

Mount Shasta Sign Ordinance Handbook



City of Mt. Shasta
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Purpose of the Handbook

The intent of the sign ordinance handbook is to attempt to familiarize members of the public with the application of the Sign Ordinance. The Sign Ordinance can be found in the City of Mount Shasta Municipal Code, Title 8. This booklet is for instructional and informational purposes only. In the event that a conflict between this handbook and the Ordinance exists, the Ordinance shall prevail. The Handbook strives to:

- Assist property owners and business owners in understanding city expectations;
- Encourage creative and innovative approaches to signage within an established framework;
- Enhance overall property values and the visual environment in the city by discouraging signs which contribute to the visual clutter of the streetscape;
- Ensure that commercial signs are designed for the purpose of identifying a business, rather than to serve primarily as general advertising of products and services.

Many non-conforming signs exist within Mt. Shasta after the guidelines were adopted. The intent of the City is to improve the visual quality of Mt. Shasta for everyone. Therefore, voluntary compliance with these guidelines is highly encouraged for businesses with existing non-conforming signage.

Permitted Signs

A sign permit is required for all new signs and for any material change to existing signs, including any substantial change of copy and/or location.

The following sign types are permitted in Mt. Shasta:

- Flushmounted Signs
- Awning & Canopy Signs
- Hanging Signs
- Restaurant Menu Box Signs
- Freestanding Signs
- Multiple-Tenant Signs
- Sandwich-board Signs
- Plaque Signs
- Marquee Signs
- Temporary Signs

What is the Purpose of a Sign Permit?

The purpose of the sign permit is to allow consideration of signs specifically permitted and determined by staff and the Planning Commission to be compatible to the surrounding area. The permit process is designed to provide the city sufficient flexibility to determine whether a specific sign on a certain site will be compatible with its environs, the sign zones, and the intent of the ordinance.

All proposed signs consistent with the guidelines stated herein and the Sign Ordinance, that doesn't require a building permit or illumination, shall require approval only by City Staff. This is referred to as an administrative permit. Signs not consistent with the guidelines stated herein shall be subject to Planning Commission approval. In reviewing a sign permit application, the Planning Commission will evaluate such items as placement and size, possible traffic confusion, design, color, landscaping, and compatibility of use with adjoining properties as well as other related impacts.

The City Staff or Planning Commission shall review and approve all signs, as defined by the Mt. Shasta Sign Ordinance, prior to sign placement on any structure or property within the City of Mt. Shasta. The Commission and Staff shall utilize the Mt. Shasta Sign Ordinance, associated resolutions and guidelines as the primary source documents in the review, evaluation, and approval of all sign permits.

The Commission or Staff, in carrying out its primary responsibilities (review, evaluation, and approval) shall also be responsible and responsive for rendering assistance to any person(s) seeking clarification of the sign ordinance, resolution, and/or guideline requirements.

Step 1: Filing an Application

A completed application is to be submitted to the Planning Department, who will review the materials to make sure all of the necessary items have been furnished by the applicant to the city. The application cannot be officially accepted if the submittal is incomplete. Acceptable applications must be submitted no later than the last business day of the month for possible consideration at the next month's Planning Commission meeting. There is no deadline for applications that can be administratively approved. The applicant will be required to pay certain fees with the application, as set forth by the City Council.

Step 2: Planning Commission

If your sign permit application is to be reviewed by the Planning Commission, the meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of every month in the Mt. Shasta Community Center, City Council Chambers, 629 Alder St. at 7:00 p.m., unless otherwise posted. It is advisable that the applicant or a representative attend the meeting.

At the meeting, the Chair of the Planning Commission will state the request for the sign permit and any staff recommendations thereon. The applicant or representative may address the Commission in support of the application. The Commission, after deliberation, may approve, conditionally approve, or deny the permit application.

Findings of approval or denial must be made on the establishment, maintenance, or operation of the sign applied for and its compatibility with the surrounding areas and/or the intent of the sign ordinance and guidelines. If the Planning Commission approves the permit application, it may also designate conditions as deemed necessary and it may require that such conditions be complied with by the applicant prior to erecting the sign.

The approving body shall have the right to refuse any proposed sign or sign modification (even though the sign or modification may meet the technical specifications outlined in the Mt. Shasta Sign Ordinance and its related resolutions and guidelines), if a sign is found to be unacceptable. Approval or denial shall be supported by specific findings of the Commission.

