

**8.60.050 General requirements applicable to all signs.****(1) General Requirements.** The following requirements apply to all signs allowed in the city:

(a) **Building and Specialty Code Compliance.** All signs, whether regulated by this chapter or not, shall meet all applicable construction and operation standards of the International Building Code adopted by the city of La Center. Where these codes conflict with the requirements of this chapter, the more stringent or restrictive shall control.

(b) No sign shall be insecurely erected, or constructed so as to constitute a safety hazard, fire hazard or a nuisance.

(c) **Sign Obstructing View, Passage or Safety.** No sign shall:

(i) Obstruct free ingress to or egress from any door, window, fire escape, alley, driveway, fire lane, access from the sidewalk to transit stop areas, designated disabled parking spaces, disabled access ramps or building exits;

(ii) Be located so as to obstruct or interfere with intersection sight distance for vehicles exiting a driveway or street in accordance with the line of sight triangle requirements in the La Center engineering standards;

(iii) Obstruct or interfere in any way with the public's ability to clearly view government signs;

(iv) By reason of their size, location, movement, content, coloring, or manner of illumination be subject to being confused with a government sign; or

(v) Interfere in any way with traffic, visibility or passage within the public right-of-way, including vehicle travel lanes, sidewalks and bike lanes.

(d) **Removal.** All prohibited signs and signs that do not have a valid sign permit when one is required under this chapter are unlawful, a violation of this chapter and shall be removed. Failure to do so shall subject the sign and property owner to civil enforcement pursuant to Chapter 2.15 LCMC, Code Enforcement.

(e) **Lighting.** Signs, excluding temporary signs and canopy signs, may be lit, either from within the sign structure or by external lights shining on the sign face. External light sources shall be aimed downward and be shielded to direct light solely on the sign face, and in no case shall sign lights shine directly onto an adjacent property, buildings or the public right-of-way or cast glare into the eyes of pedestrians or motorists in the public right-of-way. Flashing, strobe and rotating lights are prohibited in all situations. Sign lights shall not substitute for security or safety lighting that may otherwise be required.

(f) **Property Owner Consent.** No sign shall be erected on property or a structure (e.g., a building or utility pole) owned by someone other than the person responsible for the sign without the express consent of the property's owner. If the city cannot verify owner consent, the sign will be deemed unlawful and subject to removal.

(g) **Portable Signs.** Allowed portable signs shall comply with the following requirements:

(i) Portable sign area shall not exceed six square feet and the height shall not exceed three and one-half feet;

(ii) Signs may be placed in the right-of-way; provided, that the sign is placed entirely outside the driving and on-street parking portion of the right-of-way;

(iii) Portable signs shall maintain a four-foot-wide clear zone for pedestrian movement along the full frontage of the parcel and shall not create any sight obstruction per Section 2.15 of the city engineering standards;

(iv) The sign does not obstruct pedestrian or wheelchair access from the sidewalk to transit stop areas, designated disabled parking spaces, disabled access ramps or building exits; and

- (v) Signs shall be constructed of finished materials to create a professional appearance.
- (h) Two-Sided Signs. Freestanding and projecting signs may have maximum of two faces. The area of a two-sided sign shall be the largest area of one face of the sign. Further, a two-sided sign shall be considered one sign for the purpose of determining the number of signs allowed.
- (i) Freestanding Signs. When a freestanding sign is allowed by this chapter, Figures 8.60.050(1) through 8.60.050(5) illustrate the five allowed freestanding sign configurations: monument, single and dual pedestal, and single and dual pylon. The signs shall comply with the dimensional standards specified in these figures and the area and height requirements specified in this chapter.
- (j) Freestanding Sign Base Material. The sign base and support structure of freestanding signs must be constructed of or covered with quality materials such as real or faux stone, brick, stucco, textured wood, tile, and textured concrete.
- (k) Freestanding Sign Landscaping. All freestanding signs shall have landscaping surrounding the base of the sign equal in area to a minimum of 80 percent of the sign face area. Landscaping shall consist of grass, low shrubbery, and/or ground cover. Whenever possible and appropriate, native vegetation that is drought resistant and requires minimal or low maintenance shall be used for sign-related landscaping. Landscaping shall be well maintained. Sign-related landscaping may be included in any calculation of total landscaping required in a zoning district.
- (l) Canopy Signs. The lettering on a canopy sign shall not exceed eight inches in height. Lettering shall only be applied to the front vertical face of a canopy. Lettering shall not extend above or below the front vertical extent of the front vertical face or extend beyond the horizontal extent of the canopy. Canopy signs shall not be illuminated. If a canopy is placed over multiple tenant spaces, each tenant is permitted a canopy sign no longer than 60 percent of the width of the individual tenant space.
- (m) Incidental signs are allowed in all zones without a permit so long as the definitional requirements of an incidental sign are met.
- (n) Digital Video Displays. A digital video display is not a separately allowed sign. Where they are allowed they may be integrated within an allowed freestanding sign. A digital video display shall comply with each of the following requirements:
- (i) The display area shall not exceed 30 square feet or as otherwise limited by an allowed sign area.
  - (ii) Maximum luminance shall not exceed 50 nits during nighttime hours and 5,000 nits during daylight hours. The applicant shall provide certified data verifying compliance with these luminance requirements.
  - (iii) The display shall have automated control of sign luminance based on current ambient lighting conditions.
  - (iv) Digital video displays shall only be on during business hours.
  - (v) Minimum hold between messages shall not be less than eight seconds.
  - (vi) No motion shall be allowed except for instantaneous change of message.
  - (vii) Digital video displays shall not be oriented towards a residential district within 1,000 feet.
  - (viii) Digital video displays shall not be located in wetland, fish and wildlife habitat conservation, or frequently flooded critical areas or their associated buffers.
- (o) Electronic Reader Board. An electronic reader board is not a separately allowed sign. Where they are allowed they may be integrated within an allowed freestanding sign. An electronic reader board shall comply with each of the following requirements:

