



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR

Sign Plan Check to Permit Issuance

CITY OF SAN DIEGO DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
1222 FIRST AVENUE, MS 301 SAN DIEGO, CA 92101-4101

CALL (619) 446-5300 FOR APPOINTMENTS AND (619) 446-5000 FOR INFORMATION

INFORMATION
BULLETIN

111

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This Information Bulletin describes the minimum requirements for obtaining sign permits in the City of San Diego. General sign regulations can be found in [Chapter 14, Article 2, Division 12](#) of the San Diego Municipal Code. For information regarding sign procedures, see [Chapter 12, Article 9, Division 8](#).

I. SIGN DEFINITION

A sign permit is required for any sign installed. The definition of a sign is any identification, description, illustration, or device, illuminated or non-illuminated, that is visible from a public place or is located on private property and exposed to the public and which directs attention to a product, place, activity, person, institution, business, or solicitation, including any permanently installed or situated merchandise with the exception of window displays, and any emblem, painting, banner, pennant, placard or temporary sign designed to advertise, identify or convey information.

II. WHEN IS A PERMIT REQUIRED?

A sign permit is required for the installation or alteration of any sign, except for those signs specifically exempted in Section 129.0803 of the Land Development Code. A permit is required for each sign at each location.

III. SIGN PERMIT EXEMPTIONS

Sign Permits are not required for the following signs or activities:

- A. Changing the copy of a sign or maintenance of a sign that does not involve structural or electrical changes;
- B. Interior signs, except for theater lobby signs;
- C. Public utility and safety signs that are required by law;
- D. Signs that are required by law, other than public utility and safety signs, that do not exceed the minimum dimensions specified by law;
- E. Real estate signs that are not illuminated;
- F. Construction site signs that are not illuminated,
- G. Nameplate identification signs and combination name plates and address signs with letters that do not exceed 3 inches in height, are not illuminated, and do not exceed 4 square feet in area;

Documents referenced in this Information Bulletin

- San Diego Municipal Code, [\(SDMC\)](#)
- General Application, [DS-3032](#)
- Owner - Builder Verification, [DS-3042](#)
- [Information Bulletin 223](#), Specifications for Wood and Masonry Fences
- [Building Newsletter 17-3](#), Special Inspection Requirements for Structural Welding

H. Accessory warning signs that provide warnings such as "no parking," "watch dogs," and "security service" that are not illuminated, do not exceed 12 square feet in area, and do not project over a public right-of-way;

I. Window signs;

J. Signs required by the Fire Department to designate fire lanes;

K. Tablets, memorials, and cornerstones that are built into the walls of a building, and provide information such as the name of the building and the date of construction;

L. Bulletin boards for charitable or religious organizations provided the signs do not exceed 16 square feet in area, do not project over a public right-of-way, and are not illuminated;

M. Temporary on-site banners, streamers, and pennants.

A sign permit includes authorization for any electric work within the sign. A separate electric permit will be required to add or modify electric circuits feeding the sign. A sign sticker will be issued for each sign that is permitted. The sticker will be placed on the sign by the inspector and must be maintained in a legible state.

For specific information on sign permits, expiration of sign permits, extension of time for sign permits, stickers, and exemptions for sign permits refer to Section 129.0801 through 129.0814 of the Land Development Code.

General development regulations regarding primary signs including wall, ground, projecting and roof signs and secondary signs are contained in Sections 142.1201 through 142.1291 in the San Diego Municipal Code.

IV. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SIGN PERMITS

The following is a list of items required for a complete sign plan check.

- A. Completed General Application (DS-3032).
- B. Verification of the contractor’s worker’s compensation insurance and/or a completed Owner-Builder Verification form (DS-3042).
- C. Two copies of a site plan including the following information:
 - 1. Dimensioned property lines
 - 2. Adjacent streets, curbs, sidewalks, and alleys
 - 3. Existing building footprint including first and second stories, dimensions of exterior walls and their distance to adjacent property lines
 - 4. Existing and proposed sign(s)
 - 5. A north arrow
- D. Two copies of an elevation plan including the following information:
 - 1. Sign dimensions
 - 2. The dimensions of the signs
 - 3. Sign copy (words, symbols or emblems on the sign surface)
 - 4. Tenant frontage for wall signs
 - 5. Connection details/attachment methods, footing details, if applicable, and in some cases a structural design may be required

Illustrations of the different types of elevation plans and a site plan are provided on pages 3 through 6 of this information bulletin.

V. OPTIONS FOR SERVICE

A. Appointment

To schedule an appointment, call (619) 446-5300.

