

## **CHAPTER 17.16 – SIGNS**

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### **17.16.010 Content and Applicability**

**Content.** The purpose of this Chapter is to establish sign regulations that are consistent with the goals, objectives and policies of the El Dorado County General Plan and the County's visual and aesthetic goals, and provide adequate identification for establishments. Specifically, this Chapter regulates the size, quantity, and location of signs to maintain and enhance the visual appearance of the County (Goal 2.7), regulates the location, number and size of highway signs and, to the extent allowable by law, eliminates billboards along identified scenic and historic routes (Objective 2.7.1). The Sign Ordinance shall include design review for signs within the foreground and background of the designated scenic corridors commensurate with the goal of scenic corridor viewshed protection (Policy 2.1.1.1).

**Applicability.** This Chapter applies only to the unincorporated areas of the County; within such areas, this Chapter applies to signs located or mounted on private property, as well as land owned by public entities over which the County has land use regulatory authority. This Chapter does not apply to lands subject to the regulatory authority of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. For the purposes of this Chapter, urban sign regulations established herein shall apply to those areas designated in the County General Plan Land Use Diagram as Community Regions. Similarly, rural sign regulations established herein shall apply to all other areas in the unincorporated County not otherwise designated as Community Regions in the County General Plan Land Use Diagram. Unless otherwise noted, sign regulations in this Chapter shall apply to both urban and rural areas equally.

The County recognizes that signs are an essential element of a community's visual appearance and provide a means to identify communities and promote commerce, provide useful information to the public, and should not become visual distractions along public roadways. These regulations are intended to protect the public health, safety, and welfare and provide for the integrity of the County's aesthetics.

In addition, these regulations are intended to:

- A. Promote economically stable and visually attractive communities within the County;
- B. Promote signs that are attractive, pleasing, and harmonized with the physical character of the structure and environment of surrounding properties;
- C. Recognize the distinct signage needs and applications in the County's designated urban and rural areas through distinct sign regulations;
- D. Prevent an inadvertent favoring of commercial speech over noncommercial speech or favoring of any particular noncommercial message over any other noncommercial message;
- E. Protect viewsheds in designated scenic corridors;
- F. Encourage individuality among communities and businesses through signage;
- G. Encourage consolidation of signs to reduce visual clutter;
- H. Improve traffic safety and the smooth and efficient flow of pedestrians, bicyclist and vehicles to their destinations; and
- I. Direct persons to various activities and enterprises, in order to provide for maximum public convenience.

#### **17.16.020 General Sign Requirements**

Except as otherwise specifically noted herein, the following requirements shall apply to all signage in the unincorporated (urban and rural) areas of the County.

- A. **Regulatory Interpretations.** The requirements of this Chapter shall not be interpreted to nullify any easements, covenants, or other private agreements that provide for more restrictive sign regulations than are required by this Chapter.
- B. **Message Neutrality.** In adopting this Chapter, the County intends to regulate signs within the scope of this Chapter in a way that does not favor commercial speech over noncommercial speech and does not regulate noncommercial speech based on message content. The message of any sign shall not be reviewed except to the minimum extent necessary to identify the type of sign.
- C. **Message Substitution.** Subject to the property owner's consent, a constitutionally protected noncommercial message of any type may be substituted in whole or in part for the message displayed on any sign for which the sign structure or mounting device is authorized in compliance with this Chapter, without consideration of message content. Such substitution of message may be made without any additional approval or permitting. This provision is to prevent any inadvertent favoring of commercial speech over noncommercial speech or favoring of any particular protected noncommercial

message over any other protected noncommercial message. In addition, any on-site commercial message may be substituted, in whole or in part, for any other on-site commercial message, provided that the sign structure or mounting device is authorized in compliance with this Chapter, without consideration of message content.

This provision does not create a right to increase the total amount of signage on a parcel, lot, or land use; does not affect the requirement that a sign structure or mounting device be properly permitted; does not allow a change in the physical structure of a sign or its mounting device or location; does not allow for the substitution of an off-site commercial message in the place of an on-site commercial or noncommercial message, and does not authorize the conversion of an existing sign to general advertising for hire.

- D. On-Site/Off-Site Distinction.** Within this Chapter, the distinction between on-site and off-site signs applies only to commercial messages.
- E. Urban/Rural Distinction.** Within this Chapter, urban sign regulations shall apply to those areas designated as Community Regions on the County General Plan Land Use Diagram. Rural sign regulations shall apply to areas in the unincorporated County not otherwise designated as Community Region in the County General Plan Land Use Diagram. Unless otherwise noted, sign regulations in this Chapter shall apply to both urban and rural areas equally.
- F. General Prohibition.** Permanent signs not expressly allowed by this Chapter are prohibited.
- G. Exceptions to Limitations.** Any exception to the limitations and/or sign development standards stated or shown within this Chapter shall require a Variance in compliance with Chapter 17.22, Section 17.22.600 (Variance). However, consideration of the Variance request shall not evaluate the message or graphic design of the sign.

### 17.16.030 Exemptions

The following sign types are expressly exempted from the Planning Sign Permit requirements of this Chapter but must satisfy any and all other applicable permit requirements when applicable (e.g., Building, Electrical, Plumbing, Grading, Encroachment). Except as otherwise specifically noted herein, these exemptions shall apply in all unincorporated (urban and rural) areas of the County.

- A. Exempt Signs Without Limitations.** The following signs are exempt from Sign Permit requirements with no specific limitations:
  - 1. Conforming signs that change messages, but do not alter the size, location, or illumination. This provision does not authorize the conversion of an existing legal sign to a general advertising for hire use or to a digital display.
  - 2. All devices which are excluded from the definition of a “sign” as set forth in this Chapter.

3. Official traffic signs or other municipal governmental signs, legal notices, advertisements and notices prescribed by law and placed by governmental entities, and signs indicating the location of buried utility lines or any notice posted by a governmental officer in the scope of his or her duties.
4. Direction, warning, or information signs or structures required or authorized by law, or by federal, state, county, or county authority, including, but not limited to, traffic control signs (e.g., stop, yield), highway route number signs, and construction zone or site signs.
5. Noncommercial utility company signs identifying cables, conduits, and dangerous situations.
6. Street address signs on structures and building identification signs consistent with the County-adopted building code or relevant provisions of the County Municipal Code. Notwithstanding anything in this Section, street address signs may be illuminated and may contain reflective paint or material.
7. Tablets and plaques installed by the County, or by a state, federal, or county recognized historical organization exempt from federal taxation under section 501 of USC Title 26 (IRS Code), or signs authorized and installed by county, state or federal agencies on public owned lands.
8. Gas pricing signs, as required by state law, which identify the brand, types, octane rating, etc., of gasoline for sale within the county (Sections 13530–13540 of the Business and Professional Code). This does not limit the approval and design requirement for permanent or temporary placement and approval provisions listed herein.
9. Signs on currently registered and operable vehicles and vessels, including license plates, license plate frames, registration insignia, noncommercial messages, messages relating to the establishment for which the vehicle or vessel is an instrument or tool (not including general advertising, such as mobile billboards), and messages relating to the proposed sale, lease, or exchange of the vehicle or vessel.
10. Signs and advertising located upon the buses, vehicles and bus shelters of the El Dorado Transit Authority.
11. Signs on California State Park Lands in conformance with the standards enforced by the State of California as set forth in the Department of Parks and Recreation Sign Handbook, 1973, as amended.
12. Signs on National Forest lands, including sites permitted for private use, in conformance with the standards enforced by the U.S. Forest Service as set forth in the Forest Service Catalog of Posters and Signs, EM-7100-15, as amended.

- B. Exempt Signs With Limitations.** The following signs are exempt from Sign Permit requirements, provided that they meet the size, height, duration, and/or maximum number limitations listed below. Exempt signs that do not meet the limitations listed may be allowed only by Variance as outlined in Chapter 17.22, Section 17.22.600 (Variance).
1. Window signs that do not exceed 25 percent coverage of any window. Window signs do not count toward cumulative allowable sign area.
  2. Temporary signs in conformity with this Chapter (Section 17.16.050).
  3. Flags, not subject to the standards set forth in Table 17.16.070.4 (Allowed Temporary On-Site Sign Standards), shall meet the following requirements:
    - a. Flag poles shall be located outside of the public right-of-way.
    - b. The maximum height for flag poles is 30 feet.
    - c. The maximum size for any one flag is 30 square feet.
  4. Signs on property undergoing construction or remodeling not exceeding 32 square feet each in area and limited to 1 sign for each street frontage. Such signs shall not be illuminated. Such signs shall be removed within 30 days of the earliest of the following events: final building inspection approval, issuance of a valid certificate of occupancy, opening for business to the public, or expiration of the Building Permit.
  5. Signs warning against trespass, hunting or shooting on the premises not to exceed 2 square feet per sign and spaced not less than 200 feet apart.
  6. Signs on property that is currently offered for sale, lease, or rental:
    - a. On residential-zoned property, 1 sign not exceeding 8 square feet and not exceeding a height of 5 feet. On weekends and holidays, up to 4 signs to direct traffic to the subject property are allowed, provided each sign does not exceed 8 square feet in area and 3-1/2 feet in height. A sign shall not be placed on a sidewalk or street or Public Right of Way. A sign shall not create a safety hazard. Such signs shall not be illuminated.
    - b. On nonresidential and agricultural and resource-zoned property, 1 sign per street or road frontage, not exceeding 32 square feet in area and 12 feet in height. The sign shall not be illuminated.
  7. Signs on private property where there is a garage, yard, or estate sale taking place. Such signs may be posted for no more than 48 hours and must be removed at the end of the sale. A maximum of 6 square feet is allowed per sign.