Step 3: Appeal of the Planning Commission Decision

Decisions by the Planning Commission may be appealed within five (5) working days after rendition of the decision. The appeal must be submitted in writing on forms provided by the Planning Department with payment of appropriate fees, and filed with the City Clerk by the applicant or others affected who are not satisfied with the action of the Commission. A hearing shall then be set before the City Council. The City Staff shall submit a report to the City Council setting forth the reasons for the actions taken by the Commission. A public hearing will be held on the appeal.

The City Council regularly meets the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the Mt. Shasta Community Center, City Council Chambers, 629 Alder St., unless otherwise posted.

At the public hearing, the applicant or other interested party may present testimony in support of or opposition to the request. The City Council may

reverse, affirm, or modify the action of the Commission or, return the matter to the Commission for further study or action.

Estimated Time of Process

From completed application to final decision: 3 to 7 weeks.

Sign Overview

- All signs should be architecturally integrated with their surroundings in terms of size, shape, color, texture, and lighting so that they are complementary to the overall design of the buildings.
- Signs should reflect the character of the building and its use.
- Signs should reflect the immediate context of the building's location and the overall character of the district.
- Signs should enhance the primary design elements or unique architectural features of buildings.
- Signs should be designed with the purpose of promoting retail and street activity while enhancing the pedestrian experience.
- Signs should be located in logical "signable areas" which relate to the pattern of the façade.
- The number of signs per building façade should be limited to the fewest necessary to clearly identify businesses located within.
- Signs should not cover or obscure architectural features of buildings.
- The layout and shape of the architectural features of the building should be considered when determining the size and location of a sign.
- Design elements such as window patterns (vertical and horizontal rectangles, arches, squares, etc.) will help determining the sign shape that will suit the building.
- All signs shall be maintained properly such that they are always in safe, clean, working condition and the copy is not obscured or damaged.

Design & Materials

- Exterior materials, finishes, and colors should be the same or similar to those of the building or structures on site.
- Signs should be professionally constructed with natural appearing materials such as metal, stone, hardwood, and brass-plate.
- Internally illuminated plastic letters or plastic box signs are only allowed in the Sign Zone 2. The sign background must be darker than the copy, and opaque. For an internally lit sign, the allowable sign area is reduced by 50%.
- The colors and lettering styles should complement the building façade and harmonize with neighboring businesses.
- Excessively bright colors or over-scaled letters should not be used.
- The design and alignment of signs on multiple use buildings should complement each other so a unified appearance is achieved.

Placement

- The architecture of the building often suggests specific locations for signs, and these should be used.
- The size of signs should be in proportion to the size of their location.
- Repetitious signage information on the same building frontage should be avoided, regardless of the sign area square frontage allowed in the zoning code.
- Signs that are replaced on stucco exteriors may result in unattractive “patched” areas. These potential maintenance problems should be considered by the applicant and included in application materials and will be addressed during the approval process for the sign replacement.

Sign Design

- Should identify a business rather than serve as general advertising of products and services.
- Registered trade and/or service marks shall not exceed 25% of the allowed sign area.

Permitted Sign Area

The following applies to flush-mounted and freestanding signs. Permitted sign area for all other signage is addressed individually in the specific guidelines section throughout the remainder of this document.

The allowable square footage of sign area shall be computed based upon amount of lineal building frontage.

- Flush-mounted signs are allowed one (1) square foot of sign area per lineal foot of building footage.
- Freestanding signs are allowed one-half (1/2) square foot of sign area per lineal foot of building footage, up to a maximum of 33 square feet.
- Where more than one sign is used, including sandwich board signs, the accumulated aggregate of all signs shall not exceed the total square footage allowed.

Permitted Sign Height

The following applies to free standing, monument, and low profile signs.

- The allowable maximum height for all freestanding, monument and profile signs shall be 10 feet.
- Signs in excess of 6 feet in height will require a building permit from the Mount Shasta building department to ensure engineered safety.

Sign Color Program

- Sign color programs shall be required for new multiple-tenant buildings and are encouraged to be developed for existing buildings.
- Retail centers shall develop and submit a sign color program with the number of colors limited to five.
- Sign programs serve to create a coordinated project theme of uniform design elements such as color, lettering style, and placement.

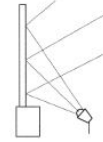
Sign Lighting

- Any external spot or flood lighting should be placed so the light source is directed away from passersby. The light source must be directed downward facing, against the sign such that it does not shine into

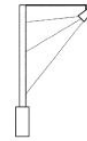
adjacent property, shine into the sky or cause glare for motorists and pedestrians.

