



Sign Regulations and Guidelines

Excerpts from Land Use Code Chapter 20.16, Article IX and the Design Review Manual

Last Updated: July 1, 2023

Exempt signs

The following types of signs are exempt from these regulations.

- One unlighted real estate sign, advertising the sale or lease of a parcel of property or structure located on the same site as the property or structure being advertised for sale or lease. Said sign shall not exceed a maximum area of 8 square feet in any residential or office district and 20 square feet in any commercial or industrial district.
- Signs directing and guiding traffic in parking facilities, including directional markings painted on pavement.
- Public convenience and information signs, including location of public restrooms, phones, presence of historic markers and similar signs, not exceeding 2 square feet in total size.
- Menu boards, not exceeding 24 square feet in area and 5 feet in height for drive-in, drive-through, or walk up restaurants, limited to 2 menu boards per restaurant.
- National and state flags, when appropriately displayed.
- Temporary signs located in the interior of a building or on the windows of said buildings or within an enclosed lobby or court of any building or group of buildings where such signs are designed and located to be viewed exclusively by patrons of such use or uses.
- One non-illuminated, temporary construction sign, not more than 6 square feet in area, on the site of a structure under construction.

Maximum sign area

Commercial and industrial districts

- The maximum sign area identified in the following table may be permitted for buildings and uses in a commercial or industrial district, except as provided for the GMU District.

Maximum sign area in commercial* and industrial districts

Maximum total sign area		
Per foot of width of building frontage, or front and street side elevations of building on corner lot, or,	Per foot of property line adjoining street, or,	Interior lot with frontage less than 50 feet
1 square foot	1/2 square foot	50 square feet

*except GMU District

- The maximum aggregate area of all signs shall be 200 feet.
- Only one side of a two-faced sign shall be counted in determining the amount of sign area.
- Signs located within 100 feet of a residential zoning district shall not exceed 20 square feet in area.

O District, ORM District and residential districts

The following signs may be permitted in the Open Space District, the Office and Multi-Family Residential District and residential districts:

- One nameplate affixed to the building, not directly lighted and not exceeding one square foot in area, on the site of a one-family or two-family dwelling.
- One identification sign, not directly lighted and not exceeding 6 square feet in area, located on the site of a multi-family dwelling, multi-family complex, lodging house or residential visitor lodging in a residential district or the ORM District, or a permitted use in the O District.
- One identification sign, not directly lighted and not exceeding 12 square feet in area on the site of a public building or grounds, a private institution, a church, a club or lodge, or a professional office, clinic, or laboratory. In addition, one monument sign not exceeding eight feet in height and twenty-four square feet in area for one side may be allowed. However, it shall not be internally illuminated. This sign shall be located no closer than 5 feet to the back of sidewalk or public right-of-way whichever is furthest.
- In addition to an identification sign, one bulletin board, not directly lighted, and not exceeding 16 square feet in area, on the site of a church.
- One non-illuminated sign not exceeding 4 square feet in area on the site of a parking lot.
- Signs pertaining to a conditional use in the O District if authorized by the conditional use permit.
- One identification sign per mobile home park entrance, which may consist of one of the following:
 - A ground sign, not exceeding a height of 42 inches and a display area of 24 square feet.
 - A wall sign, which may be affixed to a screen wall, with a maximum area of 24 square feet.

GMU District

Signs for commercial and office uses may be permitted in the GMU District subject to the following regulations:

- Free-standing signs shall be monument signs with a maximum height of 5 feet, shall be set back at least 10 feet from the street right-of-way and shall be non-illuminated.
- Signs shall be no more than 16 square feet in area.
- Sandwich board signs are prohibited.

Sign design

- Design review is required for all signs to determine if they are compatible with the building or site on which the signs are proposed and with the surrounding neighborhood.
- A sign not attached to a building shall not exceed 8 feet in height.
- Monument signs shall be provided in lieu of pole signs for all projects. The maximum height of a monument sign is 8 feet as measured from grade or as measured from the base of the modified grade if the sign is proposed to be located on a berm.
- Signs shall primarily identify the business, establishment or type of activity conducted on the same premises. No sign advertising something that is not the principal business of the site shall be allowed.
- Signs shall be restrained in size and design, and as an identification device shall not excessively compete for the public's attention.
- A sign's materials, colors, texture, size, shape, height, placement and design shall be harmonious with the building, property and neighborhood of which it is a part. Components not bearing a message

(such as supporting structures and backs) shall be constructed of materials and colors that blend with or compliment the surroundings.

