

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS



City of Jacksonville

SIGN LAWS

Dear Friends,

In 1987, the City of Jacksonville City Council passed legislation, which heightened regulations on the use and display of all sign types by business and private citizens.

The purpose of these laws is to improve the aesthetic appearance of the community, and to halt the proliferation of signs throughout the City of Jacksonville. To ensure a strong quality of life for our residents, it is important that we limit visual pollution.

This booklet is designed to explain the basic and general aspects of the sign regulations, and to answer questions about how these laws affect you as a citizen and business of the City of Jacksonville. For a more complete description of the sign regulations, please see the Municipal Ordinance sections, as noted on the back inside cover of this booklet.

If you still have questions do not hesitate to contact the City Building Inspection Division at (904) 255-8365 or FAX your question to (904) 2558642, Attn. Sign Plan Review or

E-Mail your question to Tcox@coj.net.

Please provide property address, sign type, size and height of sign proposed. Include any other information that may clarify the scope of work to be performed.

Sincerely,

Torrance A. Cox
Sign Plan Review C.E.I.
Building Code Enforcement Inspector

Why Have Sign Laws?

The City of Jacksonville's sign regulations are designed to protect the community's visual beauty and limit potential hazards to traffic and pedestrians, provide a standard for proper sign repair and maintenance, inform owners or occupants of property about permitting procedures, and limit proliferation in number and location of all signage, (on-site and off-site signs).

What is a sign?

Any structure or device placed, erected, constructed or maintained on or in the ground, on or outside a building or on a window, in order to advertise, display, direct, inform or attract attention.

When Is A Sign Permit Required?

A sign permit is required for all signs, freestanding or ground signs, building wall signs, awning signs, under canopy signs, projecting signs and roof signs.

Where Can A Sign Permit Be Obtained?

Sign Permit Applications are reviewed and Sign Permits are issued by the City of Jacksonville's Building Inspection Division, Ed Ball Building 214 N. Hogan St Room 252. The phone number is (904) 255-8523.

Who Can Obtain A Sign Permit?

Any property owner, authorized agent of the property owner, or approved licensed and registered contractor can obtain a sign permit. No person shall apply for a sign permit unless he or she has first obtained written permission from the property owner, agent, or licensed contractor.

Who Is Required To Obtain A Sign Bond?

A property owner who is applying for a sign permit must obtain a \$5,000 Sign Bond, if the proposed sign is larger than thirty-two (32) square feet in area, eight (8) feet in height or illuminated. • The cost of the Sign Bond may vary. Check with your surety company for current rates.

- Sign Bond Forms are available at the Sign Plan Review Office, Ed Ball Building 214 N.

What Are The License Requirements For A Sign Contractor?

A person becomes a contractor by:

1. Filing a \$5,000 Sign Bond (available at Sign Plan Reviewers office) with the Building Inspection Division. A Florida licensed surety company shall issue the sign bond on an approved Building Inspection Division Sign Bond Form.
2. Obtain County and City of Jacksonville Occupational Licenses from the Tax Collector's Office and Certificate of Competency from the Construction Trades Qualifying Board at 321 E. Forsyth Street. The phone numbers are (904) 630-1916 and (904) 630-2657.
3. Obtain a City of Jacksonville Identification Number issued by the Building Inspection Division. Sign Bond and City of Jacksonville Occupational Licenses must first be submitted for review and filing. At that time a Registration Card must be completed at the Building Inspection Division check-in/permit counter, Ed Ball Building 214 N. Hogan St Room 252.

The City of Jacksonville Identification Number (city ID no.) will be issued only to a person whose name appears on the Sign Bond and City of Jacksonville Occupational licenses. This is the only person allowed to endorse/sign the Sign Permit Application.

Signs And Outdoor Display Definitions.

Animated: Any sign with motion, action or flashing lights or colors activated by mechanical, electrical or other non-natural means. These signs are **prohibited** in all zoning districts.

Awning: An awning with advertisement lettering/message placed on canvas, or other approved flexible material, with a structural metal frame that is attached to a building. The awning shall not be erected/placed above the roof elevation of a single story building or above the second floor of a multi-story building. An awning sign shall not be wind-activated, or inflatable and are subject to the following criteria:

- a. The total square footage of the sign shall not exceed twelve (12) square feet in area.
- b. The height of the sign letters shall not exceed twenty (20) inches.
- c. The number of awnings for each property shall be limited to one

(1) sign per occupancy frontage.

