

Sign Regulations

In order to balance the need to protect the public safety and maintain an attractive community and the need for adequate identification, communication and advertising, signs within the City of Spokane are regulated by Chapter 17C.240 of the Spokane Municipal Code.

Below is a summary of the sign code regulations please see Chapter 17C.240 of the Spokane Municipal Code for the complete regulations.

If you are considering installing signs on property within the City of Spokane the first step in determining what signs are permitted is to find out the zoning of the property. You can do this by using the Spokane City Map Viewer or by calling the Current Planning Department at 509 625-6300.

Once you know the zoning of the property use the following tables to determine the allowable signage.

Permitted Signs in the Residential Zones (RA, RSF, RTF, RMF, and RHD)					
Use Category/Structure Type [2]	Number of Signs	Max. Sign Face Area	Types of Signs Allowed	Maximum Sign Height	Additional Signs Allowed [3]
Residential Household Living/Houses, Duplexes, Attached Houses	1 per site	3 sq. ft.	Fascia, Painted Wall	Top of wall, or 10 ft. whichever is less	directional signs
			Freestanding	6 ft.	
Residential Household Living/Multi-family Residential Building, Group Living, Day Care, Nonresidential category uses not listed below.	1 per building	15 sq. ft.	Fascia, Painted Wall	Top of wall	directional signs
			Freestanding	10 ft.	
Subdivisions, PUDs, Mobile Home Parks, Agricultural Uses. [4]	1 per entrance	32 sq. ft.	Monument	10 ft.	directional signs

Parks and Open Areas [5]	1 per street frontage	10 sq. ft.	Monument	10 ft.	directional signs
Colleges, Community Services, Medical Centers, Religious Institutions, Schools, Commercial Outdoor Recreation, Major Event Entertainments, nonconforming uses in Commercial and Industrial use categories, uses in the Office use category allowed as a Conditional Use in the RMF and RHD zones.	The sign standards of the NR zone apply. See Below.				
<p>Notes:</p> <p>[1] Temporary signs are regulated by SMC 17C.240.240. G. Temporary Signs.</p> <p>[2] See Title 17C. Uses, Use Categories, and Structure Types.</p> <p>[3] These signs are allowed in addition to other signs when they meet the standards of SMC 17C.240.240.</p> <p>[4] These signs are allowed in addition to those for individual buildings.</p> <p>[5] Signs in, or adjacent to and facing, a sports field associated with Parks and Open Areas are subject to the standards of the NR zone.</p>					

Setbacks in Residential Zones

- Monument exceeding 3.5 feet in tall shall setback a minimum of 10 feet.
- Freestanding signs with structural support of less than 2 feet in width and the copy placed at a minimum height of 7 feet above grade may be placed at the front property line.
- Signs with structural supports of more than 2 feet wide shall be setback a minimum of 10 feet.
- All signs shall meet the requirements of SMC 17C.249.240 F for clearances.

Commercial and Industrial Zones (CBD1-6, GC, CB, O, OR, NR and CC1- 4)

CBD, GC, LI & HI	CC2 & CB [2]	O, OR, NR, NMU	CC1 [2]	CC4 [2]
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Signs Attached to Buildings

Size Allocation	• 1-1/2 sq. ft. per 1 ft. of primary bldg. wall or 15 percent of the primary bldg. wall whichever is greater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 sq. ft. per 1 ft. of primary bldg. wall if a freestanding sign is also on the same street frontage • 1-1/2 sq. ft. per 1 ft. of primary bldg. wall if there is no freestanding sign on the same street frontage 	Same	Same	15 sq. ft.
Maximum Number	No limit within size allocation	Same	Same	Same	1
Maximum Area Per Sign	250 sq. ft. In the CBD zones, the maximum area per sign attached to a building is not limited.	100 sq. ft.	50 sq. ft.	50 sq. ft.	15 sq. ft.
Min. Guaranteed Sign Area For A	32 sq. ft.	Same	Same	Same	15 sq. ft.

Ground Floor Tenant Space					
Types Allowed					
Fascia, Awning, Marquee, Pitched Roof, Painted Wall	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Projecting	Yes, but no projecting signs if a freestanding sign is also on the same street frontage	Same	Same	Same	Same
Rooftop	Yes	No	No	No	No
<i>Freestanding Signs</i>					
Maximum Number	1 per site or 1 per 300 ft. of arterial street frontage and 1 for each additional 300 ft. or fraction thereof [3].	1 per arterial street frontage [4]	1 per arterial street frontage [4]	1 monument sign per arterial street frontage	1 monument sign per building

When Not Allowed	Not allowed if there is already a projecting sign on the same site frontage, or if existing signs attached to buildings exceed the limit of 1 sq. ft. to 1 ft. of primary bldg. wall	Same	Same	Same	Not allowed if there is already a wall or projecting sign
Size Allocation For All Freestanding Signs	1 sq. ft. per 1 ft. of arterial street frontage. Local street frontage can be used if there are not arterial site frontages.	Same	Same	Same	15 sq. ft.
Size Limit	250 sq. ft.	75 sq. ft. [5]	50 sq. ft. [5]	50 sq. ft.	15 sq. ft.
Maximum Height [6]	35 ft. In the CBD-5 zone, the maximum height is 60 ft.	20 ft.	20 ft.	5 feet	5 feet