- Back-lit, halo-lit illumination, or reverse channel letters with halo illumination are highly encouraged for lighting purposes. Such signs convey a subtle and attractive appearance and are very legible under moderate ambient lighting conditions.
- Signs that use blinking or flashing lights are not permitted.
- Visible raceways and transformers for individual letters are prohibited. Sign installation details shall indicate the location of the transformer and other mechanical equipment.
- Projecting light fixtures used for externally illuminated signs should be simple and unobtrusive in appearance. They should not obscure the graphics of the sign.
- Where individual letter signs face near-by residential areas, a low level of brightness should be maintained with the use of halo-lit letters or down lighting (i.e. gooseneck fixtures).
- Specifications for internally illuminated signage should be reviewed with City Staff.

Externally Illuminated Signs

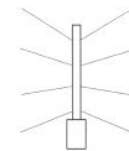


Unshielded, upward-facing lighting. Light reflects up and out, away from the sign. This type of lighting is not allowed.



Downward facing, fully-shielded lighting. Only desired area of sign is illuminated and the bulb is recessed inside the fixture. There is no glare or wasted light.

Internally Illuminated Signs



Internally illuminated signs have light spilling out in all directions. Overly lit signs produce glare for passersby and waste energy.



An internally illuminated sign with a light-colored, translucent background produces the most glare and light pollution. This type of sign is not allowed.



An internally illuminated sign where the background is opaque and darker than the copy, is easy to read and produces far less glare and light pollution.

Flush-mounted Signs

Flush-mounted Signs are to be mounted flush and fixed securely to a building wall, projecting no more than 12 inches from the face of a building wall, and not extending beyond the building face or above the highest line of the building to which it is attached.

- Signs should be located on the upper portion of the storefront, within or just above the enframed storefront opening. The length of the sign should not exceed the width of the enframed storefront.
- Signs are to be placed within a clear signable area. Signable areas are defined as an architecturally continuous wall surface uninterrupted by doors, windows, or architectural detail.
- Mount Signs in locations that respect the design of a building, including the arrangement of bays and openings.



- Signs should not obscure windows, grillwork, piers, pilasters, and ornamental features. Typically, wall signs should be centered on horizontal surfaces (i.e., over a storefront opening).
- Design is to be compatible with the storefront in scale, proportions, and color.



Awning & Canopy Signs

Awning and Canopy signs are signs that are printed on, painted on, or attached to an awning or canopy above a business door or window. They generally serve to bring color to the shopping environment and are oriented toward pedestrians on the opposite side of the street.

- Signs on awnings shall be painted or stitched and shall be parallel to the face of the building. One line of copy shall be allowed on the parallel side.
- Awnings and canopies must be permanently attached to buildings.
- The minimum height of awnings should be 8 feet from the lowest point to the sidewalk.
- Awnings with back-lit graphics or other kinds of interior illumination are not permitted.
- Matte finish canvas, glass, or metal are appropriate materials for awnings or canopies.
- Awnings with a solid color are preferred. Striped awnings may be appropriate for some buildings without ornamental facades. Striped awnings with highly contrasting, bright colors may be visually blaring and inappropriate.
- Torn or discolored awnings must be replaced.
- Awnings should be designed to project over individual window and door openings and not project as a single continuous feature extending over masonry or arches.



Hanging Signs

Hanging Signs are suspended below a canopy. These signs:

- Should be used only at ground floor locations except for upper floor businesses with covered entry.



- Shall not exceed 4 square feet.
- Shall be mounted perpendicular to building frontage.
- Maintain a minimum of 8 feet of vertical clearance including supporting rods, chains, or similar hangers.

Menu Boxes

Menu Boxes are signs that incorporate a menu containing a listing of products and prices offered by the business. Such signs help the customer identify a restaurant to patronize. Prominently displayed menus with prices and other information help the customer make this decision.

- High quality materials and artistic designs should be used in the construction of menu boxes.
- Restaurant menu boxes are not included in the calculation of maximum sign area.
- The allowable area for menu boxes shall be a maximum of 4 square feet. Not more than 1 menu box per business.
- Restaurant menu boxes should be appropriate in size, location, and design to the character and architectural detail of the building as well as to the character of the restaurant.
- The menu box may be internally illuminated; provided the source is fully shielded from the public.



Free-standing and Monument Signs

Such signs are usually used for building complexes that are separated from adjacent streets by substantial setbacks.

- Free-standing and monument signs do not overhang public property and are supported by columns, uprights, or have a solid footing in or upon the ground.
- Signs should be constructed out of materials that complement the building structure and its use.
- Architectural lines which complement that of the building should be incorporated.
- Free-standing signs may be illuminated either by downward-facing external fixtures which are fully shielded and are designed to complement the appearance of the sign, or halo-lit illumination.
- The maximum sign height, including the sign base, is not to exceed 10 feet.



