

## WEST COLUMBIA SIGN ORDINANCE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Sign Ordinance is to have consistency in signage and protect the public from hazardous signs. Signs lawful as of November 12, 2007 are grandfathered. No sign can

- be attached to a utility pole or placed in the State or City right-of-way or easement or be less than 6 ft. from the edge of the road.
- be placed on property without the consent of the property owner.
- block vehicle or pedestrian view.
- be less than 7.5 ft. above a sidewalk or less than 15 ft. above a drive or parking area.
- resemble a traffic control device.
- have distracting, moving or flashing lights.
- block a sidewalk or path used by the public.
- be painted or placed on any roof.
- extend above the highest point of the building when attached.
- be within 10 ft. of a power line.
- face adjoining residential property.

### EXEMPT SIGNS:

1. Signs inside a building that cannot be read from the outside.
2. Commemorative plaques or historic markers either attached to the building or free-standing monument sign.
3. Governmental or public utility signs.
4. Temporary seasonal signs or decorations, community events or identifying newly opened businesses, as long as it is maintained and is removed within 3 days after event or season.
5. Repair or repaint existing sign without alterations.
6. Change copy on a sign.
7. Flags for National, State, church or school.

### Signs that do not need a permit unless they exceed the stated size:

1. For Sale, Rent or Lease signs (3 sq. ft. max. for residential or 8 sq. ft. for commercial).
2. Residential Name and Address (3 sq. ft. max.)
3. Construction, Repair, Renovation signs (8 sq. ft., 4 ft. ht. max. and must be removed within 3 days after completion of project).
4. Signs stating hours of operation, credit cards accepted, restrictions of sale to minors, no soliciting or beware of dog (1 sq. ft. each, maximum of 4 sq. ft. in total signage).
5. Political signs (36 sq. ft., 8 ft. ht. max., not lighted or have moving parts and cannot be placed more than 30 days prior to voting and must be removed within 3 days after election).

6. Daily Sign placed outside the business during the day without blocking foot or vehicle traffic and then placed inside at night (6 sq. ft. max.).
7. Off-site event signs (no more than 3, 3 sq. ft. max. each, placed two weeks prior to event and removed one day after event).
8. On-site event signs (18 sq. ft. max., placed two weeks prior to event and removed one day after event).
9. Banners announcing new location or grand opening (24 sq. ft. max., 45 days max.).

**Signs that need a permit before installation:**

Single Commercial Business Property:

1. One wall sign on each side (wall length x 1.5 = max. sq. ft. of signs).
2. One free standing sign (128 sq. ft. max., 50 ft. ht. max.) (If building is on a corner, may have two free standing signs).
3. One projecting sign (12 sq. ft. max., must be no lower than 7.5 ft. in height for pedestrian traffic or 15 ft. in height for vehicle traffic).

Commercial Complex or Shopping Center:

1. One wall sign with Shopping Center's name (wall length x 1.5 = max. square footage of signs).
2. One free standing sign (128 sq. ft. max., 50 ft. ht. max.) (2+ acres may have one free standing sign along each street with a min. of 200 ft. of frontage).
3. One wall sign on each business (wall length x 1.5 + max. square footage of total of all signs).

Lighted Signs:

1. Sized same as other signs.
2. No neon signs unless in or in a window (4.5 sq. ft. max., two allowed).
3. Cannot cause glare or become a traffic hazard.
4. Cannot use mercury arc or mercury vapor light sources.
5. Cannot face a residential area.

Inflatable signs:

1. Business type no greater than 27 cubic feet.

Business signs in residential areas:

1. One wall sign (12 sq. ft. max.).
2. One free standing sign (3 sq. ft. max., 4 ft. ht. max.).
3. 12 sq. ft. maximum total of all signs.
4. Building height, 20 ft. max.
5. No internally lit signs.

**Banners:**

1. Must be kept in good repair throughout time of display.
2. Street banners must conform to Texas Department of Transportation standards.
3. No more than two banners at one time (24 sq. ft. max. each, for more than 31 days at a time).
4. Commercial banners cannot face residential areas.

**Signs not allowed:**

1. Abandoned signs (no message after one year after closure).
2. Beacons or lights with a beam directed elsewhere.
3. Billboards.
4. Portable changeable copy signs.
5. Flashing signs other than message boards.
6. Moving signs other than message boards.
7. Product or service signs not specific to the business.

**Variance Standards:**

1. Must make application.
2. Cannot be requested for prohibited signs.
3. Request must be in line with Comprehensive Plan.
4. Is not contrary to public interest.
5. Special conditions would result in undue hardship other than economic or financial hardships.
6. The spirit of the ordinance will be observed.
7. Conditions or requirements may be added in granting request.
8. Shall be for a specific event or business and will not continue with property.
9. Void after 6 months from date of approval if not substantially underway.

**International Building Code Requirements:**

1. Roof signs shall be constructed of metal or other noncombustible materials (H110.1).
2. Wall signs in excess of 40 sq. ft. shall be constructed of metal or other noncombustible materials (H111.1).
3. Projecting signs shall be constructed entirely of metal or other noncombustible materials and securely attached by metal supports (H112.1).