Additional Signs Allowed

Directional Signs, Temporary Signs	See Subsections 17C.240.240.H. and 17C.240.240.G.					
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Yes = Allowed No = Prohibited

Notes:

- [1] Temporary signs are regulated under 17C.240.240.H. Temporary Signs.
- [2] Signs in CC zones are subject to the standards and guidelines contained in the Initial Design Standards and Guidelines for Centers and Corridors.
- [3] On sites with frontages longer than 300 feet, sign area earned from the first 300 feet may not be used on the second sign. For example, a 350 foot street frontage may have a 200 sq. ft. and a 50 sq. ft. freestanding sign. Interstate freeways, United States highways, state routes that are not also City of Spokane Arterials are not considered arterial streets for purposes of this Title. Sites with frontage on more than one arterial are allowed a freestanding sign on each arterial. The size allocation for each freestanding sign shall be calculated independently using only the length of the arterial frontage adjacent to the freestanding sign. The square footage allowance for freestanding signs for one arterial shall not be transferred to other arterials.
- [4] Where a site has no arterial street frontage, one freestanding sign is allowed.
- [5] The maximum sign area may be an additional twenty-five square feet for each additional business on a site having more than one business, up to a maximum area of one hundred fifty square feet.
- [6] This height limit is for the total height of the combined sign face and sign structure.
- [7] These signs may be allowed in addition to signs attached to buildings and freestanding signs when they meet the standards of 17C.240.240.H. and 17C.240.240.G.

Setbacks in Commercial and Industrial Zones

- Freestanding signs shall not be located within the required setback from a residentially zoned property.

Primary Building Wall

FIGURE 1:
Primary and Secondary Building Walls

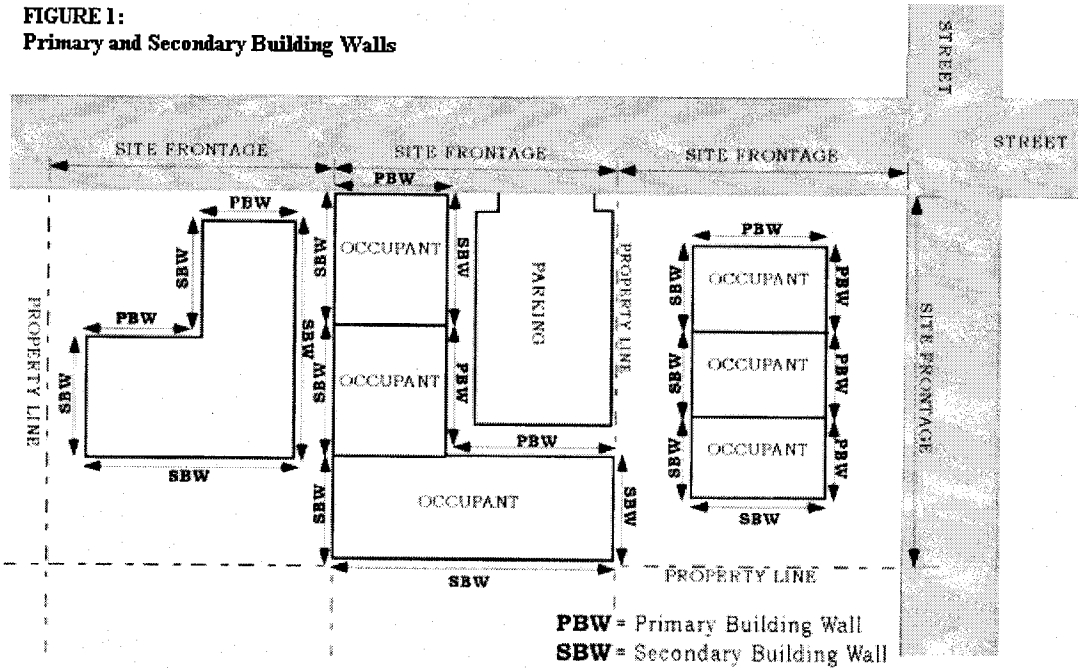
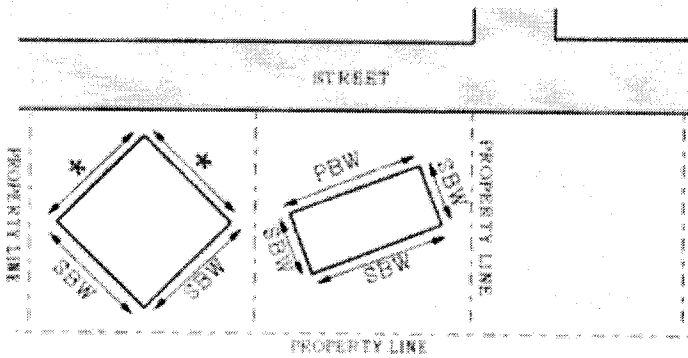


FIGURE 8a
Building Wall Orientation



* Equal orientation - applicant chooses one for primary wall and one for the secondary wall

Electronic Message Signs

Not permitted in the CBD and CC4 zones or for residential uses in the residential zones.

