

# YOUR GUIDE TO SIGN REGULATIONS

In Smithers, signs are regulated by the Town of Smithers Sign Bylaw. For all permanent signs and some temporary signs, an approved Sign Permit is required prior to putting up, relocating or altering a sign. Following these steps will ensure you are familiar with the regulations and that your permit can be issued without delay.

## 1 Know Your Zoning.

The first step is to know your property zoning as this dictates the sign regulations that apply to you. Find this by contacting the Town Office or by visiting [www.smithers.ca](http://www.smithers.ca) (search Zoning Map).

## 2 Understand What's Allowed.

Generally, any sign that is not expressly permitted is not allowed. There are also some specific exemptions where the Sign Bylaw does not apply and no permit is necessary. Examples include:

- Signs located inside your building or affixed to the inside of your window (max. 25% coverage).
- Incidental signs (functional purpose) that do not include a commercial message, (i.e. “parking”) “no parking”, “entrance”, “vacancy”, “no vacancy”, “open”, “closed”).

A sign must not be replaced, altered, rebuilt, or relocated unless the sign conforms to the sign regulations. However, a sign may be continued to be used and maintained provided it does not cause unlawful obstruction or pose a hazard.

## 3 Understand How to Calculate Sign Area

Sign Area includes total area of the sign including the outer edge of sign frame/sign border, and any material/color which is used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop. However, it does not include area of the supporting structures.

For signs without frame/border, sign area is calculated by the area of the smallest geometric figure that encompasses the limits of writing or other forms of representation. For signs with multiples faces, sign faces visible from one point will be added to calculate the sign area. Outside shape of the sign face measured by horizontal and vertical lines at the furthest extent of the sign will be used to determine sign area for irregular signs.

## 4 Submit a Sign Permit Application, as required.

A Sign Permit is required for all permanent signs and temporary banner, balloon, or sandwich board signs. Other temporary signs and Home Occupation signs are regulated, yet do not require a Sign Permit. A Sign Permit is not required if your signs have been approved as part of a Form & Character Development Permit or Development Variance Permit.

Once a complete application has been submitted and the fee paid, the staff will review your application for compliance with the Sign Bylaw regulations. The typical processing time is 1-2 weeks.

## 5 Get other Permits or Documents.

You may require the following additional permits or documents:

- Building Permit** for freestanding signs or as required by the Building Inspector;
- Encroachment Agreement/Highway License of Occupation Agreement** if your signs are over a road right-of-way
- Certificate of Insurance** indemnifying the Town against all liability to a minimum of \$2,000,000

For signs that do not conform with the sign regulations, you have the option of applying for a Development Variance Permit for approval prior to installation

## 6 Have your Signs Made.

Once you have your required approvals, you can contact your sign manufacturer to have your signs made and then installed.

# Regulation Checklist

This checklist is designed to help you work through the local sign regulations contained in the Sign Bylaw. Please contact the Town of Smithers Development Services Department for more information (see below).

## CONSTRUCTION

- Sign materials are durable & weather resistant with all wiring/conduits below grade or concealed.
- Be in compliance with the BC Building Code and Electrical Code at all times.
- Digital Menu Board signs should be equipped with Automatic Dimming Technology.

## LOCATION

- Locate signs entirely on private property with the exception of signs that are permitted to be on or over a road right-of-way including a sidewalk, only with an approved Highway License of Occupation Agreement or Encroachment Agreement.
- Provide min. vertical clearance of 4.5 m (14' 9") for any sign extending over an area accessible by motor vehicles.
- Provide min. vertical clearance of 2.4 m (8') for any sign extending over an area accessible by pedestrians.
- Do not obscure/obstruct visibility within 5 m (16' 5") of intersecting lot lines where two road right of ways meet or along any road right-of-way (including sidewalk). This does not apply to C-1, C-1A or C-1B zoned properties.
- Digital Menu Board signs should be directed to persons using the drive-through, and should not face a highway

## NUMBER + SIZE

- Comply with size requirements of individual sign types (see table summaries on pages 3 and 4).
- Maximum of 2 permanent signs (i.e. fascia, freestanding, projecting or hanging sign) on the main business frontage, with a maximum of 1 freestanding sign.
- In addition, the following additional signs are permitted:
  - 1 freestanding sign per property abutting arterial Highway 16, if the parcel width is more than 50 metres
  - 1 additional permanent sign per additional building face (i.e. on a corner) that is occupied by the business.
  - Temporary signs, as permitted (i.e. sandwich board signs or banner signs).
- Notwithstanding the above, Home Occupation Signs are limited to 1 sign per business per property.

