

**CITY OF ENCINITAS**  
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# SIGN INFORMATION

The purpose of the City's sign regulations is to permit the property owner to identify their property and the activities, services, and products that are available while reducing visual clutter and achieving an aesthetically pleasing appearance.

Sign regulations deal with permanent and temporary signs, both on and off-site. The following tells you how to apply for a sign permit, how we will process your application, and introduces you to typical signs standards and application of the standards.

## **Permit Needed?**

Most signs are required to have a permit prior to displaying the sign. Sign approvals are issued by the Development Services Department. The department staff reviews the application for compliance with sign regulations, and any other applicable regulations. The following signs require approval from the Development Services Department.

- All permanent nonresidential signs unless exempt.***
- All permanent residential signs greater than 5 sq. ft. unless exempt.***
- All temporary signs exceeding 4 sq. ft.***

Monument signs and "Sign Programs" (discussed later) require administrative design review and, if located within the city's coastal zone, require a coastal development permit as well. Public notice of 500 ft. radius is required for the coastal development permit, but, in accordance with Municipal Section 23.08.040, no other notice is required.

A permanent sign also needs a building permit.

For those signs that do not require Development Services Department approval all that is necessary is to install the sign pursuant to the regulations.

## **How Do You Get a Sign Permit?**

**Conference with staff:** Talk to the Planners of the Development Services Department before you put time and money into a sign. You can request a copy of our Sign Regulations that will tell you about size, type, and location of signs. Phone (760) 633-2710.

**Application:** In most cases, you'll have to fill out an application form to get a sign permit. With your application form you'll have to include plans and pay a fee.

## **Fees**

Consult the City of Encinitas Planning Application Processing Fees for the appropriate fee.

## **Plans are Required**

Two types of plans are required: a site plan and elevations of the sign (and building elevations if a wall or projecting sign is proposed). Both are explained and illustrated on page 7. Plans must be in ink or other nonerasable medium on a minimum 8 1/2" x 11" paper. Plans must be legible and drawn to scale. Be sure each sheet of plans includes:

- Your name, address, and phone number.***

- The location of the sign (address and Assessor Parcel Number).*
- The date the drawings were prepared.*
- The scale of the drawings.*

**Staff Review:** The Planning staff will review your sign and compare it to adopted sign and design review regulations. We will note any changes that need to be made to meet City standards. If you agree to these changes, we'll issue an approval subject to those changes. If you don't agree to the changes, we can't issue an approval or permit.

**Permit Issued:** If your sign application complies with City sign standards the Development Services Department will approve it. For temporary signs, staff is given 7 days to act on the application. Staff is given 30 days to act on a new permanent sign.

### **SIGN STANDARD SUMMARY**

The City sign standards are written “message neutral”; that is the meaning of the sign is not regulated. Sign standards apply to the size, type, location, and display period.

The following summary provides examples of the types of signs that are allowed and explains the regulations:

#### **Temporary Signs and Banners**

There are two principal types of temporary signs permitted: freestanding signs supported by posts; and banners tied to posts or mounted to a wall. Other temporary sign types, such as balloons, flags, pennants, directional signage, and the like, are also permitted on a limited basis. **A temporary sign/banner permit is required for any temporary sign or banner that is four (4) square feet in area or greater.** The table on page 5 provides a summary of the temporary sign standards.

#### ***A. Temporary Signs in Residential Zones***

1. Temporary on-site freestanding signs are allowed three (3) square feet each side with a maximum height of five (5) feet in residential neighborhoods. Typical uses for a temporary sign would be for “Open House”, “For Sale”, “For Lease or Rent”, or “Garage/Yard Sale”. Signs must be located on-site and may be two-sided.
2. No more than two (2) signs are permitted, however, the total sign area of both signs cannot exceed three (3) square feet.
3. Temporary signs in residential neighborhoods may not be illuminated.
4. Balloons, flags, and pennants are permitted provided they are securely tied down and displayed for daylight hours only.
5. Subdivisions with five (5) or more lots or units may have a temporary freestanding sign with a maximum area of 16 square feet and maximum height of six (6) feet. The sign area may be increased up to 32 square feet and to eight (8) feet in height provided a design review permit is approved first. This allowance is in addition to the temporary sign standards for the property.
6. Vacant, unsubdivided residentially zoned property may be permitted one (1) double-sided temporary sign not more than eight (8) square feet in area and eight (8) feet in height. “Unsubdivided” for these purposes means property that is vacant, not subdivided, and capable of yielding five (5) units or more based on the maximum density for the zone. Additional area may be allowed for properties on Circulation Element roads or with lot frontage of 300 feet or more (see EMC Section 30.60.080H).

