

SIGNS

Summary

Businesses and residents that wish to erect, remodel, enlarge, move, alter, operate or maintain signs within the city limits must obtain a permit and follow the Land Use and Development Code (LUDC) and applicable design guidelines of the City of Durango. Those out of compliance with signage regulations and design guidelines or without the required permit will be subject to the penalties prescribed in the Signage sections of the City of Durango [Land Use and Development Code](#).

Signage is regulated in the City of Durango in order 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.

The City of Durango Community Development Department is charged with regulating signage in the City. Please contact the Department in River City Hall, 1235 Camino Del Rio, or at (970) 375-4850 for if you have questions about signage.

Applicable Sections of Code

[Division 3-6-1: Purpose and Application of Article](#)

[Division 3-6-2: Standards for Permanent Signs](#)

[Division 3-6-3: Standards for Temporary Signs](#)

Fee & Required Materials

The application fee for a Sign Permit is \$50.

The application fee for a Sign Variance is \$250.

The application fee for a Master Sign Program is \$250.

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

1. A completed [Sign 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 Regulations and an existing Master Sign Program can be administratively approved by planning staff. In order to receive an administrative approval, applicants must bring all required materials to the Community Development Department.

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

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

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

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, and shall not be located in the public right of way. Signs cannot extend above the roofline of a building.

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

Number of Signs - A maximum of four (4) individual signs, which require sign permits, are allowed on one parcel of land. Signs less than six (6) square feet and exempt signs do not count towards the maximum number of signs, but they do count towards the total sign area for a parcel.

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 should be calculated by enclosing all parts of the sign face in the simplest geometric form possible.

Master Sign Programs (MSP) - Properties which contain multiple businesses and need more than four (4) signs will need a MSP. A MSP can provide for additional signs and square footage. Refer to [LUDC Sec. 3-6-2-5.F.](#)

Projecting (Blade) Signs - Shall maintain eight and a half (8 ½) feet of clearance over any public right of way.

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

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

Internal Illuminated – Signs that are illuminated from the inside shall have opaque backgrounds so only the lettering and logos are illuminated. Internal illumination is not allowed in certain areas.

SPECIAL SIGNS

Banners - Banners are considered temporary signs. They are not allowed if a parcel of land has already used up their maximum sign area. Banners and other temporary signs may remain in place for seven (7) days out of every thirty (30) days and shall be a maximum of thirty-two (32) square feet. 'Grand Opening' banners are allowed for fourteen (14) days. Temporary signs do not require a permit.

Banners over Main Avenue - Require a special permit from the Community Events Supervisor (970)375-7331.

Vehicle Signs - Signs may be located on vehicles if they are placed on the door or side panel and advertise a single business. They shall not be located on or attached to the vehicle roof.

Seasonal Businesses - Signs for seasonal businesses shall not exceed six (6) square feet each.

Portable Signs (A-Frames) – Shall receive approval by the DRB and shall be located on private property.

Exempt Signs - Signs that are exempt from sign permits are found in [LUDC Section 3-6-2-2.](#)

Prohibited Signs – Signs that are prohibited are found in [LUDC Sec. 3-6-2-1.](#) Including but not limited to animated signs, signs that may be confused with traffic control devices, wind driven signs, tent signs, signs posted on public property and inflatable signs.

Contact Information

Questions and other inquiries can be directed to the City of Durango Community Development Department—Planning Division at (970) 375-4850 or by visiting River City Hall at 1235 Camino del Rio, Durango, CO during normal business hours.

SIGN STANDARDS HANDOUT
Does Not Pertain to Master Sign Programs (MSP)