For institutional uses in the residential zones

- 25 square feet max area

- Shall be shut off between the hours of 10PM and 6AM

All uses in the CC1, O, OR zones and NR zoned property with frontage on an arterial

- 25 square feet max area
- No limits to hours of operation

All uses in the CC2 and CB zones

- 48 square feet max area for a wall signs
- 37.5 square feet max area for freestanding signs
- No limits to hours of operation

All uses in the GC, LI and HI zones

- 48 square feet max area
- No limits on hours of operation

Electronic message signs shall comply with the standards of Table 4 of SMC 17C.240.240 J for automatic dimming and brightness standards. A signed letter from the owner of a proposed electronic message sign certifying compliance with these standards shall be submitted with the sign permit application.

Electronic message signs shall display static images for not less than 2 seconds before transitioning to another static image. Transitions may utilize frame effects but flashing signs are prohibited.

Except in the GC, LI and HI zones no video display methods are permitted. Where permitted the minimum duration of videos displays shall be 2 seconds and the maximum shall be five seconds.

Sign Permits

All new permanent signs require a permit unless exempted by 17C.240.060 (make link). Changes to an existing legally permitted sign that do not structurally alter or relocate the sign do not require a permit. These changes may include painting, repainting, cleaning or changing the advertising copy. See below for temporary sign permitting requirements.

The Building Services Department administers sign permits. A sign permit application may be submitted on the 3rd floor of City Hall, 808 W Spokane Falls Blvd. between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM and shall include the following information:

- ✓ Completed Building Department Application form
- ✓ The location of the affected lot, building(s) and sign(s);
- ✓ The scale of the site plan;

- ✓ A scaled drawing of the proposed sign or sign revision, including size, height, copy, structural footing details, method of attachment and illumination;
- ✓ The location of all existing signs on the site including size and height;
- ✓ For signs subject to spacing regulations, the location of neighboring signs on adjacent properties;
- ✓ Tax parcel number or correct parcel address where proposed sign will be located.
- ✓ A letter signed by the owner of a proposed electronic message sign certifying compliance with brightness standards if electronic message sign is proposed.
- ✓ Application review fee.

Temporary Signs					
Type	Allowed?	Permit required?	Max Area	Max Height	Time Limit
Construction Sign	Yes.	No.	32 sq. ft. or 15 sq. ft. in RSF Zones	10 feet	Duration of construction after building permit is obtained.
Grand Opening Displays (signs, posters, banners, strings of lights, flags, balloons)	Yes, on premises of the business only, in zones where the use advertised is permitted.	No.	No maximum.	No maximum.	Thirty days prior to event, must be removed within 7 days after event.
Special event signs.	Yes, on premises of the business only.	No	20 sq. ft.	No maximum.	Thirty days prior to event, must be removed within 7 days after event.
Balloon Signs	Yes, in commercial and industrial zones, on premises of the business only.	No.	No maximum.	The vertical dimension of the balloon may not exceed 25 feet.	One balloon sign is allowed per site for a maximum of one month at a showing twice per calendar year.
Real estate signs	Yes, on private property only.	No.	See rules for real estate signs below		
Political Campaign Signs	Yes.	No.	16 square feet in residential zones. 32 square feet in non-residential zones.	No maximum.	Signs shall be removed after the date election results are certified.
Community Banners	Yes, in city designated locations for promotion of a	Yes, requires permit from the City	Complies with all applicable codes and in the judgment of the street director does not		As approved by permit.

	civic event, public service announcement and holiday decoration.	Administrator and approval by the arts commission.	present a traffic hazard.		
Sandwich Board Signs	Yes, one sign per business is allowed, constructed and sited as outlined by SMC 17C.240.240.	Notification to the city prior to displaying a sandwich board sign is required. This includes an acknowledgment of requirements and a rendering of the sign.	9 square feet in area and not exceeding 3 feet in any dimension.	36 inches.	Signs may only be displayed during business hours.
Garage Sale Signs	Yes, one on site and ten-off premises signs are permitted.	No.	4 square feet.	N/A	May be displayed only during the sale and must be removed the day the sale ends.
Seasonal sales (e.g. Christmas tree stands)	Yes, if a vender has valid license for the sales activities. The sign shall be placed on private property only.	No.	One sign of up to 20 square feet mounted on the booth or trailer used for sales.	N/A.	As long as the sales activity has a valid license.

Temporary signs shall not be posted or attached to telephone poles, power poles or other public utility facilities.

No political campaign signs may be placed on private property without permission of the property owner.

All banners must be legible, made of durable materials, and must be well maintained.

Rules for Real estate Signs