable or retractable structures that provide weather protection along storefronts and businesses. Signs located on the front, side or soft fringe of an awning, or on a circular awning are called Awning Signs.

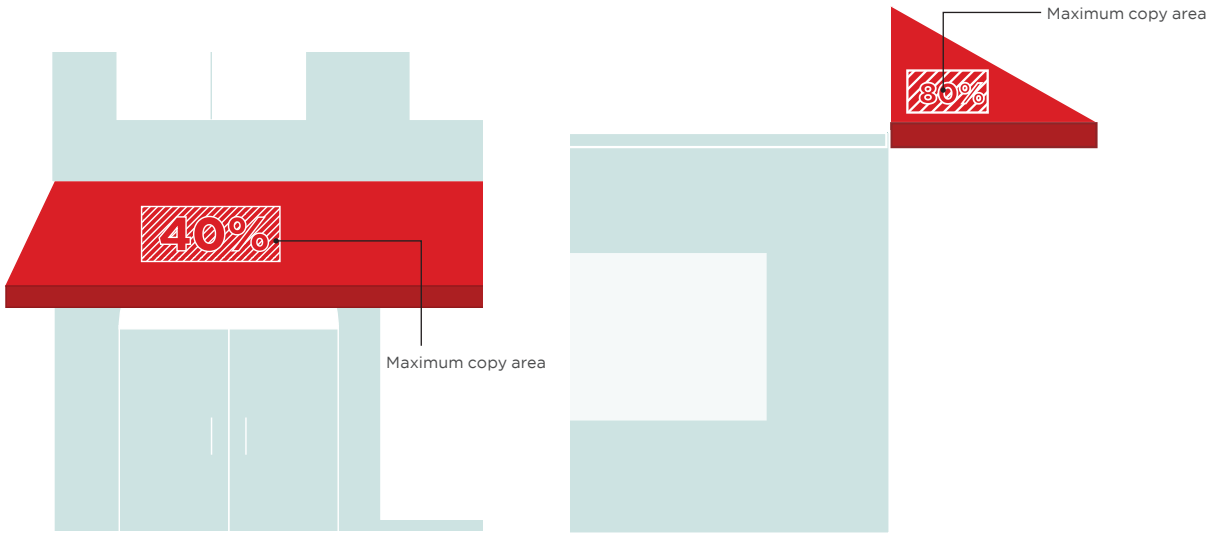
These illustrations depict regulations for Awning Signs from the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District.



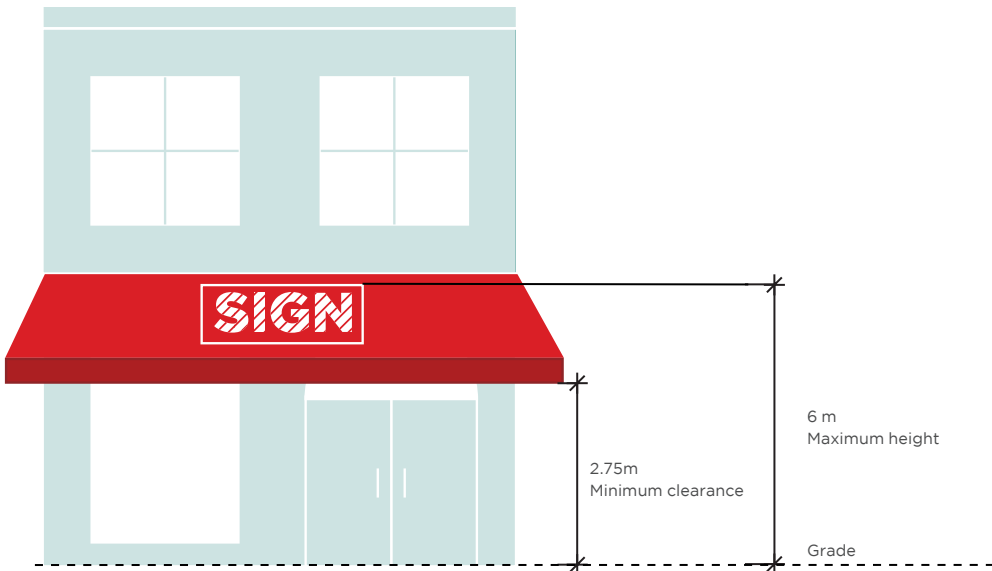
LOCATION



COPY



DIMENSIONS



# UNDER AWNING SIGNS

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Awnings are light, detachable or retractable structures that provide weather protection along storefronts and businesses.

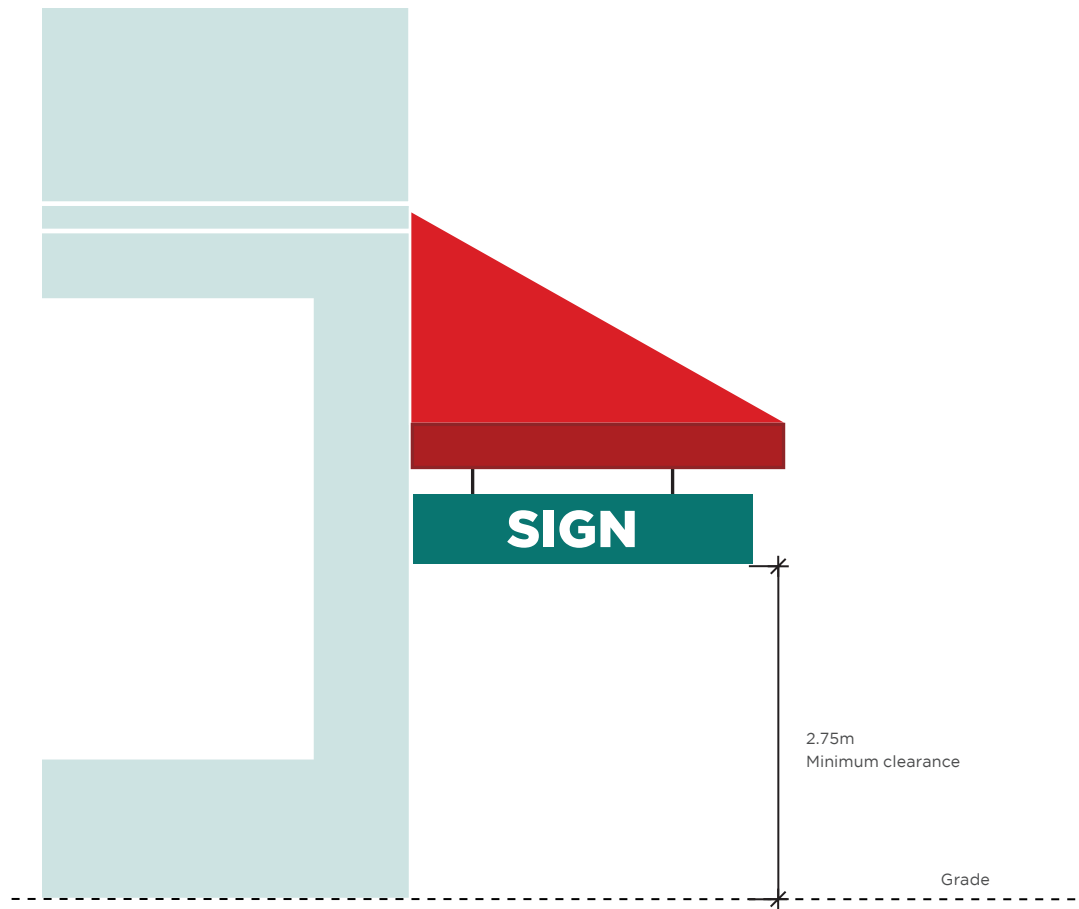
Signs located underneath an awning are Under Awning Signs. These signs are intended to be viewed by patrons on the sidewalk. They are situated perpendicular to a building and located near an entrance.

These illustrations depict regulations for Under Awning Signs from the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District.

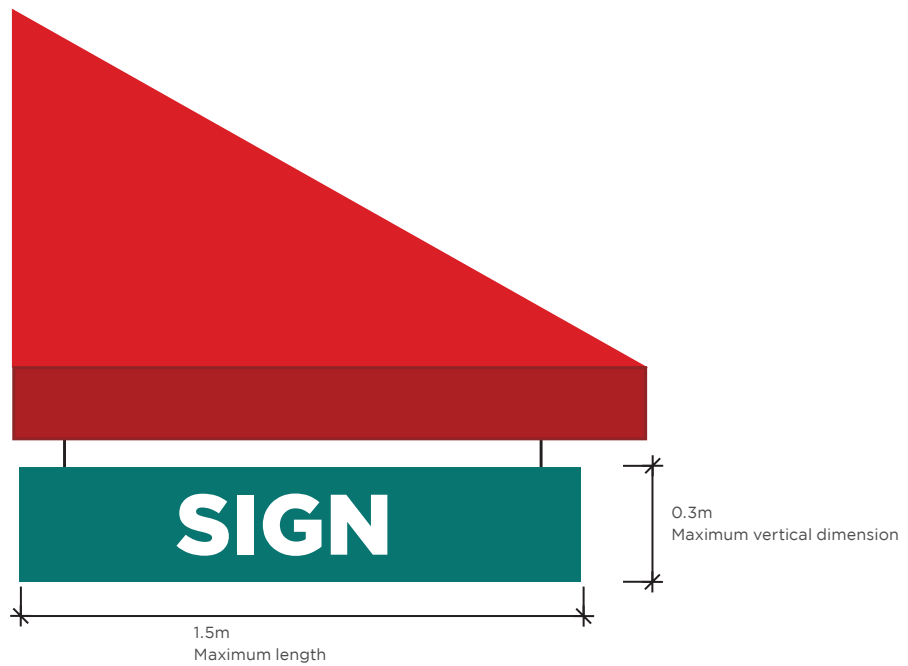




# LOCATION



# DIMENSIONS



# CANOPY SIGNS

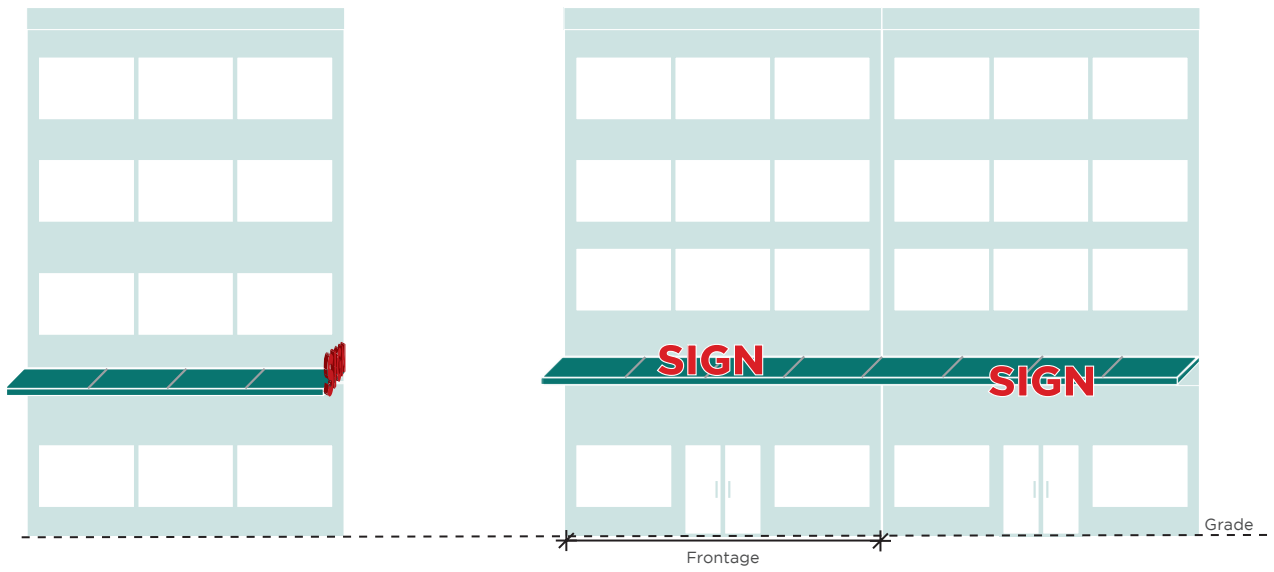
Canopies are permanent roof structures that provide weather protection along storefronts and businesses. Signs attached to the front, side or above a canopy are Canopy Signs.

