



# SIGN PERMIT (SGN) APPLICATION GUIDE

## INFORMATIONAL PACKET

### QUESTIONS?

Additional information regarding the sign permit process can be obtained at the Planning Counter at 630 Garden Street, or (805) 564-5578, [PlanningCounter@SantaBarbaraCA.gov](mailto:PlanningCounter@SantaBarbaraCA.gov)



### WHAT IS A SIGN PERMIT APPLICATION?

A [Sign Permit \(SGN\) Application](#) is the means by which the Planning Division schedules a project for review and decision by the Sign Committee. After receiving approval for a sign, an applicant is responsible for obtaining a Building Permit (BLD) to install the sign. Sign Permits are not valid unless a building permit is issued, and a final inspection has been obtained.

In order for the Planning Division to determine that a Sign Application is complete, it must contain all of the required information necessary for project analysis and demonstrate compliance with all applicable ordinances and codes. The City shall not act on an application until it has been determined to be complete.

### WHEN IS A SIGN PERMIT NECESSARY?

A sign permit is required for any new non-exempt sign; any lighting associated with a sign; the supports, mountings, and landscaping associated with a sign; face changes, name changes or any other change in the character of a sign; any sign that is moved to another site or relocated on its current site; and any new vending machines readily visible to the public.

### WHO MAY SUBMIT FOR A SIGN PERMIT?

The California Code of Regulations requires sign permits to be issued to a licensed California Sign Contractor with a valid City of Santa Barbara Business License. Please contact the Building & Safety Division at (805) 564-5485 for questions regarding permit issuance and other permitting requirements.

## WHAT TYPES OF SIGN ARE ALLOWED?

When designing a project, applicants should review all of the general requirements and standards of review and findings in the Sign Ordinance (Santa Barbara Municipal Code Chapter 22.70), and consider the guidelines in the [Sign Review Guidelines](#) and [Vending Machine Design Guidelines](#). A table showing maximum allowable size standards is included on page 4 of this guide.

Applicants may request an exception to the Sign Ordinance for consideration by the Sign Committee. Exception requests must be accompanied by an additional fee and a letter describing the specific ordinance sections which the applicant desires to have waived.

## HOW DOES THE PROCESS WORK?

1. **Submit a Sign Permit Application.** Once you have submitted your application, and it has been accepted for processing, the project will be assigned to a planner who will review the application materials and schedule the project for either Conforming Review or Sign Committee. You will be sent an agenda with the meeting date and time.
2. **Possible Conforming Review.** Some applications may be eligible for “conforming” sign review. This is an expedited review process whereby projects are not placed on a Sign Committee agenda and applicants are not required to attend or make a presentation of the project. Conforming sign reviews are conducted each week. Your assigned planner will notify you the same day if your project is approved on Conforming Review.
3. **Attend Sign Committee Meeting.** If the project is not eligible for conforming review, it will be scheduled for a public hearing. Projects scheduled for a Sign Committee hearing will require a presentation of the project by the applicant. The Sign Committee will make a determination to either approve, deny, or continue the project.
4. **Appeals.** Decisions of the Sign Committee are appealable to the appropriate design review body within 10 calendar days. Subsequent decisions of the design review body may also be appealed to City Council.
5. **Resubmit Any Changes or Conditions.** If the approval is subject to corrections or conditions from the Sign Committee, or if project is changed after approval, revised plans must be submitted to your assigned planner for review prior to applying for a building permit.
6. **Submit a Building Permit Application.** A Building Permit (BLD) must be obtained by a licensed sign contractor, within 6 months from the date of the approval, or the sign approval expires. A 6-month time extension may be requested.

## WHAT IS A SIGN PROGRAM?

A Sign Program is required for any office, commercial, or industrial complex containing 4 or more occupants which maintains a group identity. It provides a framework for approval of all future tenant signage and serves to unify the design and maintain the theme of the complex, building, or center. Sign program requests go through the same process described above but must be submitted by the property owner and will be reviewed by the full Sign Committee. Additional sign program procedures are included on page 5 of this guide.



