

SIGNS

Summary

Businesses and residents that wish to erect, remodel, enlarge, move, alter, operate or maintain signs within the city limits must comply with the applicable design guidelines of the City of Durango's [Land Use and Development Code \(LUDC\)](#).

Signage is regulated to ensure that business signs effectively advertise locations and do not detract visually from the character of City neighborhoods, create a nuisance, or distract motorists and pedestrians. The proliferation or disrepair of signs undermines the effectiveness of business and public safety signage, causes conflicts with traffic-control signs and signals, and contributes to visual pollution to the detriment of the general public. The City's sign regulations are designed to ensure that signage enhances Durango's aesthetic appeal, meets the identification and advertising needs of businesses, and ensures the health, safety and welfare of residents and visitors.

Applicable LUDC Code Sections

[Division 3-6-1: Purpose and Applicability](#)

[Division 3-6-2: Administration and Procedures](#)

[Division 3-6-3: General Sign Requirements](#)

[Division 3-6-4: Permitted Sign Types](#)

[Division 3-6-5: Place-Based Standards](#)

[Division 3-6-6: Design, Installation and Maintenance](#)

Fee & Required Materials

The application fee is \$50 for a Sign Permit, \$250 for Alternative Compliance, and \$250 for a Master Sign Program or Amendment.

The following materials are required as part of a complete application for a Sign Permit.

1. A completed [Sign Permit Application](#).
2. Required fee. (Make checks payable to City of Durango)
3. A scaled drawing, photograph or rendering of the proposed signs, including colors, fonts, and other design features.
4. Drawings, pictures or renderings of the property and building(s) showing proposed sign locations and location context.
5. Any additional materials, which in the opinion of the Administrator, are necessary to adequately review the application.

Procedural Summary

Signs that comply with the Design Guidelines, Sign Standards and an existing Master Sign Program (if applicable) can be administratively approved by Planning staff. In order to receive an administrative approval, applicants must submit all required materials to the Community Development Department.

Master Sign Program applications are reviewed by the Design Review Board and require additional materials.

Signs proposed for properties on East 3rd Avenue need to meet the LUDC standards and the East Third Avenue Historic District Design Guidelines. Signs located on properties that have been designated as City of Durango Historic Landmarks shall receive approval from the Historic Preservation Board.

Once an application is approved, a permit will be issued and the signage may be erected in accordance with the reviewed plans.

BASIC SIGN STANDARDS

Colors and Materials - Signs shall be in character with the material, color and architectural detail of the building. Background colors shall be muted earth tones. Bright colors are only allowed for lettering and logos. Reflective materials are not allowed in the downtown area.

Location - Signs must meet the applicable setback requirements for that particular zone. Signs cannot extend above the roof-line of a building, and may not be located in the public right-of-way without an approved [R-O-W permit](#).

Visibility - Signs shall not block traffic visibility. If a sign is located near an intersection or driveway, specific visibility rules apply.

Number of Signs - No more than four (4) signs requiring a sign permit shall be allowed on any one parcel unless approved by a Master Sign Program.

Sign Area Calculation - All sign faces shall be included in the sign area. A freestanding sign counts as one (1) sign but may have multiple sign faces that all count towards sign area. Sign area shall be calculated by enclosing all parts of the sign face in the simplest geometric form possible.

Master Sign Programs (MSP) - Properties that contain multiple businesses and need more than four (4) signs require a MSP. A MSP can provide for additional signs and square footage. Refer to LUDC Sec. 3-6-2-4.

Projecting (Blade) Signs - If extending over the public right-of-way, these signs shall maintain 8.5 ft of pedestrian clearance and obtain a [R-O-W permit](#).

Window Signs - For public safety and aesthetic reasons, window signs shall not cover more than 25% of a window or be illuminated.

Indirect (External) Illumination - External light fixtures must be downcast with a full cut-off, dark sky compliant shield over the light source.

Internal Illumination - Signs that are internally illuminated must have opaque backgrounds such that only the lettering and logos are illuminated. Internal illumination is only permitted in some zones.

SPECIAL SIGNS

Temporary Signs - Banners, small portable signs, site signs and yard signs are all examples of temporary signs. See [LUDC 3-6-4-2](#) for more details.

- **Banners** - Must be registered prior to display. Each business can display a banner a maximum of six (6) times per year, for fourteen (14) consecutive days at a time. Banners can be registered at: www.durangogov.org/banners.
- **Small Portable Signs** - Also known as sandwich boards or A-frames, small portable signs may be allowed on sidewalks if requirements are met and a [R-O-W permit](#) is obtained.

Banners over Main Avenue - Require a special permit. Please contact the Community Events Administrator at (970) 375-7325.

Authorized without a Permit - Signs that are exempt from sign permits are found in [LUDC Section 3-6-3-1](#).

Prohibited Signs - Signs that are prohibited are found in [LUDC Sec. 3-6-3-2](#). Prohibited types include those that are electronic, wind-driven, inflatable, may be confused with traffic control devices, or posted on public property.

Contact Information: Questions and other inquiries can be directed to the City of Durango Community Development Department by calling (970) 375-4850, emailing planning@durangogov.org, or visiting River City Hall at 1235 Camino del Rio.