

A BASIC GUIDELINE FOR OBTAINING A SIGN PERMIT IN FIFE

Signs have an impact on the character and quality of the environment. They attract or repel the viewing public and affect the safety of vehicular traffic. The **City of Fife** developed the Municipal Sign Code to balance the needs of businesses to advertise their services with the community's desire for an attractive, less cluttered appearance in its commercial areas. Additionally, the Sign Code provides minimum standards to safeguard life, health, property, and the public welfare by regulating the design, quality of materials, construction, location, and maintenance of all signs and sign structures.

Here's some basic information about the process for installing signs within the City of Fife. Please keep in mind that this is an overview of the application process and may not include limitations which may apply to your signage. Please call our Community Development Department at 253-922-9624 for more detailed assistance.

- **When do I need a sign permit?**

*Most signs in Fife require either a permanent or a temporary sign permit, depending upon how long you'd like to display the sign. Signs that **do not** require a permit include:*

- *Real estate signs less than 8 sq. ft. on private property*
- *Political signs on private property*
- *Temporary construction-related signs*
- *Municipal facility signs*
- *Flags (You can put a maximum of three flags up on your property.)*
- *Any signs erected by the government (For example, traffic signs.)*
- *Seasonal holiday decorations (As long as they don't contain any advertising or business names)*
- *Signs in off-street parking lots for the purpose of controlling traffic*
- *Signs on gas pumps or vending machines*
- *Menu boards for drive-through businesses*
- *Individual balloons tethered on a cord less than 4-feet in length*
- *Warning and security signs*

- **What signs are not allowed?**

- *Roof and roof-top signs*
- *Any sign which might pose a hazard to public health or safety*
- *Signs which make use of words such as "Stop," "Look," "Yield," or which might be confused with public safety signs*
- *Signs displaying obscene, indecent, or immoral matter*
- *Signs which obstruct any building entrance or exit*
- *Signs on stationary vehicles or trailers*
- *Neglected or dilapidated signs*
- *Rotating or revolving signs*
- *Some types of electronic messaging display signs*

- **How do I apply for a Sign Permit?**

First determine whether you need a permanent or a temporary sign permit. Permanent signs are just that—signs that you'll want to leave in place indefinitely. Temporary signs are defined as any banner, pennant, A-board, or other advertising display that you want to

display for short-term promotional purposes. A temporary sign permit allows you to display up to two banners and one A-Board for up to 45-days per year. You can pick up applications for either type of sign permit at Fife City Hall or you can download the forms from the City of Fife website at <http://www.cityoffife.org>.

On the application for a permanent sign permit, be sure to:

- Identify and describe the sign
- Describe the land where the proposed sign is to be located by legal description, street address or parcel number
- Include sign drawings showing display faces with the proposed message and design accurately represented as to size, area, proportion and color
- Include a site plan drawn to scale containing a north arrow, location of property lines, lot dimensions, location of existing signs and the location of the proposed sign
- Depending upon the type of sign, we may require a landscape plan, elevations, diagrams, light intensities, and structural calculations. Contact the Community Development Department at 253-922-9624 for further information regarding these requirements.
- Provide proof that both the sign installer and the business applying for the permit have current City of Fife business licenses
- If the sign is electrical, provide a copy of an electrical permit from Tacoma City Light
- Don't forget to have the application signed by the applicant or their authorized agent
- Depending upon the size and type of sign, we may also require a building permit prior to approval of the sign permit

Provide as much detail as possible to help expedite your application!

- **How much does a Sign Permit cost?**
 - Temporary permits are \$35.00 for a specified period of time up to 45-days per year (You can get up to three temporary permits per year, as long as the **total** number of days in a given year doesn't exceed 45-days)
 - There is a Sign Plan Check Fee of \$45.00 assessed on **all** permanent sign permit applications. This fee doesn't apply to temporary, incidental, or directional signs
 - Fees for permanent sign permits are variable based on the type, size and location of the proposed sign. See posted fee schedule for specific permanent sign fees.
- **How long does the application process take?**
 - Temporary permits can usually be issued while you wait
 - Permanent sign permits can take up to 30-days from submission

Please remember that this is a general guideline designed to give you an idea of the permitting process. There are a number of variations and limitations on the above information, based on size, proposed location, and type of sign. It's always best to give us a call at 253-922-9624 early in your planning. We'll be glad to assist you to put up a sign that helps your business and your community continue to grow!