Location	Setbacks (from property lines)	Allowable Height (measured from ground)	Signs Per Parcel	Total Area/Parcel (square feet)	Area by Allowed Sign Type* (includes different types of sign levels)	Illumination	Prohibited Sign Types
Commercial Corridor Standards							
Downtown Main Avenue	5' (Must also comply with sight distance and visibility requirements of Division 4-2-2.	12 ft Monument	4	2 s.f. / linear ft of street frontage (200 s.f. max)	Freestanding 150 s.f. max (3/4 s.f. per street frontage length) Wall/Awning 150 s.f. total for all Projecting 50 s.f. max (1/2 s.f. per linear ft of building facade) Window 25% of window area max	Indirect Only	Pole, Flashing Animated Internally Illuminated
Downtown East Second Avenue	5' (Must also comply with sight distance and visibility requirements of Division 4-2-2.	12 ft Monument	4	2 s.f. / linear ft of street frontage (200 s.f. max)	Freestanding 150 s.f. max (3/4 s.f. per street frontage length) Wall/Awning 150 s.f. total for all Projecting 50 s.f. max (1/2 s.f. per linear ft of building facade) Window 25% of window area max	Indirect Only	Pole, Flashing Animated Internally Illuminated
Downtown Camino del Rio	5' (Must also comply with sight distance and visibility requirements of Division 4-2-2.	12 ft Monument	4	100 s.f.	Level 1 70 s.f. (Monument, includes all sides) Level 2 20 s.f. each (Wall, Projecting or Awning) Level 3 6 s.f. (Window or Directory) Window 25% of window area max	Indirect Internal (Opaque Background)	Pole Flashing Animated
Downtown River Corridor Overlay Zone	5' (Must also comply with sight distance and visibility requirements of Division 4-2-2.	12 ft Monument	4	100 s.f.	Level 1 60 s.f. (Monument, includes all sides) Level 2 20 s.f. each (Wall, Projecting or Awning) Level 3 6 s.f. (Window or Directory) Window 25% of window area max	Indirect Only	Pole, Flashing Animated, Internally Illuminated, Visible from the River Viewshed
North Main Avenue Corridor (from the River north)	5 ft front 0 ft side/rear (5 ft min if provided) 10 ft adjacent to residential	12 ft Monument	4	100 s.f.	Level 1 (Monument) - 60 s.f. (includes all sides) Level 2 (Wall, Projecting or Awning) - 20 s.f. Level 3 (Window or Directory) - 6 s.f. Window - 25% of window area (max)	Indirect Internal (Opaque Background)	Pole Flashing Animated
8th Avenue and College Drive Corridors	5 ft front 0 ft side/rear (5 ft min if provided) 10 ft adjacent to residential	12 ft Monument	4	100 s.f.	Level 1 (Monument) - 60 s.f. (includes all sides) Level 2 (Wall, Projecting or Awning) - 20 s.f. Level 3 (Window or Directory) - 6 s.f. Window - 25% of window area (max)	Indirect Internal (Opaque Background)	Pole Flashing Animated
Highway 160 West Corridor	5 ft front 0 ft side/rear (5 ft min if provided) 10 ft adjacent to residential	12 ft Monument	4	150 s.f.	Level 1 (Monument) - 80 s.f. (includes all sides) Level 2 (Wall, Projecting or Awning) - 25 s.f. Level 3 (Window or Directory) - 6 s.f. Window - 25% of window area (max)	Indirect Internal (Opaque Background)	Pole Flashing Animated
Highway 550/160 Corridor	5 ft front 0 ft side/rear (5 ft min if provided) 10 ft adjacent to residential	20 ft for 2-lane road, 25 ft for 4-lane road Monument	4	200 s.f.	Level 1 (Freestanding) - 150 s.f. (includes all sides) Level 2 (Wall, Projecting or Awning) - 25 s.f. Level 3 (Window or Directory) - 6 s.f. Window - 25% of window area (max)	Indirect Internal (Opaque Background)	Flashing Animated
Highway 3 and Sawmill Road Corridors	5 ft front 0 ft side/rear (5 ft min if provided) 10 ft adjacent to residential	12 ft Monument	4	150 s.f.	Level 1 (Monument) - 80 s.f. (includes all sides) Level 2 (Wall, Projecting or Awning) - 25 s.f. Level 3 (Window or Directory) - 6 s.f. Window - 25% of window area (max)	Indirect Internal (Opaque Background)	Pole Flashing Animated
Grandview Highway 160 Corridor	5 ft front 0 ft side/rear (5 ft min if provided) 10 ft adjacent to residential	12 ft Monument	4	200 s.f.	Level 1 (Monument) - 150 s.f. (includes all sides) Level 2 (Wall, Projecting or Awning) - 25 s.f. Level 3 (Window or Directory) - 6 s.f. Window - 25% of window area (max)	Indirect Internal (Opaque Background)	New Pole Flashing Animated
If Not in a Commercial Corridor, then Refer to the Zoning Districts Standards Below							
Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Zones (MU-N, MU-A, CB, CG, CR, BP and LI)	Refer to Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Zoning Standards for Setbacks	20 ft for 2-lane road, 25 ft for 4-lane road Monument	4	2 s.f. / linear ft of street frontage 200 s.f. max	Wall or Awning - 150 s.f. (max) Projecting - 1/2 s.f. / linear ft of building facade (50 s.f. max) Window - 25% of window area (max) Freestanding (2 travel lanes) - 3/4 s.f. / linear ft of street frontage (150 s.f. max) Freestanding (4 travel lanes) - 1 1/2 s.f. / linear ft of street frontage (150 s.f. max)	Indirect Internal (Opaque Background)	Pole Flashing Animated
Public Zones	5 ft front 0 ft side/rear (5 ft min if provided) 10 ft adjacent to residential	5 ft Monument	4	2 s.f. / linear ft of street frontage 200 s.f. max	24 s.f. max per sign	Indirect Only	Pole Flashing Animated
Residential Zones (includes Residential PD's)	Refer to Residential Zoning Standards for Setbacks	5 ft Monument	4	2 s.f. / linear ft of street frontage 200 s.f. max	24 s.f. max per sign	Indirect Only	Pole, Flashing Animated Internally Illuminated

* Different Types of Sign Levels
- Level 1 Sign - Seen from the Street (Largest Sign on Property, usually a Freestanding Sign)
- Level 2 Sign - On site (Wall or Projecting Sign not as Visible from Street)
- Level 3 Sign - On Site Business Entry (i.e. Business Directory Names, Window Signs, etc)