8. On-site directional signs, such as exit, entrance, or other on-site traffic directional signs, the maximum height of any directional sign shall not exceed 42 inches and the maximum size shall not exceed 6 square feet within designated urban areas of the County. Within the designated rural areas, the maximum height of any on-site directional sign shall not exceed 12 feet and the maximum size shall not exceed 32 square feet. In both urban and rural areas of the County, no advertising or message other than for traffic direction shall be displayed on the signs authorized by this subsection.
9. Off-site commercial signs, located on private property within the designated rural areas of the County, for establishments that are not directly abutting County roads. For those establishments located on private roads, each establishment is allowed 1 non-illuminated commercial identification and directional sign with a maximum sign area of 16 square feet and a maximum height of 12 feet. Such signs may be permanent or temporary and require property owner consent. This provision does not allow general advertising for hire.
10. Temporary signs displaying noncommercial messages subject to:
  - a. 6 square feet of signage, set back at least 5 feet from the public right-of-way and not projecting above the roofline of any structure.
  - b. During the time period beginning 90 days before a special, general, or primary election and ending 3 weeks after such election, the total allowed sign area for noncommercial messages may be 32 square feet in area. The same setback and height restrictions listed above shall apply to this additional area.
  - c. Such signs shall be non-illuminated.
11. Home Occupation signs identifying authorized home business activities on site. All signs shall be non-illuminated, compatible in design with existing residential structures, and consistent with the sign development and design standards as listed on Table 17.16.070.3.

#### **17.16.040 Permanent Signs**

- A. **Permanent On-Site Signs.** Permanent on-site signs allowed in the County's zoning districts include the following sign types:
  1. **Building-Attached Signs.** Allowed permanent on-site signs attached to a structure include wall signs, projecting signs, awning or canopy signs, and under canopy signs.

2. **Freestanding Signs.** Allowed permanent freestanding signs include monument and pylon signs. Permanent on-site signs shall be consistent with the sign design and developments standards as described in this Chapter and shown on Tables 17.16.070.1 and 17.16.070.2.
3. **Menu/Order Board Signs for Drive-In and Drive-Through Uses.** Menu/Order board signage shall be consistent with the sign design and developments standards as described in this Chapter. No alterations or additions (e.g., rider signs) along the exterior of the menu/order board sign are allowed.
4. **U.S. Highway 50-Oriented Signs.** Signs on properties within 100 feet of U.S. Highway 50 that are outside of the designated State Scenic Highway Corridor. *(Note: Designated State Scenic Highway Corridors in El Dorado County shall be subject to special sign regulations under "Design Review - Scenic Corridor Ordinance" in the reserved Section 17.27.070 of the draft Zoning Ordinance).*

Permanent on-site signs shall not be used as general advertising for hire.

**B. Permanent Off-Site Signs.** Permanent off-site signs allowed in the County's zoning districts include the following sign types:

1. **Subdivision Signs.** Signs directing traffic to new residential subdivisions shall be consistent with the sign design and development standards as described in this Chapter and the following conditions:
  - a. All signs for housing subdivisions shall be removed within 30 days after all lots in the subdivision are sold.
  - b. The County may require the developer to submit a performance deposit or other form of security to ensure compliance with the standards of this Section.

**17.16.050 Temporary Signs**

Temporary signs may include, but are not limited to, commercial signs for grand openings, products/services, sales, special events, and new apartments/multi-family units. All temporary signs must comply with the standards listed in Table 17.16.070.4 (Allowed Temporary On-Site Sign Standards) and are subject to the conditions herein.

**A. Time Duration.** Display periods for temporary on-site signs shall be limited to a cumulative maximum of 90 days per establishment per calendar year, unless otherwise specified below.

1. **Apartment Signs.** Signs at new or substantially renovated apartments shall be removed 6 months from opening.

2. **Banner Signs.** All banner signs utilized for grand opening events shall be limited to a maximum of 30 consecutive days per establishment per calendar year.
  3. **A-Frame Signs.** When allowed, A-frame signs shall be removed during all times when the establishment is closed.
- B. Illumination.** Temporary signs shall not be illuminated.
- C. Message.** Temporary signs displaying a commercial message shall be limited to on-site signage only. Off-site signage displaying a commercial message shall not be allowed, except as noted in Section 17.16.030.B.9.

### 17.16.060 Community Sign Programs

The Board is the decision-making authority for all new Community Sign Programs. Program descriptions are outlined below.

- A. Community Directional.** Community directional sign programs generally include signs to direct residents and visitors to points of interest, recreational areas, and tourist industries in the county. Where applicable, the use of pylon signs shall be required in higher density use areas to reduce sign clutter. Specific development and design details will be considered and decided by the Board of Supervisors.
- B. Community Identity.** Community identity sign programs shall establish a means for individual communities within the county to designate their name at main point(s) of entry to their community. Such signage can be unique to each community as a means to define their character, quality, or historic contribution to the county. The community identity sign program is limited to monument signs. Specific development and design details will be considered and decided by the Board of Supervisors. The maximum area of any 1 display face shall not exceed 250 square feet.
- C. Community Events.** Community event sign programs are limited to identified sites for the display of event signs including; street banners, signs, or other displays for any civic or public events/activities. Site location and specific development and design details will be considered and decided by the Board of Supervisors. Signs may be allowed to be displayed up to 30 days prior to the event and shall be removed within 3 days after the event has ended.
- D. Industry Association Signs.** Industry association sign programs shall establish directional and identifying agricultural industry association signs such as those offered by the El Dorado County Farm Bureau, Farm Trails, Apple Hill Growers Association, El Dorado Winery Association and similar groups. Specific development and design standards will be considered and decided by the Board of Supervisors.



### 17.16.070 Sign Development and Design Standards

This Section establishes standards for sign development and design, including but not limited to: methods for measuring sign size, area and height, sign placement, construction, design, illumination, maintenance, and removal. Unless otherwise specified in this section, sign development and design standards shall apply to all signs within the unincorporated (urban and rural) areas of the County.

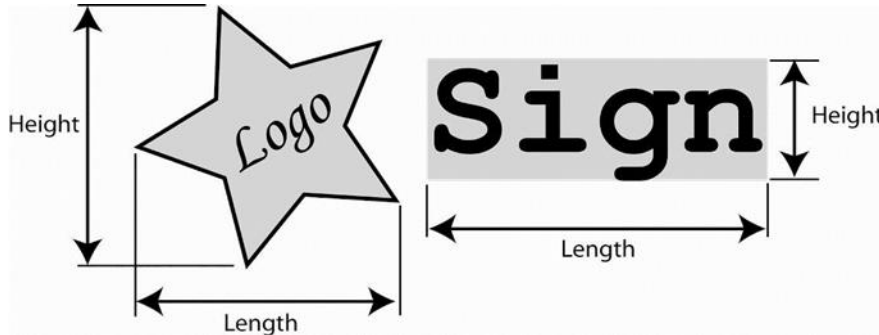
**A. General Sign Design Requirements for Permanent Signs.** Permanent Signs shall comply with the following general design requirements as well as design standards applicable to specific types of signs listed herein in Subsection K (Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs).

1. **Design Compatibility with Structure.** Signs shall be compatible in architectural scale and bulk with the architectural style of the main structure or structures on the site where the sign is located. The applicant shall incorporate construction materials, color, letter style, and other design details in designing an architecturally compatible sign. Multiple signs on any structure, or on structures within the same development, shall have the same primary type of building-attached sign.
2. **Sign Illumination.** The artificial illumination of signs, from either an internal or external source, shall be designed to prevent the casting of stray light on surrounding rights-of-way and properties. All illuminated signs shall comply with the following:
  - a. External light sources shall be directed toward the sign and fully shielded to limit direct illumination of any object other than the sign.
  - b. The light from an illuminated sign shall not be of an intensity or brightness that creates glare or other negative impacts on residential properties in direct line of sight to the sign.
  - c. Unless otherwise allowed by another provision of this Chapter, signs shall not have blinking, flashing, or intermittent lights or other illumination devices that have a changing light intensity, brightness, or color.
  - d. Colored lights shall not be used at a location or in a manner so as to be confused or interpreted as traffic control devices.
  - e. Light sources shall utilize energy-efficient fixtures compliant with Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations.

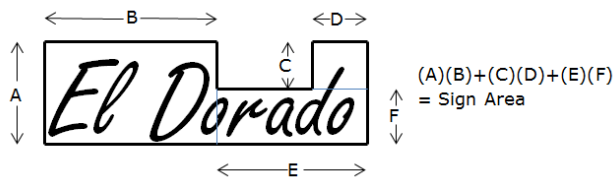
**B. Sign Area Measurement Procedures.** The sign area is calculated by determining the number of square feet of the smallest rectangles (s) within which a sign face can be enclosed (see Figure 17.16.070.A). In determining the area of an individual sign that has more than 1 face (e.g., a monument or projecting sign), the single sign face with the

greatest area shall be used. The total sign area is the sum of all individual signs. For irregularly shaped signs or signs with cursive individual letters, the area of the sign may be calculated by using no more than an eight-sided polygon (see Figure 17.16.070.B).

1. **Figure 17.16.070.A Sign Area**

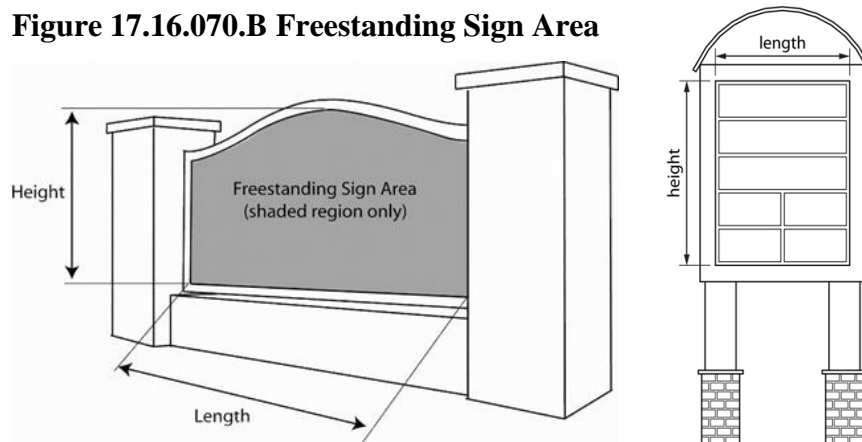


**Figure 17.16.070.B Sign Area (Polygon)**



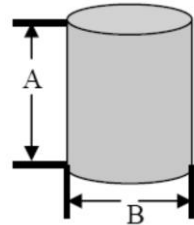
2. **Awning, Canopy, Push Pin, and Channel Letter Sign Area.** Sign area for copy which is applied to an awning, canopy, or as separate lettering onto the building face shall be computed at 100 percent of the area within a single parallelogram enveloping the sign copy.
3. **Freestanding Sign Area.** Freestanding sign area is to be computed as total height by the total length of the sign face for 1 side regardless if it is single- or double-face, excluding structural or architectural framework with no sign copy. See Figure 17.16.070.B.

