

The City of Asheville first adopted a sign ordinance in 1977. The most significant revision of the sign ordinance occurred in 1990.

The sign ordinance applies to the erection and maintenance of all signs within the city limits of Asheville as well as the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ).

Signs are governed by Article 13 in Chapter 7 of the City's Code of Ordinances.

The Planning & Development Department administers and enforces the sign ordinance in partnership with other city departments as necessary.

This publication serves to give a **general** overview of the sign ordinance and define types of permitted and prohibited signs as well as when permits are required.

Additional questions about sign permits should be directed to the Sign Administrator at 828-259-5822.

Sign permit applications may be found at the City's website

www.ashevollenc.gov/planning

or by visiting the Permit Center at 161 South Charlotte Street.

How do I know if I need a sign permit?

Permits are required for all permanent signs to be erected in the city limits or ETJ of the City of Asheville. Signs that are not permanent (examples include real estate signs, construction signs and political signs) do not require a permit.

May I get a copy of the Sign Ordinance?

The ordinance is available on the City's website (www.ashevollenc.gov/planning) or you may contact the Sign Administrator and a copy may be emailed to you in pdf format.

Who do I contact with questions?

Direct all questions to the Sign Administrator in the Planning Department at 259-5822 or email jwilliams@ashevollenc.gov.

How do I report a sign that I believe is in violation of the Sign Ordinance?

Contact the Planning & Development Department at 259-5831 and a Code Enforcement Officer will visit the site to determine if the sign is in violation.

What is the cost of a Sign Permit?

The cost of your permit is determined by the size and scope of your sign. Contact the Sign Administrator for more specific information.

Do banners require a permit?

Freestanding or attached temporary signs will require a sign permit. Contact the Sign Administrator for more information.

Where do I submit my application? How long does the review take?

Applications are submitted in the Permit Center at 161 South Charlotte Street. The review time once a completed application is submitted is 5-10 working days.

What can I do if my proposed sign or existing sign does not meet all the requirements of the sign ordinance?

Variance requests for nonconforming signs may be heard by the Board of Adjustment. Requests are subject to specific standards as defined in the application. Contact 259-5627 to request an application and information about meeting dates and deadlines.

Code Enforcement staff in the Planning & Development Department enforce the sign ordinance through proactive patrols and citizen complaints.

Sign sweeps for snipe signs (small temporary signage placed in the right-of-way of a public road) are conducted regularly in geographic areas of town. Signs that are removed during a sign sweep or other proactive enforcement may be claimed by their owners for a fee of \$50/sign. Signs are only held for seven days after pick-up.

Signs that are erected within the jurisdiction of the City of Asheville or the ETJ are subject to Notice of Violation and double the application fees.

Questions about enforcement of the sign ordinance should be directed to the Sign Administrator at 259-5822.

applications wall signs political signs banners frame signs construction signs yard sale signs snipe signs free standing signs off-premise signs real estate changeable copy billboards variances FAQ prohibited signs directional signs applications wall signs political signs banners a-frame signs construction signs yard sale signs snipe signs free standing signs off-premise signs real estate changeable copy billboards variances FAQ prohibited signs directional signs applications wall signs political signs banners a-frame signs construction signs yard sale signs snipe signs free standing signs off-premise signs real estate changeable copy billboards variances FAQ prohibited signs directional signs applications wall signs political signs banners a-frame signs construction signs yard sale signs snipe signs



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Planning & Development Department
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Permanent Signs

Temporary Signs

Prohibited Signs

Standards for All Signs

- A permit is required for all signs located in the City of Asheville corporate limits and the ETJ.
- Signs must meet the standards of the North Carolina Building Code
- Illuminated signs may not shine into surrounding areas and may not create a traffic hazard.
- Signs may not be placed in the Right of Way.
- A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for all signs in an historic district and on landmark properties.



Wall Signs

- Generally, a wall sign is any sign attached to a building. Types include projecting, window, awning/canopy, suspended, or transom.
- Wall signs can be internally-illuminated, non-illuminated, or externally- illuminated.
- Size allowances are based on zoning district and single tenant or multi-tenant locations.

Freestanding Signs

- Generally, freestanding signs are signs that stand alone and advertise a business or a group of businesses.
- Size allowances are based on zoning district and single tenant or multi-tenant locations.

Light Emitting Diode (LED)

- LED signs shall be permitted for all changeable copy, time and temperature, and marquee signs. Please call the Sign Administrator for restrictions.

Home Occupation

- Attached home occupation signs shall not exceed one square foot per face, with no more than two faces per sign, and shall not be illuminated.

Places of Worship, Schools and Institutions in a Residential Zoning

- These uses are allowed a total of 60 square feet of signage to be located on a maximum of two signs.
- Only one sign may be freestanding.
- One of the allowed signs may contain a changeable copy panel.
- No sign may contain more than 30 square feet per face with two faces per sign.
- Signs may not exceed six feet in height.

For All Signs - Contact the Sign Administrator at 259-5822 for size allowances and permit pricing.

Temporary signs are allowed in all nonresidential zoning districts subject to specific restrictions: (1) Businesses are limited to 60 days of temporary signage per year. (2) Days of display may be separated into six separate 10 day occurrences, not to exceed 60 days. (3) Temporary signs include banners for special events and will require a permit.

- Temporary signs placed on the property of a business or attached to the outside of a building will require a temporary sign permit.
- A-Frame signs are only allowed in these zoning districts: Central Business, Neighborhood Corridor, Urban Village, and Urban Residential. Permits for A-Frame signs must be renewed each year. For questions on A-frame signs, please call 259-5829.
- Inflatable Balloon signs are allowed for a period of 10 days per calendar year and only one per business per year.

Permits for temporary signs are **generally** not required in these cases:

Temporary window signs - 16 square feet or less is allowed without a permit.

Yard sale signs - maximum of four signs on private property, no more than four square feet per sign face.

Political signs - no greater than eight square feet, specific restrictions on dates of installation and removal.

Construction signs - no greater than four square feet for residential, 32 square feet for multi-family or commercial, height not to exceed ten feet.

Real Estate Signs - contact Sign Administrator for size and number restrictions.

The following signs are prohibited:

- Signs on roadside appurtenances including utility poles, bus shelters, parking meter poles, refuse containers, etc.
- Signs located in any public right-of-way.
- Signs on vehicles (exception - the vehicle must have valid registration and inspection, used in the course of the business and parked away from the street as feasible possible).
- Roof signs
- Wind signs
- Signs of illusion
- Signs resembling traffic signals
- Animated signs and flashing signs.
- Flags (exception - flags showing the insignia of nation, state, county or city)
- Snipe signs.
- Portable or moveable display signs.
- Signs obstructing access.



Snipe signs (left) and signs on utility poles are prohibited.

Disclaimer - This document is to serve as a general guide to the sign ordinance and does not encompass all requirements and restrictions of that ordinance. Please contact the Sign Administrator in the Planning & Development Department for clarification and additional information on signs and sign permits.