B. Walk-In Service

Visit the Development Services Department at 1222 1st Avenue, 3rd Floor, Check-In counter.

C. Fax

Wall signs may be processed by fax. To use this option, please fax a complete set of plans, completed application, copy of your worker’s compensation and/or owner builder form and a credit card authorization to (619) 236-7687.

VI. SIGN PERMIT FEES

In addition to the Fees listed in the attached Table 1, the following administration fees will be added.

Issuance Fee.....	\$38
Records Fee.....	\$20
Mapping Fee.....	\$10

VII. STRUCTURAL CALCULATIONS REQUIREMENTS FOR SIGNS

Structural calculations shall be prepared by a registered design professional (an architect or engineer) in the State of California to justify the adequacy of the structural system to resist seismic and wind loads, and dead loads of the sign. Structural calculations are required for the following :

A. Ground Signs (monument and pole signs)

- 1. If the monument sign is more than 6 feet in height when measured from the top of the footing to the top of the sign. See Figure 3.
- 2. If the pole sign is more than 8 feet in height measured from the lowest grade to the top of the sign, with sign area more than 50 square feet. See Figure 2.

B. Wall signs

If the area of the wall sign is more than 70 square feet (per sign box or channel letter) or the weight is more than 600 pounds (per sign box or channel letter). The maximum fastener spacing to the building structure shall not be more than 4 feet on center each way unless structural calculations are provided. See Figure 1.

C. Projecting signs

If the area of the projecting sign is more than 20 square feet or the weight is more than 250 pounds or the sign is more 30 feet in height. See Figure 4.

D. Awning or canopy signs

If the height of the awning or canopy is greater than 6 feet.

Roof signs:

Structural calculations are required if the signs mounted at or above the roof line. See Figure 5.

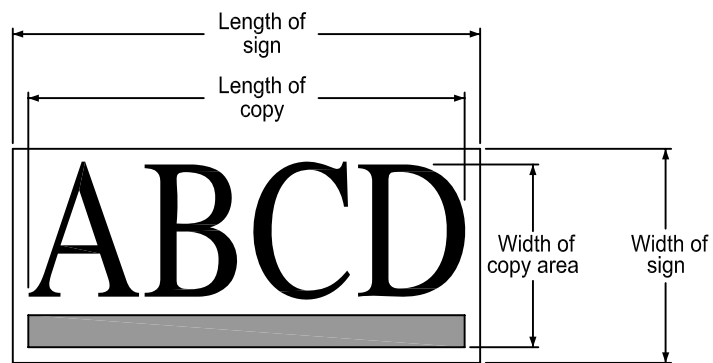
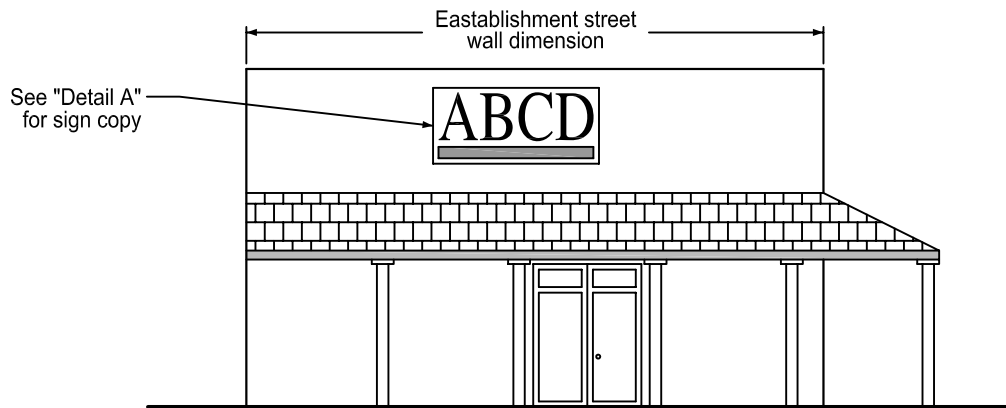
E. Roof signs

Structural calculations are required if the signs mounted at or above the roof line.

Figure 1 / Typical wall sign

Wall sign means a sign attached to, or a sign copy area on, a structure or adjunct of a structure, including an equipment screen or dormer that completely screens the mechanical equipment of the structure, and has its exposed sign face parallel or approximately parallel to the plane of the structure to which the sign is attached.

For specific information on wall signs in commercial and industrial zones, see San Diego Municipal Code, Section 142.1225.