**Figure 17.16.070.B Freestanding Sign Area**



4. **Three-Dimensional Objects.** Where a sign consists of 1 or more three-dimensional objects (e.g., balls, cubes, clusters of objects, sculptures, or statue-like trademarks or symbols), the sign area shall be measured as their maximum visible surface area from any vantage point. See Figure 17.16.070.C.

**Figure 17.16.070.C Area of Three-Dimensional Objects**



$$\text{TOTAL AREA} = (A) (B)$$

- C. **Sign Height Measurement.** Sign height shall be measured from the ground, adjacent to the sign, to the top of the sign and support structure. If the ground under the sign slopes, the height shall be measured from the average grade under the sign itself.
- D. **Construction Requirements.** Every sign and all parts, portions, and materials thereof shall be manufactured, assembled, and erected in compliance with all applicable state, federal, and county laws and regulations, including the locally adopted building code. All signs shall comply with the following criteria:
1. All transformers, equipment, programmers, and other related items shall be screened and/or painted to match the structure or shall be concealed within the sign.
  2. All permanent signs shall be constructed of quality materials such as metal, concrete, natural stone, wood, glass, and acrylics. Techniques shall be incorporated during construction to reduce fading and damage caused by exposure to sunlight or degradation due to other elements.
  3. All freestanding signs that incorporate lighting shall have underground utility service.
  4. All temporary signs and banners shall be maintained in good condition for as long as the sign is displayed.
- E. **Sign Placement**
1. **Location of Building-Attached Signs.** Building-attached signs may be located along any frontage of a building that faces directly onto a public right-of-way or an internal circulation path of the site. Orientation of signs such that they face directly onto residential property is allowed only when there is no practical alternative and the visibility of the sign from the residence is minimized and not illuminated.

2. **Clearance from Public Utility Facilities.** The person erecting a sign and the owner of the premises shall maintain any legally required clearance from communications and electric facilities. A sign may not be constructed, erected, installed, maintained, or repaired in any manner that conflicts with a rule, regulation, or order of the California Public Utilities Commission pertaining to the construction, operation, and maintenance of public utilities facilities.
  3. **Interference with Motorist Field of Vision**
    - a. No sign shall be located in a manner which may obstruct or interfere with the view of a traffic signal or other traffic regulatory signs. No sign shall, as determined by the Director, be so located as to create a hazard to the life or property of any person using the public right-of-way.
    - b. Any landscaping shall be trimmed as needed to provide clear visibility of the sign or signs.
    - c. Signs shall not be located within the “cross visibility area,” as defined in the Design Improvement Standards Manual.
  4. **Setback and Spacing of Freestanding Signs.** Setback and spacing standards for freestanding signs are as follows:
    - a. The minimum setback distance for any portion of any freestanding sign shall be measured from the back of the public right-of-way or side of a driveway. With the exception of front setbacks, sign setbacks shall be determined by base Zone District. Signs may be allowed within front setbacks, provided that the signs are not located within a public right-of-way, required cross visibility area, utility or private road easement.
    - b. The minimum spacing distance between permanent freestanding signs, excluding on-site directory and menu/order board signs, shall be 250 feet, (except that U.S. Highway 50-Oriented signs shall be separated by a minimum of 1,000 feet.) The designated approving authority as noted in Table 17.16.080.1 may allow a reduction in minimum spacing requirements to ensure that a qualified establishment can have at least 1 freestanding sign as allowed in Tables 17.16.070.1 and 17.16.070.2. The designated approving authority will review a proposed sign location on a case-by-case basis to ensure the sign is located outside the required cross visibility area and does not otherwise inhibit motorist safety.
- F. Maintenance Requirements.** Every sign and all parts, portions, and materials thereof shall be maintained and kept in proper repair. The display surface of all signs shall be kept clean, neatly painted, and free from rust and corrosion. Any cracked, broken surfaces, malfunctioning lights, missing sign copy, or other non-maintained or damaged portions of a sign shall be repaired or replaced within 30 days following notification by the County. Noncompliance with such a notice will constitute a nuisance and zoning violation and will be enforced as such.

- G. Sign Removal or Replacement.** When a sign is removed or replaced, all brackets, poles, and other structural elements that support the sign shall also be removed. Affected surfaces shall be restored to match the adjacent portion of the structure. This requirement does not apply to routine maintenance.
- H. Design Standards for Specific Sign Types.** In addition to the general sign design requirements in Subsection A, the following requirements shall apply to specific sign types listed below.
1. **A-Frame Signs.** A-frame signs, where allowed under Section 17.16.050 (Temporary Signs), shall be placed at least 5 feet behind the face of curb and outside the County right-of-way. Where there is no sidewalk or curb, A-frame signs shall be located outside of the County right-of-way. A-frame signs shall not be placed where they may obstruct vision or create other public safety hazards. A-frame signs shall comply with clearance rules under the Americans with Disabilities Act. A-frame signs shall be removed during all times when the establishment is closed.
  2. **Awning and Canopy Signs.** Awning and canopy signs may be allowed only as an integral part of the awning or canopy to which they are attached or applied and shall be considered wall signs for sign area calculation purposes. The following requirements shall apply:
    - a. Lettering shall not exceed 25 percent of the total surface area.
    - b. Only permanent signs that are an integral part of the awning or architectural projection shall be allowed. Temporary signs shall not be placed on awnings.
    - c. Awning signs shall be allowed only on first- and second-story occupancies.
    - d. Awnings shall not be lit from under the awning (backlit) so that the awning appears internally illuminated. Lighting directed downward that does not illuminate the awning is allowed.
  3. **Electronic (Digital) Signs.** The following standards apply to electronic (digital) signs:
    - a. Digital display is limited to 50 percent of the total allowable display face area of any particular sign.
    - b. Signs shall not change message more than once every 8 seconds (dwell time).
    - c. Digital signs shall not operate at brightness levels of more than 0.3 foot-candles above ambient light, as measured using a foot-candle meter at a distance of 250 feet from the sign face. Each digital display area shall

have a light-sensing device that will adjust the brightness of the sign as ambient light conditions change throughout the day.

4. **Freestanding Signs.** Freestanding sign materials and design, including monument and pylon signs, shall be complementary to the materials and design of the structures for the related development. For example, if the façade of the structure is made of brick or brick veneer, a complementary freestanding sign would also include brick.
  5. **Projecting Signs.** Projecting signs, including, but not limited to, blade signs, bracket signs, and marquee signs, shall be considered wall signs for the purposes of sign area calculation purposes. Projecting signs shall only be allowed as follows:
    - a. **Location.** Projecting signs shall be placed only on ground-floor façades, except for establishments located above the ground level with direct exterior pedestrian access. Within the designated rural areas, projecting signs may also be placed on fences, posts, and railings.
    - b. **Angle of projection.** Projecting signs shall either be located at right angles to the structure front along the façade, or, when located on the corner of a building, at a 45-degree angle to the corner of the structure.
    - c. **Height.** Where located above a pedestrian walkway, the lowest point of a blade or bracket sign shall be a minimum of 8 feet above grade.
    - d. **Projection.** The sign may project a maximum of 5–1/2 feet from the structure.
    - e. **Suspension.** The sign shall be suspended with a clear space of at least 6 inches between the sign and the structure. Exceptions may be granted consistent with applicable building code requirements.
    - f. **Sign structure.** Sign supports and brackets shall be compatible with the design and scale of the sign.
  6. **Wall Signs**
    - a. Wall signs shall not project more than 12 inches from the structure's façade.
    - b. Wall sign raceways shall be concealed from public view (e.g., within the structure's wall or otherwise integrated with the design of the sign and structure) so as to not detract from the architectural character of the structure.
- I. Standards for Off-Site Subdivision Signs.** The purpose of subdivision signs is to direct the traffic related to new residential subdivisions in a manner that minimizes

visual clutter, reduces unnecessary traffic through established neighborhoods, and provides an orderly, attractive, high-quality image of the county.

1. Subdivision signs shall not exceed 40 square feet in sign area, 12 feet in height, and the display area shall be at least 24 inches off the ground.
2. All subdivision signs require approval of a subdivision sign permit as required under Section 17.16.080.D (Subdivision Sign Permit) and their locations approved within or outside of the County's right-of-way.
3. Subdivision signs listing multiple subdivisions shall include removable sign panels with no more than 1 panel per residential subdivision.
4. No subdivision sign may be located within 1,000 feet of another subdivision sign except in the case of signs on different corners of an intersection, unless an unusual situation causes the need for a deviation as determined by the County.
5. All subdivision signs placed on private property require written consent of the property owner and are subject to approval by the Director. All subdivision signs placed within County right-of-way require an Encroachment Permit issued by the County Transportation Division.
6. Subdivision signs may only be located in a manner that does not obstruct the view of traffic or safety signs, encroach within the cross visibility area, or otherwise pose a traffic or safety hazard.
7. There shall be no additions, tag signs, streamers, balloons, flags, riders, devices, display boards, or appurtenances added to the subdivision signs as approved.
8. Structures and panels on subdivision signs may not be displayed after a subdivision developer has completed the sale of all units in the development. Each developer shall be responsible for sign removal. The County may require the developer to submit a performance deposit or other form of security to ensure compliance with the standards of this Section.