7. All temporary freestanding signs must be removed upon the termination of the temporary use or within six (6) months, whichever is less. Temporary uses exceeding six (6) months in duration may apply for renewal of the permit prior to its expiration.
8. See EMC Section 30.60.080 for complete standards for temporary signs on residentially zoned property.

### ***B. Temporary Signs and Banners in Nonresidential Zones***

1. Temporary on-site freestanding signs for nonresidential zones may not exceed 16 square feet in area with a maximum height of eight (8) feet. Typical uses include: “For Lease”, “For Sale”, “Under Construction”, “Christmas Trees”, and “Carnival”. Signs must be located on-site and may be two-sided. No more than two (2) signs are permitted; however, the total sign area of both signs cannot exceed 16 square feet. All temporary freestanding signs must be removed upon the termination of the temporary use or within six (6) months, whichever is less. Temporary uses exceeding six (6) months in duration may apply for renewal of the permit prior to its expiration.
2. On-site banners for nonprofit special events may be displayed no more than 14 days prior to the event and must be removed within three (3) days after the end of the event. Only one banner with a maximum area of 24 square feet may be permitted at any time. Banners on buildings may not extend above the roof line. Banners on posts may not exceed eight (8) feet in height.
3. Grand opening/closing banners are permitted for new businesses, a change of ownership of a business, or closing of a business. Only one banner with a maximum area 24 square feet may be permitted at any time. The banner may be double-sided and may be displayed a maximum of 60 days after the initial opening of the business, or from 60 days prior to the close of a business until the business closure. Banners on buildings may not extend above the roof line. Banners on posts may not exceed eight (8) feet in height.
4. In addition, four (4) banners per calendar year are permitted for nonresidential uses for sales and special promotions. Only one banner is permitted at a time, with a maximum area of 24 square feet and a maximum display period of 15 consecutive days. Banners on buildings may not extend above the roof line and may not be attached to the roof or parapet walls. Banners on posts may not exceed eight (8) feet in height.
5. Banners over public rights-of-way are limited to 45 square feet in area. Said signs are for civic and non-profit City-wide recognized special events and are approved through the City Manager’s office pursuant to City specifications. A banner over the public right-of-way may be displayed no more than 14 days prior to the event and must be removed within three (3) days after the end of the event.
6. See EMC Section 30.60.110 for complete standards for temporary signs on non-residentially zoned property.

### ***C. Off-site Temporary Signs***

1. Permission of the owner of the property where the temporary sign will be located must be obtained prior to placement of the sign. Permission is required for placement of the temporary sign and for the use of the property’s typical temporary sign allowances, except as provided below.
2. Only the minimum number of off-site temporary signs to provide direction to the subject parcel may be allowed.
3. A maximum of three (3) off-site temporary signs may be permitted per off-site parcel. Said signs shall only be displayed during daylight hours.
4. Off-site temporary signs may not exceed five (5) feet in height or three (3) square feet in area.

5. Any subdivision of land may provide an off-site directional sign not more than three (3) square feet in area, which may be displayed no restriction to daylight hours.
6. With approval of a design review permit, off-site signs not more than 16 square feet in area and not more than six (6) feet in height may be allowed for the initial sale of property that has been subdivided into five (5) or more lots. Such signs must be removed upon the completion of the initial sell of the subdivided lots. This allowance is in addition to the temporary sign standards for the property.
7. Except as provided above, off-site temporary signs must be removed upon the termination of the temporary use or within six (6) months, whichever is less. Temporary uses exceeding six (6) months in duration may apply for renewal of the permit prior to its expiration.
8. See EMC Section 30.60.120 for complete standards of off-site temporary signs.

### **Permanent Residential Signs**

The maximum permitted sign area for each dwelling unit is five (5) square feet and the sign must be placed a minimum of two (2) feet from any property line or public right-of-way. The maximum height is four (4) feet.

A 32 square foot residential development identification sign is permitted when five (5) or more dwellings exist. The signs may be located on each street frontage affording primary vehicular access to the site. The signs must be integrated into an approved landscape plan and have maximum height of six feet. This applies to nonresidential uses allowed in residential zones such as greenhouses, churches, parks, and the like.

### **Permanent Nonresidential Signs**

Various types of signs are permitted including freestanding signs, wall signs, and projecting signs. New Freestanding/Monument signs require Administrative Design Review. The table on page 6 provides a summary of Permanent Sign Standards.