## LIGHTING

- Frontlit signs (i.e. goosenecks or flood/pot lights) are permitted in downtown (C-1, C-1A, C-1B zones).
- Signs in all other commercial zones are permitted to be either:
  - Frontlit; or
  - Backlit provided that only individual letters, symbols, or a halo surrounding individual letters or symbols illuminate, with the remaining sign face opaque as to not allow light to pass through.
- Digital displays shall not increase the luminance of the adjacent area > 3 LUX above the ambient light level.

## MATERIALS + LETTERING

- Flexible material (i.e. vinyl, canvas, etc.) can only be used for temporary signs.
- Permanent signs located in the C-1, C-1A or C-1B Zones between Hwy 16 and Railway Avenue must:
  - Incorporate relief in the form of recessed, routed, raised or die-cut lettering; and
  - Be built with one or more of the following materials: Wood, metal (**excluding** alupanel or similar composite) and/or glass.
- Permanent signs located elsewhere must be built with:
  - recessed, routed, raised or die-cut lettering; and
  - wood, metal (**Including** aluminum, alupanel or similar composite) and/or glass.

## ENFORCEMENT

A non-compliance order/notice from the Director must be remedied:

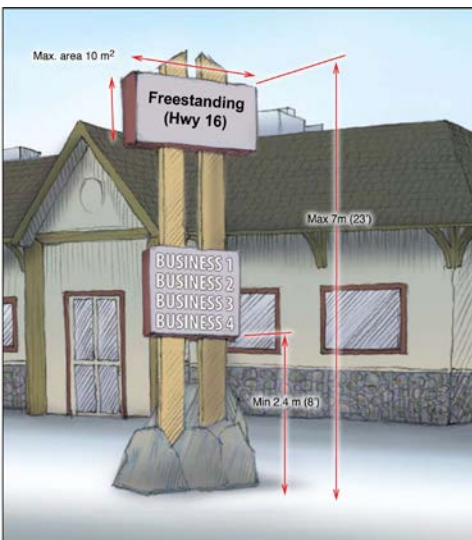
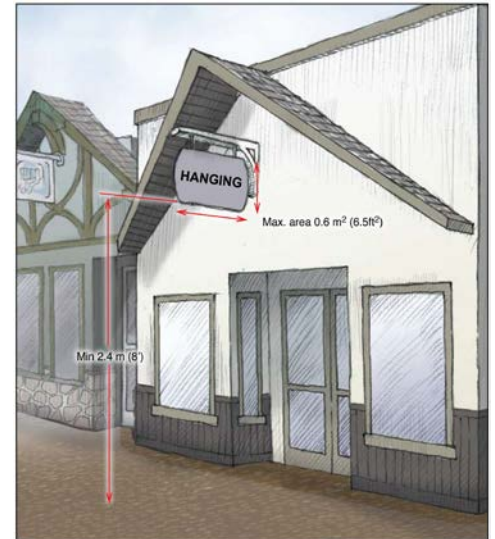
- within 30 days of receiving the written notice in case of a permanent sign; and
- within 15 days of receiving the written notice in case of a temporary sign.

# Sign-Specific Regulations: Permanent Signs

Permanent signs require an approved Sign Permit and are permitted in all zones. These include the following:

SIGN TYPE	SIZE & GENERAL REGULATIONS	OTHER SPECIFICATIONS
<b>FASCIA/CANOPY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. area <b>0.3 m<sup>2</sup>/m</b> of building frontage (or primary business frontage) in the C-1, C-1A and C-1B parcels without highway access, and <b>0.6 m<sup>2</sup>/m</b> elsewhere.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not extend above the roof line/beyond a building side.</li> <li>Min. <b>2.4 m (8')</b> vertical clearance.</li> <li>Signage for individual businesses will count towards fascia sign area permitted for the entire building.</li> </ul>
<b>FREESTANDING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. area <b>10 m<sup>2</sup></b> when adjacent to/visible from highway 16, else <b>3 m<sup>2</sup></b> (including for multi-family residential uses).</li> <li>Max. height <b>5 m; 7 m</b> for Hwy 16.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attached to permanent base &amp; needs Building Permit.</li> <li><b>50 m</b> away from a similar sign &gt; <b>3 m<sup>2</sup></b> on the same site.</li> <li>Min. <b>2.4 m</b> vertical clearance, if over pedestrian area.</li> </ul>
<b>HANGING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. area <b>0.6 m<sup>2</sup></b> &amp; Min. <b>2.4 m</b> vertical clearance from grade.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not extend horizontally beyond the limits of a canopy/awning.</li> </ul>
<b>PROJECTING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. area of <b>3 m<sup>2</sup></b> &amp; Min. <b>2.4 m</b> vertical clearance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. projection of <b>2 m</b> from building and not within <b>0.6 m (2')</b> from nearest curb.</li> </ul>
<b>DIGITAL MENU BOARD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. area: of <b>3 m<sup>2</sup></b> &amp; 1 sign per commercial properties with drive through facility.</li> <li>Directed to drive-through users, not facing a street.</li> <li>should displays only menu items available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distance from residential properties: 100 m, if the illuminated screen is visible, otherwise 75 m.</li> <li>Equipped with automatic dimming, no flashing light/video, &amp; limit light levels of the adjacent area to &lt;3 LUX above ambient light level.</li> </ul>

