



INFORMATION GUIDE: **Signage**

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INFO GUIDE

for SIGNAGE

Are you considering installing a new sign for your business? The following is a collection of **Key Terms**, **Frequently Asked Questions**, and **Design Recommendations** that you should consider before designing your sign. If you have questions about signs or the approval process, please contact the Planning and Development Department at planning@canmore.ca

Key Terms

Before reviewing this guide, you should familiarize yourself with the following terms, which appear throughout this document and are foundational to the discussion of signage:

Certificate of signage conformance means a certificate or stamp issued by the Town of Canmore stating that the proposed Sign is in conformance with the Land Use Bylaw on the date the certificate was signed. A Certificate of Signage Conformance may be issued for a sign that meets all of the sign regulations of the Land Use Bylaw in place of a Development Permit.

Development permit means a document issued by a Development Authority pursuant to the Land Use Bylaw, which authorizes a development and includes the plans and conditions of approval.

Directly lit sign means a sign that is illuminated from a light source located on or near the exterior of the sign.

Quality material means painted or stained wood, stone, painted or nonferrous (brushed, textured or satin) metal and weathered steel.

Relief means when elements of a sign create depth or layers, and typically include but is not limited to, backing material to bring the sign away from the façade, natural timber bordering material, or letters raised/recessed from the sign or building face.

Sign means a device, structure, or fixture intended for the advertising of, or calling attention to, any - person, business, matter, object, event, or activity.

Frequently Asked Questions

What type of permit do I need to install a sign?

Signs (permanent or temporary) require a Development Permit or Certificate of Signage Conformance unless explicitly exempted in the Land Use Bylaw.

In what situations would a Development Permit be required for a sign?

A Development Permit is required for all new permanent or temporary signs that request a variance to the regulations of the Land Use Bylaw. New signs include revised signs for existing businesses that change the letter dimensions, sign location, materials, relief design or overall sign size.

In what situations would a Certificate of Signage Conformance be required for sign?

A Certificate of Signage Conformance is required for all new permanent or temporary signs that are designed in accordance with the regulations of the Land Use Bylaw.

What are the application requirements for a Development Permit?

The Development Permit form and application requirements list for signs is available on the Town's website.

What are the application requirements for a Certificate of Signage Conformance?

To apply for a Certificate of Signage Conformance, applicants will need to submit a Planning application form and the documents included in the Certificate of Conformance requirements list. Both of these can be found on the Town's website.

What is the cost for a Development Permit or a Certificate of Signage Conformance?

Application fees can be found in the Town's [Fee Schedule](#).

How long will it take to get a Development Permit or a Certificate of Signage Conformance?

Once a complete application and the applicable payment has been received, the typical processing time is 2 – 3 weeks. Processing times will also be impacted by the extent of revisions that may be required to an initial application, and the number of applications already in the queue for review.

If the sign requests a variance to the Land Use Bylaw, an additional 21 days will be added to review time, in order to adhere to Provincially mandated timelines regarding advertising and appeal of the application.

What are the rules for signs?

The regulations for signs can be found in Section 9 of the [Land Use Bylaw](#). It is important to note that there are different rules (e.g. preferred locations, dimension limits, quantity limits and downtown specific requirements) for each type of sign.

How many signs can I have for my business?

The number of signs depends on the business location. The [Land Use Bylaw](#) provides rules on the number of signs allowed for commercial, industrial and home-based businesses. It further details specific requirements for businesses located downtown, on Bow Valley Trail or in the Gateway area, as well as, requirements for businesses located on the main floor or above the main floor of a commercial building.

What types of signs are not allowed?

In general, most temporary signs (e.g. flags, plastic banners, A-frames, etc.) are not allowed. The regulations for prohibited signs can be found in Section 9.13 of the Land Use Bylaw 2018-22.



Design Recommendations

Before designing your signage, please consider all of the following recommendations to help ensure your signs meet the Land Use Bylaw and contribute to the aesthetics of Canmore's public realm:

Recommendation One: Complement the Architecture

The location of a building sign should be used to highlight a business entrance and reinforce the architectural design of the building. A new sign should incorporate elements of the building design by using similar materials and colours to ensure the sign complements the architectural style of the building.



Recommendation Two: **Use Appropriate Scale**

A sign that includes lettering that is too large or too small can create a sign that is unbalanced or overwhelms the associated building or space. It is recommended that a photo of the building façade be used to superimpose the sign onto the building or within the space. This will ensure that your sign is being designed to an appropriate scale and provide a visual for how the sign will look once installed.



Recommendation Three: Use Appropriate Materials

A sign designed with the use of quality materials (i.e. painted or stained wood, stone, painted or nonferrous metal or weathered steel) provides a more appealing aesthetic, is typically more durable, and complements existing signage and architecture within the Town. These materials are required and can be incorporated into many aspects of the sign design. Composite wood material or exterior grade plywood may also be suitable. The use of secondary materials, such as vinyl, plastic, aluminum layered plastic, or glass requires careful consideration and shall not be a prominent aspect of the sign design.



Recommendation Four: **Consider Adding Relief**

A sign with relief is characterized by elements of the sign that create depth or layering to the design and typically includes backing material to set the sign away from the façade or raised and/or recessed letters and other sign elements to set them away from the sign face or building façade.

A sign that incorporates relief can improve legibility and can capture light and cast shadows to create a more interesting sign. Achieving sign relief by raising and/or recessing the letters of the sign is critical to ensure the sign adds greater visual interest to the building façade and/or associated streetscape.



Recommendation Five:

Give Attention to Layout & Colour

A sign that is legible can be achieved by ensuring the background colour is clearly visible around each sign letter. When selecting a background colour for your sign, one should aim to provide contrast with the letters and logo to ensure the design is visible and easy to read. Variation to colour and layout can also provide visual interest and help to draw attention to the sign.



Recommendation Six: **Consider the Addition of Lighting**

A sign with lighting can complement the building architecture and enhance a building design, especially throughout the winter months when daylight is scarce. If lighting is proposed, it is required that full cut-off lighting fixtures directed downwards (e.g. goose neck, or similar) are used to illuminate the sign face.





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