Premises with larger frontages may have larger Canopy Signs.

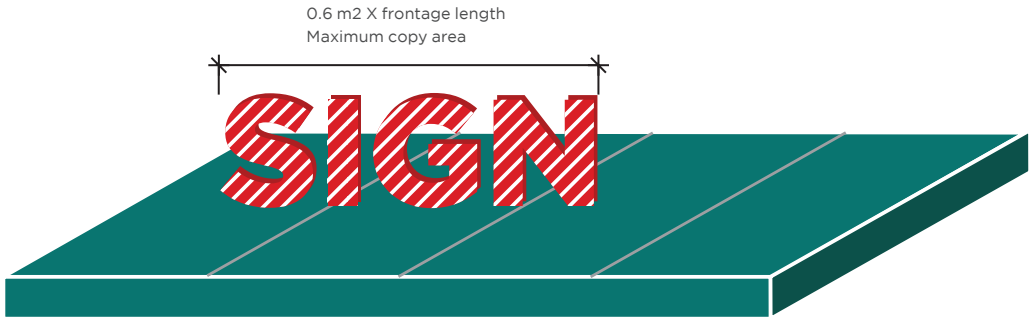
These illustrations depict regulations for Canopy Signs from the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District.



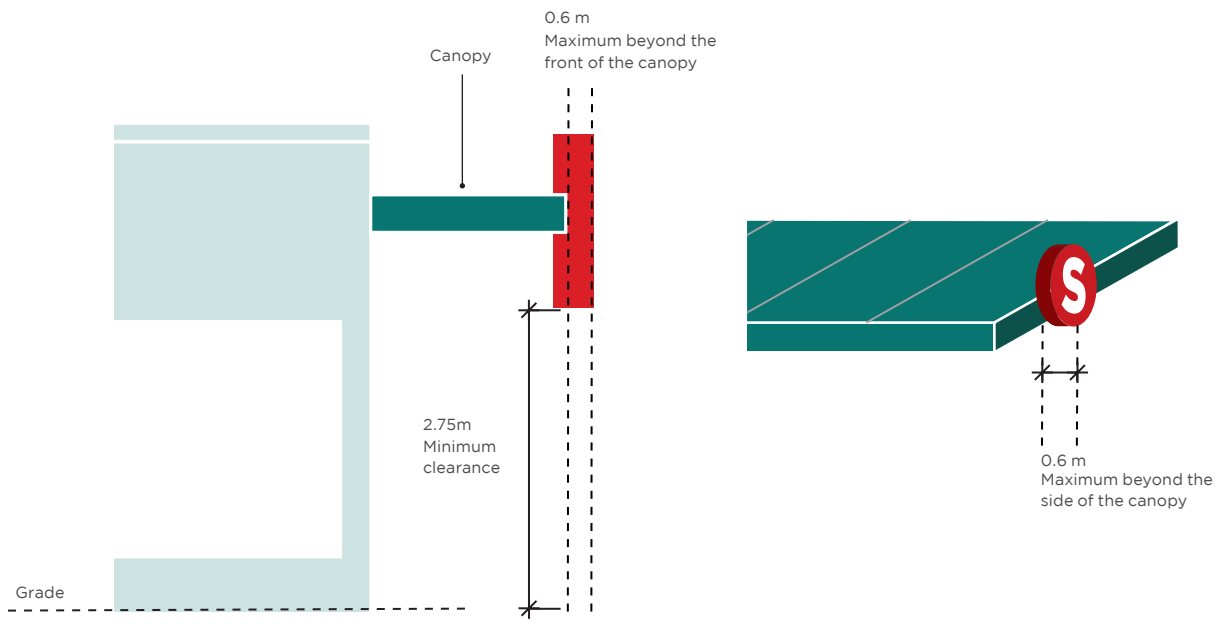
LOCATION



COPY

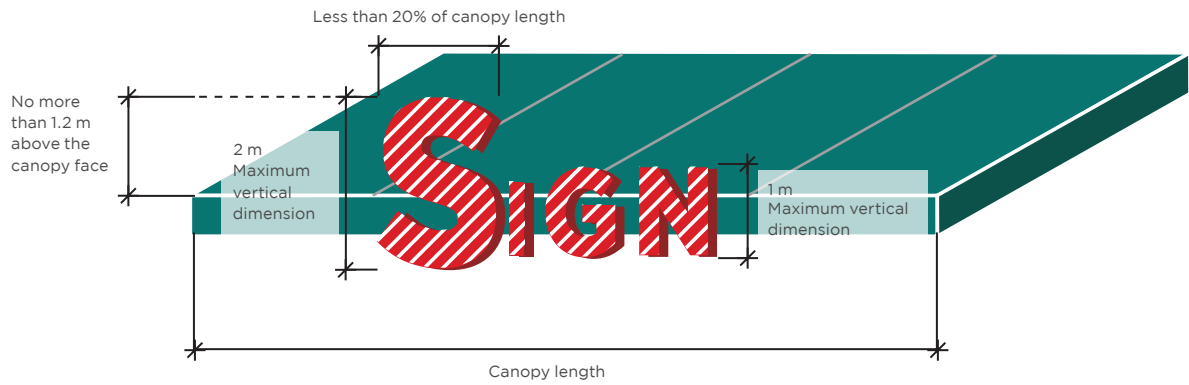


DIMENSIONS

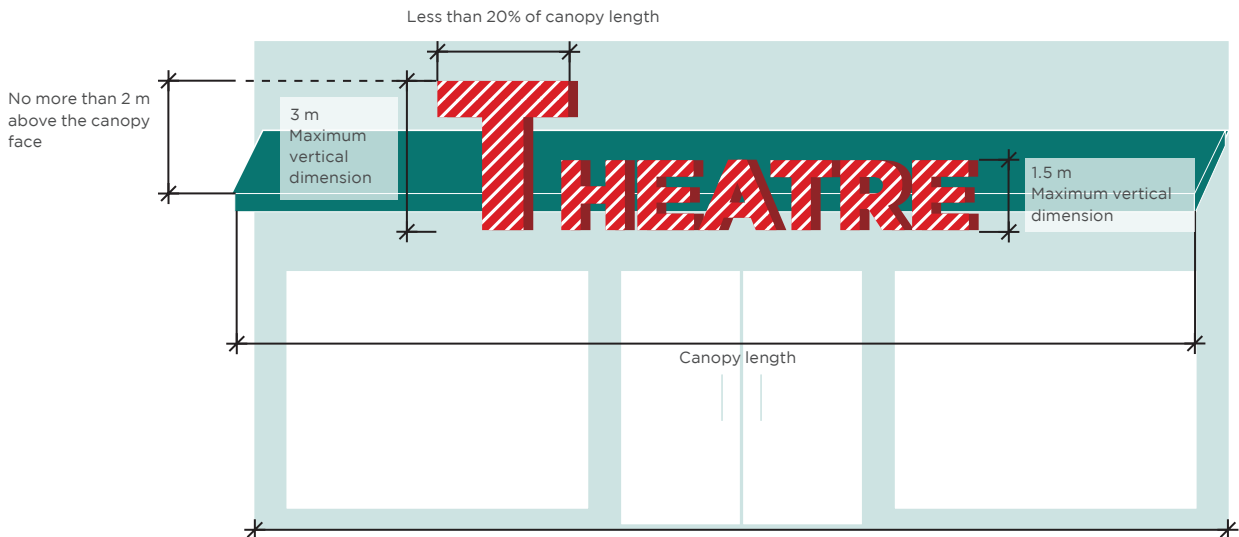


PERMIT  
REQUIRED

DIMENSIONS



A portion of a Canopy Sign may have a larger vertical dimension.



Theatre or premises with longer frontage may have a larger sign.

Theatre or premises with a frontage more than 30m



# UNDER CANOPY SIGNS

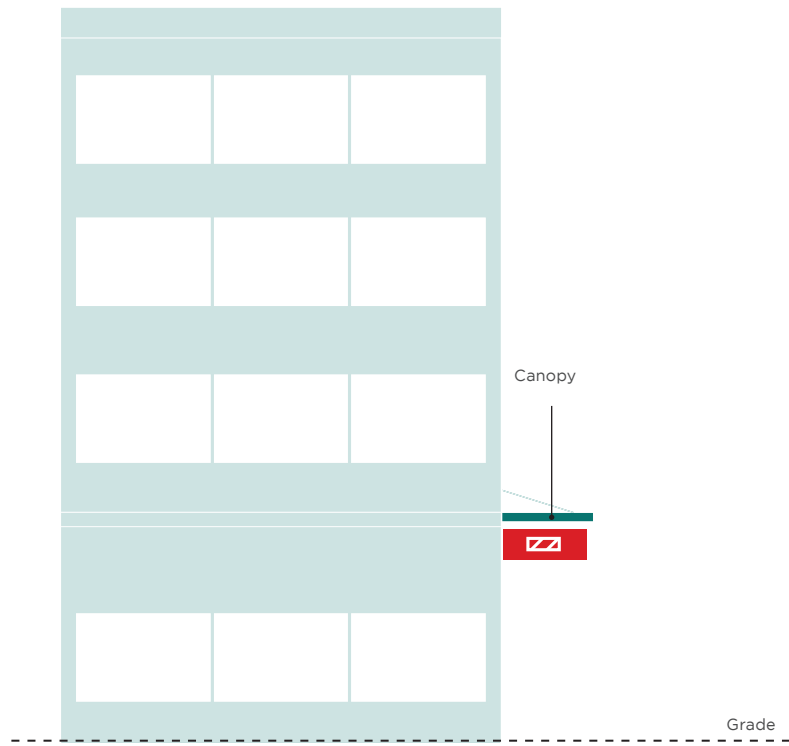
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Canopies are permanent roof structures that provide weather protection along storefronts and businesses. Signs located perpendicular to a building and under a canopy are called Under Canopy Signs. Under Canopy Signs direct pedestrians along sidewalks to a premises entry. Under Canopy Signs should be located near the front door of a business.