Banner: A sign made of canvas or other flexible materials, attached to a building or other structure. Banner signs must meet the requirements of an on-site sign and be no larger than 100

square feet in area. Banner sign permits are valid for no more than thirty (30) days. These signs must be securely affixed/attached to a building, canopy, pole or other structure. These signs shall not be hung, tied, taped or hooked from any structure.

Changing Message Device: Any device visible from a public right-of-way or approved private street across the face of which a verbal message moves or appears to move, or which contains a verbal message that changes electrically or mechanically more than once in any three (3) minutes.

Construction: A temporary on-site sign erected or placed at construction sites indicating the individuals or companies associated with the construction project or structure. Only one (1) temporary construction sign is allowed per construction site. **The sign cannot exceed four (4) square feet in area in RR and RLD zoning districts, sixteen (16) square feet in RMD and RHD zoning districts and thirty-two (32) square feet in all other zoning districts. This sign shall not be erected/placed on City of Jacksonville right-of-ways.**

Development Identification: Development Identification Sign cannot exceed the sign area or height restrictions of the zoning district in which the sign is proposed to be located. **The sign cannot exceed one hundred (100) square feet in area.**

Application for this type of sign must be pre-approved by the Director of Planning and Development, City Engineer and Traffic Engineer.

Directional Or Directing: An on-site, on premise sign designed to guide or direct pedestrian or vehicular traffic for information only. This sign shall not contain any advertisement (even a company logo) and shall be no larger than four (4) square feet in area.

Double-Faced: A sign with two (2) surfaces against, upon or through which a message is displayed. The sign shall have both surfaces parallel to each other and constructed, fastened together into an integral unit with no visible air space between the surfaces.

Freestanding Ground: A sign not attached to a building or structure. A sign, which is supported by one (1) or more, poles, pylons, columns, and uprights or braces in or on the ground.

Illuminated: A sign in which internal or indirect continuous lighting (floodlights) is maintained by one or more lights in a stationary condition which remain constant in intensity and color at all times. Electronic and mechanical changing message devices are permitted unless otherwise

prohibited by zoning. An electrical permit shall be required for all illuminated signs. *Animated, flashing and revolving signs are **prohibited** in all zoning districts.*

Off-Site: Any combined sign structure and message advertising products or services available *at a location other than on the premises on which the sign is located is prohibited.* New Off-Site Billboard signs are *prohibited/not allowed since March 12, 1987.*

On-Site: Any sign relating exclusively to the use, business or activities of the premise on which the sign is located. On-Site signs can be wall signs, freestanding/ground signs and masonry monument signs.

Projecting: Any sign erected or supported on the wall of a building or other structure and projects from it. Must meet the requirements of an on-site sign. Sign shall be constructed entirely of metal or shall have a metal structural frame with approved plastic faces/panels and shall not project beyond the property line into or over a street right-of-way, alley, walk or other public space.

Political: Any sign erected/utilized during the Election Period. Placement of political signs *shall be on private property only.* Residential political signs shall be no larger than four (4) square feet in area and Commercial political signs shall be no larger than twenty-four (24) square feet in area. Sign permits are required for larger political signage.

Real Estate: A temporary non-illuminated sign advertising the sale, rent or lease of real estate upon which the sign is located. Only one (1) real estate sign is allowed per lot. **For RR and RLD zoning districts only one (1), not to exceed four (4) square feet in area sign is allowed. All other zoning districts only one (1), not to exceed twenty-four (24) square feet in area sign is allowed. These signs shall have a setback of not less than ten (10) feet.**

Roof: A sign erected, constructed and maintained on the roof of a building or structure above the eaves, or above mansards, parapets, or other architectural features of a building or structure capable of supporting signs. Roof signs shall be constructed entirely of metal and structural members shall not be less than one-fourth (1/4") of an inch thick. Roof signs shall not exceed thirty-five (35') in height above the roof level/line upon which the sign is erected.

Subdivision Identification: A sign and or signs located at the entry of the subdivision and

at the intersection of two (2) street right-of-ways. Such signs shall be limited to **the name of the subdivision, and no other words or forms of advertisement shall appear on the signs.** The Planning Department must approve this type of sign.

Under-Canopy: A sign suspended beneath a canopy, ceiling, roof or marquee, consisting of the name of the tenant, business or occupation. **The sign shall not exceed eight (8) square feet in area.** Square footage utilized for the under-canopy sign shall be subtracted from the allowable square footage for wall signs.

Wall: A sign attached to and parallel with a wall, including signs printed or painted on walls. Wall signs shall not extend above the roof level of a building.