### **Permanent Sign Programs**

A “Permanent Sign Program” is a comprehensive design program that integrates all the proposed business signage with the architecture of the building complex to create a visually compatible and effective sign display. Sign design elements such as size, shape, color scheme, location, signage type, and construction materials are made consistent throughout the building complex while offering some degree of flexibility for individual tenants. The intent of a permanent sign program is to encourage excellence in design by allowing for creativity in all types of signage, including monument signs, walls signs, projecting signs, permanent window signs, and canopy signs. A Sign Program is required for commercial centers with 6 or more tenants and requires Administrative Design Review.

### **Nonconforming Signs**

All signs that don’t conform to these regulations shall be deemed nonconforming. Illegal or abandoned signs shall be removed or brought into compliance immediately. Legal nonconforming signs shall be removed or brought into conformance within 15 years from the date the sign becomes nonconforming. This will allow the owner to depreciate the value of the sign.

**TEMPORARY SIGN STANDARD SUMMARY**

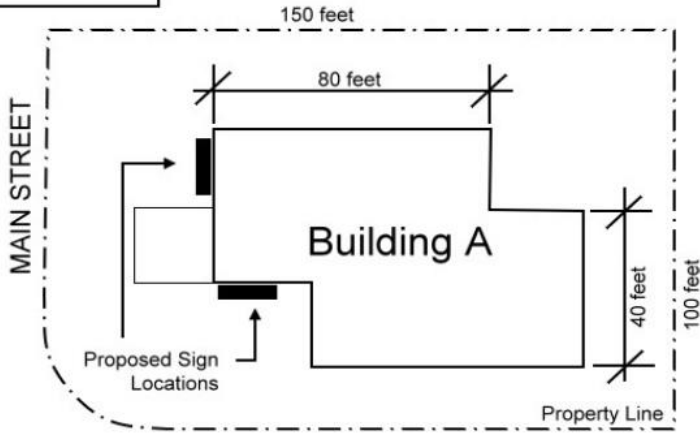
Sign Type	Size	Height	Number	Period	Notes
<b>Residential Zones</b>					
A. Freestanding	3 sf	5'	2	6 months	16 sf is maximum aggregate allowed area for all signs
B. Subdivisions of 5 or more lots/units	16 sf	6'	1	Initial sell period	May be increased to 32 sf and 8 ft in height subject to design review
C. Vacant, unsubdivided property	8 sf	8'	1	6 months	Area may be increased up to 32 sf in certain locations subject to design review
<b>Nonresidential Zones</b>					
A. Freestanding	16 sf	8'	2	6 months	16 sf is maximum aggregate allowed area
B. Special Event Banners (nonprofit)	24 sf	8'	1	14 days + event + 3 days	May be displayed 14 days prior to event; to be removed by three (3) days after event
C. Grand opening/closing banners	24 sf	8'	1	60 days	60 days after initial opening/prior to closing
<b>Off-Site Signs</b>					
A. Directional	3 sf	5'	3	6 months	Three (3) signs maximum per off-site parcel. Restricted to daylight hours only
B. Subdivisions	3 sf	5'	1	6 months	May be displayed with no restriction to daylight hours
C. Major Subdivisions (5 or more lots)	16 sf	6'	1	Initial sell period	Design Review Permit required

**PERMANENT SIGN STANDARD SUMMARY FOR NONRESIDENTIAL USES**

Sign Type	Size	Height	Notes
Freestanding	1 SF/1 LF of street frontage up to 175 SF	8', 12' with minor use permit	Minimum if 75' of street frontage. Sign may include area for tenant directory. 1 sign per street frontage.
Wall/Window	1 SF/1 LF of building/suite frontage up to 100 SF	Cannot exceed height of ceiling of 2 <sup>nd</sup> story	May not project above the roofline at the wall or ridge line or parapet wall.
Projecting	6 SF for blade signs, 4 SF for canopy signs	Cannot exceed the roofline at the wall or top of parapet wall	On projecting sign allowed per establishment in-lieu of freestanding sign. A canopy sign may be in-lieu of a wall sign and given 1 SF/1 LF of building face.

## Sign Application Sample

### Site Plan



Proposed Signs	
Type	Canopy
Dimensions	8 feet x 2 feet
Total Area	16 square feet
Number of Faces	1
Illumination Type	None

Proposed Materials	
Sand Blasted Redwood	
Raised White Letters	
Rust Trim	

### Elevation

Sign is in size and scale of the building.



### Sign Detail