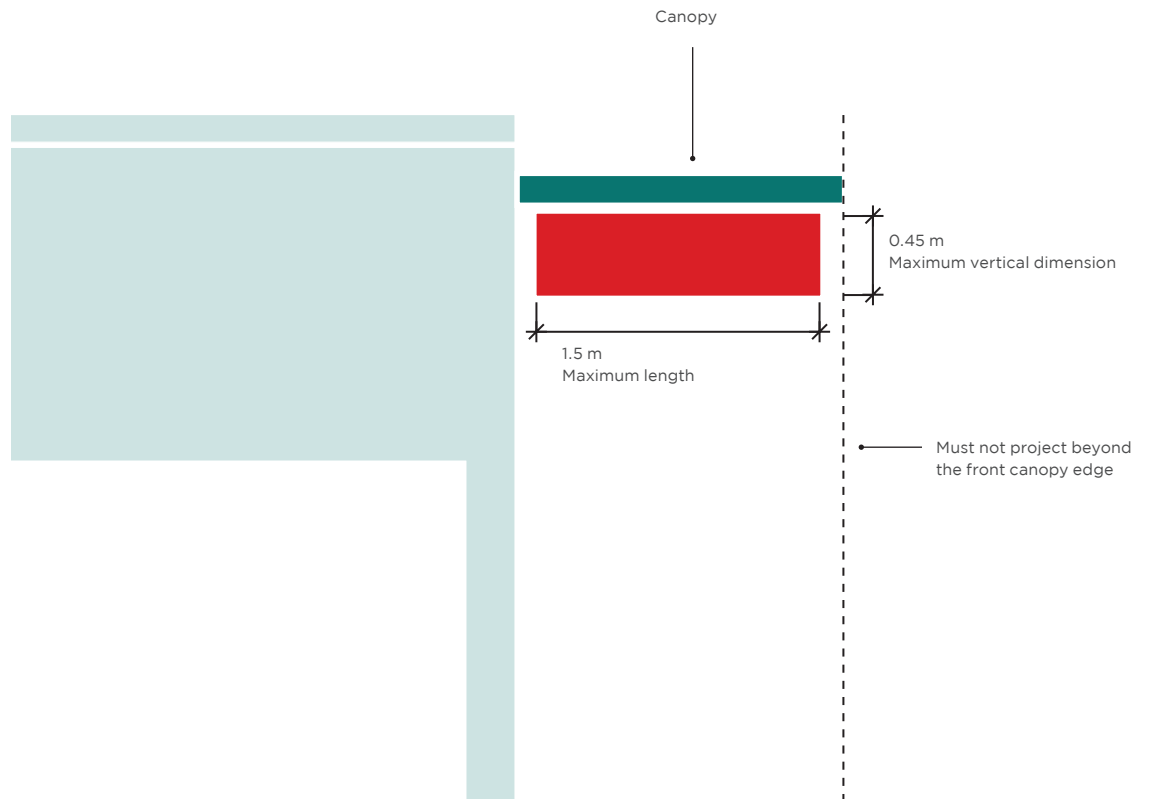
These illustrations depict regulations for Under Canopy Signs from the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District.



# LOCATION



# DIMENSIONS



# BANNER SIGNS

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A banner is made of a light, flexible material, and is attached perpendicular to a building. In the Sign By-law, signs on a banner are called Banner Signs. These signs can be secured up to three edges and must not be illuminated. A permit is not required for this sign type.

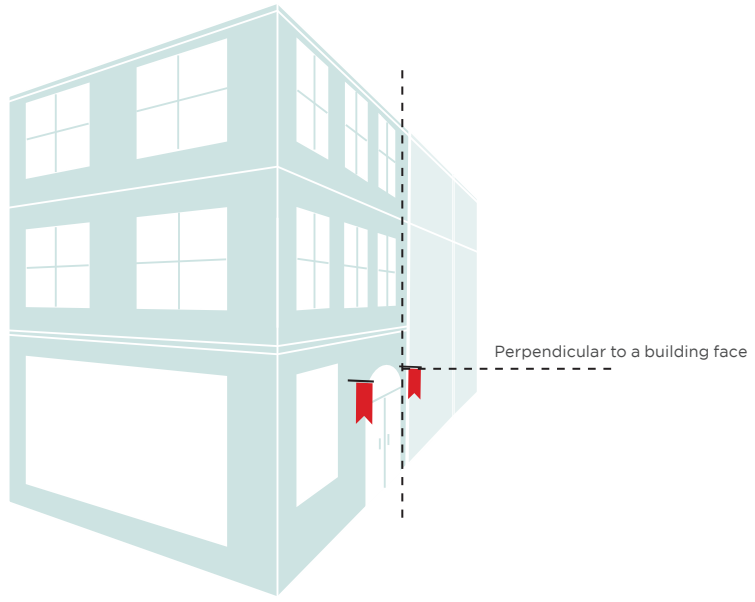
A premises that may have one or multiple banner signs with a combined copy area that do not exceed the maximums described in [Section 6.6](#) if the Sign By-law.

These illustrations depict regulations for Banner Signs from the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District.

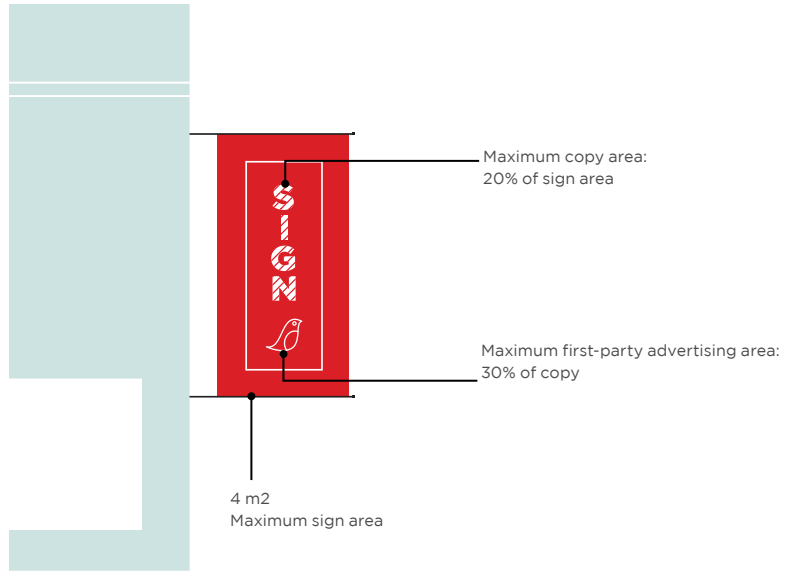




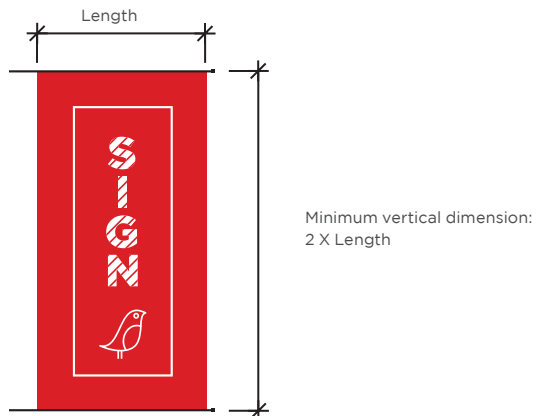
# LOCATION



# COPY



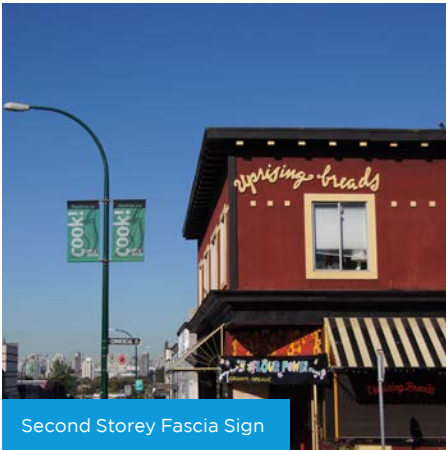
# DIMENSIONS



# FASCIA SIGNS

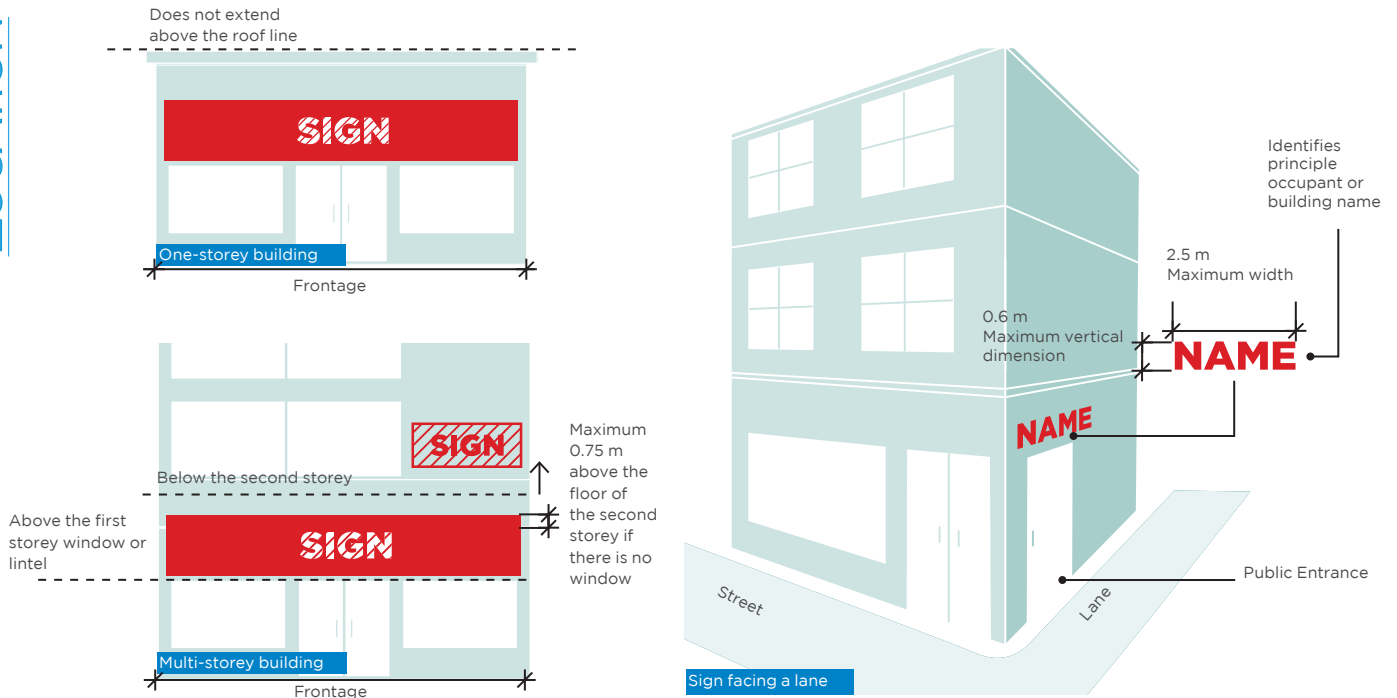
A fascia sign is a sign attached parallel to a building face. Regulations for fascia signs are different for signs on the first, second and upper building storeys. Larger painted signs are allowed in industrial areas.

These illustrations depict regulations for Fascia Signs from the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District.