**J. Standards for U.S. Highway 50-Oriented Signs.** Proposed on-site signs within 100 feet of U.S. Highway 50, outside of the officially designated scenic corridor, are subject to a Design Review Permit. U.S. Highway 50-Oriented signs shall be consistent with the standards provided below, and as required in other provisions of this Chapter. U.S. Highway 50-Oriented Signs shall not be used as general advertising for hire.

1. **Location**
  - a. **Spacing between signs.** U.S. Highway 50-Oriented sign shall be separated by at least 1,000 feet.
  - b. **Setbacks.** All signs must be set back a minimum of 10 feet from the highway right-of-way or other distance as determined by Caltrans. All

- U.S. Highway 50-Oriented signs must be distanced from any residential district by a minimum of 200 feet.
- c. **Visibility.** U.S. Highway 50-Oriented signs shall not be located to inhibit pedestrian or vehicular visibility and more specifically shall not be located within the clear visibility area as defined in this Chapter or other County adopted policies or standards. Illuminated signs shall be directed away from any residentially designated land.
2. **Quantity.** 1 U.S. Highway 50-Oriented sign shall be allowed per either:
    - a. Integrated developments, as defined in this Chapter; or
    - b. Sites with a single tenant of 10 acres or more.
  3. **Area.**
    - a. **Maximum allowed area.** For single-tenant signs, the maximum sign area shall be 60 square feet. For multi-tenant signs, the maximum sign area shall be 200 square feet.
    - b. **Ancillary components.** Ancillary components of the sign, such as shopping center identification, shall not exceed 25 percent of the total sign area and shall be excluded from the calculation of the sign area.
    - c. **Freestanding sign area.** The area of a U.S. Highway 50-Oriented sign shall be in addition to the allowable freestanding street frontage sign area if the underlying property is adjacent to the highway and a local street.
  4. **Height.** The maximum height of U.S. Highway 50-Oriented signs shall be as follows:
    - a. For single-tenant signs, 1.5 times the height of an adjacent structure up to a maximum of 30 feet. Within designated scenic corridors, the maximum height of a single-tenant sign shall be 24 feet.
    - b. For multi-tenant signs, a maximum of 60 feet. Within designated scenic corridors, the maximum height of a multi-tenant sign shall be 48 feet.
  5. **Architecture.** U.S. Highway 50-Oriented signs shall be designed as pylon signs, and shall be composed of materials and design-compatible with the building materials and design of the applicable establishment.
  6. **Illumination.** If illuminated, U.S. Highway 50-Oriented signs must be internally lit. Signs shall not have blinking, flashing, or intermittent lights or other illuminating devices that have a changing light, brightness, or color. Electronic (digital) changeable copy LED lights are allowed to be incorporated



into the structure consistent with restrictions listed in Section 17.16.070.H.3 (Electronic (Digital) Signs).

7. **Special Development and Design Standards for Designated State Scenic Highway Corridors.** *(Reserved for future Scenic Corridor Ordinance)*

**K. Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs.** Permanent on-site sign standards in this section are listed separately for the designated urban and rural areas of the County based on zone and sign type. See Table 17.16.070.1 (Urban Area Sign Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs) and Table 17.16.070.2 (Rural Area Sign Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs). Standards for other sign types are listed in Tables 17.16.070.3 and 17.16.070.4. Where allowed the following sign types shall conform to standards listed below.

1. **Building-Attached Sign Allowance.** Building-attached signs have a maximum allowable sign area that can be used for 1 or more signs as specified in Tables 17.16.070.1 and 17.16.070.2 (Signage Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs, Urban Areas and Rural Areas, respectively). Building-attached signs are allowed on walls that face public streets, parking areas, and pedestrian walkways. Wall signs are not allowed on walls facing adjoining residential property within designated urban areas of the County. Within the designated rural areas of the County, wall signs (where allowed), may face adjoining residential properties.
2. **Freestanding Sign Allowance.** Freestanding signs are allowed a maximum number, maximum sign area, and maximum height standard per individual establishment or integrated development as specified in Tables 17.16.070.1 and 17.16.070.2 (Signage Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs, Urban Areas and Rural Areas, respectively). For definitions, see Section 17.16.120.
3. **Changeable Copy Allowance.** Changeable copy signs are only allowed in commercial and agricultural zoning districts and for nonresidential uses in residential zones (e.g., religious institutions and public service uses, home occupations, community centers, and schools).
4. **Menu/Order Board Signs for Drive-In and Drive-Through Uses.** Where allowed, each drive-in or drive-through use is allowed a maximum of 60 square feet of menu/order board signage, with no one sign to exceed 30 square feet. The sign(s) shall not count toward the cumulative allowable display area purposes of Tables 17.16.070.1 and 17.16.070.2 (Signage Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs), either in terms of number or cumulative area. The maximum height for a menu/order board sign shall be 6 feet.

**Table 17.16.070.1a – Urban Area Signage Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs**

<b>Residential and Agricultural Zone Districts</b>					
	<b>Allowed Signs and Development Standards in Urban Areas</b>				
	<b>Building-Attached</b>	<b>Freestanding</b>			
<b>Zone District</b>		<b>Number Allowed</b>	<b>Max. Area</b>	<b>Max. Height</b>	<b>Specific Reg.</b>
R1 R1-A RE-5 RE-10 R-20,000 R3A	Not allowed	1 non-illuminated sign per subdivision or neighborhood	12 sf	8 feet	See Section 17.16.070
R2 RM	Not allowed	1 non-illuminated sign per subdivision or neighborhood	12 sf	8 feet	
RT	Not allowed	1 sign per development	12 sf	8 feet	
MP	Not allowed	1 sign per park	12 sf	8 feet	
RA-20 RA-40 RA-60 RA-80 RA-160 U	Not allowed	1 non-illuminated sign per parcel	12 sf	12 feet	
A SA-10	Not allowed	1 non-illuminated sign per parcel	16 sf	12 feet	
AE PA	Not allowed	2 non-illuminated signs per parcel	32 sf	12 feet	

**Table 17.16.070.1b – Urban Area Signage Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs**

Commercial Zone Districts		
Zone District	Allowed Signs and Development Standards in Urban Areas	
	Building-Attached	Freestanding
C CP CG	1 or more signs per establishment based on floor area as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &lt; 10,000 sf floor area = 50 sf max sign area</li> <li>• 10,001 – 25,000 sf floor area = 75 sf max sign area</li> <li>• &gt; 25,001 sf floor area = 100 sf max sign area</li> </ul>	<b>Individual Establishment:</b> No more than 1 sign per public street frontage as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <u>First street frontage</u>: 50 sf max area, 12 ft max height</li> <li>➤ <u>Other street frontage(s)</u>: 30 sf max area, 10 ft max height</li> </ul>
		<b>Integrated Development:</b> 1 multi-tenant sign per public street frontage as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <u>First street frontage</u>: 80 sf max area, 20 ft max height</li> <li>➤ <u>Other street frontage(s)</u>: 40 sf max area, 10 ft max height</li> </ul>
CPO	1 or more signs not exceeding a combined total of 50 sf per establishment; Roofline is max height	<b>Individual Establishment:</b> No more than 1 sign per public street frontage as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <u>Primary frontage</u>: 50 sf max area, 12 ft max height</li> <li>➤ <u>Other street frontage(s)</u>: 30 sf max area, 8 ft max height</li> </ul>
		<b>Integrated Development:</b> 1 multi-tenant sign per public street frontage as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <u>First street frontage</u>: 80 sf max area, 20 ft max height</li> <li>➤ <u>Other street frontage(s)</u>: 40 sf max area, 10 ft height limit</li> </ul>

**Table 17.16.070.1c – Urban Area Signage Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs**

<b>Industrial Zone Districts</b>		
<b>Zone District</b>	<b>Allowed Signs and Development Standards in Urban Areas</b>	
	<b>Building-Attached</b>	<b>Freestanding</b>
I	1 or more signs not exceeding a combined total of 50 sf per establishment; Roofline is max height	<b>Individual Establishment:</b> No more than 1 sign per public street frontage as follows: ➤ 50 sf max area, 12 ft max height
		<b>Integrated Development:</b> 1 multi-tenant sign per public street frontage as follows: ➤ 80 sf max area, 20 ft max height
R&D	2 signs per establishment, 80 sf max area; Roofline is max height	No more than 1 sign per public street frontage for individual establishment or integrated development: ➤ 50 sf max area, 12 ft max height

**Table 17.16.070.1d – Urban Area Signage Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs**

<b>Miscellaneous Zone Districts</b>		
<b>Zone District</b>	<b>Allowed Signs and Development Standards in Urban Areas</b>	
	<b>Building-Attached</b>	<b>Freestanding</b>
TPZ	Not allowed	2 non-illuminated signs per parcel: ➤ 32 sf max area each, 12 ft max height
MR	Not allowed	2 non-illuminated signs per parcel: ➤ 12 sf max area each, 12 ft max height
RF	1 or more signs not exceeding a combined total of 50 sf per structure; Roofline is max height	1 non-illuminated sign per parcel: ➤ 16 sf max area, 12 ft max height
O CN	Not allowed	Not allowed