Detail A

Figure 2 / Typical flat ball ground sign Ground sign means any sign supported wholly by uprights, braces, or poles in or on the ground including poster panels, painted bulletins, sign on fences, and signs on structures other than buildings and canopies. For specific information on ground signs in commercial and industrial zones, see San Diego Municipal Code, Section 142.1240.

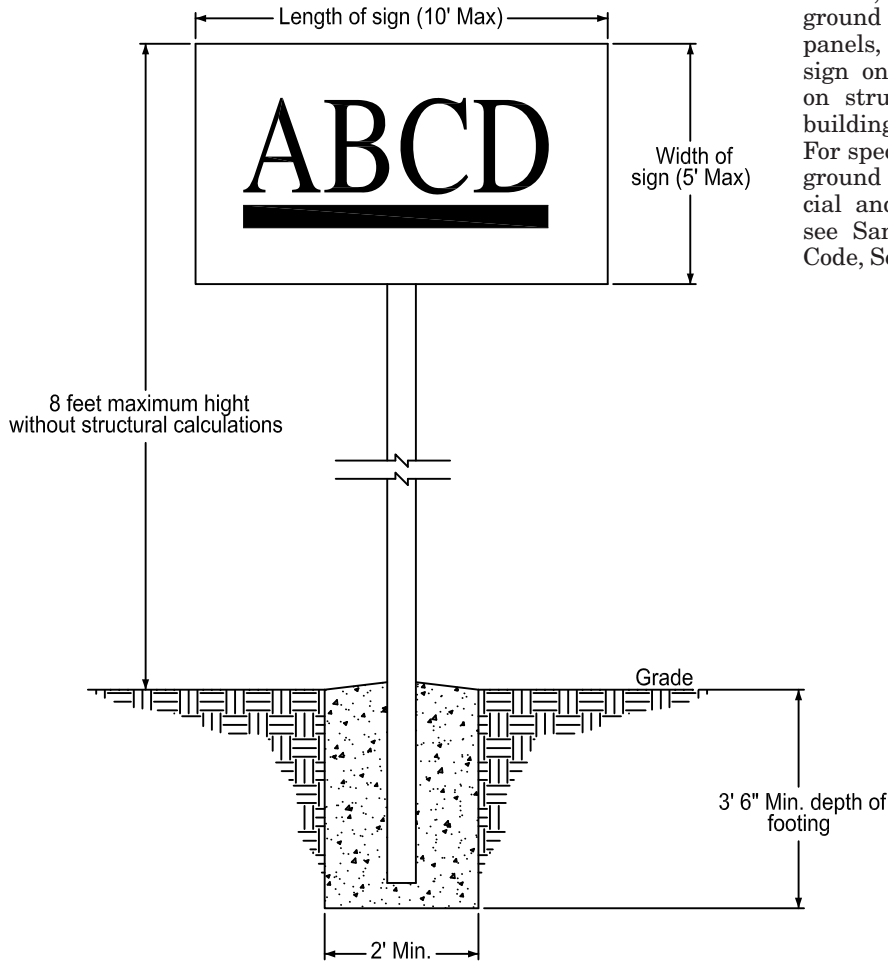


Figure 3 / Typical monument ground sign

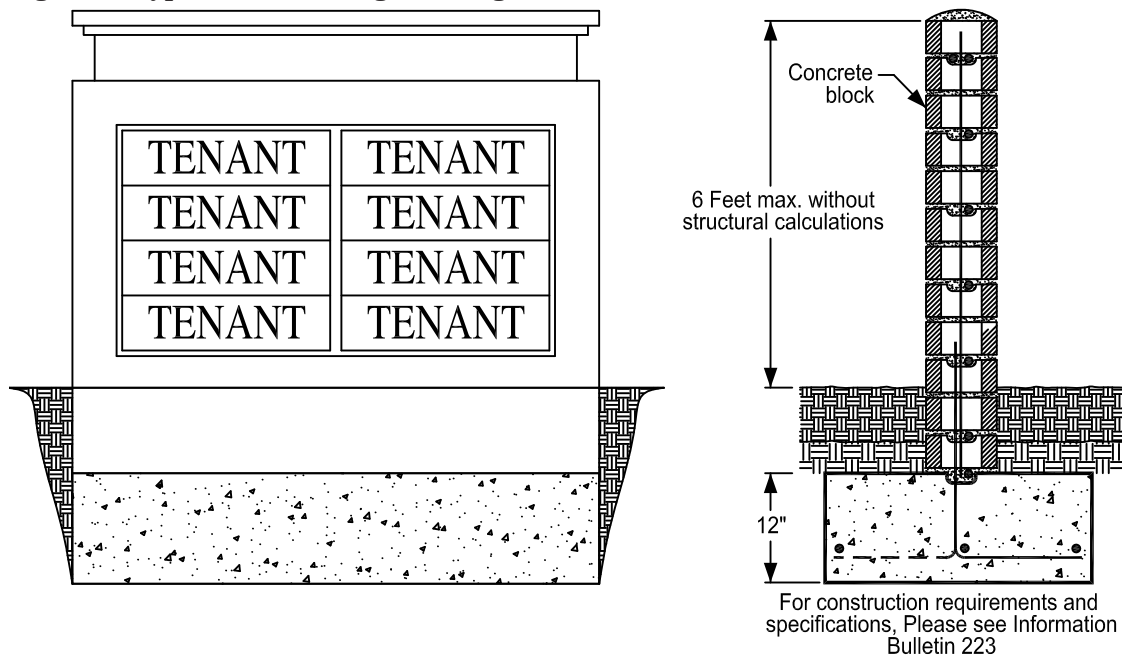


Figure 4 / Typical projecting sign