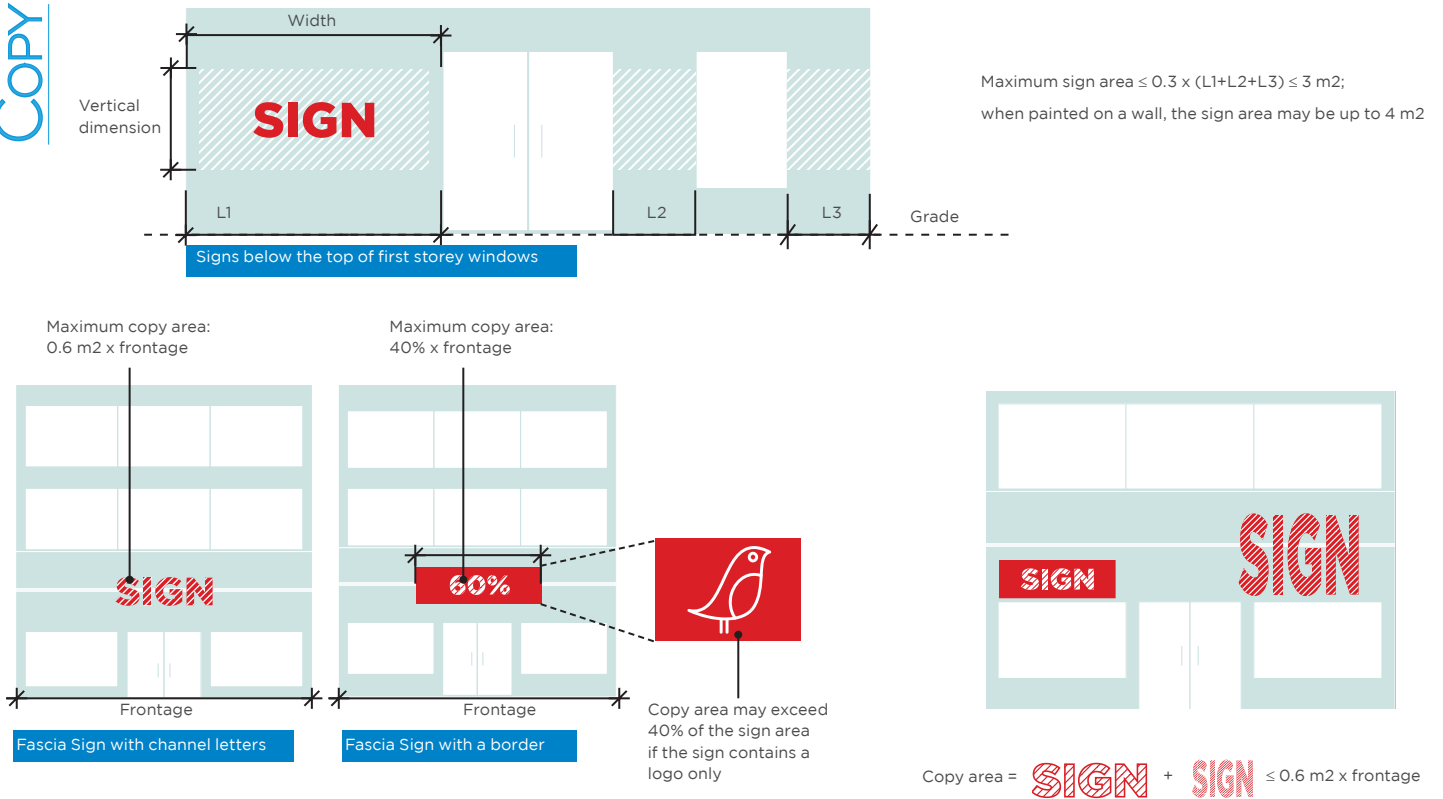


# FIRST STOREY FASCIA SIGNS

## LOCATION



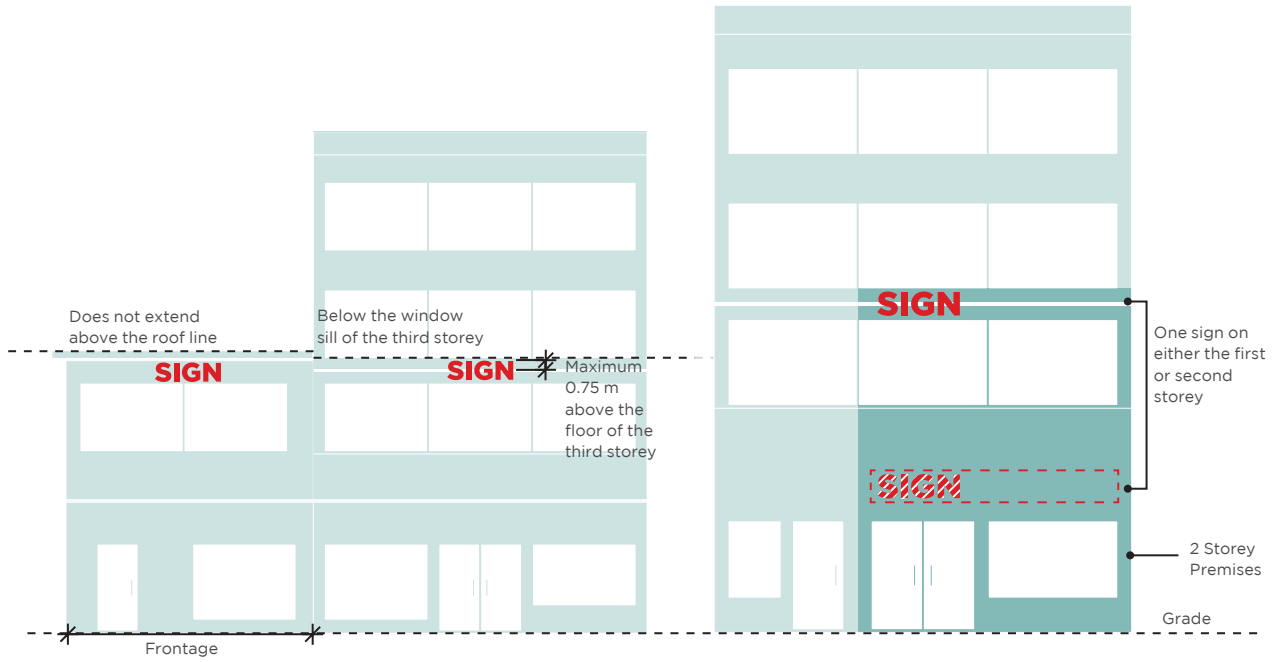
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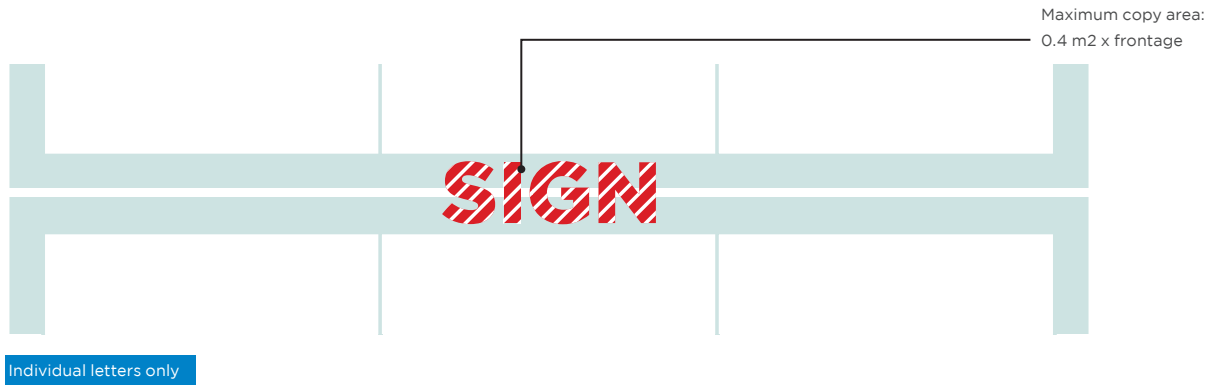
PERMIT  
REQUIRED

# SECOND STOREY FASCIA SIGNS

## LOCATION



## COPY

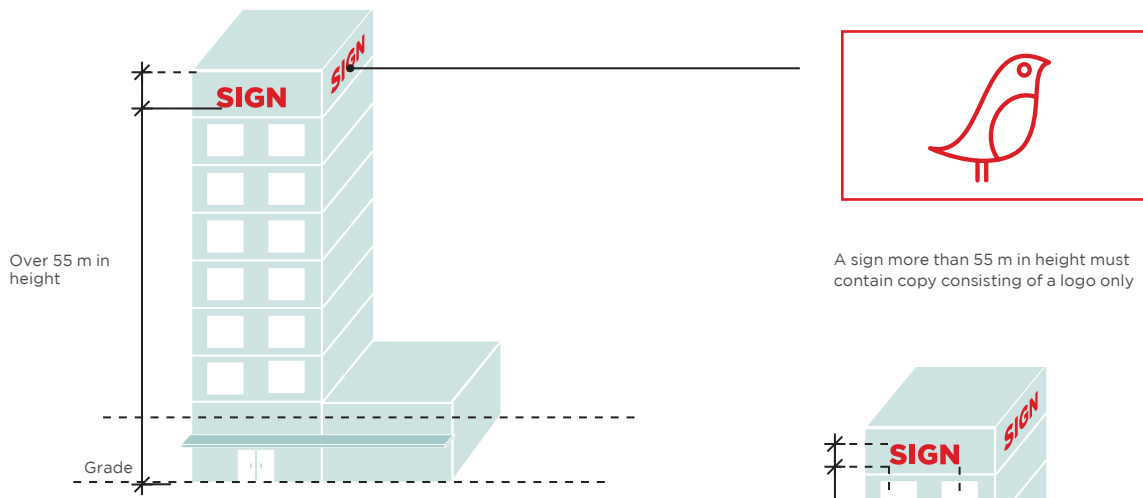
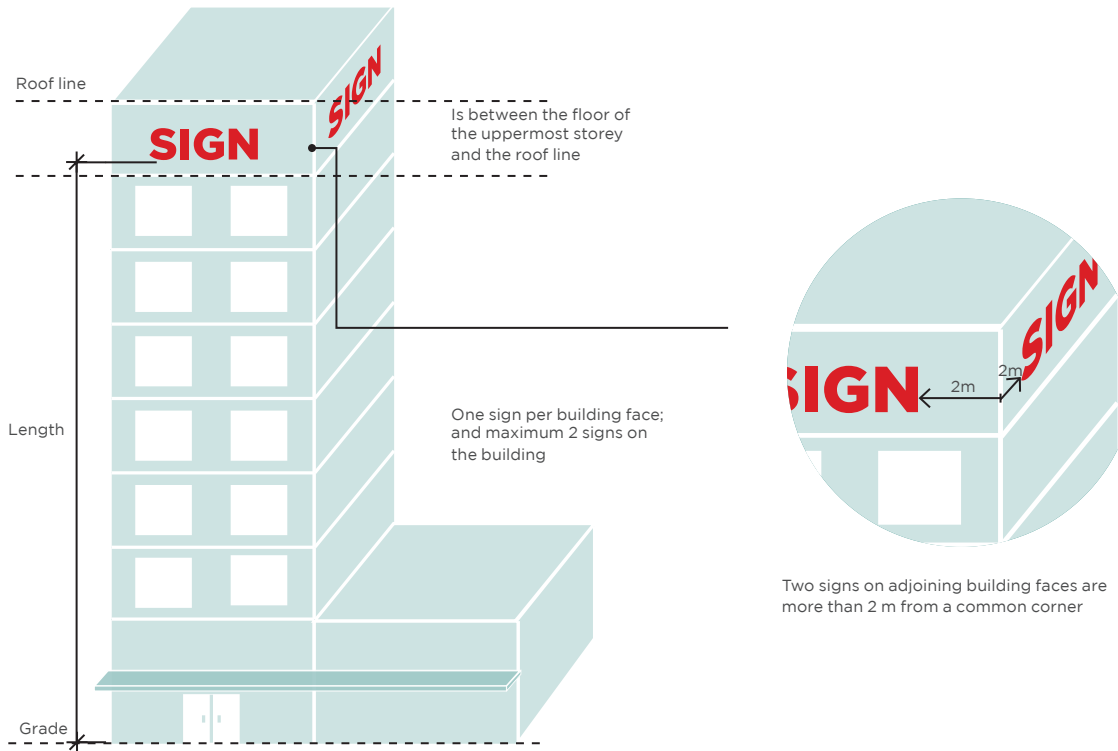


