

SIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE CITY OF SANTA FE SPRINGS

INTRODUCTION

These Sign Guidelines are intended to allow for sufficient identification to the public for each business while also requiring quality sign design that is aesthetically pleasing. Accordingly, these guidelines are intended to provide the business owner with a better understanding of those factors which contribute to effective, high-quality sign design.

This sign brochure will give you a general overview of the sign standards; however, you are advised to consult with a Planning staff member early in the sign planning process regarding specific sign standards pertaining to your location and use.

WHAT SIGNS CAN DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Signs are an important element of your business for three main reasons:

- To identify your business
- To help identify your location
- To establish your business image

STREET ADVERTISING

Street signs should be simple, direct and designed in a contemporary style. Use of several signs and signs that are poorly fabricated will not be permitted.

SIGN REGULATIONS

The Santa Fe Springs' City Council, on September 25, 1986 and April 7, 1989, adopted new sign regulations to the City's Zoning Ordinance. The major goal of the new sign regulations is to enhance the visual quality and environment of the City by controlling and limiting the use of signage primarily to wall and monument signs on industrial and commercial properties.

SIGN TYPES SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED

The following is a list of signs that are specifically prohibited:

A. Roof Signs

Roof signs are prohibited in all zones of the City.

- B. **Flashing, Rotating, Moving, Reflecting, Prismatic or Blinking Signs**
Electronic Reader Boards are only permitted for an auto center or recreational vehicle sales use fronting a freeway.
- C. **Portable Signs**
Portable signs, including A-frame, sandwich boards, poster boards and signs mounted on trailers or motor vehicles which are capable of being carried or readily moved from one spot to another.
- D. **Banners, Pennants and Flags**
Banners, pennants and flags are permitted for thirty (30) consecutive days in a calendar year during a grand opening of a business or for a period of time not to exceed fourteen (14) consecutive days in a calendar year during a promotional sales event.
- E. **Freestanding Signs**
A freestanding center sign may only be approved for a planned commercial or industrial park development containing five (5) acres or more subject to obtaining Development Plan Approval by the Planning Commission.
- F. **Panel or Canned Wall Signs Discouraged**
Channel letters shall be utilized for the primary wall sign for a business.
- G. **Painted Wall Signs Discouraged**
Primary identification signs that are painted on the wall of a building, plywood board or similar materials are discouraged.

COMMON PROBLEMS WITH SIGNS

While signs can be a cost-effective means of advertising for your business, they can also be a costly detriment to the growth and success of your business. Some of the common problems with signs that can detract from your business are described below:

1. **Too Many Signs/Too Much Information**
There is a misconception among some business owners that more and bigger signs attract more customers. Other business owners believe that signs should have as much information as possible. Both of these assumptions lead to signs that are ineffective because they convey more information than a moving viewer can understand. The City of Santa Fe Springs has established limits on sign area so that confusing text advertising is minimized, thereby promoting signs that provide clear and easy-to-read business identification.

2. **Poor Placement/Poor Setting**
Signs should be positioned on the building where they will not cover, obliterate or damage the architectural integrity of the building on which they are placed.
3. **Poor Design/Poor Compatibility**
Signs that are poorly designed do not communicate well. They may include too much information, or the information is arranged in such a way that it is hard to understand. Poorly-designed signs also may include improper use of colors, materials, lighting or multiple typefaces that make the sign unappealing or unattractive.

GUIDELINES TO GOOD SIGNS

1. **COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PROGRAM**
One of the best ways of improving sign quality is for the owner or his agent to prepare a sign program which will coordinate all signs on a site where multiple tenants or users exist. The sign program should show that all signs on the site will be consistent or compatible in design, shape, size, color, placement, lettering style, lettering height and illumination.
2. **PERMITTED SIGN AREA**
Each building is permitted **1.5 square feet of sign area for each linear foot** of building frontage. For example, if your building is 50 feet wide on the side facing the street, you are permitted a sign area of 75 square feet in size. The total allowed sign area may be distributed among several signs on your site (e.g., one wall sign, one window sign, one under-canopy sign and a monument sign) or may be used for only one or two signs.
3. **WIDTH AND HEIGHT OF WALL SIGNS**
Overly-large wall signs tend to hide the building to which they are attached and compete with signs on adjacent buildings for the viewers' attention. The City has established limits on sign size to maintain good visibility and to establish consistency in sign sizes.
 - A. **Limitations on the width of wall signs**
Signs may not exceed **50 feet** in width or **60%** of the width of the frontage, whichever is less. For example, on a 50-foot-wide building, your sign could be 30 feet wide.
 - B. **Limitations on the height of wall signs**
Sign height (sign letters) generally should not be taller than **18 inches**. For instance, on the example cited above, you could use 18-inch-tall

channel letters. Taller sign heights may be permitted depending on the size and scale of the building. This is determined on a case-by-case basis by the Planning Department.

4. **PLACEMENT OF WALL SIGNS**

Commercial and Industrial Buildings

Individual channel letters should be used for each business in a multi-tenant development provided that they meet the size and width limitation of such signs as discussed herein. All the signs should be part of a planned sign program, which should specify the colors, letter style and specific location of the signs. Monument signs may be used in accordance with the sign regulations. Freestanding signs are not permitted except for a center sign for the entire development.