Examples of permanent signs include the following:



## Sign Specific Regulations: Temporary Signs

SIGN TYPE	ZONES PERMITTED	SIGN PERMIT	SIZE REGULATIONS	OTHER SPECIFICATIONS
<b>BALLOON</b>	All commercial zones	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No size limits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displayed for a maximum of 30 days/calendar year.</li> <li>Securely fastened as to prevent excessive movement.</li> </ul>
<b>BANNER</b>	Commercial, industrial & public use zones	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. area of <b>10 m<sup>2</sup></b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attached to support to prevent flapping.</li> <li>Prohibited in the C-1, C-1A, and C-1B zones between Highway 16 and Railway Avenue.</li> </ul>
<b>SANDWICH BOARD</b>	Commercial, industrial, public use zones	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On private property: Max. <b>1</b> sign per business/site.</li> <li>On a sidewalk: Max. <b>1</b> sign per frontage (only permitted in C-1, C-1A, C-1B zones).</li> <li>Max. <b>0.6 m x 1.2 m</b> (2' x 4')</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highway License of Occupation required for signs on a sidewalk in the C-1, C-1A &amp; C-1B zones.</li> <li>Displayed during business hours only.</li> <li>Must be stable and maintain a 1.5 m clear unimpeded pedestrian width.</li> </ul>
<b>COMMUNITY EVENT</b>	All zones	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. area <b>8 m<sup>2</sup></b> (86 ft<sup>2</sup>).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Displayed for a max. 30 days and removed after event finishes.</li> <li>Permitted on a road right-of-way with a Highway License of Occupation for any sign over <b>1.5 m<sup>2</sup></b> (16 ft<sup>2</sup>).</li> </ul>
<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>	All zones	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. area <b>5 m<sup>2</sup></b>.</li> <li>Max. height <b>10 m</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removed within 15 days after construction completed.</li> <li>Only permitted at area under construction &amp; valid Building Permit.</li> </ul>
<b>POLITICAL</b>	All zones	No		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permitted on side boulevards with a Highway License of Occupation for any sign over <b>1.5 m<sup>2</sup></b> (16 ft<sup>2</sup>)</li> <li>Removed within 7 days after election/voting day.</li> <li>Not permitted on freehold property owned by the Town of Smithers (i.e. parks) or in flower beds/formal landscaped areas.</li> </ul>
<b>REAL ESTATE</b>	All Zones	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. <b>5 m<sup>2</sup></b>.</li> <li>Max. height <b>5 m</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located only on the site or adjacent road right-of-way.</li> <li>Day of open house: Max. <b>6</b> signs; max area <b>1 m<sup>2</sup></b> (11 ft<sup>2</sup>) each and can be located in road-side boulevards.</li> </ul>

## Sign Specific Regulations: Home Occupation Signs

SIGN TYPE	ZONES PERMITTED	SIGN PERMIT	SIZE REGULATIONS	OTHER SPECIFICATIONS
<b>HOME OCCUPATION</b>	All residential & agricultural zones, including non-conforming residential uses in any other zone.	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>R-1, R-2, R-2A zones: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. <b>1 m<sup>2</sup></b> area.</li> <li>Max. <b>2 m</b> height.</li> </ul> </li> <li>All other zones, as permitted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Max. <b>2 m<sup>2</sup></b></li> <li>Max. <b>3 m</b> height.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town of Smithers Business License is required for the home occupation.</li> </ul>

## Signs on or over a Road Right-of-Way/Sidewalk

The below drawings illustrate the required clearances for signs permitted to be located either on or over a road right-of-way, including a pedestrian sidewalk. An approved Encroachment Agreement or Highway License of Occupation Agreement with the Town is required. This includes naming the Town of Smithers as "Additional Insured" on your liability insurance (min \$2,000,000).