Terminology

Street frontage: The property line of a lot *abutting* the right-of-way line of public or approved private streets, excluding alleys to such property. A sign, which is allowed based on, the linear amount of street frontage a lot has.

Occupancy frontage: The length of that portion of a building occupied by a single office, business or enterprise *abutting* a street, alley, parking area, or other means of customer access such as a walkway or sidewalk.

Sign area computation: The method by which the area of each sign surface is computed. Signs with fixed boundaries, frames or edges, shall be computed *by calculating the area within and including the exterior boundaries, frames or edges enclosing the letters or graphics which composes each sign surface.* Signs with no fixed boundaries, frames or edges, such as separate/individual lettering placed or painted upon or against a building, shall be computed *on the basis of the smallest regular geometric shape, such as a triangle, rectangle, square or circle encompassing the outermost exteriors of the individual letters, words or numbers. Border trim shall also be included in the sign area computation.*

Sign Exemptions.

These signs are exempted from the Sign and Outdoor Display Laws:

- Signs no more than one (1) square foot in area bearing only

property numbers, mail/post office box numbers, occupant names or other non-commercial identification of the premises.

- United States of America, State of Florida, and Local Government flags (Duval/Jacksonville) may be displayed.
- Legal notices or identification and informational or directional signs erected and required by governmental bodies.
- Integral decorative or architectural features of buildings. This does not include letters, trademarks, moving parts or moving lights.
- On-premise Incidental directional or directing signs no larger than two (2) square feet in area which guide or direct pedestrian or vehicular traffic for information only. These signs *shall not* contain any form of advertisement or logos.
- Signs painted or securely attached to vehicles (cars, trucks, vans, busses etc.) used during/within the work environment for identification purposes.
- Poster signs erected behind glass windows or signs painted on glass windows.
- Signs posted on JEA maintained electric poles or light standards advertising activities/events/holiday decorations in publicly owned facilities. These signs/postings/displays require the approval of the City Council and JEA Managing Director.
- Historical markers erected by duly authorized public authorities.
- Signs erected prohibiting/warning the public against hunting, fishing or trespassing no larger than two (2) square feet in area.
- Signs being fabricated, manufactured or constructed off the site, on which they are intended to be erected, installed and located.

- Signs located on property owned or leased by a federal, state or local government or signs used in connection with any event sponsored or authorized by a federal, state or local governmental entity.
- Signs located/installed/erected on machinery or equipment, which advertise products sold therein.
- Signs erected at athletic fields (on public or private property) to recognize contributing sponsors. These signs *shall be erected so as to face and or to be oriented (facing) toward the interior of the athletic field.* These signs shall not extend above the top of the fencing and these signs shall not exceed twenty-five (25) square feet in area for each sign.

Unlawful Sign Structures.

It shall be unlawful and a violation to erect, alter or maintain a sign which:

- Does not meet all the requirements of the Building, Sign and Zoning Codes.
- A sign permit has not been approved, issued and payment received.
- Is tacked (nailed, screwed), tied (rope, tape, zippy-ties), stapled or pasted/glued to a hydrant, tree, lamppost, telephone, telegraph/cell tower or electric utility pole, fence or building.
- Is hung or supported from another sign and is not built as an integral part.
- Is/are placed in a public space or street right-of-way.
- Is of a temporary nature, not permanently anchored/secured to the ground or other structure, such as "A"-frame signs, portable signs, or stick signs.
- Lighted/illuminated signs producing glare to vehicular traffic. Illumination or electric lighting, which pulsates, flashes, flickers, or alternates or changes intensity.
- Animated, flashing and revolving signs are prohibited in all zoning districts. Changing message devices (manual/mechanical) are permitted unless otherwise prohibited.

- Consists of streamers, ribbons, pennants or wind activated devices, multiple flags, including multiple flags of states, governmental units, balloons, including individual and giant balloons which are inflated and tethered for support which encompass an area or areas, singularly or in aggregate, greater than twenty-five (25) square feet.
- The United States of America or a single American flag of any size is permitted on a property.
- Is/are existing signs, which are non-conforming, and do not meet the building and zoning code requirements; check/consult with the Building Inspection Divisions Sign Plans Examiner/Reviewer. *If the property title has been sold or transferred after March 1, 1987 the non-conforming sign shall be brought into compliance with the building and zoning code requirements (sign size or sign setback).*
- **Note: Any sign which is being used, or has been constructed, erected, placed, located or parked on public or City right-of-way may be removed by a City of Jacksonville Building Official without prior demand or notice.**

Zoning Limitations and Restrictions.