- (i) The display area shall not exceed 30 square feet or as otherwise limited by an allowed sign area.
- (ii) Maximum luminance shall not exceed 100 nits during nighttime hours and 5,000 nits during daylight hours. The applicant shall provided certified data verifying compliance with these luminance requirements.
- (iii) The display shall have automated control of sign luminance based on current ambient lighting conditions.
- (iv) Electronic reader boards shall only be on during business hours.
- (v) Minimum hold between messages shall not be less than four seconds.
- (vi) No motion shall be allowed except for instantaneous change of message.
- (vii) Electronic reader boards shall not be located in wetland, fish and wildlife habitat conservation, or frequently flooded critical areas or their associated buffers.

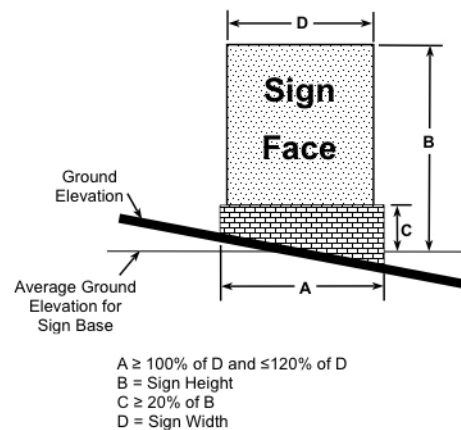


Figure 8.60.050(1) Monument Sign Dimensional Standards

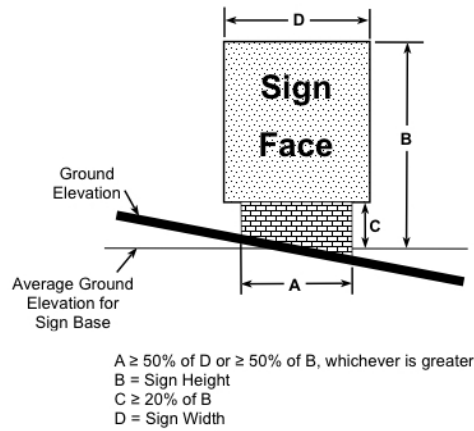


Figure 8.60.050(2) Single Pedestal Sign Dimensional Standards

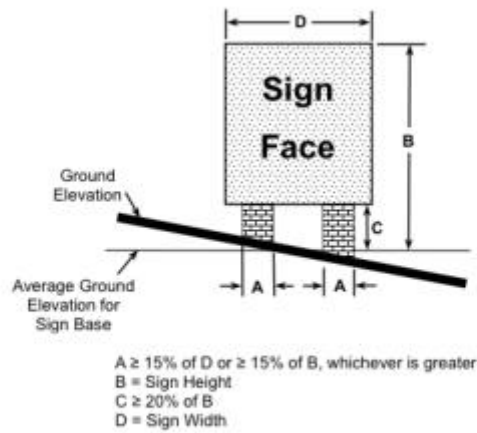


Figure 8.60.050(3) Dual Pedestal Sign Dimensional Standards

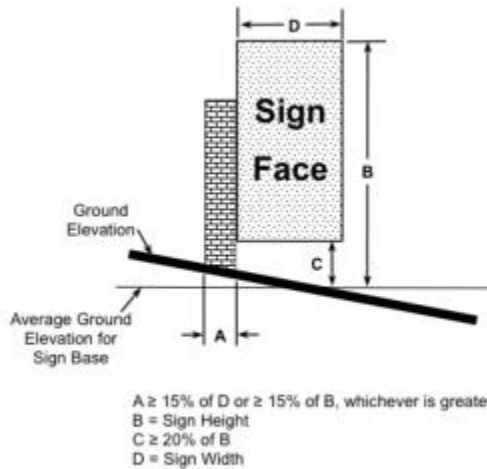


Figure 8.60.050(4) Single Pylon Sign Dimensional Standards

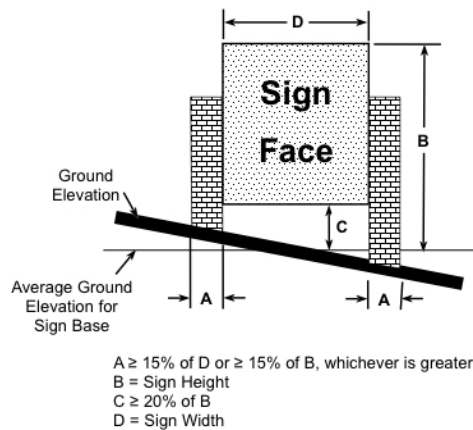


Figure 8.60.050(5) Dual Pylon Sign Dimensional Standards

(2) Modifications to Existing Signs. Any sign that is structurally altered, relocated or replaced shall be brought into compliance with all applicable substantive requirements of this chapter, including the requirement to obtain a permit. Any modification to a sign for which a permit has been issued shall be processed as an administrative review in the same manner as for a new sign. This requirement to obtain a new permit for sign modifications does not apply to copy or panel changes where the physical size, shape, height, or support structure is not changed by more than 10 percent of the applicable numeric standard.

(3) Variances. After receiving a written request from the sign owner, the city may grant a variance to one or more numeric or dimensional requirements of this chapter, except that none of the prohibited signs in LCMC 8.60.020(2)(a) through (k), Prohibited Signs, may be allowed through a variance procedure.

(a) Variance Criteria. All of the following criteria apply to sign variances:

(i) Exceptional, extraordinary or unusual circumstances that are not self-imposed that do not apply to other properties in the same area or zone are present. Such circumstances may be the result of an unusual

location or orientation of the applicant's building, topography, vegetation or other circumstance over which the applicant has no control.

(ii) The variance is necessary for the preservation of a right of the applicant that is substantially the same as rights possessed by the owners of other property in the area or zone.