**Table 17.16.070.2a – Rural Area Signage Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs**

<b>Residential and Agricultural Zone Districts</b>					
<b>Zone District</b>	<b>Allowed Signs and Development Standards in Rural Areas</b>				
	<b>Building-Attached</b>	<b>Freestanding</b>			
		<b>Number Allowed</b>	<b>Max. Area</b>	<b>Max. Height</b>	<b>Specific Reg.</b>
R1 R1-A RE-5 RE-10 R-20,000 R3A	Not allowed (Except in RE-10 in rural areas)	1 non-illuminated sign per subdivision or neighborhood	12 sf	8 feet	See Section 17.16.070
R2 RM	Not allowed	1 non-illuminated sign per subdivision or neighborhood	12 sf	8 feet	
RT	Not allowed	1 sign per development	12 sf	8 feet	
MP	Not allowed	1 sign per park	12 sf	8 feet	
RA-20 RA-40 RA-60 RA-80 RA-160 U	1 or more signs not exceeding a combined total of 50 sf per establishment; Max height is 6 feet above the roofline	1 non-illuminated sign per parcel	12 sf	12 feet	
AP	Not allowed	1 non-illuminated sign per parcel	12 sf	12 feet	
A SA-10	1 or more signs not exceeding a combined total of 50 sf, per establishment; Max height is 6 feet above the roofline	1 non-illuminated sign per parcel	16 sf	12 feet	
AE PA	1 or more signs not exceeding a combined total of 50 sf, per establishment; Max height is 6 feet above the roofline	2 non-illuminated signs per parcel	32 sf	12 feet	

**Table 17.16.070.2b – Rural Area Signage Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs**

<b>Commercial Zone Districts</b>		
<b>Zone District</b>	<b>Allowed Signs and Development Standards in Rural Areas</b>	
	<b>Building-Attached</b>	<b>Freestanding</b>
C CP CG	1 or more signs per establishment based on floor area as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• &lt; 10,000 sf floor area = 50 sf max sign area</li> <li>• 10,001–25,000 sf floor area = 75 sf max sign area</li> <li>• &gt; 25,001 sf floor area = 100 sf max sign area</li> </ul>	<b>Individual Establishment:</b> No more than 1 sign per public street frontage as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <u>First street frontage</u>: 50 sf max area, 12 ft max height</li> <li>➤ <u>Other street frontage(s)</u>: 30 sf max area, 8 ft max height</li> </ul>
		<b>Integrated Development:</b> 1 multi-tenant sign per public street frontage as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <u>First street frontage</u>: 80 sf max area, 20 ft max height</li> <li>➤ <u>Other street frontage(s)</u>: 40 sf max area, 10 ft height limit</li> </ul>
CPO	1 or more signs not exceeding a combined total of 50 sf per establishment; Roofline is max height	<b>Individual Establishment:</b> No more than 1 sign per public street frontage as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <u>First street frontage</u>: 50 sf max area, 12 ft max height</li> <li>➤ <u>Other street frontage(s)</u>: 30 sf max area, 8 ft max height</li> </ul>
		<b>Integrated Development:</b> 1 multi-tenant sign per public street frontage as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <u>First street frontage</u>: 80 sf max area, 20 ft max height</li> <li>➤ <u>Other street frontage(s)</u>: 40 sf max area, 10 ft max height</li> </ul>

**Table 17.16.070.2c – Rural Area Signage Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs**

<b>Industrial Zone Districts</b>		
<b>Zone District</b>	<b>Allowed Signs and Development Standards in Rural Areas</b>	
	<b>Building-Attached</b>	<b>Freestanding</b>
I	1 or more signs not exceeding a combined total of 50 sf per establishment; Roofline is max height	<b>Individual Establishment:</b> No more than 1 sign per public street frontage: ➤ 50 sf max area, 12 ft max height
		<b>Integrated Development:</b> 1 multi-tenant sign per public street frontage: ➤ 80 sf max area, 20 ft max height
R&D	2 signs per establishment; 80 sf max area; Roofline is max height	No more than 1 sign per public street frontage for individual establishment or integrated development: ➤ 50 sf max area, 12 ft max height

**Table 17.16.070.2d – Rural Area Signage Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs**

<b>Miscellaneous Zone Districts</b>		
<b>Zone District</b>	<b>Allowed Signs and Development Standards in Rural Areas</b>	
	<b>Building-Attached</b>	<b>Freestanding</b>
TPZ	Not allowed	2 non-illuminated signs per parcel: ➤ 32 sf max area each, 12 ft max height
MR	Not allowed	2 non-illuminated signs per parcel: ➤ 12 sf max area each, 12 ft max height
RF	1 or more signs not exceeding a combined total of 50 sf per establishment; Max height is 6 feet above the roofline	1 non-illuminated sign per parcel: ➤ 16 sf max area, 12 ft max height
O CN	Not allowed	Not allowed

**Table 17.16.070.3 – Sign Standards for Home Occupation Signs**

	Allowed Signs and Development Standards							
	Building-Attached Signs				Freestanding Signs			
Zone District	Number Allowed	Max. Area	Max. Height	Location	Number Allowed	Max. Area	Max. Height	Location
R1 R1A R-20,000 RM	1 sign per home occupation	1 sf	N/A	Adjacent to Front Entrance	Not allowed			
R2A R3A RE-5	1 sign per home occupation	1 sf	N/A	Adjacent to front entrance	2 signs	12 sf each	6 feet	1 adjacent to residence, 1 within front setback
RE-10 Agriculture and Resource Zones	1 sign per home occupation	1 sf	N/A	Adjacent to front entrance	2 signs	12 sf each	6 feet	1 adjacent to residence, 1 within front setback

**Table 17.16.070.4 – Allowed Temporary On-Site Sign Standards**

Sign Type	Number Allowed	Max. Area	Max. Height	Minimum Setback from Right-of-Way <sup>1</sup>
<b>On-Site Subdivision and Apartment Signs<sup>1</sup></b>				
Banner	3	30 sf each	Roofline	5 feet
Entrance	1 per subdivision entrance	80 sf each	15 feet	5 feet
Model Home	1 per model home	8 sf	2 feet	5 feet
Flags	5 poles per street frontage, max 15 poles per subdivision	20 sf per pole	25 feet	5 feet
<b>All Other Uses<sup>1</sup></b>				
Banner	1 sign (any type) per establishment per street frontage	50 sf	Roofline	5 feet behind face of curb, outside of right-of-way
A-Frame		8 sf	4 feet	
<b>Notes</b>				
<sup>1</sup> Must be located outside of the required cross visibility area.				



**17.16.080 Permit Requirements and Review Procedures**

This Section describes permit requirements and review procedures applicable to all signage in the unincorporated (urban and rural) areas of the County. Signs proposed within communities that have County adopted local sign standards or guidelines shall conform to those standards/guidelines. Signs proposed within communities that have a Board appointed community design advisory committee are required to be submitted to the committee for a review of consistency with local sign standards/ guidelines.

- A. Sign Permit Required.** Planning Sign Permits shall be required for specified types of permanent signs prior to erection, relocation, alteration, or replacement, as listed in Table 17.16.080.1., unless otherwise exempted by this Chapter. Planning Sign Permits shall be processed in accordance with Chapter 17.22 (Land Use Permit Procedures).
1. No planning approvals shall be required for general maintenance of existing conforming signs or replacement of a conforming sign face (including message) when the area of the sign is not being changed, subject to Section 17.16.020 (General Sign Requirements.)
  2. Sign Permit(s) shall be required as part of the review of any discretionary application that includes proposed signage. The Sign Permit shall be in addition to the discretionary application or permit.
  3. Sign Permits are not required for the display of temporary signs. However, temporary signs shall be consistent with the development standards and time duration limits established in this Chapter.
- B. Uniform Sign Program Required.** A Uniform Sign Program shall be required for all new multi-tenant shopping centers, office parks, and other multi-tenant, mixed-use, or otherwise integrated developments of 3 or more separate tenants/uses that share structures, public spaces, landscape, and/or parking facilities. A Uniform Sign Program provides a process for the County's review of, and decisions related to, requests for signs for multi-tenant projects. The Uniform Sign Program allows for the integration of a project's signs with the design of the structures to achieve a unified architectural statement and to approve common sign regulations for multi-tenant projects. The Zoning Administrator is the decision-making authority for Uniform Sign Programs. However, if part of an application is reviewed and decided by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors, the Uniform Sign Program shall be decided by same higher-level Review Authority in conjunction with other entitlements. Deviations from the sign standards of this Chapter (Section 17.16.070) of up to 20 percent over maximum allowance are allowed through the Uniform Sign Program. Standard procedures for application submittal, review, decision, and appeal are outlined in Chapter 17.22 (Land Use Permit Procedures.)
- C. U.S. Highway 50-Oriented Signs.** A Design Review Permit shall be required for all U.S. Highway 50-Oriented signs located within 100 feet of the designated state highway. The approval of a Design Review Permit is a ministerial project pursuant to CEQA when in compliance with adopted standards set forth in Section 17.16.070.J

(Standards for U.S. Highway 50-Oriented Signs). If part of an application is reviewed and decided by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors, the Design Review Permit shall be decided by same higher-level Review Authority in conjunction with other entitlements. Standard procedures for application submittal, review, decision, and appeal are outlined Chapter 17.22 (Land Use Permit Procedures.)

- D. Subdivision Sign Permit.** A Sign Permit shall be required for all subdivision signs to ensure their locations are approved within or outside the County's right-of-way and that they are consistent with the standards under Section 17.16.070.I (Standards for Off-Site Subdivision Signs.)
- E. Variances.** Applications for a Variance from the terms of this Chapter shall be reviewed according to the Variance procedures set forth in Chapter 17.22, Section 17.22.600 (Variance).
- F. Review Procedures**
- 1. Method of Application.** An application for a Sign Permit, Uniform Sign Program, Community Sign Program, U.S. Highway 50-Oriented Sign Permit, or Variance shall be made on the form(s) prescribed by the Planning Division. The application shall be accompanied by any fees as specified by Board resolution.
  - 2. Application Review Procedures, Decisions, and Appeals.** The application review procedures, decisions, and appeals of decisions for Sign Permit, Uniform Sign Programs, Community Sign Program, U.S. Highway 50-Oriented Sign Permits, or Variances shall be as provided in Chapter 17.22 (Land Use Permit Procedures).

