

# WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?



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## County of Hawai‘i

### Department of Public Works

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Working together as ONE to improve the quality of service for the health and safety of our  
Big Island ‘Ohana



*County of Hawai‘i is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer*

## **Introduction**

Signage is a vital means of communication throughout the County of Hawai'i. It is important that it conform to certain guidelines to facilitate effective use, aesthetics and minimize potentially detrimental effects to public and private property, and provide for public health and safety.

Hawai'i County essentially regulates three categories of signage. Which category applies depend on the Residential, Commercial and Agricultural district which your signage will be erected and if signage is permitted with or without a permit.

## **Temporary Signs allowed in all Districts without Permits**

This includes temporary an unlighted sign or banner. A temporary sign must relate to a meeting, special event, or condition of the property. In other words, it cannot be a permanent form of advertising. Temporary signs in Residential, Open, or Agricultural districts cannot exceed eight square feet of an area. In Commercial areas, it cannot exceed thirty-two square feet of the area. Small-unlighted sign may not exceed two square feet.

## **Signs for Public Benefit**

These signs are public or non-commercial in nature including a safety sign, signs marking historic or cultural interest, and signs erected by a public officer and warrior sign markers erected by Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau identifying locations of significant interest.

## **Signs allowed in residential districts (RS, RD, RM)**

WALL OR GROUND SIGN: One sign, either wall or ground (unlighted or indirectly lighted) not exceeding six square feet in area. Commercial signs shall relate to a legally permitted activity being conducted on the premises.

## **Signs allowed in all Districts with a Permit**

This is a temporary sign or banner over a public street, a public place or over a pedestrian way. One subdivision identification sign, not more than sixteen square feet in the area, per legal subdivision roadway access, (either a ground or a wall type) identifying that subdivision, and one residential sign per lot either unlighted or indirectly lighted, but not to exceed six square feet.

## **Signs Permitted within Commercial Districts (RCX,V,CN,CG,CV,MCX,ML,MG)**

DIRECTORY SIGN: For a lot frontage up to one hundred lineal feet, a directory sign may not exceed sixteen square feet or fifteen percent of the wall area, whichever is the lesser of the two. If the lot frontage is greater than one hundred

lineal feet, a directory sign may not exceed twenty four square feet or fifteen percent of the wall area on which it is located; whichever is the lesser of the two.

**GROUND SIGNAGE:** One ground sign, related to business(es) conducted on the premises, as follows: If the lot frontage is up to one hundred lineal feet, the ground signage may not exceed sixteen square feet and not exceed eight feet in elevation from the ground. If the lot frontage is greater than one hundred lineal feet, the ground signage may not exceed twenty-four square feet and not exceed twelve feet in elevation from the ground. More on ground signage <http://www.hawaiicounty.gov/lb-countycode/#countycode> .

**MARQUEE SIGN:** One sign attached to the underside of a marquee (hanging sign) for each business conducted on the premises is permitted, but it shall not exceed nine square feet of the area and the lower edges must be at least seven and one-half feet above the ground. Or, one sign attached or displayed on the marquee cannot exceed thirty two square feet of an area not more than fifteen percent, whichever is lesser of the two. The maximum letter height is twenty four inches.

**PROJECTING SIGN:** One projecting sign for each business conducted on the premises, stating the name and nature of the business, which may occur on an exterior wall without an overhang. The bottom edge of the sign is no lower than nine feet over any public area or pedestrian right-of-way, over any public area or pedestrian right-of-way. The maximum size area is sixteen square feet.

**ROOF SIGN:** Except in residential-commercial mixed use (RCX) or resort-hotel (V) district, where roof signs are not allowed one roof sign, lighted or unlighted, no larger than thirty-two square feet of the area and not containing alphabet letters more than twenty-four inches in height is permitted. Signage must relate to a business on the premises, and the highest point on any sign attached to the roof should not extend above the highest part of the roof.

