



# Sign Code and Permits



## DO YOUR HOMEWORK:

### *Tips on Planning a Successful Construction Project*

1. Get written detailed bids from three contractors. Compare the bids and ask questions. Don't assume that the lowest bid is the best deal.
2. Verify that the contractor's license is active and check the complaint history at **hirelicensedcontractor.com** or call 503-378-4621.
3. Ask for, and check references. Look at other jobs the contractor has completed recently.
4. Verify who will be responsible for securing the necessary permits.
5. Agree in advance to a payment schedule, don't pay for everything up front.

## ABOUT US

The Community Development Department is responsible for economic development, land use planning, zoning administration, building inspection, and historic preservation. The Department provides staff support to the Planning Commission (APC), the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC), the Design Review Committee (DRC), and the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSC).

The Department administers both the City Comprehensive Plan and the Development Code. The Department also administers the City's Building Inspection Program.

For further information please visit our website at [www.astoria.or.us](http://www.astoria.or.us).

## KEY INFORMATION REGARDING CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR SIGNS

### WHAT IS A SIGN?

"Sign" is defined as "Any identification, description, illustration, symbol, or device which is affixed directly or indirectly upon a building, structure, or land and which conveys a message." (*Development Code Section 1.400*)

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- The Sign Code is found in Article 8 of the Astoria Development Code and is available on the web at [www.astoria.or.us](http://www.astoria.or.us).
- Each zoning district within the City has different allowable size, number, and types of signs. The content of a sign is not reviewed. To verify zoning on a particular property, contact the Planning Division at 503-338-5183 or check the zoning map on the web at [www.astoria.or.us](http://www.astoria.or.us). Check with the Planning Division prior to having a sign made to verify that the sign meets all Code requirements.
- Every sign installed that is visible from the outside is required to meet the Sign Code requirements. Most signs require a sign permit. A list of "exempt" signs that do not require a permit are listed in the Development Code Section 8.040 and can be viewed on the web at [www.astoria.or.us](http://www.astoria.or.us).
- Signs must be installed on private property (with the property owner's permission) and may not be attached to utility poles, vehicles, or public property. Signs, flyers, and leaflets are not allowed to be left on unattended vehicles.
- Political signs, with no size or number limitation, may be installed on any private property (with property owner's permission). They may be displayed any time before an election, but must be removed 14 days after the election. No permit is required.
- Signs may not move, blink, or draw attention through any form of movement.
- Sandwich board or "A" frame signs located on a sidewalk require a yearly "Sandwich Board / Portable Sign" permit. Only one sandwich board sign is allowed at each location.

### TYPES OF SIGNS

A sign may be flush with the building (wall sign), at a right angle to the building (projecting sign or blade sign), on a window or door (wall sign), attached to the ground by a pole or support structure (freestanding sign), on the ground and not attached to any structure (portable sign), mounted on the ground with no visible pole support (monument sign), or have a message that changes electronically (changeable text sign). Some signs are not allowed in every zoning district.

## KEY INFORMATION REGARDING CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR SIGNS



WALL SIGN



PROJECTING/BLADE SIGN



FREESTANDING SIGN



MONUMENT SIGN

### RESIDENTIAL AREA SIGNS

Permitted sign types and standards in residential zones (R-1, R-2, R-3, AH-MP) are limited to a single 2 sq. ft. wall sign (not a freestanding sign) unless the use has been approved as a conditional use through the Planning Commission. For specific standards on types and sizes of signs at your location, contact the Planner at 503-338-5183.

### NON-RESIDENTIAL ZONE SIGNS

Permitted sign types and standards in all other non-residential zones are based on the specific zone. To verify zoning on a particular property, contact the Planning Division at 503-338-5183, or check the zoning map on the web at [www.astoria.or.us](http://www.astoria.or.us). The Sign Code is listed on the web under Development Code, Article 8.

- Generally, you are allowed one square foot of signage for each lineal foot of the building facade on which the sign will be installed, up to the maximum allowed in that zoning district. For specific standards on types and sizes of signs at your location, contact the Planner at 503-338-5183.
- Most zones allow a maximum of two signs per frontage (frontage is the portion of the building adjacent to a right-of-way or that has a public entrance). Contact the Planner at 503-338-5183 to verify the number of signs allowed for your specific location.

### HOW TO GET A SIGN PERMIT

- Complete a Sign Permit application and submit to the Planning Division, 1095 Duane Street, Astoria OR 97103. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with the Planner by calling 503-338-5183.
- For signs painted on a window or building, or applied without any nails, screws, etc., only a Sign Permit is required. If the sign

requires mechanical attachments such as brackets, screws, etc. a Building Permit is required in addition to the Sign Permit.

- All information on both the front and back of the application form shall be provided to consider an application for review. Include a site plan showing the location of all existing and proposed signs.
- Sign Permits are reviewed and approved by the Planner and may take one to ten days. Building Permits are reviewed and approved by the Building Official and may take up to two weeks. To determine if a building permit is required, contact the Building Division at 503-325-1004. For signs that do not meet the Sign Code standards, or if an application is incomplete, additional review time may be required.

### HOW TO GET A SANDWICH BOARD PERMIT

- Complete a Sandwich Board / Portable Sign Permit application and submit to the Planning Division, 1095 Duane Street, Astoria OR 97103. This is a yearly permit and must be renewed in January each year to retain the permit. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with the Administrative Assistant by calling 503-338-5183.
- Be sure to include the signature of the business and/or property owner adjacent to the site where you want to place the sign.
- Only one portable sign is allowed at a location and are issued on a first come basis.
- Permits can be issued over the counter with complete applications and the payment of the \$10 fee.

### EXCEPTIONS TO THE SIGN CODE

At times, there may be circumstances on a site that warrant variations to Code standards. A Sign Variance (exception to the Code) may be requested. Specific Code criteria will need to be met to obtain approval.

- Submit a Sign Variance application to the Planning Division, 1095 Duane Street, Astoria OR 97103. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with the Planner by calling 503-338-5183.
- Depending on the type and amount of a variance requested, the application may be reviewed administratively by the Planner, or at a public hearing by the Planning Commission at their regular meeting. Administrative review takes approximately 30 to 45 days while Planning Commission review takes approximately 45 to 60 days.
- Once a variance has been approved, the sign may remain without any further review unless the sign is altered.

## HOW TO CONTACT US

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**CITY OF ASTORIA**

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