

WHAT IS THE OFFICIAL DEFINITION OF SIGN?

The City of Rensselaer Zoning Law defines a sign as: "Any material, structure or device, or part thereof, composed of lettered or pictorial material which is located out of doors, on the exterior of any building including illuminated window signs over two square feet in area located within three feet of the window surface and intended to be viewed from the exterior of the building, displaying an advertisement, announcement, notice or name, and includes sign frames, billboards, signboards, painted wall signs, hanging signs, and shall include any declaration, demonstration, display illustration or insignia used to advertise or promote the interests of any person or business or cause when the same is places in view of the general public.

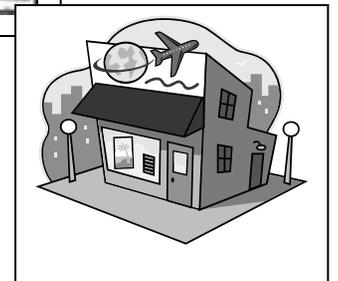
This brochure is for informational purposes only. For additional information regarding business signs, please contact the Planning and Building Department at (518) 465-1693.



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
BUILDING & ZONING DEPARTMENT
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(518) 465-2031 Fax

ALL YOU EVER WANTED
TO KNOW* ABOUT.....

BUSINESS SIGNS IN THE CITY OF RENSSELAER



* but were afraid to ask

WHY DOES THE CITY REGULATE SIGNS?

The city provides standards for the design, manufacture and installation of signs in order to promote aesthetically attractive signs which present clearly the intended communication and that is compatible with its surroundings.

“The character and quality of a community are affected by the location, size, construction and graphics of its signs...signs should convey their messages in a distinctive manner that enhances its environs”.

- Rensselaer Zoning Code

ARE FREESTANDING SIGNS PERMITTED?

Freestanding signs, signs mounted on the ground or a pole rather than on a building, are not permitted in any zoning district except the Columbia Street overlay. However, even in the Columbia Street overlay, signs must be mounted on suitable structures. No sign may be attached to a fence, free or utility post. If you are located in the Columbia Street Overlay (on the south side of Columbia Street, roughly between Academy and Aiken), please visit the Building Department for more information on freestanding signs.

DO I NEED A BUILDING PERMIT TO PUT UP A SIGN?

YES, you need a building permit before doing any work to a building, including erecting a sign. Building permits are issued by the Building

Inspector in the Department of Planning and Building at City Hall, 62 Washington St., Second Floor. Office hours are 8:30am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

HOW LARGE CAN MY SIGN BE?

The zoning ordinance specifies the total amount of signage permitted for any single property or lot. If there is more than one sign on a property (for one or more businesses), the total area of signage is limited by this total. The size limit for each lot is determined by lot frontage (the width of your property on the street) and depends on the zoning district in which you are located.

In the *Local Business (LB), Local Business 2 (LB2), and Historic Commercial (HC) zoning districts*: 1/2 square foot of signage is permitted per foot of lot frontage, not to exceed 30 square feet.

In the *Commercial Industrial (CI) zoning district*, 1 square foot of signage is permitted per foot of lot frontage, not to exceed 60 square feet.

In the *Industrial (I) zoning district*, 1 square foot of signage is permitted per foot of lot frontage, not to exceed 100 square feet.

IS THERE A LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF SIGNS?

YES. No more than two signs are permitted on any premises, and the total area of all signs on a single property must not be greater than the limit specified above.

DOES LETTERING ON A CANOPY OR AWNING COUNT AS A SIGN?

A canopy or awning that displayed letters, numbers (other than the street address) or symbols is considered a sign. Furthermore,

lettering is only permitted on awnings or canopies located on the lowest floor occupied by the business or service it is announcing.

WHAT MATERIALS CAN I USE?

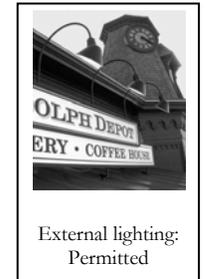
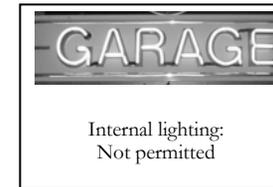
Signs must be constructed of wood, metal or other durable material approved by the Building and Zoning Administrator.

CAN MY SIGN MOVE?

Signs may not move, flutter or revolve, either by wind (ie streamers, banner, etc.) or by mechanical means (ie rotating or revolving signs)

CAN MY SIGN BE LIT?

Signs in commercial districts can be lit with a constant light from the exterior only. Internally lit signs are not permitted, nor are blinking signs.



WHAT ABOUT TEMPORARY SIGNS?

Temporary signs, including political posters and event banners, are permitted for a maximum of 30 days without a permit or fee as long as they meet the following criteria:

- do not obscure or impair traffic;
- are not attached to fences, trees, utility poles or regulatory signs;
- do not represent a commercial product, activity or enterprise;
- do not exceed 30 square feet.