**WALL SIGN:** One wall sign that relates to the business (es) conducted on the premises, per side or rear of a building. Each side or rear wall sign cannot exceed fifteen percent of the total exposed area of the wall associated with the business on which the signage is displayed or exceed one hundred fifty square feet; whichever is the lesser of the two. The combined area of any wall covered by signage shall not exceed fifteen percent of the total area of the wall, whether used by single or multiple businesses. More on wall signs <http://www.hawaiicounty.gov/lb-countycode/#countycode> .

**WINDOW SIGNS AND PAINTED WINDOW SIGNS:** For any business, the total area covered by one or more window signs, facing any street may be no greater than twenty-five percent of the total combined area of the windows or, one hundred fifty square feet, whichever is the lesser amount of the two.

## **Signs Permitted within Agricultural/Open Districts (RA,FA,A,IA,0)**

A ground signage is permitted providing it does not exceed eight square feet in an area, and relates to a business conducted on the premises. The front building on which the sign is displayed is not less than thirty feet from the street. A wall signage can be permitted provided it does not exceed thirty- two square feet of the area upon any wall on a structure, located on the premises and related to the business conducted on the premises.

# Signs Prohibited in All Districts

Violators receive a written warning to remove a sign in ten working days. If the sign is not removed, the owner may be assessed a fine and the sign removed by Public Works. More information, go to <http://www.hawaiicounty.gov/lb-countycode/#countycode> .

- Any sign in the county right-of-way or on county property
- Signs by reason of size, location, movement, content, coloring, etc, that pose a traffic safety hazard
- Any sign which is obscene
- Any sign that advertises a commercial activity not conducted on the premises
- Temporary signs used for ongoing commercial use
- Automated signs
- Aerial signs
- Any sign placed on a utility pole
- Portable signs
- Flashing signs
- Any sign placed on a tree
- Any sign placed on public property unless otherwise authorized
- Any sign that is a billboard or outdoor advertising device prohibited by chapter 445 of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes

PERMIT APPLICATIONS AT THE HILO AND KONA OFFICES OR ONLINE

<http://records.co.hawaii.hi.us/Weblink8/Browse.aspx?dbid=1&startid=58044>

Signs may require building and or electrical permits and will be reviewed for compliance to chapters 27, on Floodplain Management and 22 on County Streets.

To download the Hawai'i County Code on Chapter 3 relating to signs, and Kailua Village design district, go to <http://www.hawaiicounty.gov/lb-countycode/#countycode> .

File an appeal, with the Board of Appeals, c/o Planning Department, Aupuni Center, and 101 Pauahi Street. Ste 3, Hilo, Hi 96720 ph: 961-8288.

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

101 Pauahi Street Ste 7  
Hilo, Hi 96720  
Ph: 961-8331 F/961-8410

[cohbuild@co.hawaii.hi.us](mailto:cohbuild@co.hawaii.hi.us)

West Hawai'i Civic Center  
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy  
Ph: 323-4720F/327-3509