(iii) The granting of a variance will not be materially detrimental to, or conflict with, the purposes of this chapter, or be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the area or vicinity, or the public way, in which the property is located.

(iv) The variance requested is the minimum exception to the established requirements that is necessary to alleviate the claimed grounds for variance.

(v) The requested variance does not exceed 20 percent of the underlying numeric performance standard.

(b) Conditions for Granting a Variance. The city may impose certain changes as conditions to granting a variance. These may involve sign design, area, height, location, and compliance with the downtown design guidelines or similar conditions.

(c) Variance Fee. The applicant shall pay a fee in accordance with the fee schedule established and amended from time to time by the city council and on file with the city clerk.

(d) Procedure. Any variance sought to the requirements of the sign code shall be processed as an administrative decision with public notice and an opportunity to be heard and in conjunction with the underlying sign permit application.

(i) Notice of Application. Within 14 calendar days after the date of an application for a sign permit variance, the department shall invite the public to comment on the variance request. The department shall:

(A) Mail a written notice of the application to property owners within 300 feet of the subject sign site; and

(B) Post a notice of the variance request on the subject property which is visible to the public.

(ii) Comment Period. The notice shall provide for a 14-day public comment period from the date of mailing the notice.

(iii) Decision.

(A) Not less than 28 days or not more than 35 days after the date an application for variance is received, the department shall issue a decision that approves, approves with conditions, or denies the application; provided, an applicant may agree in writing to extend that time and may provide additional information within that time at the request of the city.

(B) The decision shall include a brief summary of the relevant facts and applicable standards for the application and a summary of how the application complies with those standards based on the facts and evidence, including any conditions of approval.

(iv) Notice of Decision. Within seven calendar days after issuing a decision, the department shall mail notice of the decision to the parties of interest including, but not limited to, the applicant and any person or party commenting on the variance request.

(v) Appeal. An appeal of the department decision on the permit itself will be heard by the city hearing examiner consistent with established city procedures for public hearings.

(e) Permit Duration. Once granted, and the sign is installed, a sign variance shall be valid so long as the sign is not abandoned, altered, relocated or obsolete. [Ord. 2018-06 § 2 (Exh. A), 2018.]