## DIMENSIONS

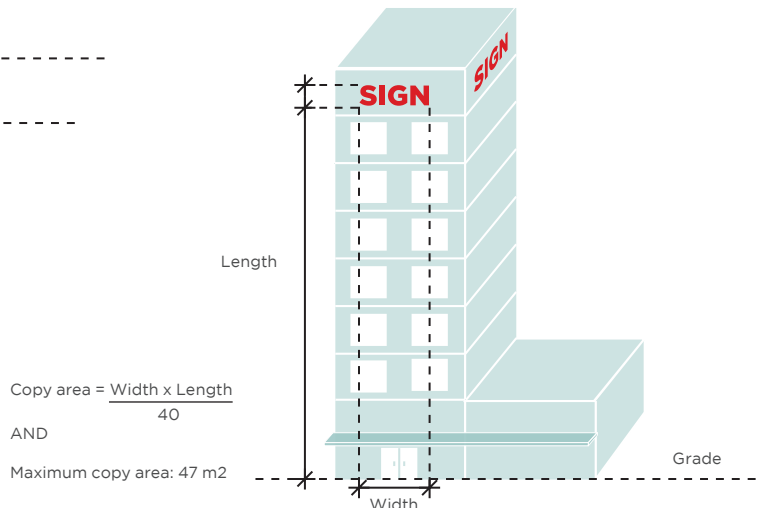


# UPPER LEVEL FASCIA SIGNS ABOVE THE SECOND STOREY

## LOCATION



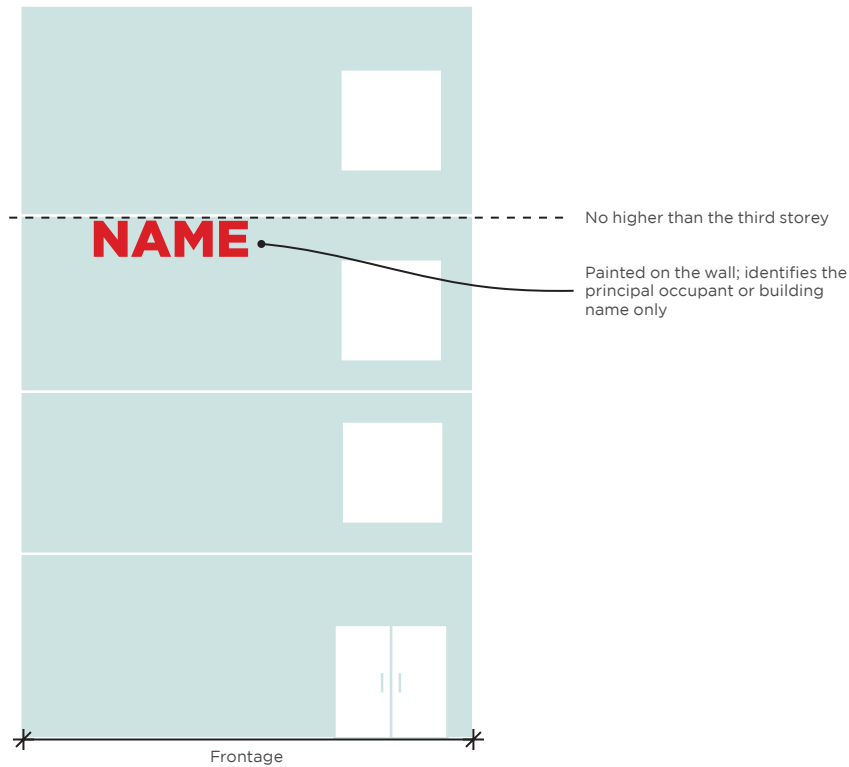
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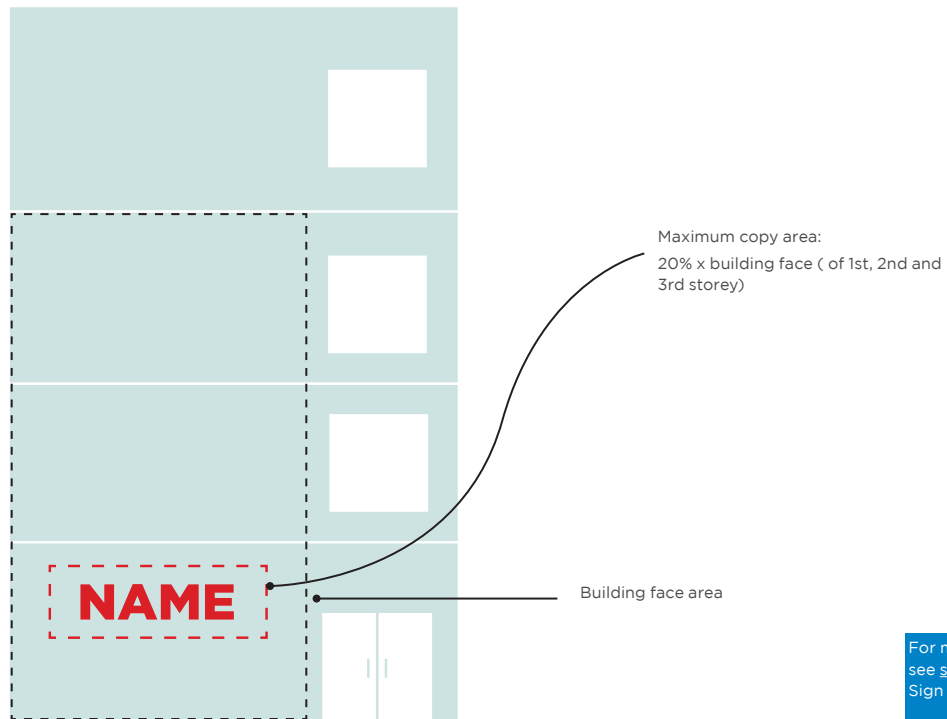
PERMIT  
REQUIRED

# PAINTED FASCIA SIGNS ON BUILDINGS UP TO THREE STOREYS

## LOCATION



## COPY



For more information  
see section 9.14 in the  
Sign By-law.



# MANSARD ROOF SIGNS

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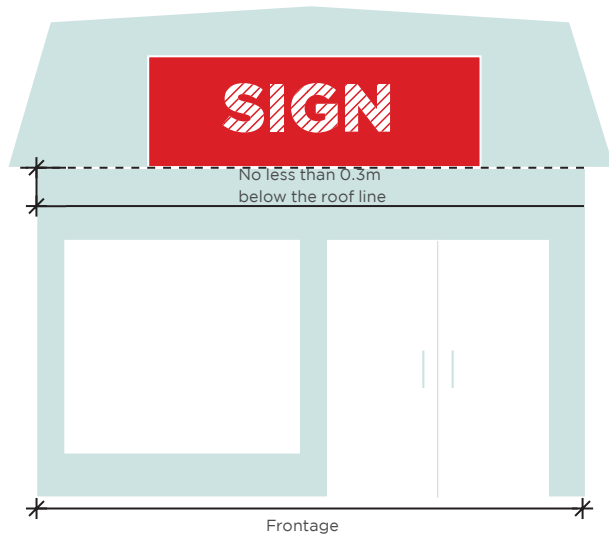
A mansard roof has four sloping sides. A sign attached to a mansard roof is called a Mansard Roof Sign.

These illustrations depict regulations for Mansard Roof Signs from the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District.

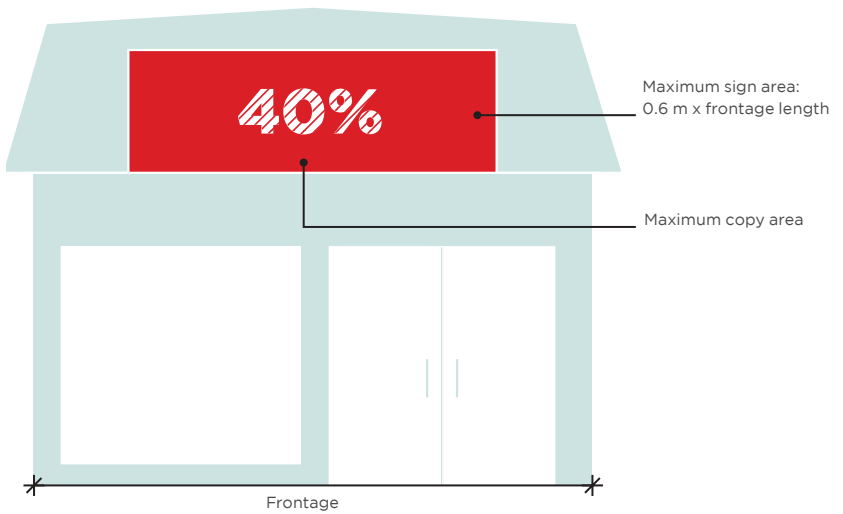




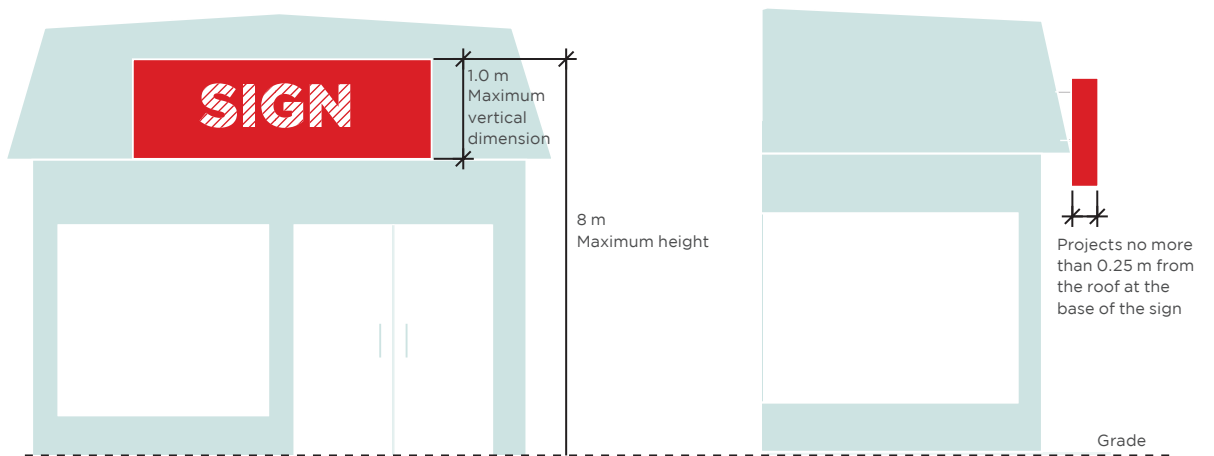
LOCATION



COPY



DIMENSIONS



# PROJECTING SIGNS

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Signs that are secured perpendicular to a building wall are called Projecting Signs. These signs are intended to be viewed by patrons on the sidewalk and should be located near an entrance. Projecting signs may also be located at the corner of a building.

For this sign type, sign area varies by zoning. In the Commercial, Mixed Use, Industrial Sign District, the maximum sign area ranges from 0.075m<sup>2</sup> to 0.30m<sup>2</sup> per length of frontage. See Table 9.3 in the Sign Bylaw for more information.

For projecting signs located at the corner of a premise, the calculation of maximum sign area is based on the average frontage length:

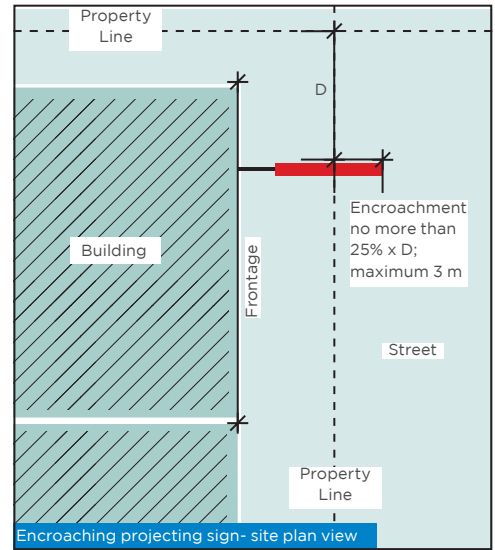
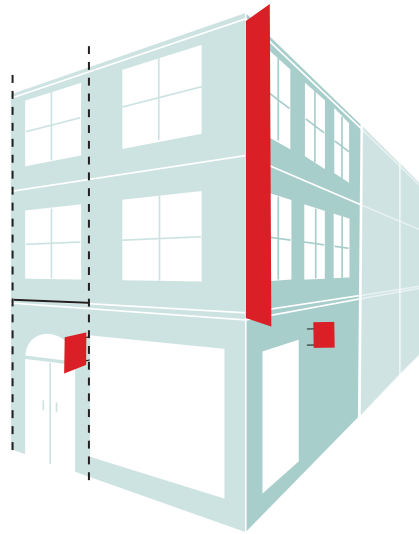
$$\frac{(\text{Frontage 1} + \text{Frontage 2})}{2} = \text{Average Frontage}$$

Each premises may have one projecting sign at the first storey.