All real estate property is assigned into specified zoning districts. No sign can be erected, constructed or maintained which does not conform to the assigned zoning district. Obtain your zoning district classification code and approval from the Zoning Department, room 100, prior to submitting the sign permit application. This zoning classification code indicates/identifies your addresses allowable signage limitations; number of, size of, illumination and setbacks. Please provide/have the property street address and or real estate number available at the time of making the zoning inquiry.

Height Limitations and Restrictions on the Number of Signs Allowable.

Limitations/restrictions on sign height and the number of signs that can be placed on a property, private/public are based on the zoning district classification of the property.

What is a Right-Of-Way?

A right-of-way means land or waterway established and recorded as required by law for **unobstructed** passage of the public. This generally refers to a street, highway, and or river. A right-of-way usually includes not only a paved roadway, but also an additional strip of land adjacent to the paved roadway.

How Close to the Street Can a Sign Be Placed/Positioned?

No sign shall be placed within twenty-five (25) feet of the intersection of two (2) right-of-way lines or shall not be placed closer than ten (10) feet from any right-of-way/property line. In all

zoning district classifications, no on-site ground sign shall be erected/placed in any required yard. Obtain zoning classification code from Zoning Department for proper required yard and or setback information.

What is the Maximum Height of a Sign?

Commercial, industrial and miscellaneous zoning district signs **shall not exceed** fifty (50') feet in maximum height above the level of the adjacent ground. Residential zoning district signs **shall not** exceed twenty (20') feet in maximum height above the level of the adjacent ground. **Note:** Ground signs erected to a height of twenty (20') feet or higher shall be constructed entirely of metal, with all structural members not less than one fourth (1/4") of an inch thick. **Note:** the height of ground signs above the level adjacent ground shall maintain a clearance of not less than nine (9') feet below the main body of the sign if the sign is erected within twenty (20') feet of an intersection of two (2) street right-of-way lines.

How is a Sign's Surface Area Measured?

The method by which the area of each sign surface is computed is *sign area computation*. For signs with fixed boundaries, frames or edges, the area within and including the exterior boundaries, frames or edges enclosing the letters or graphic matter which composes each sign surface. For signs with no fixed boundaries, frames or edges, such as where a sign is composed of separate/individual letters, placed and or painted upon or against a building, window or similar surface not designed, framed or edged specifically for sign presentation, the sign area shall be computed on the basis of the smallest geometric shape, such as a triangle, rectangle, square or

circle encompassing the outermost exteriors of the outermost separate/individual letters, words or numbers which yields the least total square footage of area. Border trim shall be included in the sign area computation.

Sign Maintenance Requirements.

All signs shall be maintained in good repair at *all times* by their owners, lessors or other users. Examples of required sign maintenance include: Keeping exposed sign surfaces clean so that the sign's message does not become obscured, keeping painted sign portions painted to prevent chipping, peeling or flaking of paint, replacement of missing, torn or defective parts or portions of such sign. The City Building Official may order repair or removal of any sign that becomes unsafe due to lack of maintenance. Signs shall be plainly marked with the name of the person, firm or corporation erecting and maintaining such sign. Each sign shall have affixed a permanent plastic or non-corrosive metal placard/tag, with the name of the person, firm or corporation erecting and maintaining the sign, the sign permit number and the year of permitting. The placard/tag shall be securely attached to the sign facing or sign support structure so as to be plainly visible to the public and Building Code Enforcement Inspectors.

General Requirements:

No sign shall be installed or erected so as to cover the door or windows of a building, obstruct a fire escape or an access or be attached to a fire escape, exterior stairs or other means of ingress/egress.

No part of a sign shall be installed/placed or erected closer than five (5') feet to an electric, telephone, cell phone or other utility pole tower or line.

Cables, turnbuckles, eyebolts or other fastenings for a sign shall be of non-corrosive metal or hot-dipped galvanized steel.

Where a support, brace, eyebolt or similar device, which supports a sign, pierces a roof, there shall be a flashing pan provided and the roof shall be made waterproof/water-tight.

Detailed Sign Regulations.

Detailed sign regulations can be found in the following chapters of the City of Jacksonville ordinance Code: 320 – Building Code, 323 – Street Encroachments, 325 – Electrical Installations, 326 – Signs and Outdoor Display Structures, 601 – Offences Against Operation of Government (Political Signs), 656 – Zoning Code, part 13; Sign Regulations, 746 – Street Use Regulations. Copies of these chapters may be obtained from the Council Secretary, 117 W. Duval Street, Suite 430; (904) 630-1406 or online at

www.municode.com