A projecting sign is any sign, other than a wall sign, that is attached to the wall and projects more than 18" from the building wall. One projecting sign is permitted for each premises with accessible street frontage. Projecting signs are not permitted in addition to a ground sign or a roof sign.

For specific information on projecting signs in commercial and industrial zones, see San Diego Municipal Code, Section 142.1230.

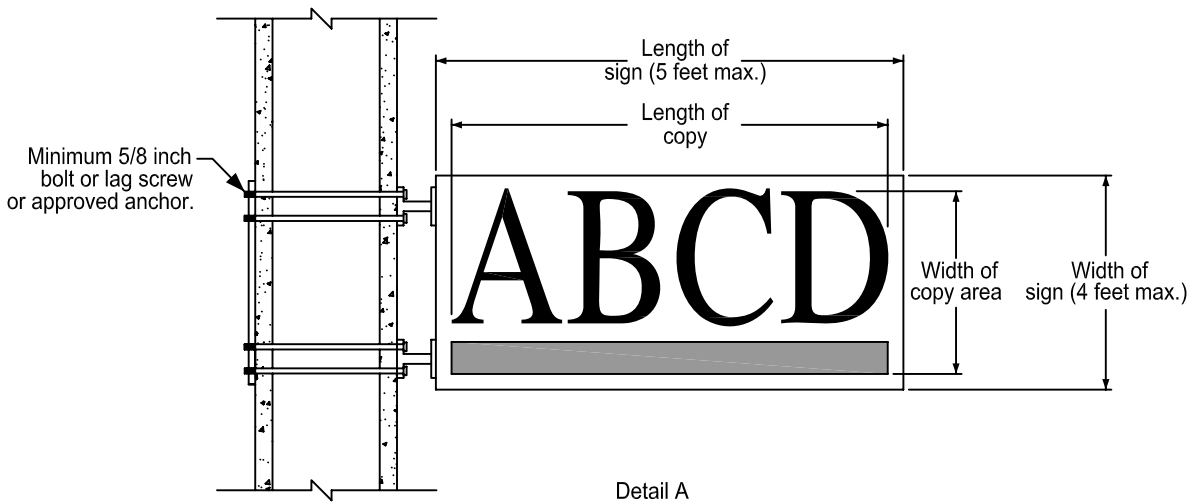
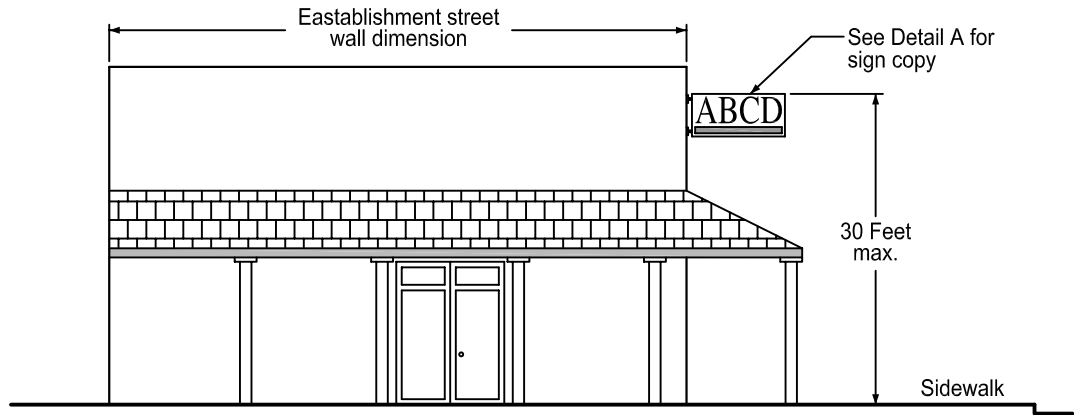
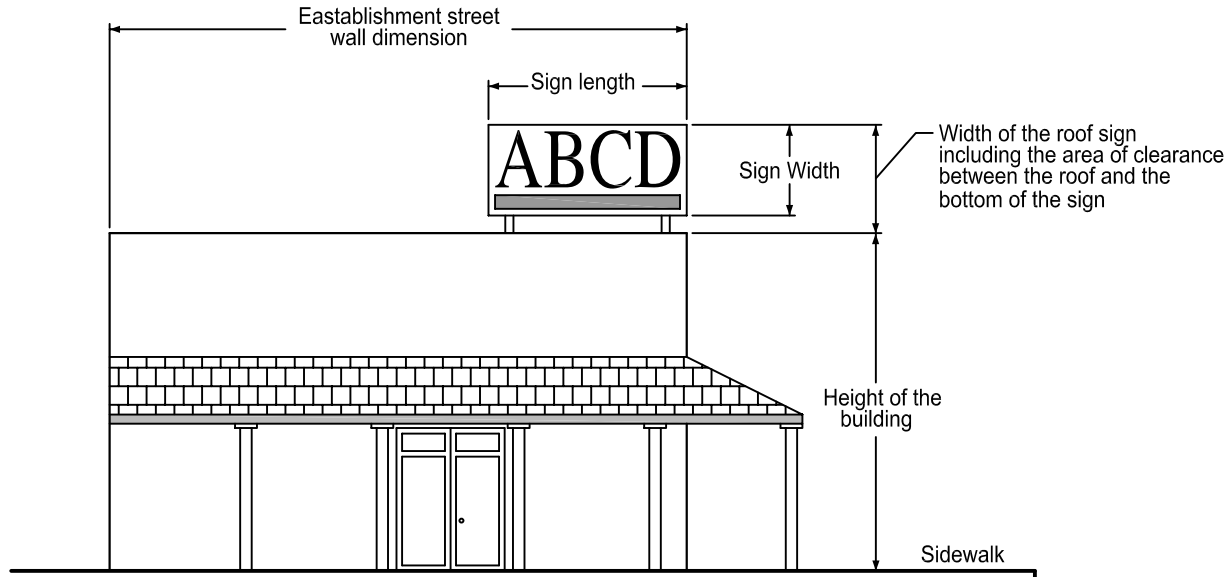