Monument Signs

There are basically two types of monument signs permitted along the street frontage of a property. They are described as follows:

1. **Monument signs under three and one-half (3 ½) feet.** Such signs shall be located a **minimum distance of five (5) feet from the front property line** and the on-site driveway of the property. The maximum sign area is 40 sq. ft.
2. **Monument signs under five (5) feet.** Such signs shall be located a **minimum distance of ten (10) feet from the front property line** and five (5) feet from the on-site driveway of the property. The maximum sign area is 40 sq. ft.

The minimum spacing between monument signs on a site is 100 feet and 50 feet from a monument or freestanding sign on an adjacent lot.

6. **Signs on Secondary Frontage**

The same requirements for sign area and size of wall signs, as listed above, apply to signs on secondary frontages. Generally, however, signs facing secondary streets look best if they are smaller and less dominant than the signs on the primary street.

7. **Colors**

Sign colors should be harmonious with one another and with the colors used on the building's architecture. Generally, no more than three colors should be used on a single sign.

8. **Logos**

Logos may be a very effective way of achieving recognition for a business. Corporate logos may be used in combination with business names but should not occupy more than 25% of the sign area. Occasionally, corporate logos may be used instead of other signs. For example, these may be placed at a cornice line of a building over three stories in height. The use of corporate logos at the top of a building requires a special approval by the Department of Planning and Development.

9. **Sign Copy**

In order to be effective in conveying their advertising message, signs must be simple and easy to read. The following guidelines limit the placement and content of sign copy:

- On all signs, other than window signs, the sign copy should be limited to the name of the business and/or the services provided and street number.
- If a slogan or product advertising message is needed, it should occupy no more than 10% of the sign copy area.
- Small window signs which are oriented to the pedestrian can be used to provide more detailed information such as hours of operation, proprietor's name, business telephone or credit card information.
- Single lines of sign copy are preferred for wall signs. If second lines are needed, these will be reviewed by the Department of Planning and Development and decided on a case-by-case basis.

10. **Gas Station Signs**

Gas stations are required to submit a planned sign program. Price signs should be posted on monument signs in accordance with the sign regulations. Price signs shall advertise only fuel price and shall not advertise other products available.

11. **Real Estate Signs**

Real estate signs pertaining to the sale, lease or rental of a site or structure on a site are permitted subject to the following criteria:

- May not exceed sixteen (16) square feet in area
- Must maintain a minimum of fifty (50) feet from each other
- May not be located within the ten (10) foot front-yard setback area of the property
- Must be removed from the site upon occupancy of the property, structure or unit.

12. **Window Signs or Displays**

Window signs or displays will be limited to 25% of the total window area and shall be subject to the sign standards of the underlying zone. It should be noted that use of the total window area is permissible for special sales events provided that approval is granted by the Department of Planning and Development and that said sign or display does not occur for more than five, 14-day consecutive periods in any calendar year.

13. **Freestanding Center Signs**

Development Plan Approval shall be required for the establishment of freestanding center signs. In addition to any other conditions which the Planning Commission may impose, the following criteria shall apply:

- a. Freestanding center signs shall only be approved for unified commercial and industrial developments such as shopping centers, industrial and business parks and similar developments which are five (5) or more acres in area.
- b. Freestanding center signs shall only be approved in conjunction with the approval of a comprehensive sign program for the entire unified commercial or industrial development.
- c. The size, height, location, etc. of freestanding center signs shall be subject to the sign regulations of the underlying zone of the property served.

The Planning Commission may approve a center sign greater than twenty (20) feet in height provided the sign is in scale with the overall development as a whole.

14. **Projecting Signs**

Projecting signs are not permitted as wall signs, excepting pedestrian signs under a canopy surface in a shopping center are permitted.

15. **Professional Design**

Homemade signs or unprofessional fabricated signs create a poor image for your business and for the City. Therefore, the City requires that all signs be professionally designed, fabricated and installed.

CITY REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES

1. **APPROVAL PROCESS**

The Department of Planning and Development shall first review and approve all sign proposals. The sign proposals (plans) must include a site plan, building elevations on which the sign will be located, size, style and color of the proposed

sign. All drawings should be properly dimensioned and drawn to scale on 24" x 36" maximum-sized paper.

The planning official will review your sign request and determine the appropriate approval procedure required for the proposed sign. Most signs, such as monument and wall signs, can be administratively approved over the public counter.

Once you have obtained approval from the Department of Planning and Development, a building permit for the sign is required from the Building Division. Construction plans for the sign will be required to be submitted to the Building Division for plan checking. The building official will require you to submit plans regarding the **method of attachment** of a wall sign to a building and the **foundation plans** for a freestanding or monument sign. The building official will also review to ensure that all electrical transformers and related electrical parts are **UL Listed**.

2. **Final Approval**

The final design, style, color, type and size of lettering, placement and method of illumination for all signs on a site will be subject to the approval of the Director of Planning and Development or his designated Planning staff member to ensure that the sign regulations and sign guidelines are met before the sign permits are released.

3. **On-site Inspections**

The City will conduct an on-site review of the sign after installation in order to ensure that the final design and installation are in compliance with the approved sign plans.