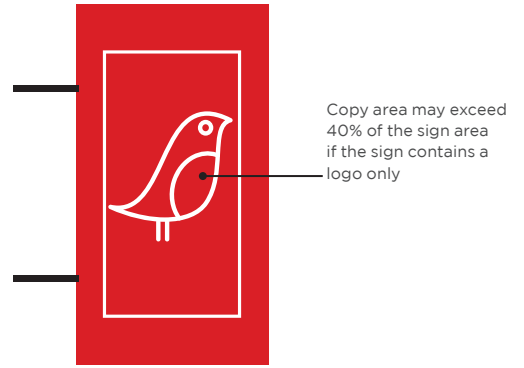
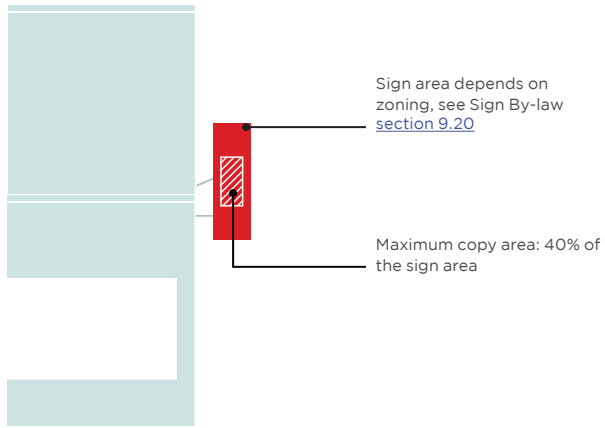
These illustrations depict regulations for Projecting Signs from the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District.



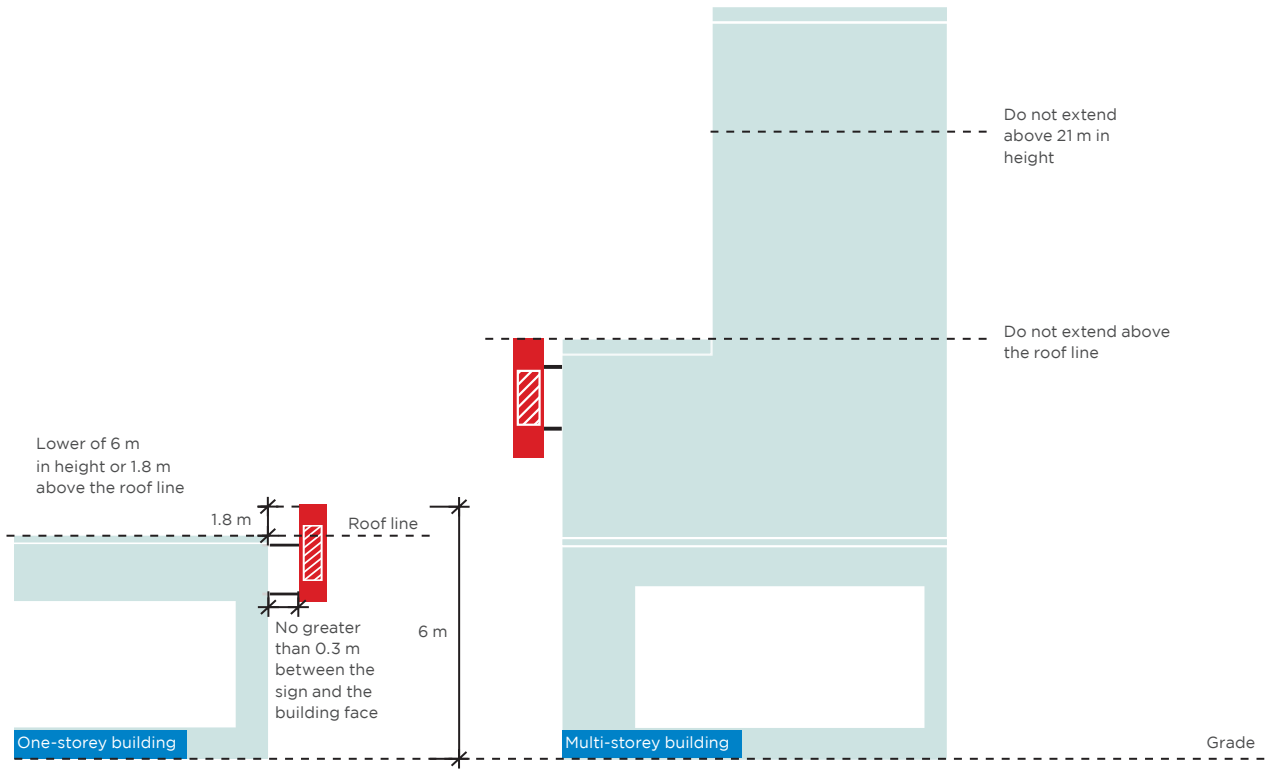
# LOCATION



# COPY



# DIMENSIONS



# SIGNS IN CONJUNCTION WITH A MURAL

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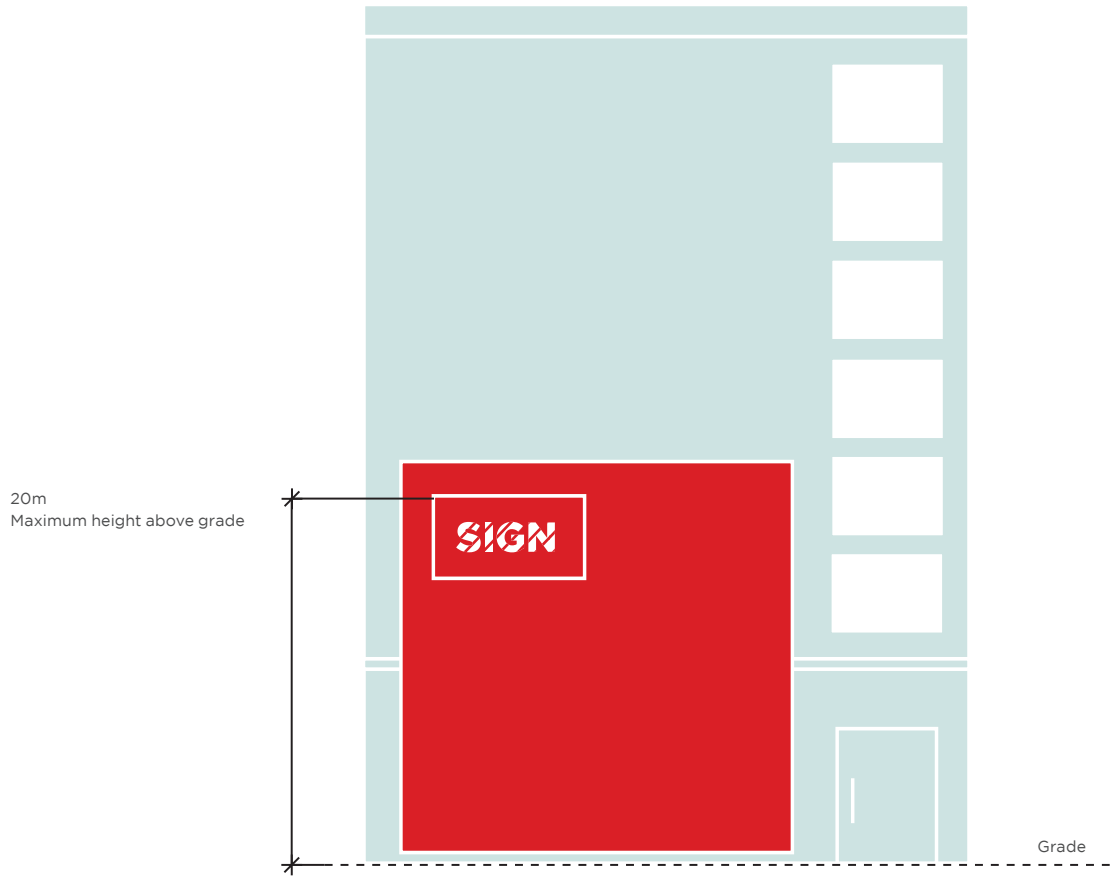
A mural is a graphic or art that is typically painted or affixed to a building wall. When a sign is incorporated into a mural, this is called a Sign in Conjunction with a Mural.

Murals are reviewed and approved by the City through a [development permit process](#). The sign portion of the mural is considered through a Sign Permit Application. This can include the name of a building, principle occupant name or logo.

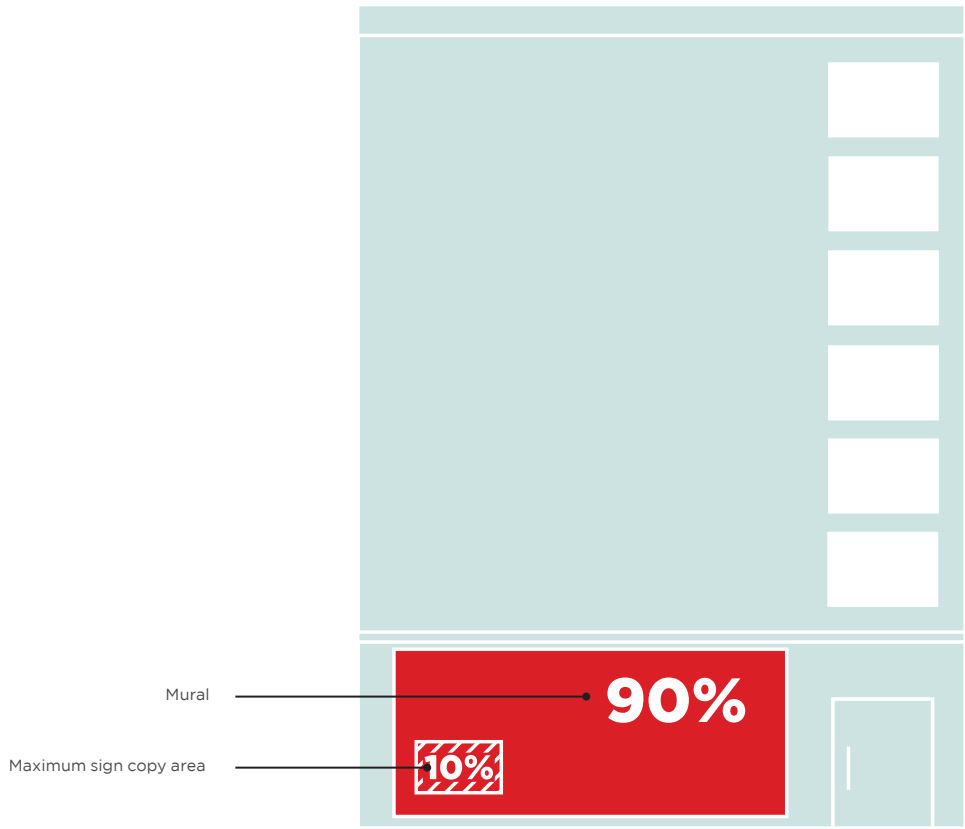
These illustrations depict regulations for Signs in Conjunction with a Mural from the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District.