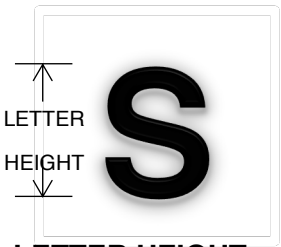
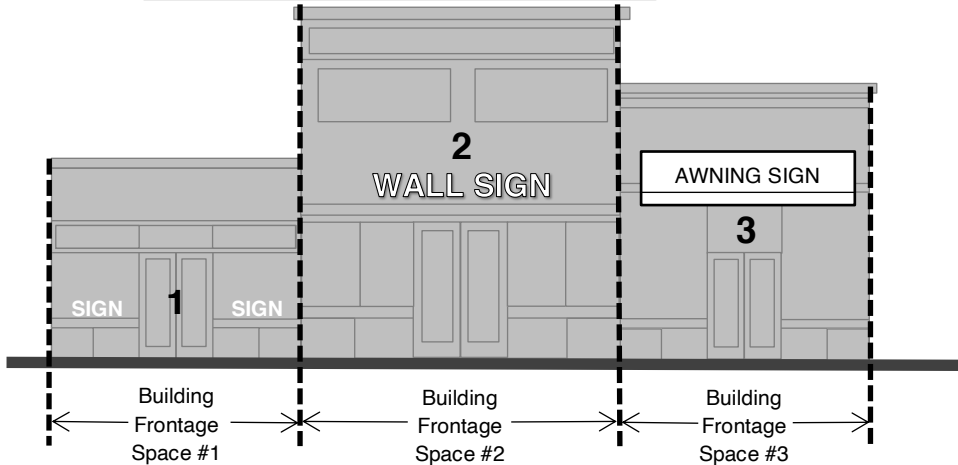
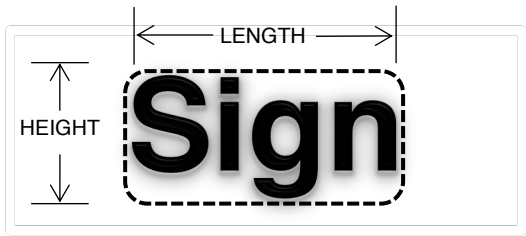
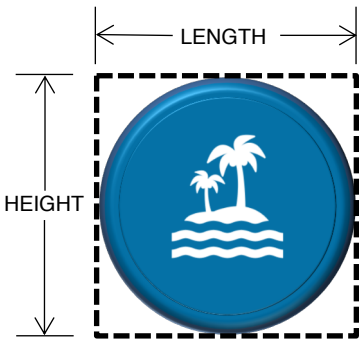
# HOW DO I MEASURE THE SIZE OF A SIGN?



**SIGN AREA = AREA WITHIN DASHED LINES**



**SIGN AREA = LENGTH x HEIGHT**



**LETTER HEIGHT**

*not to exceed  
12-inches or  
10-inches in EPV*

**MAXIMUM SIGN AREA** = Ratio based on the linear street frontage at the main entrance for each tenant

# WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM SIGN AREA ALLOWED?

SIGN TYPE	MAX NUMBER	MAXIMUM AREA
RESIDENTIAL USE		
Residential unit complex; less than 25 units	1	10 square feet
Residential unit complex; more than 25 units	1	25 square feet
Identifying sign at entrance of each neighborhood	1	24 square feet
OFFICE USE		
Aggregate allowable signage for all office tenants	--	½ square feet of sign area per linear foot of building frontage, or 20 square feet, whichever is less
Directory sign for complex	1 per public entrance	See above
Complex which maintains a group identity	Per Sign Program	
COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL – 3 OR LESS TENANTS		
Ground floor business; frontage 100 linear feet or less	--	1 square foot of sign area per linear foot of building frontage, or 65 square feet, whichever is less.
Ground floor business; frontage 101 linear feet or more	--	¾ square feet of sign area per linear foot of building frontage, or 90 square feet, whichever is less
Upper floor business	--	½ square foot of sign area per linear foot of building frontage
COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL – 4 OR MORE TENANTS		
Identifying sign for complex	1 per frontage	½ square foot of sign area per linear foot of building frontage
Individual business with frontage on public street or parking lot	--	½ square foot of sign area per linear foot of building frontage, or 25 square feet, whichever is less
Directory sign for complex	1 per public entrance	10 square feet
Complex which maintains a group identity	Per Sign Program	
PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC USES		
Public and Semi-Public Uses	1	18 square feet