**Table 17.16.080.1 Planning Sign Permits and Review Authority**

<b>Planning Permit Required:</b> <b>A</b> Administrative Permit <b>DR</b> Design Review Permit <b>CUP</b> Conditional Use Permit <b>V</b> Variance	<b>P: Allowed Use - No Planning Permit Required</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>D: Development Services Director</b> <b>ZA: Zoning Administrator</b> <b>PC: Planning Commission</b> <b>BOS: Board of Supervisors</b>			
		<b>REVIEW AUTHORITY</b>			
SIGN TYPE <sup>1</sup>		D	ZA	PC	BOS
Replacement <sup>2</sup>	P				
Freestanding or Building-Attached Signs		A			
<u>Temporary On-Site Signs Including, But Not Limited To:</u> New Apartments, Grand Opening Banners, Products/Services, Special Events	P				
Off-Site Signs <sup>4</sup> : New Subdivisions		A			
US Hwy 50-Oriented Signs		DR			
Exempt Signs <sup>3</sup>	P				
Home Occupation Signs	P				
Signs Exceeding Development Standards			V		
Signs on Public Property		A			
<b>Uniform Sign Programs:</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New or Modified Uniform Sign Program</li> </ul>			CUP		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of new or replacement signs as part of an approved program</li> </ul>	P				
<b>Community Sign Programs:</b> (Directional, Identity, Event, Industry Association)					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New or Modified Community Sign Program</li> </ul>					Required <sup>5</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of new or replacement signs as part of an approved program</li> </ul>	P				
Sign(s) Proposed as Part of a Discretionary Project	Permitted with Discretionary Project				
NOTES: <sup>1</sup> All allowed signs may be subject to a building permit, as required by current Building Code. All signs requiring a building permit shall be consistent with the requirements of this Chapter. <sup>2</sup> No planning approvals shall be required for general maintenance of existing conforming signs or replacement of a legal, nonconforming sign face. <sup>3</sup> Signs exempt from a Planning Sign Permit as specifically listed or described in Section 17.16.030. All signage shall be consistent with the requirements of this Chapter. <sup>4</sup> All other off site commercial signage is prohibited, unless expressly allowed in Chapter 17.16. <sup>5</sup> The Board is the decision-making authority for all new Community Sign Programs (Section 17.16.060).					

**17.16.090 Prohibited Signs**

- A. General Prohibition.** All off-site commercial signage on private property is prohibited unless as otherwise allowed in this Chapter. Existing off-site signs (e.g., billboards) are considered nonconforming signs as regulated by Section 17.16.100 (Illegal, Abandoned, and Nonconforming Signs). Off-site signs on County property are regulated by Section 17.16.110 (Signs on County Property).
- B.** The signs listed in this Section are prohibited in all zones. Except as otherwise specifically noted herein, these prohibitions apply in all unincorporated (urban and rural) areas of the County.
1. Any sign not specifically allowed by this Chapter.
  2. Billboards as defined herein. This does not prohibit relocation agreements as authorized by state law (California Business and Professions Code Section 5412.)
  3. Roof signs or signs placed above the roofline. Except roof signs are permitted on non-residential structures within the designated rural areas of the County, consistent with the standards listed in Table 17.16.070.2 (Rural Area Signage Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs)
  4. Animated, flashing, scrolling, digital or video screen signs where the message is displayed for less than 8 seconds (dwell time) before changing to a different message.
  5. Pennants, banners, balloons, or other paraphernalia composed of paper, cloth, or other flexible material, except as otherwise allowed.
  6. Pole signs except where permitted within designated rural areas of the County, consistent with standards listed in Table 17.16.070.2 (Rural Area Signage Standards for Permanent On-Site Signs).
  7. Signs placed on the public right-of-way or affixed to an element or structure on the public right-of-way, or located on a publicly owned tree, fence, or utility pole or otherwise posted on public property, except where required by a governmental agency.
  8. Inflatable balloon signs, including, but not limited to, individual balloons, balloon strings, and other inflatable objects made of a flexible material and inflated so as to be lighter than air.
  9. Signs painted upon a fence, or free standing wall.
  10. Mobile billboard advertising displays traversing upon or parked on a public right-of-way for the primary purpose of general advertising for hire.

11. Signs attached to light standards (poles), traffic control devices, or utility poles.
12. Signs affixed to a structure or property not owned by the person or entity installing the signs, unless authorized by the written consent of the owner of the structure or property. For purposes of this provision, “owner” means any person or entity holding the immediate right of possession and control.
13. Signs that are dilapidated, abandoned, or in disrepair or dangerous condition.
14. Window signs that exceed 25 percent of any window.

#### **17.16.100 Illegal, Abandoned, and Nonconforming Signs**

**A. Illegal Signs.** Illegal signs shall be abated by the property owner or person responsible for installing or maintaining the sign.

1. The duty to abate arises upon notice by the Planning Director. Such notice shall give such parties a 30-day opportunity to cure by conformance to current law and/or current permit, to abate by removal or other remedial action.
2. Such notices may be appealed in the same manner as any other sign-related decision. However, when a sign poses a serious and immediate threat to public health or safety by virtue of its physical condition, without consideration of the message thereon, then the threat may be summarily abated by court order, or an emergency abatement should be summarily abated by the County with the reasonable cost of abatement chargeable to the sign owner and/or property owner.

**B. Abandoned Signs.** The following standards shall apply to conforming and nonconforming abandoned signs:

1. If a sign is maintained, the sign copy shall be replaced with blank sign copy within 90 days of the close of the operation (e.g., no utility service, not open for more than 2 weeks).
2. A nonconforming sign that is maintained with blank copy shall only be allowed to remain for 9 consecutive months (for a total of 12 months from closure of the establishment). At the conclusion of this time period, if a new establishment that utilizes the nonconforming sign structure has not been established, the entire sign structure shall be removed. However, within the designated rural areas of the County, the maximum timeline to maintain blank copy on a nonconforming sign shall be 24 months from establishment closure.
3. A conforming sign not in use, but which could be re-used in conjunction with the ownership or operation of a new establishment on a property, shall not fall under the definition of abandoned.

4. Abandoned signs that are not maintained or removed consistent with the requirements of this Section may be abated by the County with the cost of abatement reimbursed by the property owner and may become a lien against the property.

### C. Nonconforming Signs

1. **Removal/Abatement.** Any sign which becomes nonconforming as a result of the provisions of this Chapter shall be protected from removal by applicable provisions of state law and may be removed only as allowed by state law. The County shall order signs to be abated by the property owner and/or person or entity responsible for sign installation and/or maintenance.
2. **Maintenance and Repair.** Any sign currently in use that was legally installed but does not conform to the requirements of this Chapter may continue with routine maintenance and repair.
3. **Relocation and Alteration.** No nonconforming sign shall be moved, enlarged, or raised in height unless such relocation, alteration, or enlargement is required by law, or brings the sign into conformance with the provisions of this Chapter. Modification of a nonconforming sign may be allowed through the plan check application process so long as it is determined that there is an increase in the level of conformity of the subject nonconforming sign.
4. **Restoration of Damaged Signs.** As determined by the Director, whenever 50 percent or less of a nonconforming sign is destroyed by fire or other calamity (not including intentional acts). The sign may be restored to its nonconforming condition and the use modified as necessary to comply with current safety code requirements. Any nonconforming sign destroyed by more than 50 percent shall not be restored unless it is brought into compliance with the provisions of this Chapter.
5. **Building Façade Modifications.** If a Building Permit is issued for major modifications to the exterior of a building façade, as determined by the County, any nonconforming building signs on the façade undergoing modification shall be brought into full conformance with the provisions of this Chapter prior to approval for final occupancy.

#### 17.16.110 Signs on County Property

This Section states rules and policies for display of signs on properties owned by El Dorado County, either in fee or by holding the present right of possession and control. This Section provides the process and standards for establishing signage on County property. In adopting this Section, the Board acts in its proprietary capacity as to County property, as defined in this Section, within the county. This Section is adopted in compliance with the County's general powers, property rights, Government Code Sections 65850(b), 38774, and 38775, Business and Professions Code Section 5200, et seq., and Penal Code Section 556 et. seq.

- A. Public Forum.** The County declares that County property shall not function as a designated public forum, unless some specific portion of County property is designated herein, or by Resolution of the Board, as a public forum of one particular type. In such case, the declaration as to public forum type shall apply strictly and only to the specified area and for the specified time period. For the purposes of this chapter, a public forum is a government-owned property that is open to public expression and assembly that is protected under the First Amendment.
- B. General Prohibition.** Unless specifically authorized by this, Chapter, no private party signs may be displayed on County property. Any sign posted on County property in violation of this Section may be summarily removed by the County as a trespass and a public nuisance.
- C. Certain Governmental Signs.** The following signs may be erected and displayed on County property:
1. Traffic control and traffic directional signs erected by the County or another governmental unit;
  2. Official notices required or authorized by law;
  3. Signs placed by the County in furtherance of its governmental functions, including the dissemination of its own speech and information to the public; and
  4. Signs allowable under Subsection E of this section.
- D. Temporary Signs Displaying Noncommercial Message.** In areas qualifying as traditional public forums, private persons may display noncommercial message signs thereon, provided that such signs conform to all of the following:
1. The signs must be personally held by a person or personally attended by one or more persons. "Personally attended" means that a person is physically present within 5 feet of the sign at all times.
  2. The maximum aggregate size of all signs held or personally attended by a single person is 6 square feet. For purposes of this rule, apparel and other aspects of personal appearance do not count toward the maximum aggregate sign area.
  3. The maximum size of any one sign which is held or personally attended by 2 or more persons acting in concert is 50 square feet.
  4. The sign must have no more than 2 display faces and may not be inflatable, inflated or air-activated.

