



**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
CODE ENFORCEMENT**

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### **What is a sign?**

“Sign” is defined in the Edmonds Community Development Code as any structure, device or fixture that is visible from a public place, that incorporates graphics, symbols, or written copy for the purpose of conveying a particular message to public observers, including wall graphics or identification structures.

### **When is a sign permit required?**

A permit is required for the installation of new signs (monument, cabinet, pole, etc.), wall graphics or identification structures. Please contact a Development Services Technician or check the City of Edmonds website for more information. Also, please see the technical public handout “commercial signs”.

### **What signs are exempt from a permit?**

- Replacing the panel on a previously permitted existing wall cabinet or pole sign with no location change.
- Repainting an existing permitted wood sign with no location change.
- Painted window signs.
  - Please note that even though a permit is not required for painted windows, the square footage used is included in the “maximum area” calculation.

# COMMERCIAL SIGNS

### **How are signs regulated?**

Signs are regulated by:

- Maximum area
- Height
- Location
- Number
- Type
- Design (color and graphics)
  - Signs that do not meet all of the standards in ECDC20.60 also require Architectural Design Board (ADB) approval. Please see the appropriate ADB public handout.

### **Where can I find the sign code?**

The Edmonds Community Development Code (ECDC) can be found at Development Services, the local library and on the City’s website ([edmondswa.gov](http://edmondswa.gov)). The Sign Code is Chapter 20.60.

### **What is a sign code violation?**

The most common examples of sign violations:

- Signs installed without a permit.
- A-Frame (sandwich board) signs outside the BC and CW Zones.
- Signs on utility poles (RCW 70.54.090).
- Signs exceeding maximum area and number.
- Off-premises signs (some examples below).

### **Why regulate signs?**

ECDC 20.60 regulates the size, character, and aesthetics of signs. The purpose of the Edmonds sign code is to:

- Protect the public right-of-way from obstructions which would impair the public’s use of their right-of-way.

- Minimize the hazard to the public represented by distractions to drivers from moving, blinking, or other similar forms of signage or visual clutter.
- Provide for distinct signage for each distinct property.
- Encourage the use of graphics/symbols to reduce the visual clutter associated with overly large letters or extensive use of lettering.
- Minimize potential for view blockage and visual clutter along public right-of-way.

## **Real Estate and Campaign Sign Codes**

### **Real estate sign code ECDC 20.60.065**

- A. On-premises real estate signs are permitted as a form of temporary signage, subject to the following requirements.
- B. Off-premises real estate signs are permitted as a form of temporary signage, subject to the following requirements:
  1. Two and only two types of off-premises real estate signs shall be permitted:
    - a. An off-premises real estate directional sign is a sign displaying a directional arrow and either a company or logo, or an indication that the property is for sale by its owner, and installed for the purpose of directing the public to the property.
    - b. An off-premises open house sign is a form of temporary off-premises sign indicating the property is currently open for viewing.
  2. All off-premises real estate shall be posted in accordance with the regulations set forth in ECDC 20.60.080(B).
  3. The maximum number of off-premises real estate signs allowed per property shall only be the number reasonably necessary to direct people to the premises. An agent or owner shall be permitted no more than one off-premises real estate directional sign per intersection and five in total. No more than one off-premises open house sign shall be displayed per intersection and no more than five in total.
    - a. Each off-premises real estate directional sign shall bear a legible tag located on

the sign or supporting post indicating the date of posting and the address of the property to which it pertains.

- b. Off-premises real estate open house signs shall only be posted during daylight hours when the real estate agent or owner is in attendance at the property for sale or rent, and shall be removed immediately upon the termination of an "open house" or other similar property display event.
4. No off-premises real estate signs shall be fastened to any traffic control device, public structure, fence, rock, tree or shrub.
- C. All on-premises and all off-premises real estate directional signs shall be removed within seven days after the closing of the sale or lease of real property to which the sign pertains [Ord. 3461 § 2, 2003].

### **Campaign Sign Code**

#### **ECDC 20.60.060**

- A. On-premises campaign signs are permitted as a form of temporary signage in all zones, subject to the maximum sign size limitations set forth in "ECDC 20.60.080.
- B. Off-premises campaign signs are permitted as a form of temporary signage in the public right-of-way; provided, that the following requirements are met:
  1. All campaign signs shall be posted in accordance with the regulations set forth in ECDC 20.60.080(B).
  2. All off-premises campaign signs shall be posted and displayed no earlier than upon declaration of candidacy in accordance with Chapter 29.15 RCW, or other formal registration or certification of the candidate, party, initiative, referendum or other ballot issue for an upcoming election, or 60 days prior to the election, whichever time period is greater.
- C. There is no maximum number of off-premises campaign signs that may be posted. [Ord. 3461 § 2, 2003].