# DO ANY SIGN PROGRAM POLICIES APPLY TO MY PROJECT?

## New Buildings

*The Sign Program sets the format for all signs in the complex. Existing signs may become non-conforming.*

- **Timing.** A Sign Program must be approved before any individual tenant signs are approved for a new building. The Sign Program and individual tenant signs may not be processed simultaneously.
- **Tenant Names.** The Sign Program should not indicate individual tenants by name but should provide a framework for approval of all future tenant signage.
- **Copies.** After the Sign Committee approves the Sign Program, one copy is returned to the landlord or landlord's agent, and copies must be made available to all existing and future tenants.

## Existing Buildings

*In some situations, an existing building undergoes alterations or additions which alter the number of signs, the locations of the signs, or change the architectural style, creating the need for a new or revised Sign Program.*

- **Examples.** Here are some situations that require a new or revised Sign Program:
  - A multi-tenant building is remodeled to unify the architecture and design elements.
  - A building, which originally had a single tenant, is subdivided into multiple tenant spaces.
  - A new building is constructed on a site where an existing building had three or fewer tenants. If the new building results in the creation of a unified center or complex, a Sign Program is required, even though the existing building has existing signs.
  - The sale of a property causes the information in the existing Sign Program to become outdated.
  - A building or complex is remodeled, and the changes make the existing Sign Program obsolete.
  - Additional sign locations are proposed creating the need for a revised Sign Program.
- **Timing.** An application for a Sign Program may be submitted concurrently with a Building Permit application for the building alteration. If the building alteration occurs prior to establishing a Sign Program, the first new application for a sign may be processed, but the property owner will be informed in writing that no further sign applications will be processed until a current Sign Program is in place.
- **Revisions.** Revisions to the Sign Program may be submitted by the Property Owner or Owner's Agent.
- **New Tenants.** A new or revised Sign Program will apply to all incoming new tenants.
- **Existing Tenants.** Any existing signs that are legal non-conforming to the Sign Program must be brought into compliance when any changes to the non-conforming signs are proposed.

## Future Tenant Signs

- **Conforming Signs.** An application for individual tenant signs that conforms to the program and to the City Sign Regulations may be reviewed as a Conforming Sign.
- **Exceptions.** When a Sign Program has been approved with the necessary exception findings to allow excess letter height or sign area for specified tenants, and the subsequent tenant application conforms to the Sign Program, the applicant does not have to return to the full Sign Committee for exception findings and does not have to pay exception fees.



## PROJECTING SIGN

A sign which projects from, and is supported by, a wall of a building with the display surface of the sign is perpendicular to the building wall. Also known as a blade sign.

## WALL SIGN

A sign affixed or painted on an exterior wall or fence, the principal face of which is parallel to the wall or fence.



## AWNING SIGN

Any sign or graphic attached to, painted on, or applied to, an awning or awning canopy.

## GROUND SIGN

Any sign which is supported by one or more uprights or braces on the ground, not to exceed 6 feet in height above grade.



## HANGING SIGN

A sign attached to, and located below, any eave, roof, canopy, awning, or wall bracket.

## WINDOW SIGN

A sign that is printed, attached, affixed or otherwise placed within 10 feet of a window, designed to be viewed from streets, malls, or parking lots.