5. In order to serve the County’s interests in traffic flow and safety, persons displaying signs under this Section may not stand in any vehicular traffic or bicycle lane, and persons displaying signs on public sidewalks must give at least 5 feet width clearance for pedestrians to pass by. Persons holding signs may not obstruct the “cross visibility area,” as defined in the Design Improvement Standards Manual.
  6. The message substitution policy as described in Section 17.16.020, applies only to traditional public forum areas.
- E. Off-Site Signage in Designated Rural Areas.** Within designated rural areas of the County, off-site commercial signs are allowed with limitations listed or approved by the Board as outlined below.
1. Board approved Industry Association Sign Programs, as listed in Section 17.16.060 (Community Sign Programs).
    - a. Signs located on County property along the street shall be located so as not to obscure vision or create other public safety hazards as determined by the Community Development Agency, Director of the Transportation Division, and;
    - b. Signs located on County property may require an encroachment permit as determined by the Community Development Agency, Director of the Transportation Division.
- F. Relocation of Off-Site Billboards.** Notwithstanding the prohibition on billboards in Section 17.16.090.B.2, pursuant to state law, the Board may approve agreements for relocation of existing billboards to County owned land.

### 17.16.120 Definitions

As used in this Chapter, the terms below are defined as follows:

**Abandoned Sign.** Any display or sign remaining in place or not maintained which no longer identifies an ongoing business, product, or service available on the premises where the display or sign is located or where the structure or establishment to which the display or sign is related has ceased operation, or have not been updated upon occupancy of a new establishment.

**A-Frame Sign.** A portable sign capable of standing without support or attachment and sometimes referred to as a “sandwich board”. Such signs typically resemble the letter “A”, but may also resemble the letters “T” (upright or inverted) or “U” or “H” and are hinged or designed to fold up for easy moving by hand. See Figure 17.16.120.A.

**Figure 17.16.120.A**  
**A-Frame Sign**





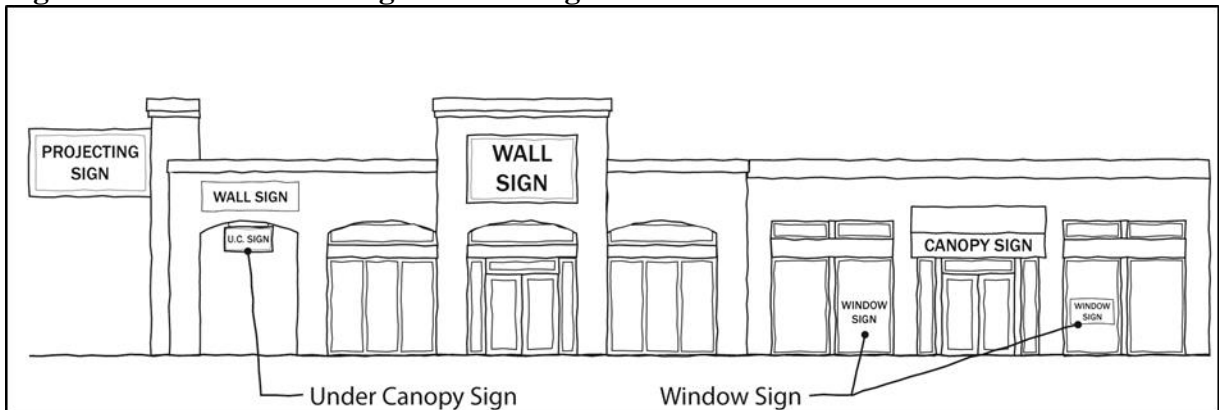
**Animated Sign.** Any sign that uses movement or change of lighting to depict action or movement of visual elements.

**Billboard.** A sign which meets any one or more of the following criteria: 1) a sign structure which is used for the display of off-site commercial messages; 2) a sign structure which constitutes a principal, separate, or secondary use, as opposed to an accessory use, of the parcel on which it is located; 3) an outdoor sign used as general advertising for hire, e.g., on which display space is made available to parties other than the owner or operator of the sign or occupant of the parcel (not including those who rent space from the sign owner, when such space is on the same parcel or is the same development as the sign), in exchange for a rent, fee, or other consideration; or 4) an off-site outdoor advertising sign on which space is leased or rented.

**Blade/Bracket Sign.** A small, pedestrian-oriented sign that projects perpendicular from a structure (including fences, posts, and railings).

**Building-Attached Sign.** A sign placed on a wall or canopy, projecting from a wall, or hung underneath a canopy or overhang structure, or placed in a window. This sign category includes wall signs, canopy signs, projecting signs, under canopy signs, and window signs as defined herein. See Figure 17.16.120.B.

**Figure 17.16.120.B Building-Attached Signs**



**Can Sign.** A type of sign which contains all the text and/or logo symbols within a single enclosed cabinet that is mounted to a wall or other surface. Such sign structures typically use slide in panels to display the message to the public. See Figure 17.16.120.C.

**Canopy Sign.** Any sign that is a part of or attached to an awning, canopy, or other fabric, plastic, or structural protective cover (excluding a marquee) over an actual or faux door, entrance, window, or outdoor service area. See Figure 17.16.120.B (Building-Attached Sign).

**Figure 17.16.120.C  
Can Sign**



**Changeable Copy Sign.** A sign or portion thereof with characters, letters, or illustrations that can be changed or rearranged manually without altering the face or surface of the sign. See Figure 17.16.120.D.

**Channel Letter Sign.** A type of sign comprising individual letters that are independently mounted to a wall or other surface with a covered face. The “air space” between the letters is the building façade. A logo may also be considered a channel letter provided it is clearly distinguishable from other sign elements. See Figure 17.16.120.E.

**Commercial Message.** Any sign, wording, logo, or other representation that names or advertises an establishment, product, service, or other commercial activity, primarily concerns the economic interest of the message sponsor or audience, or which proposes a commercial transaction.

**Community Sign.** A sign located on private property or County-maintained roads or rights-of-way (per Section 17.16.110) that is part of a County-authorized and coordinated program to provide the public with information and guidance concerning public accommodations, facilities, commercial services, events, and points of scenic, cultural, historic, educational, recreational, religious interest, and other local community destinations as designated and recognized by a Community Sign Program.

**Construction Site Sign.** A temporary sign mounted or displayed on the site of a construction project during the time when actual physical construction is ongoing.

**Copy.** The words, letters, numbers, figures, designs, or other symbolic representations incorporated into the visually communicative elements of a sign.

**Digital Display.** Display methods utilizing Light Emitting Diode (LED), Liquid Crystal Display (LCD), Plasma, projected images, or any functionally equivalent technology, and which is capable of automated remote or computer control to change the image, either in a “slide show” manner (series of still images), or full motion animation, or flashing, blinking or intermittent light, or any combination of them. Also known as dynamic signs, and Commercial Electronic Variable Message Signs (CEVMS).

**Digital Sign.** See Electronic (Digital) Message Sign

**Directional Sign.** Any sign (building-attached or freestanding) intended to be permanently affixed and utilized only for the purpose of indicating the direction of any object, place, or area.

**Figure 17.16.120.D**  
**Changeable Copy Sign**



**Figure 17.16.120.E**  
**Channel Letter Sign**



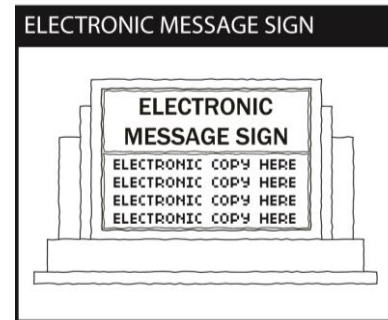
**Directory Sign.** A pedestrian-oriented sign that identifies or lists the names and locations of tenants at a multi-tenant site.

**Display Face.** See Sign Face.

**Dwell Time.** The number of seconds an electronic (digital) message is displayed before changing to a different message.

**Electronic (Digital) Message Sign.** An electronic sign, typically comprising a liquid crystal diode (LCD), light-emitting diode (LED), plasma, or other digital illuminated display that contains one or more messages. An electronic message sign is different from an illuminated sign in that the illumination of the display creates the message, rather than an internal or external light source illuminating the message. See Figure 17.16.120.F.

**Figure 17.16.120.F Electronic (Digital) Message Sign**



**Establishment.** Any legal use of land, other than long-term residential, which involves the use of structures subject to the Building Code. By way of example and not limitation, this definition includes businesses, factories, farms, schools, hospitals, hotels, and motels, offices and libraries, but does not include single-family homes, mobile homes, residential apartments, or residential condominiums. Multi-units housing developments are considered establishments during the time of construction; individual units are not within the meaning of establishment once a certificate of occupancy has been issued or full-time residency begins.

**Exempt Sign.** A sign that is not subject to a plan check approval or a sign that is not subject to a sign permit.

**Flag.** Any fabric, banner, or bunting containing distinctive colors, patterns, or design that displays the symbol(s) of a nation, state, local government, company, organization, belief system, idea, or other meaning.

**Freestanding Sign.** A permanent sign that is self-supporting in a fixed location and not attached to a building. A freestanding sign can be connected or attached to a sign structure, fence, or wall that is not an integral part of a building. Freestanding signs include, but are not limited to, monument/pylon signs and pole signs as described in this section.

**Gas Pricing Signs.** Signs identifying the brand, type, octane rating, etc., of gasoline for sale, as required by state law.

**Highway-Oriented (U.S. Highway 50 only) Sign.** An on-site freestanding sign structure (single or multi-tenant identification) located on property within 100 feet of U.S. Highway 50 that are outside of the officially designated scenic corridor for which a U.S. Highway 50 Oriented Sign Permit is issued.

**Home Occupation Sign.** A sign located at a residence advertising a business or profession legally conducted in the residence.

**Illegal Sign.** A sign which is not lawfully permitted in accordance with current adopted regulations.

**Illuminated Sign.** A sign with an artificial light source incorporated internally or externally for the purpose of illuminating the sign; includes signs made from neon or other gas tube(s) that are bent to form letters, symbols, or other shapes. An illuminated sign excludes electronic (digital) message signs, which are separately defined.

**Inflatable Balloon Sign.** A sign consisting of balloons and inflatables made of latex, metallic and/or cloth material, regardless of the size that is used, for the purpose of attracting attention.

**Integrated Development.** A property or combination of properties containing 3 or more separate tenants and which share common parking, driveway, and access areas.

