

SIGNS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS*

1. What information should my sign have on it?

Purpose of a sign. The purpose of a sign is for the identification of a business. It is the policy of the Design Review Board not to allow telephone numbers, brand names, product lists and excessive descriptions. If the name of the business does not imply the nature of the business, a brief description of the business' primary services may be provided. Only in exceptional circumstances are more than the name of a business and its primary services allowed.

2. Are there regulations for awning signs?

Awnings. Internally illuminated awnings are not allowed. Lettering on awnings shall be a maximum of 1 line and may not exceed 6 inches in height.

3. Can I put a sandwich board sign on the sidewalk in front of my business?

Sandwich board signs. These signs are now allowed in Beverly. The process for obtaining permission is slightly different, with a business owner applying to the City Council for a one-year permit. Applications for a sandwich board sign and more information can be obtained from the City Clerk's office.

4. Are window signs permitted?

Window signs. In the CG, CC, IR, and IG Zoning Districts, one window sign is permitted per business and should not cover more than 20 percent of the window opening in which the sign is located. These signs cannot exceed 10 square feet.

In the CN, HD, or WD Zoning Districts, upper floor uses may have one sign (no greater than 3 square feet). On upper floors, window signs cannot be internally illuminated. Signs for ground floor uses should not cover more than 20 percent of the window opening in which the sign is located and cannot exceed 6 square feet.

5. Are there any restrictions on the colors that I may use?

Colors. The Design Review Board encourages the use of colors that complement the architecture, materials and colors of the building. Rich, earth tones, such as dark greens, dark reds, dark blues and cream colors work well in most instances. The Design Review Board discourages the use of loud colors such as fluorescents, bright yellows and stark whites.

6. Where should my sign be placed and what size am I allowed?

Scale and placement of signage. Try to locate your sign near the primary entrance of your business. Signs should be placed within the sign band of a storefront, if one exists. If there is no sign band, try to keep your sign proportional to the overall scale of the storefront or building. Take into consideration the sizes and locations of the doors and windows and the size and placement of the other signs near your business. Try not to obscure or cover up any architectural elements. Please refer to the Beverly Zoning Ordinance, Section 29-25 for size restrictions.

7. Are there any guidelines, other than the Zoning Ordinance, that the Design Review Board refers to for signs?

Downtown signage. The City of Beverly has Downtown Design Guidelines. Guidelines for downtown signage are one of the many focuses of this document. Please contact the Planning Department for a copy.

8. My business has already opened or is opening soon and I do not have approval for my signage yet. Can I put up temporary signs in the meantime?

Temporary signage. One temporary sign may be put up per business for up to 14 days. You should contact the Building Inspector at 8 Dane Street for permission to do this.

*These guidelines are for informational purposes only. Please refer to the Beverly Zoning Ordinance, Article XI Signs (Sections 300-66 through 300-72) for the complete regulations. The Sign Ordinance is posted online on the Design Review Board website.