



Planning & Economic Development

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SIGN STANDARDS

A sign is any structure, device, advertisement, advertising device or visual representation intended to advertise, identify or communicate information to attract the attention of the public for any reason.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT'S ALLOWED

Signs are regulated by the Poulsbo Municipal Code (PMC), [Chapter 18.170](#) to safeguard life, health, property and public welfare, to preserve and improve the appearance of the city as a place in which to live and as an attraction to nonresidents who come to visit or trade, and to encourage sound signage practices as an aid to business and for public information.

The size, number and other provisions for sign requirements are set forth under each specific zoning district. Properties located within the shoreline jurisdiction are subject to additional standards. Refer to the PMC for these specific standards:

- Residential Districts [PMC 18.70](#)
- Commercial Districts [PMC 18.80](#)
- Business and Employment Districts [PMC 18.90](#)
- Park Zoning District [PMC 18.100](#)
- Shoreline Master Program [PMC 16.08](#)

Notes:

- Properties incumbered by a Master Plan Overlay will often have additional sign standards. Talk to PED staff for help.
- Adopted CC&Rs for subdivisions may have specific sign standards that are not enforced by the City. Please check with your Homes Owners Association if you have questions.

EXEMPT SIGNS

Exempt signs shall not require a sign permit; however exemptions shall not be construed as relieving the owner of a sign from the responsibility of its erection and maintenance. In addition, signs shall not interfere, confuse or conflict with the recognition and visibility of any traffic control or directional devices or street name signs, nor shall any sign be so placed as to cause visual obstruction of any public rights-of-way.

The following signs are exempt from obtaining a sign permit:

- Signs erected by government agencies.
- Temporary signs per [PMC 18.170.080](#).
- On-premises occupant name plates on residential units.
- Changing of advertising on a legal changeable copy sign.
- On-premises contractor job signs not exceeding 16 sq.ft. in area, in conjunction with construction and approved permit.
- Normal maintenance of signs that does not change the appearance of the sign.
- On-premises directional signs not exceeding 6 sq.ft., the sole purpose of which is to provide for vehicular and pedestrian traffic direction and which display no advertising.
- Indoor window signs when not exceeding 25% of the total window area; provided, that open/closed signs, address, and hours are not included.

- Tourist signs located on city property & approved by council.
- Legal notices required by law.
- Barber poles.
- Holiday decorations.

PROHIBITED SIGNS

- Abandoned signs.
- Bench signs.
- Billboards.
- Electronic readerboard, animated, flashing, revolving signs.
- Off-premises signs.
- Portable readerboard signs.
- Roof-mounted signs, including signs painted directly on roof.
- Signs that conflict with traffic control signs or devices.
- Signs that create a safety hazard.
- Signs larger than 2 sq.ft in area attached to or placed on a vehicle or trailer on public or private property to purposefully gain additional signage which would otherwise not be allowed.
- Signs attached to utility poles or traffic signs.
- Signs within the public right-of-way, except political signs, community event signs, sandwich board signs, garage or rummage sale signs, real estate open house.
- Streamers, pendants, balloons, searchlights and other similar devices that are displayed more than 14 consecutive days.

TEMPORARY SIGNS

Temporary sign means any sign, banner, pennant, valance or advertising display intended to be displayed for only a limited amount of time. See the [Temporary Sign Handout](#) and [PMC 18.170.080](#) for specific standards and additional information.

SANDWICH BOARD SIGNS

Sandwich board signs intended for permanent display (more than 14 days in a calendar year) are required to obtain a sandwich board sign permit from the city. See the [Sandwich Board Handout](#) and [PMC 18.170.090](#) for specific standards and additional information.

ABANDONED SIGNS AND SIGN MAINTENANCE

Abandoned signs shall be removed by the owner and/or occupant of the premises upon which the sign is located. All signs shall be constantly maintained in a state of security, safety, appearance and repair. If any sign is found not to be so maintained or is insecurely fastened or otherwise dangerous, it shall be the duty of the owner and/or occupant of the premises on which the sign is fastened to repair or remove the sign. The premises surrounding a freestanding sign shall be free and clear of rubbish and landscaping area maintained in a tidy manner.

PERMITS

Sign permit [applications](#) are available on the City of Poulsbo [Building Department](#) website.

Disclaimer: this handout should not be used as a substitute for codes and regulations. The applicant/property owner is responsible for compliance with all code and rule requirements, whether or not described here. Please see the City of Poulsbo Municipal Code for complete text and requirements.

