

Part 5

General Sign Regulations

5.1 General Prohibitions

Except as otherwise provided in this by-law, a sign must not:

- (a) obstruct or interfere with the visibility of a traffic control device;
- (b) obstruct or interfere with the natural lighting, air intake or ventilation of a building;
- (c) cover or obstruct an architectural feature;
- (d) be constructed or installed in a way that damages or may damage a tree;
- (e) emit sound or noise;
- (f) obstruct or interfere with the flow of pedestrian traffic;
- (g) be in or project over a required landscaped setback area listed in Schedule C of the Zoning and Development By-law; or
- (h) display flashing, blinking or intermittent lights or illumination.

5.2 Signs in Landscaped Setback

Despite the provisions of section 5.1 of this by-law, the following signs may be in or project over a required landscaped setback area listed in Schedule C of the Zoning and Development By-law:

- (a) a fascia or directional sign; or
- (b) a free-standing sign that identifies the principal use or occupancy of the site, if:
 - (i) the sign area is no greater than 1.25 m²,
 - (ii) the sign is no more than 1.8 m in height,
 - (iii) the sign is within the rear two-thirds of the required landscaped setback, and
 - (iv) the landscaping at the base of the sign is to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning.

5.3 Sign Area Calculation

Sign area must be calculated as follows:

- (a) for a double-faced or multi-faced sign, the sign area is one half of the total surface area of all the sign faces combined;
- (b) for a sign composed of individual letters or figures, sign area is measured by applying the smallest square, rectangular or other simple geometric form to enclose the surface area of the individual letters or figures that comprise the sign face, and the sign area is the total surface area of all the geometric forms combined; and
- (c) for a three-dimensional sign with no easily measurable face, sign area is measured by applying the smallest square, rectangular or other simple geometric form possible, to enclose each of the parts of the sign face, and the sign area is one half of the total surface area of all the geometric forms combined.

5.4 Signs Incorporating Multiple Sign Types

In the case of a sign that incorporates more than one sign type, the regulations for each particular sign type must be applied to the portion of the sign to which they pertain.

5.5 Structural Supports

A sign must be designed and placed on a building so that the structural supports, bracing and ties of the sign are concealed, where possible, by the body of the sign.

5.6 Signs and Building Lines

Subject to the provisions of this by-law, a sign may project over a building line prescribed by Schedule E of the Zoning and Development By-law, if it complies with section 5.9.

5.7 Signs for Premises with No Frontage

In the case of a use that is located at the rear of a building or below grade and has no calculable frontage, a sign pertaining to that use may be on the frontage of the premises of another occupant in the same building or at a common entrance to the building.

5.8 Encroachment over a Street

A sign must:

- (a) be at least 0.60 m from the edge of the curb that is immediately adjacent to the roadway of a street; and
- (b) not encroach over a lane, except that a fascia sign may encroach over a lane to a maximum of 0.10 m.

5.9 Sign Clearances

A sign that:

- (a) encroaches on a portion of a street used only by pedestrians, must have a minimum clearance of 2.75 m, except that:
 - (i) if the grade below an awning sign slopes more than 0.10 m over the length of the awning, the minimum clearance is 2.6 m,
 - (ii) if an awning sign is painted on a soft awning fringe or an under-awning or under canopy sign is painted on soft material, the minimum clearance is 2.3 m,
 - (iii) there is no minimum clearance for any fascia sign that encroaches less than 0.10 m, and
 - (iv) the minimum clearance of a fascia sign in the Granville Street Sign District that encroaches 0.10 m or more is 2.6 m; and
- (b) is a projecting sign or free-standing sign encroaching on a street used by vehicular traffic, must have a minimum clearance of 4.5 m; and
- (c) is a projecting sign, must have a maximum clearance of 6.0 m.

5.10 Illuminated Signs

A sign may be illuminated, unless otherwise prohibited by this by-law.

5.11 General Regulations for Illuminated Signs

An illuminated sign must:

- (a) not be illuminated from below;
- (b) if externally illuminated, be equipped with a shield directing light downward;
- (c) not increase the level of ambient light on an adjacent street or site by more than 3.0 lux;
- (d) if an awning sign, have any lighting source contained and concealed under the awning;

- (e) if within 30 m of a dwelling unit in the Residential Sign District facing the copy area of the sign, be turned off between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., unless the premises are open for business;
- (f) if at the second storey of a building or facing a lane and within 30 m of a dwelling unit facing the copy area of the sign, be turned off between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., unless the premises are open for business, except in the shaded area shown on Schedule 5A; and
- (g) for the purposes of this Section 5.11, dwelling unit includes a residential unit in a community care facility, group residence or seniors supportive or assisted housing.

5.12 Electronic Signs

A sign may not contain electronic copy unless specifically permitted by this by-law.

5.13 General Regulations for Electronic Signs

An electronic sign must:

- (a) not increase the level of ambient light on an adjacent street or site by more than 3.0 lux;
- (b) be equipped with an ambient light sensor that automatically adjusts the luminance of the sign;
- (c) have a luminance no greater than 300 nits between sunset and sunrise and 5000 nits between sunrise and sunset;
- (d) default to a black screen if the sign malfunctions;
- (e) be at least 30 m from a dwelling unit facing the copy area of the sign;
- (f) be at least 15 m from a traffic control signal;
- (g) if within 60 m of a dwelling unit facing the copy area of the sign, be turned off between the hours of 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. and when the premises are not open for business, except in the Granville Street Sign District;
- (h) if an electronic static image sign:
 - (i) display an electronic static image that does not change for a minimum of 10 seconds, and
 - (ii) transition between images within 0.5 seconds; and
- (i) for the purposes of this section 5.13, dwelling unit includes a residential unit in a community care facility, group residence or seniors supportive or assisted housing.

5.14 Signs with Manual Changeable Copy

Subject to the provisions of this by-law, a manual changeable copy sign is permitted in all zoning districts except the HA-2(Gastown) and HA-3(Yaletown) zoning districts.

5.15 General Regulations for Manual Changeable Copy Signs

A manual changeable copy sign must:

- (a) have a copy area no greater than 75% of the sign area, to a maximum of 2.3 m², except that the copy area of signs for arenas, bingo halls, halls, places of worship, pools, rinks, service stations or gas bars, and theatres may be greater than 75% of the sign area, to a maximum of 2.3 m²; and
- (b) in the HA-1 and HA-1A District (Chinatown):
 - (i) be located on a theatre, and
 - (ii) be a canopy or fascia sign.

5.16 First Party Advertising

Except as otherwise provided in this by-law, first party advertising is only permitted on:

- (a) a fascia sign that does not include electronic copy, to a maximum of 30% of the copy area; and
- (b) a window sign that is exempt from permit under this by-law, to a maximum of 100% of the copy area.

5.17 Third Party Advertising

Except as otherwise provided in this by-law, third party advertising is only permitted on a billboard sign, to a maximum of 100% of the copy area.