# LOCATION



# COPY



# FREE-STANDING SIGNS

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Signs attached directly to the ground are Freestanding Signs. Freestanding signs are suited to buildings that are setback from the property line and to identify multiple tenants on a shared sign.

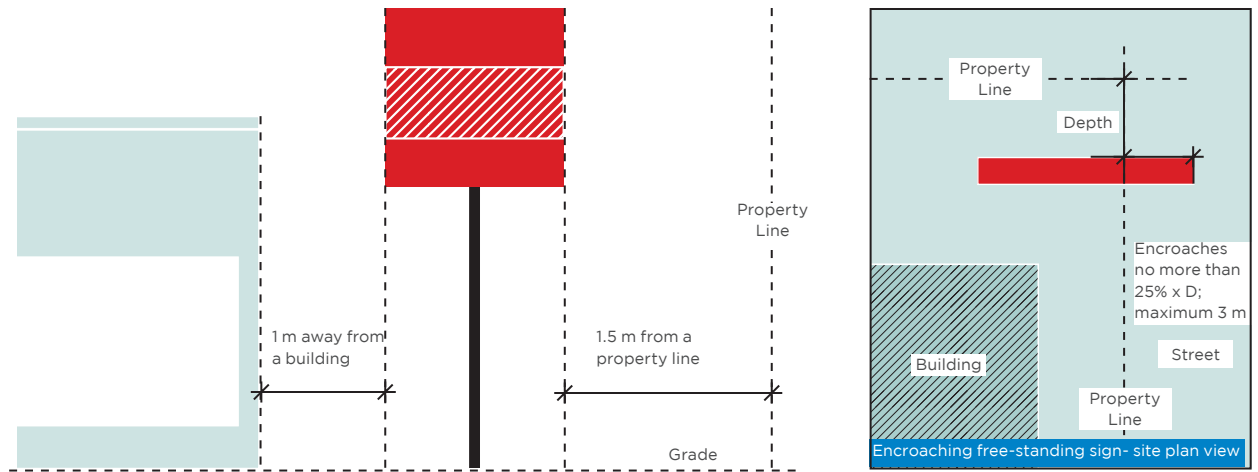
The allowable size and encroachment of a freestanding sign varies by zoning. See Sign By-law [section 9.15](#) for more information.

Sites over 25,000m<sup>2</sup> may have freestanding wayfinding signs. These are signs attached to the ground that display information or maps for wayfinding. See Sign By-law [section 9.16](#) for more information.

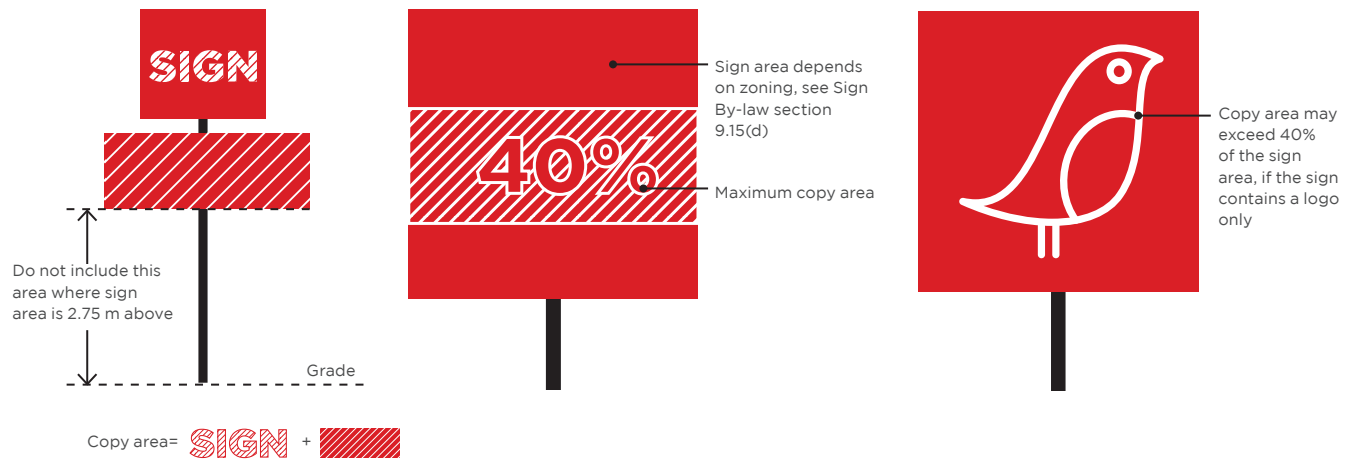
These illustrations depict regulations for Free-standing Signs from the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District.



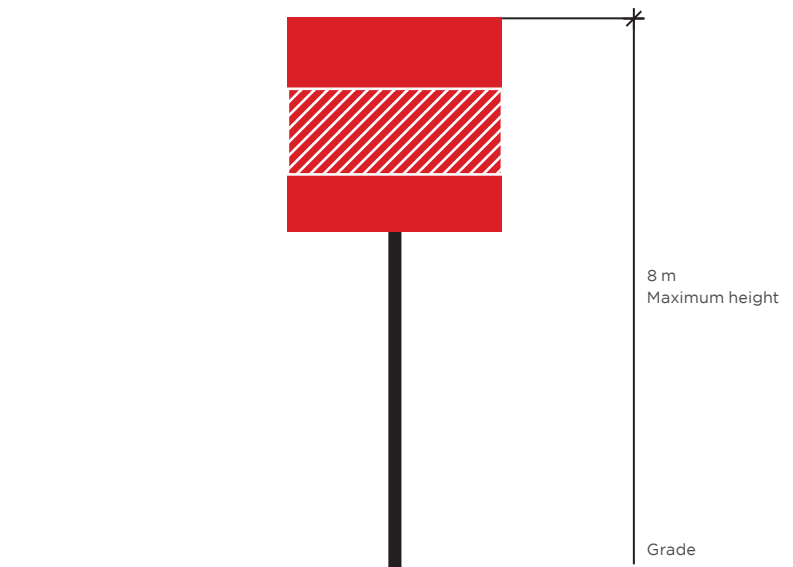
# LOCATION



# COPY



# DIMENSIONS

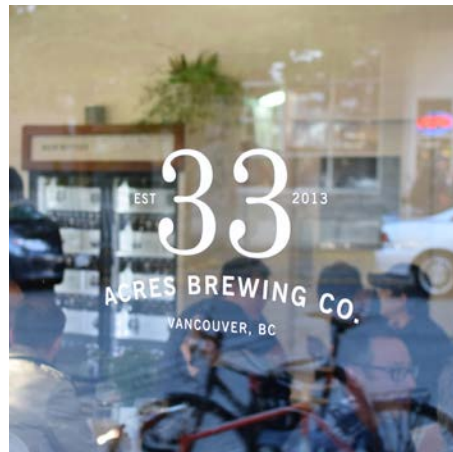


# WINDOW SIGNS

Signs located near to or on a window are Window Signs. This category of signs includes photographs, images and lifestyle graphics used to promote products or services available at a business. A permit is not required for this sign type.

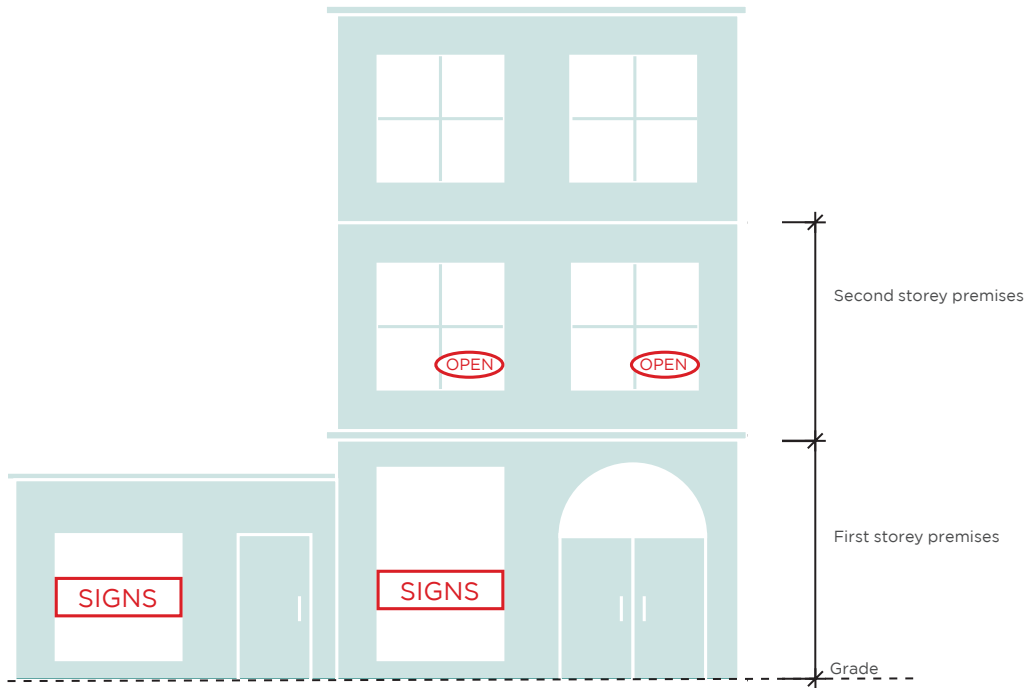
As a general rule, window signs cannot be illuminated. However, a premise may locate one small illuminated electronic message sign in a window, such as an open or operating hours sign.

These illustrations depict regulations for Window Signs from the Commercial, Mixed Use and Industrial Sign District.

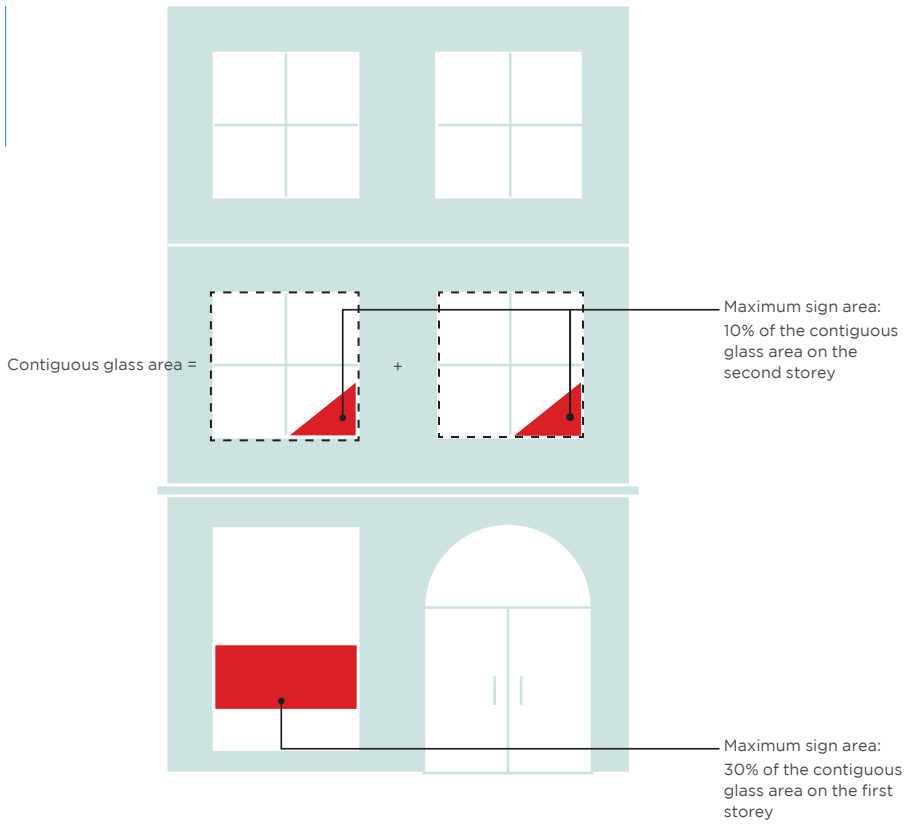




# LOCATION



# COPY

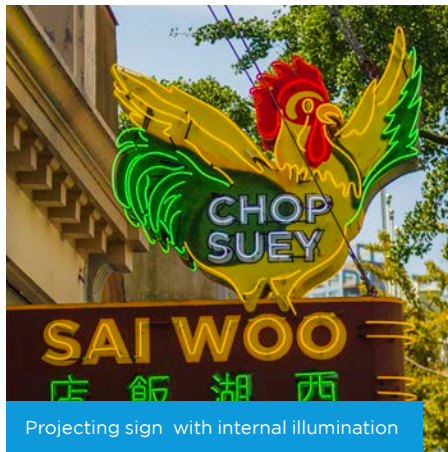


Electronic message sign has a copy area no greater than 0.34 m<sup>2</sup>

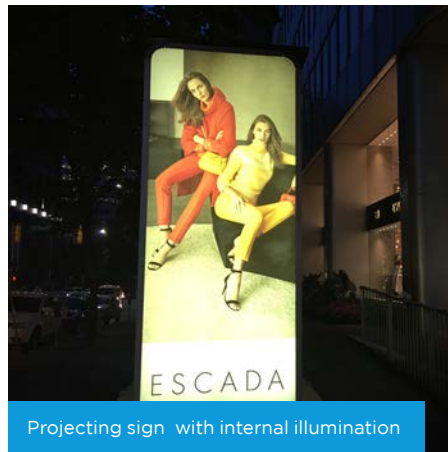
# ILLUMINATION

The Sign By-law contains standard illumination requirements for all signs in the City, which reduce impacts on residents and maintain safe conditions on streets and sidewalks.