Tenant Directory Signs

Tenant directory signs are used to identify multi-tenant buildings and businesses therein that do not have direct frontage on a public street.

- Multiple tenant buildings shall submit a sign color program which does not exceed five (5) colors.
- Tenant directory signs should be oriented to the pedestrian.
- They should be mounted flat against a solid wall or incorporated into a free-standing or monument sign located on the property on which the tenants are located.
- The maximum sign height, including the sign base, is not to exceed 10 feet.
- The sign copy may include the following: building or project name, project logo, address, business tenant names, and suite numbers or letters.
- Should be constructed out of materials that complement both the building structure and its use.



Sandwich Board Signs

Sandwich board signs are designed to stand on their own, either on public or private property, adjacent to the business for which they advertise goods or services. Such signs are portable and are usually placed along public sidewalks to attract pedestrians. All sandwich board signs on public property require an encroachment permit with applicable fee.

- Glass, breakable materials, paper, laminated paper, vinyl, plastic, PVC pipe frames, or illumination are not permitted materials for sandwich board signs.
- Designs should be uncluttered, with a minimum of text. Graphics are encouraged, however, non-owner logos and changeable copy are prohibited.
- Must not be permanently affixed to any object, structure, or the ground.
- The maximum sign area per sandwich board sign is 3 feet by 4 feet. Sign area is calculated on one side only.
- They should not block or restrict pedestrian traffic.
- Like all signage, should primarily be for the purpose of identifying businesses, not advertise products or services.



- All sandwich board signs shall be removed at the close of each business day.
- Sandwich board sign area will be part of the total allowed sign area for a business.

Plaque Signs

Plaque signs are a small version of flush-mounted signs that are attached to surfaces adjacent to shop front entries.

- Are to be located only on wall surfaces adjacent to tenant entries.
- Are to fit within an imaginary rectangle with a maximum area of 2 square feet.
- May project from wall surfaces to a maximum of 2 inches.
- To include only the business name, address, or profession of the occupant, or information of historical interest regarding the building.
- Are encouraged to include unique designs or other visually stimulating decorations and may be irregular in outline shape.

Marquee Signs

- Are only allowed on buildings occupied by theaters, cinemas, or performing arts facilities.
- The sign copy of marquee signs will be limited to include only the facility's name and changeable copy related to current and future attractions.
- The facility name portion of the sign should not exceed 40 percent of the total sign area and the changeable copy portions of the sign should not exceed 80 percent of the total sign area.



Temporary Signs

Temporary signs require Planning Department approval.

- These may contain written messages and should use simple font that is easy to read.
- Are not to exceed 32 square feet in size.
- Should be made of durable materials and shall not incorporate fluorescent or intensely bright colors.
- Each permit may be approved for up to 120 consecutive days.
- No more than 3 allowed per year.
- Permanent banners are prohibited.

Application Submittal Requirements

- Application form completed and signed by applicant and property owner.
- \$245 filing fee for Planning Commission review of freestanding signs greater than 6-feet in height or illuminated.
- A \$55.00 filing fee for administrative review of flush mounted signs or for freestanding signs less than 6 feet in height.
- All illuminated signs are reviewed by the Planning Commission.
- Sign drawings to scale: Note: a “bar scale” is required. Drawings should be on paper no larger than 11 x 17 inches. We require a drawing with dimensions clearly shown.
- Site photographs showing the structure the sign is to be placed upon, and any existing signage on site.
- For freestanding sign applications submit a plot plan, to scale, of the site showing the following:
 - Location, size, total height, elevation of bottom of sign from the ground, dimensions, materials, and proposed use of all signs and related structures. (Existing and intended to be on the site which may influence the appearance or location of the sign).
 - Freestanding signs shall indicate the landscaping area at the base of the sign, dimensions thereof, and describing any plant material proposed and the irrigation plan.
 - Bar scale on all drawings.
 - All streets within the vicinity.
- Physical example of colors to be used. Paint chips/samples from paint dealer are preferred.

Other such data may be required to permit the Planning Department and/or Planning Commission to make the required findings for approval of the sign.

Submissions become the property of the City of Mt. Shasta.

Additional Application Requirements for Signs that Require a Building Permit

The City of Mt. Shasta has adopted the Uniform Sign Code for the purpose of providing minimum standards to safeguard life, health, property, and public welfare through controlling the design, quality of materials, construction, location, electrification, and maintenance of sign and sign structures not located within a building. A copy of the Uniform Sign Code is available for review at City Hall.

Sign Permit applications for signs that require a building permit shall comply with the Mt. Shasta Sign Ordinance and obtain a building permit from the City prior to installation.



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