- Vending machines when visibly displayed on the site shall be considered signage and added to the total allowable sign area.
- Wall signs shall not cover distinctive architectural details.
- A sign program is required for multi-tenant buildings. Such program shall include exhibits showing the size, colors, materials, lighting and orientation of all proposed signs and existing signs proposed to remain. Sign permits shall be issued only for tenant signage that is in conformance with the Planning Commission approved sign program.
- An illuminated sign within 300 feet of a residential zoning district, measured along the radius of a 180 degree arc in front of a face of the sign, shall not flash, blink, move, or scintillate or be directly lighted, but may be indirectly lighted or may have semi-indirect or diffused lighting, provided that the surface brightness shall not be greater than 100 foot-lamberts. This regulation shall not apply to a sign that is not visible from a residential zoning district.
- All illuminated signs shall have an opaque background, allowing only lettering and logos to be illuminated to the degree that it does not become an annoying glare or hazardous condition as determined by the Planning and Building Director.

Sign location

- In all districts except the CD, CS and PR District, no blade sign shall project more than 36 inches over a public sidewalk, street or alley. Encroachment permits for such signs may be required from the Public Works Department.
- There shall not be less than 8 feet of clearance between the bottom of an overhanging sign and ground level, or as may be required by the Uniform Building Code, whichever is more restrictive.
- Roof-mounted signs are prohibited.
- The base of a monument sign shall be set back at least 5 feet from any public right-of-way and shall be located in a planter area.

Temporary signs

Temporary signs are allowed under the following conditions:

- A temporary sign permit is obtained from the Planning & Building Department. A single temporary sign permit may cover up to 3 temporary signs during a 12-month period.
- A temporary sign must relate to an event, occurrence or matter of temporary nature, limited duration or present interest.
- Temporary signs may be erected for a period of up to 30 days.
- Temporary signs may not exceed 50 square feet.
- Roof signs are not permitted.
- Temporary signs must be located on private property, and in a manner that does not endanger the public safety or welfare.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT | Planning Division

401 Grove Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448-4723

Phone: (707) 431-3346 | Email: planning@healdsburg.gov | Website: www.healdsburg.gov

Sign Permit - Submittal Requirements

- Planning Permit Application** form completed and signed by the applicant(s) and property owner(s) and is available at the following site:
<https://www.ci.healdsburg.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/620/Planning-Permit-Application-PDF>
- Application Fees** are based on the Planning Fee schedule which is updated annually in July. The fee schedule is available at the following site: <https://healdsburg.gov/352/Application-Forms-Submittal-Requirements>. If plan on submitting an application in July or August, check with CDC staff to confirm the fees based on the time you might be submitting.
- Sign Inventory** of all existing signs to remain, including type (e.g., free-standing, wall, projecting), dimensions, height (free-standing signs).
- Plan Sets** refer **Submittal Checklist Table and Contents of Plan Sheets** below.

Sign Permit Submittal Checklist	
Item	Applicability & Quantity “#” = Number of items ● = Required “*” = Required and see notes
Plan Sets	
8 ½” x 11”	3
Plans	
Site Plan	●
Building Elevations	●
Sign Details	●

A. CONTENTS OF PLAN SHEETS

The following information will be required on plan sheets as noted below. Questions regarding the applicability of requested items should be directed to Planning staff at the Community Development Center.

1) Building Elevations

- a) Dimensioned elevations of sides of the building where signage is proposed, include existing (photos) and proposed signs.
- b) Dimension the building frontage.
- c) Note finish materials and colors of all exterior surfaces, including roofs for existing and proposed and treatment of existing opening proposed to be filled or covered.

2) Sign Details

- a) Sign Dimensions (height, width, square feet).
- b) Height (free-standing signs), height above finished grade (projecting and under-canopy signs)
- c) Material(s) and Color(s).
- d) Method of illumination