Most signs on private property in Vancouver may be illuminated. In certain locations, illuminated signs may be restricted near dwelling units, or may have additional operating requirements. For more information, see [section 5.11](#) in the Sign By-law.



Projecting sign with internal illumination



Projecting sign with internal illumination



Fascia sign with external illumination



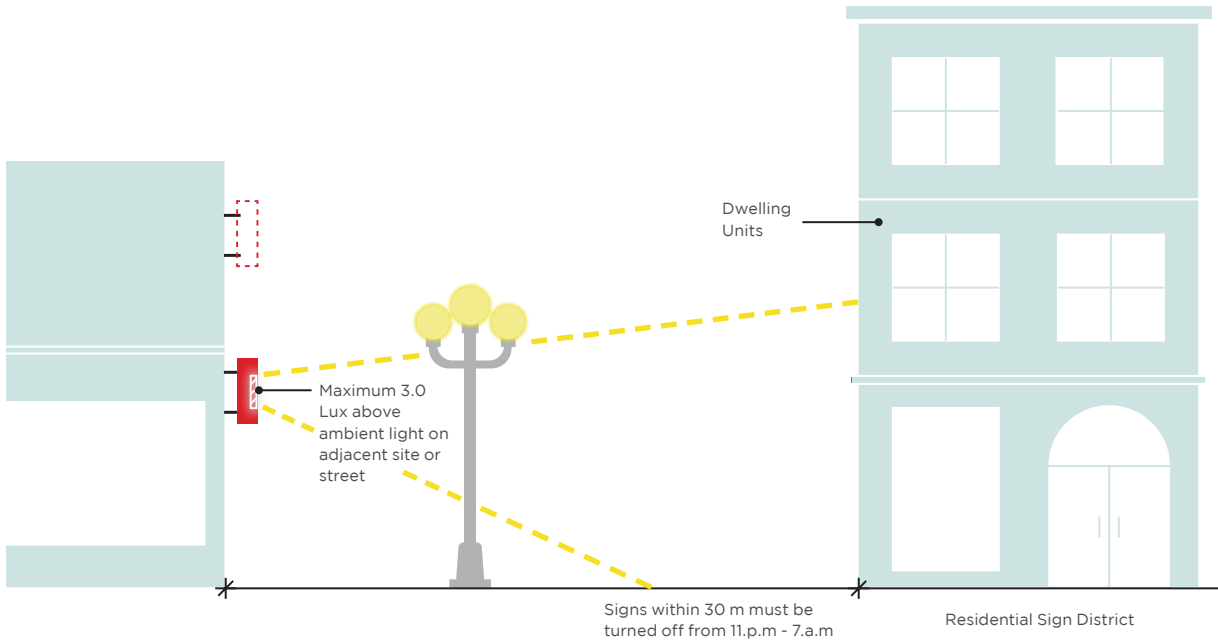
Shield required if externally illuminated



Do not illuminate from below



Lighting source concealed under the awning



# MAKING A PERMIT APPLICATION

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Most signs on private property in Vancouver require sign permits except those described in [section 6](#) of the Sign By-law, such as Banner Signs, Window Signs, and signs displaying only a building number and street name.

The following documents are required for a complete sign permit application package:

## 1. Application Form

In the [online](#) Application Portal, information is added directly into online fields. A Sign Details Form, available in the Online Application Portal, is required. In person, customers fill out the City of Vancouver's [application form](#). This lists what documentation is required, and includes required fields for proposed sign dimensions. This form, including all dimensions, must be completed in full to be processed by staff. To assist in filling out this form, see the explanation of sign permit application form information requirements found on [page 46](#) of this guide.

## 2. Sign Drawings

Copy, site plan, section and elevation drawings must identify and label the dimension measurements in metric. An example of a sign drawing package is shown on pages [44](#) to [45](#) in this guide.

## 3. Fees

The standard Sign Permit application fee is \$294. Additional fees apply to signs that require electrical connections, a relaxation, for a billboard. For more information, consult the [Sign Fee By-law](#). If you are applying in person, you can pay by cheque or credit card. Fees are automatically calculated in the online portal, and can be paid online by credit card.

#### **4. Owners Undertaking Letter**

An [owners undertaking letter](#) must be signed by the owner of the property or authorized signatory of a corporation that owns a property.

#### **5. Supplemental documentation**

Additional information may be required for certain sign proposals:

[Awning Permits](#) are required for new awning structures that include an awning signs.

[Building Permits](#) are required for signs over 200lbs, freestanding signs, projecting signs, and above the second storey of a building.

[Electrical Permits](#) are required for illuminated signs.

[Heritage Alteration Permits](#) are required for properties on the Vancouver Heritage Register.

#### **Where to Submit an Application**

Sign permit applications can be submitted:

**Online**, by [registering for an online account and submitting an application](#).

**In person**, by submitting the [application](#) to the Development and Building Services Centre, located at:

Ground floor, 515 West 10th Avenue, Vancouver, BC

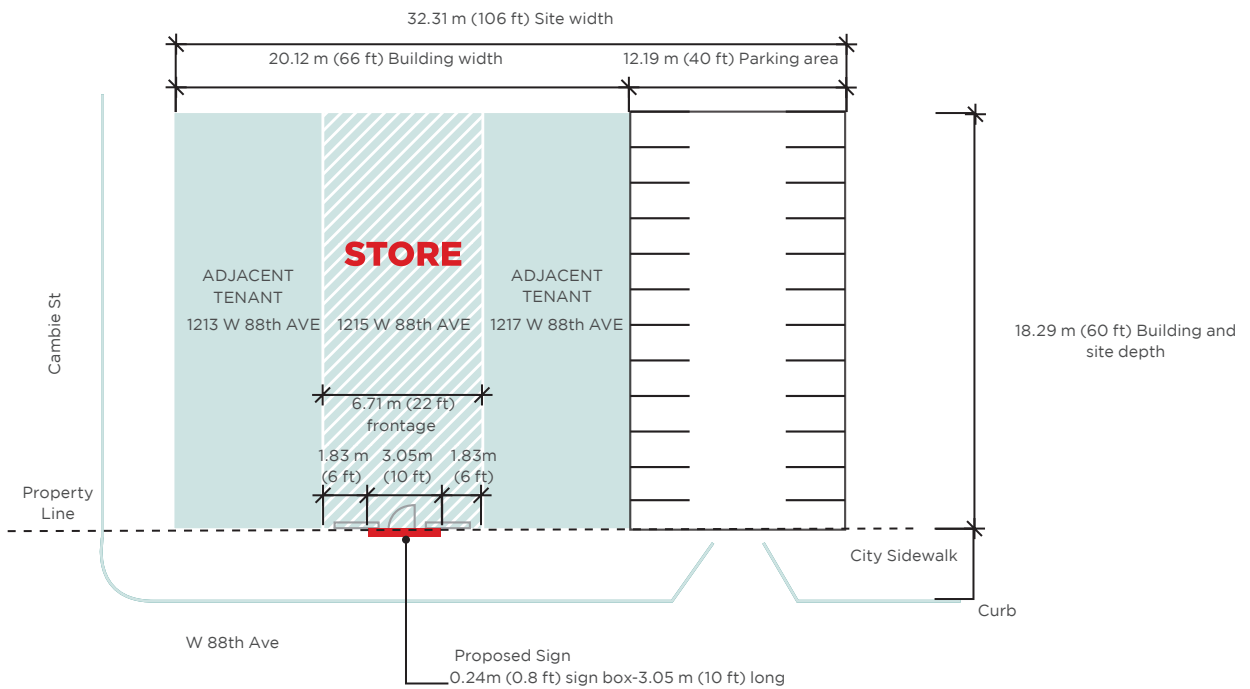
After receiving a permit and beginning installation call 3-1-1 (604-873-7000) for an inspection.

# SAMPLE DRAWING PACKAGE



## SIGN COPY DRAWING

Scale - 1:10



## SITE PLAN FLOOR PLAN DRAWING

Scale - 1:200



# EXPLANATION OF SIGN PERMIT APPLICATION FORM INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

Partial Section Drawings at the Sign Location - Required Information		
Drawings identify the location and label dimensions of:	Proposed:	Sign By-law allowance for this premises:
<input type="checkbox"/> Proposed sign location		
<input type="checkbox"/> Location of grade (ground)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clearance dimension (height from grade to bottom of sign)	3 m	2.75 m
<input type="checkbox"/> Premises frontage length dimension		
<input type="checkbox"/> Building storey floor lines location		
<input type="checkbox"/> Distance from the proposed sign to the nearest tenant (dimension)		
For signs <b>attached</b> to a building, identify:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Location of all windows and doors		
<input type="checkbox"/> Roof/parapet line location		
<input type="checkbox"/> Height of sign and support structure above roof (dimension)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Projection from building face (dimension)		

Identify the exact dimensions

Identify the maximum or minimum allowed in the Sign By-law

Sign Structure and Materials - Required Information	
Frame Material	
Cross Bracing	
Sign Face Material	
Method of Attachment	
Sign Weight	
Structural Drawings are required for: signs over 200lbs, freestanding signs, signs above the second storey.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Two signed sealed structural drawing sets are attached	
<input type="checkbox"/> One copy of signed sealed B1/B2 Letters of Assurance	
<input type="checkbox"/> One copy of signed sealed Structural Concept Review Letter	
Forms are available at: <a href="http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/application-forms-and-checklists.aspx">http://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/application-forms-and-checklists.aspx</a>	

Sign By-law Compliance and Relaxations	
Does the proposed sign comply with the Sign By-law?	No
Is a relaxation under Part 15 of the Sign By-law being requested?	No
Identify the reason for the relaxation request:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unnecessary hardship	<input type="checkbox"/> New Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Heritage property, historic area, historic sign	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Event
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A rationale letter explaining the request and how the proposal meets the parameters of Part 15 of the Sign By-law is attached.	

Check the box to indicate that the required document is in your application package







City Hall  
453 West 12th Ave  
Vancouver, BC  
V5Y 1V4

 3-1-1

 604-873-7000