<b><u>DISTRICTS</u></b>	<b><u>PERMISSABLE SIGNS</u></b>	<b><u>RESTRICTIONS</u></b>
RESIDENCE (RS, RD, RM)	Wall Signs	Size ≤ 6 square feet
	Ground Signs	Size ≤ 6 square feet
AG / OPEN (RA, FA, A, IA, O)	Wall Signs	Size ≤ 32 square feet
	Ground Signs	Size ≤ 8 square feet
SUBDIVISION SIGN	Wall Sign:	Size ≤ 16 square feet
	Ground Sign:	Size ≤ 16 square feet
COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL (CN, CG, CV, MCX, ML, MG)	Directory Sign:	Lot Frontage ≤ 100 feet: Wall Sign: Size ≤ the lesser of 16 square feet or 15% of wall area Ground Sign: Size ≤ 16 square feet and ≤ 8 feet in height
		Lot Frontage > 100 feet Wall Sign: Size ≤ the lesser of 24 square feet or 15% of wall area Ground Sign: Size ≤ 24 square feet and ≤ 12 feet in height
	Ground Sign:	Lot Frontage ≤ 100 feet: Size ≤ 16 square feet and 8 feet high Lot Frontage > 100 feet: Size ≤ 24 square feet and 12 feet high
	Marquee Sign:	Face of sign = lesser of up to 32 square feet or 15% of marquee face area; Letter Height ≤ 24 inches
	Marquee Hanging Sign:	1 hanging sign maximum per business; Size ≤ 9 square feet; Clearance ≥ 7 ½ feet
	Projecting Sign:	1 sign per business; Size ≤ 16 square feet; Clearance ≥ 9 feet
	Roof Sign:	Not to exceed highest point of roof; Size ≤ 32 square feet; Letter Height ≤ 24 inches
	Wall Sign:	1 sign per wall; Size ≤ the lesser of 150 square feet or 15% of wall area
	Window Sign or Painted Window Sign:	Size ≤ the lesser of 150 square feet or 25% of total window area
	COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL (RCX, V)	Directory Sign:
Lot Frontage > 100 feet Wall Sign: Size ≤ the lesser of 24 square feet or 15% of wall area Ground Sign: Size ≤ 24 square feet and ≤ 12 feet in height		
Ground Sign:		Lot Frontage ≤ 100 feet: Size ≤ 16 square feet and 8 feet high Lot Frontage > 100 feet: Size ≤ 24 square feet and 12 feet high
Marquee Sign:		Face of sign = lesser of up to 24 square feet or 15% of marquee face area; Letter Height ≤ 24 inches
Marquee Hanging Sign:		1 hanging sign maximum per business; Size ≤ 9 square feet; Clearance ≥ 7 ½ feet
Projecting Sign:		1 sign per business; Size ≤ 16 square feet; Clearance ≥ 9 feet

COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL (CONTINUED) (RCX, V)	Wall Sign:	1 sign per wall; Size ≤ the lesser of 32 square feet or 15% of wall area
	Window Sign or Painted Window Sign:	Size ≤ the lesser of 150 square feet or 25% of total window area
KAILUA VILLAGE SPECIAL DESIGN DISTRICT	Wall:	Lot Frontage ≤ 30 linear feet: Size ≤ 12 square feet Lot Frontage > 30 linear feet: Size ≤ 22 square feet
	Directory Sign:	Lot Frontage ≤ 30 linear feet: Size ≤ the lesser of 12 square feet or 15% of wall area
KAILUA VILLAGE SPECIAL DESIGN DISTRICT CORE:	Wall & Window:	Size ≤ 12 square feet Size ≤ 16 square feet
	Directory & Projecting	Size ≤ 6 square feet
	Ground Sign:	Lot Frontage ≤ 30 feet: Size = 12 square feet and 6 feet high Lot Frontage > 30 feet: Size = 22 square feet and 11 feet high
KAILUA VILLAGE SPECIAL DESIGN DISTRICT INDUSTRIAL SUBDIVISION DISTRICT:	Wall:	Size ≤ 75 square feet
	Window:	Size ≤ 22 square feet
	Directory:	Size ≤ 12/22 square feet
	Marquee Hanging Sign:	1 hanging sign maximum per business; Size ≤ 9 square feet = 22 square feet of 15% the marquee face area Size ≤ 9 square feet
	Projecting:	Size ≤ 16 square feet
	Ground Sign:	Lot Frontage ≤ 30 feet: Size = 12 square feet and 6 feet high Lot Frontage > 30 feet: Size = 22 square feet and 11 feet high
2011—11-8 This document is intended only as a guide. If you require more information, please consult Sign ordinance, chapter 3 of the Hawai'i County Code <a href="http://co.hawaii.hi.us/countycode">http://co.hawaii.hi.us/countycode</a> , or a Department of Public Works representative. Please also note that special design districts such as Kailua Village Design District have a different set of sign regulations.		