

Lancaster City Office of Code Compliance and Inspections

SIGN PERMIT SUBMITTAL GUIDE

This guide has been developed to assist individuals with completing the requirements for the submission of construction documents for the building permit application for Code Compliance.

The following municipal offices require submittals for sign approvals: **(1) Zoning; (2) HARB (Historical Specialist - if required); (3) Code Compliance.**

Zoning approval does not constitute approval for installation under the Uniform Construction Code requirements.

HARB - For properties located within Lancaster's Historic District, where building alterations are subject to review by the Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB), any exterior sign visible from the public right of way requires submission of an Application for HARB review, review by HARB and approval by City Council before a permit can be issued. Sign installation within the HARB requires that anchoring be accomplished within mortar joints and not into the masonry units.

Code Compliance: The following signs are exempt from ***building code requirements***, but may still need ***zoning and/or HARB approvals***:

- a. Painted signs (painted directly on the building surface), signs painted on awnings (awning installations do require a building permit);
- b. Banner type signs;
- c. Temporary sale or rent signs; temporary contractor and development signs;
- d. Signs erected by transportation authorities;
- e. Projecting signs not exceeding 2.5 S.F.;
- f. Signs for which a building permit had previously been issued and where only the sign message is being altered.

Please Note: A building permit cannot be issued until **Zoning approval** has been obtained. Signs within the Historic District are also subject to review by the **HARB** prior to building permit issuance.

Signs are required to be submitted under separate building permit applications, separate from any general building permits.

FOR ALL SIGNS:

1. Submit three sets of drawings which accurately depict the sign to be installed. Dimensions of the overall sign area and all lettering/information to be on the sign must be clearly indicated.
2. The drawings shall clearly indicate the proposed location of all signs on the building façade and the dimensions of the façade of the business being served. (For freestanding signs, see below).
3. The drawings shall indicate the dimensions, material and details of construction, including loads, stresses and anchors. The wind loads and working stresses are required to conform to the requirements of the International Building Code, Chapter 16. The anchorage is required to be able to support the loads applied.
4. The drawings shall indicate the type of sign (ground sign, roof sign, wall sign, projecting sign, marquee sign, or portable sign) for installation.
5. Drawings shall be sealed and signed by a PA licensed Registered Architect or Professional Engineer. The professional designer shall indicate the required construction/installation method in accordance with the International Building Code to deal with the signs wind loading, working stresses, anchorage & support.
 - a. Exception – Interior signs.

- b. Exception: Freestanding signs not exceeding 20 square feet in area and not over six feet in height above finished grade.
- c. Exception: Flat (one sided), non-illuminated, building signs not exceeding 10 square feet in area and attached directly to the building (not projecting signs – they require a permit).
- d. Channel letters attached directly to the building or business façade that are less than two square feet in area (each). Trough mounted channel letters require a design professionals seal.

PROJECTING WALL SIGNS:

1. New projecting wall sign installations over 2.5 square feet in size require a design professional seal for wind and load factors. Specific details on anchoring must be provided by the design professional.
2. Projecting wall signs shall be constructed of metal or other non-combustible construction.

WALL MOUNTED SIGNS:

1. Wall mounted signs which have an area exceeding 40 square feet shall be constructed of approved non-combustible materials.

ROOF MOUNTED SIGNS:

1. Submit three sets of drawings which accurately depict the sign to be installed. Dimensions of the overall sign area and all lettering/information to be on the sign must be clearly indicated.
2. The drawings shall clearly indicate the proposed location of all signs on the building roof and the dimensions of the sign. (For freestanding signs, see below).
3. The drawings shall indicate the dimensions, material and details of construction, including wind and snow loads, stresses and anchors. A Design Professional's seal is required for all roof signs.

FREESTANDING/GROUND/POLE SIGNS:

1. Three site plans are required to be submitted and shall clearly indicate the proposed location of all signs on the property, and distance to right-of ways, easements, and/or sight triangles.
2. The sign drawings shall include footing and foundation details and design criteria indicating compliance with the International Building Code in effect in Pennsylvania at the time of application.
3. A Design Professional's seal is required for all freestanding signs in excess of 20 square feet.
4. The street address in six inch high numbers is required to be posted on the sign, visible from both traffic directions.

INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED SIGNS:

1. All electric signs are required to be U/L Listed. This means they must be constructed in a U/L listed sign manufacturing facility or field inspected and labeled by Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.
2. The U/L label must be visible after the sign is installed.
3. The sign is required to be marked with the manufacture's name, trademark or other means of identification; input voltage and current rating.
4. The drawings shall indicate that the sign is U/L listed and the wiring type and/or conduit type and size.
5. The drawings shall indicate a minimum 20 amperes dedicated branch circuit for each sign. If the sign is incandescent or fluorescent the branch circuit shall be rated not to exceed 20 amperes.
6. The drawings shall indicate an externally operable weather proof switch or circuit breaker that opens all ungrounded conductors within sight of the sign. If the disconnect needs to be mounted out of line sight, disconnect shall be capable of being locked in the open position.

7. The drawings shall indicate the location and accessible access to the ballast, transformers, and electronic power supplies. They shall be located as near to the lamps as possible. A working clearance at least 30 inches high, by 36 inches wide, by 36 inches deep shall be provided.
8. Ballast, transformers, and electronic power supplies shall be permitted in attics or soffit locations, provided there is an access door at least 36 inches, by 22.5 inches and a passageway of at least 36 inches high, by 24 inches wide with a suitable permanent walkway at least 12 inches wide.
9. Ballast, transformers, and electronic power supplies located above suspended ceilings shall have their enclosures securely fastened in place. The power supplies shall not be connected to the branch circuit by flexible cord.
10. The drawings shall indicate the bonding of all metal parts together and to the associated transformer or power-supply equipment grounding conductor of the branch circuit feeding the sign. Metal building parts are not permitted to be used as a means for bonding metal parts and equipment of signs. The bonding conductor shall be copper, not smaller than 14 AWG, and protected from physical damage.
11. Installation instructions shall be submitted with drawings for the permit approval.

INSPECTIONS REQUIRED:

1. The Uniform Construction Code of Pennsylvania, Section 403.45(c) requires that “the permit holder or an authorized agent shall notify the construction code official when work is ready for inspection and to provide access for the inspection.” This means that footings are to be inspected prior to pouring of concrete and that signs are required to be inspected prior to closing or sealing of any sign cabinet. It is the applicant’s responsibility to provide the access to any elevated sign component for inspections.
2. Electric signs are required to be inspected before being energized.

Miscellaneous signs

1. Code Compliance will “group” several signs submitted under one business name to be installed on a single building façade as one for the purposes of permitting.
2. For small hanging signs, less than 3 square feet in area being installed on existing wall mounted brackets, we will not require sign permits.
3. For signs which were erected under permit, and are only having face information changed such as a name change, hours etc... with no change in the sign material, shape or size, there is no permit requirement.
4. For small, less than 5 square feet, non-electric pole mounted signs in a front yard or setback, we will not require permits. These may include signs for professional services, etc...
5. Building Permits are not required for signs painted directly onto a structure, such as a brick wall or awning structure. (The awning is required to be under permit). Zoning regulations apply.
6. Signs within five feet of a window subjected to public view will not require building permits; however, electrical signs are subject to National Electrical Code regulations and require appropriate electrical installations which may require an electrical permit. Zoning regulations may apply.
7. Contractor signs are not required to be under a building permit from Code Compliance.