Figure 5 / Typical roof sign

A roof sign is any sign that is attached to the roof and projects above the roof or roof eave. One roof sign is permitted for each premises with accessible street frontage. Roof signs are not permitted in addition to a ground sign or projecting sign, nor are they permitted in the coastal zones. For specific information on roof signs in commercial and industrial zones, see San Diego Municipal Code, Section 142.1235.



**Table 1
Sign Permit Fees**

Type of Sign	Plan Check	Inspection
Awning, Directional or Wall Sign, Non-Electric Or Electric self Contained - First	\$97.00	\$135.00
Awning, Directional or Wall Sign, Non-Electric Or Electric self Contained - Additional 2-5	\$61.00	\$74.00
Awning, Directional or Wall Sign, Non-Electric Or Electric self Contained - Each additional >5	\$49.00	\$49.00
Banner Signs - Each per banner district	\$121.00	\$98.00
Freeway Signs - Each	\$111.00	\$563.00
Ground/Roof/Projecting Signs - First	\$121.00	\$221.00
Ground/Roof/Projecting Signs - Additional 2-5	\$49.00	\$98.00
Ground/Roof/Projecting Signs -Each additional >5	\$36.00	\$98.00
Master Plan Sign Check - Each	\$182.00	-
Replacement Sticker - Each	-	\$74.00
Rework of any Existing Ground Sign - First Sign	\$85.00	\$98.00
Rework of any Existing Ground Sign - Additional 2-5	\$30.00	\$61.00
Rework of any Existing Ground Sign - Each >5	\$30.00	\$49.00
Wall Sign Electric (component, remote supply) - Each	\$121.00	\$221.00
Wall Sign Electric (component, remote supply) - Additional 2-5	\$61.00	\$61.00
Wall Sign Electric (component, remote supply) - Each >5	\$36.00	\$61.00
Subdivision Directional Sign Permit - Each	\$481.00	\$86.00
No Plan Permit - Repair In Kind (@ staff hourly rates)	\$121.00	\$123.00