**Legal Nonconforming Sign.** A sign that was lawfully erected but that does not comply with the provisions of this Chapter.

**Marquee.** Any permanent roofed structure projecting over public property or right-of-way attached to and supported by a building.

**Menu/Order Board Sign.** A sign installed in a drive-through facility and oriented so as to be visible primarily by drive-through customers.

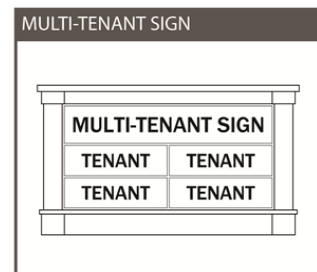
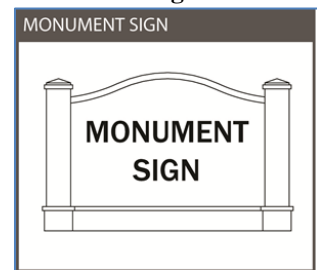
**Monument Sign.** A freestanding sign detached from a building and having a support structure with a base that appears to be solid and is constructed of permanent material, such as concrete block or brick. This sign type also includes multi-tenant signs. See Figure 17.16.120 .G.

**Mural.** A painted or otherwise attached or adhered image or representation on the exterior of a structure that is visible from a public right-of-way or neighboring property, does not contain commercial advertisement (is noncommercial in nature), and is designed in a manner so as to serve as public art, to enhance public space, and to provide inspiration.

**Noncommercial Message.** A message that addresses topics of public debate and concern. By way of example and not limitation, such messages often express opinions and views on subjects such as religion, politics, commentary on the arts or sports, or protests.

**Off-Site Sign.** Any sign not located on the premises of the establishment indicated or advertised by such sign. This definition shall include, but not be limited to billboards, poster panels, painted bulletins, and other similar advertising displays.

**Figure 17.16.120.G  
Monument Sign**



**On-Site Sign.** A sign directing attention to an establishment, commodity, service, or entertainment conducted, sold, or offered upon the same property as that upon which the sign is maintained.

**Painted Sign.** A sign that comprises only paint applied on a structure.

**Pennant.** Any lightweight plastic, fabric, or other material, whether or not containing a message of any kind, attached to a rope, wire, or string, usually in a series, designed to move in the wind and attract attention.

**Permanent Sign.** A sign that is entirely constructed out of durable materials, is fixed in place, and is intended to exist for more than 120 days.

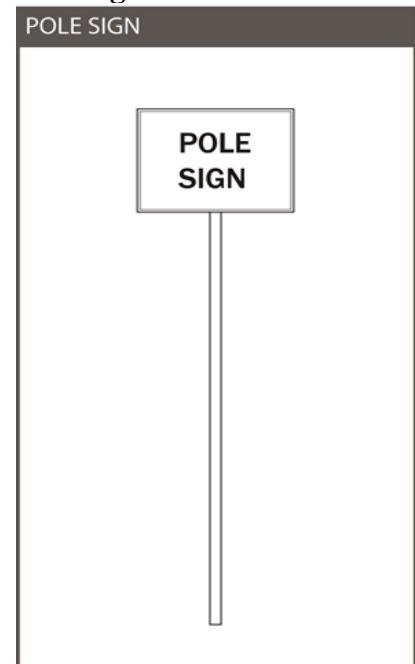
**Pole Sign.** A freestanding sign detached from a building and supported by one or more structural elements that are either: (a) architecturally dissimilar to the design of the sign; or (b) less than one-quarter the width of the sign face. See Figure 17.16.120.H. (Freestanding signs constructed with poles as the substructure where the poles are encased to incorporate design features are not considered pole signs.)

**Portable Sign.** Any sign not permanently attached to the ground or other permanent structure, or a sign designed to be transported. Portable signs include, but are not limited to, signs designed to be transported by means of wheels, A-frame signs, menu and sandwich board signs, and umbrellas used for advertising. Clothing or other aspects of personal appearance are not within this definition.

**Projecting Sign.** A sign attached to and extending outward from the face of a structure. Includes, but is not limited to, a blade/bracket sign, or marquee sign. See Figure 17.16.120.B (Building-Attached Signs).

**Pushpin Letter Sign.** A type of sign comprising individual letters that are independently mounted to a wall or other surface. Such sign may be illuminated by an external light source, such as pendant lighting. The “air space” between the letters is the building façade. See Figure 17.16.120.I.

**Figure 17.16.120.H  
Pole Sign**



**Figure 17.16.120.I  
Pushpin Sign**



**Pylon Sign.** A freestanding sign detached from a building and having a support structure with a base that appears to be solid and is constructed of permanent material, such as concrete block or brick. See Figure 17.16.120.J.

**Raceway (Sign).** A sign channel for protecting and holding electrical wires and cables, especially a metal rectangular tube used for such purposes.

**Real Estate Sign.** A temporary sign advertising the sale or lease or other economic transaction involving real property. All signs described in Civil Code 713 are within this definition.

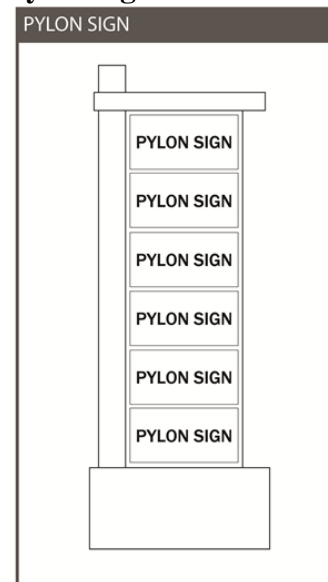
**Roof Sign.** A sign erected, constructed, painted, or placed upon or over a roof or parapet wall of a building and which is wholly or partly supported by the building or roof structure.

**Sign Face.** That area or portion of a sign on which copy is intended to be placed.

**Sign.** Any device, structure, fixture, or placard displaying graphics, symbols, and/or written copy for the primary purpose of communicating with the public. The following do not fall within the definition of a “sign” for purposes of this Chapter:

- a. Architectural or decorative features of buildings (not including lettering, trademarks, or moving parts).
- b. Fireworks, candles, and artificial lighting. The legal use of fireworks, candles, and artificial lighting not otherwise regulated by this Chapter.
- c. Graphic images that are visible only from above, such as those visible only from airplanes or helicopters, but only if not visible from the street surface or public right-of-way.
- d. Gravestones and grave markers.
- e. Holiday and cultural observance decorations that are on display for not more than 45 calendar days per year (per parcel or use) and which do not include commercial advertising messages.
- f. Interior signs or other visual communicative devices that are located entirely within a building or other enclosed structure and are not visible from the exterior thereof, or located at least 3 feet from the window on the interior of the structure.
- g. Manufacturers’ marks on tangible products that identify the maker, seller, provider, or product and which customarily remain attached to the product even after sale.

**Figure 17.16.120.J**  
**Pylon Sign**



- h. Mass transit graphic images mounted on trains or duly licensed mass transit vehicles that legally pass through the county.
- i. Murals, painted or otherwise attached or adhered image or representation on the exterior of a structure that is visible from a public right-of-way or neighboring property, does not contain commercial advertisement (is noncommercial in nature), and is designed in a manner so as to serve as public art, to enhance public space, and to provide inspiration
- j. News racks and newsstands.
- k. Personal appearance items or devices of personal apparel, decoration, or appearance, including, but not limited to, tattoos, makeup, wigs, costumes, and masks.
- l. Shopping carts, golf carts, and horse-drawn carriages.
- m. Symbols embedded in architecture such as symbols of noncommercial organizations or concepts including, but not limited to, religious or political symbols, when such are permanently integrated into the structure of a building; the definition also includes foundation stones and cornerstones.
- n. Vehicle and vessel insignia as shown on street-legal vehicles and properly licensed watercraft including, but not limited to, license plates, license plate frames, registration insignia, noncommercial messages, messages relating to the business of which the vehicle or vessel is an instrument or tool (not including general advertising for hire), and messages relating to the proposed sale, lease, or exchange of the vehicle or vessel.
- o. Vending machines that do not display off-site commercial messages or general advertising messages.

**Subdivision Sign.** A temporary or otherwise limited-term sign for the purpose of providing direction for vehicular and/or pedestrian traffic to the new home sale of multiple lots or dwelling units with a single builder within a master planned community, including both single-family and multi-family for-sale products. All other home sales signs are included within the definition of real estate sign.

**Temporary Promotional Sign.** Any sign displaying a commercial/promotional message, pennant, streamer, banner, beacon, bunting material, or other similar nonpermanent sign made of paper, cloth, canvas, lightweight fabric, or other non-rigid material, with or without frames, whether displayed as freestanding, wall-mounted, pole-mounted, window-mounted, or painted, or any other method of attachment, or beacon, which is intended to be displayed for a limited period of time.

**Temporary Sign.** A sign used for the public display of visual messages or images, which is easily installed with or without common hand tools, and which is not intended or suitable for long-term or permanent display (e.g., less than 120 days), due to lightweight or flimsy construction materials. Examples include, but are not limited to, A-frame signs, banners, pennants, streamers, or similar nonpermanent signs made of paper, cloth, canvas, lightweight

fabric, or other non-rigid material, with or without frames. Any device that meets the definition of a “structure” in the building code is not within this definition.

**Under Canopy Sign.** A pedestrian-oriented sign hung from underneath an awning, canopy or overhang structure/breezeway. See Figure 17.16.120.B (Building-Attached Signs).

**Wall Sign.** A sign attached to or erected against the wall of a building or structure with the exposed face of the sign parallel to the plane of such wall. See Figure 17.16.120.B (Building-Attached Signs).

**Window Sign.** Any permanent or temporary sign, picture, letter, character, or combination thereof, designed to communicate information about an activity, business, commodity, event, sale, or service that is placed upon and/or inside and/or within 3 feet of a window for the purpose of being visible from the exterior of the window. See Figure 17.16.120.B (Building-Attached Signs).