

87.3 SIGNS AND NAMEPLATES

~~87.3.1 Purpose and Applicability. The purpose of these regulations is to ensure: (1) that signs within Humboldt County will not impair the public health, safety, and welfare by being excessively intrusive, and, (2) that any permitted signs will maintain visual quality and will be compatible with nearby development. These regulations shall apply to the placement of any sign within the unincorporated area of Humboldt County. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(A))~~

87.3.1 Purpose. The purpose of these regulations is to: (1) ensure that signs within Humboldt County will promote public health, safety, and welfare, (2) promote the use of signs that are, of appropriate scale, and compatible with nearby development and landscape, (3) promote the free flow of traffic and protect pedestrians, cyclists and motorists from injury and property damage caused by distracting signs, and (4) support economically viable business serving county residents, workers and visitors.

87.3.2 Applicability. These regulations shall be applicable to all signs in all zoning districts.

87.3.3 Permitted Signs. Signs shall be permitted with a Coastal Development Permit in conformity with the following regulations, unless otherwise specified: (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B))

87.3.3.1 Nameplates. Nameplates are limited to a statement of the name, address and occupational designation of the occupant, and are not illuminated. Nameplates shall be principally permitted on existing structures appurtenant to any permitted use when conforming with all the following requirements:

87.3.3.1.1 In any zone, one (1) nameplate not exceeding two square feet (2sf). ~~Shall be limited to a statement of the name, address and location of the occupant.~~ (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(1))

87.3.3.1.2 In any residential zone, ~~one (1) nameplate, not illuminated and not exceeding two square feet (2sf), appurtenant to any permitted use, shall be permitted in any residential zone.~~ (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(1))

87.3.3.1.3 In AE, TPZ and TC zones, ~~one (1) nameplate, not illuminated and not exceeding twenty square feet (20sf), appurtenant to any permitted use, shall be permitted only in AE, TPZ and TC zones.~~ (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(1))

87.3.3.2 Temporary Signs. Temporary signs displayed for a limited period of time which do not exceed 25 square feet in size shall be principally permitted in any zone when conforming with all the following requirements:

87.3.3.2.1 Strings or individual banners, streamers, pennants and similar devices for business openings, temporary sales and events which are placed up to fifteen (15) days

prior and removed within fifteen (15) days after the opening or fifteen (15) days after their installation, whichever comes first.

87.3.3.2.2 Political signs pertaining to a scheduled election which are placed up to fifteen (15) days prior and removed within fifteen (15) days after election day.

87.3.3.2.3 Temporary signs advertising a special event being held by a public agency or non-profit organization which are placed up to fifteen (15) days prior and removed within fifteen (15) days.

87.3.3.3 2 Property Sale Signs. Signs, not illuminated, to advertise the sale of property on which it is displayed shall be permitted when conforming with all the following regulations and removed within fifteen (15) days of the sale or lease of the property:

~~87.3.2.2.1 Two (2) signs, not illuminated, to advertise the sale of property on which it is displayed, and not exceeding six square feet (6sf) each, shall be permitted in any zone. Two such signs, not exceeding fifteen square feet (15sf), shall be permitted in any Commercial Zone. Two such signs, not exceeding twenty square feet (20sf), shall be permitted in any Industrial Zone. The Director may approve a Special Permit for additional signs if the applicant demonstrates a need, based upon site-specific physical conditions. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(2)(a))~~

87.3.3.3.1 In any zone, one (1) sign not exceeding six (6) square feet shall be principally permitted;

87.3.3.3.2 In any Commercial Zoning District, two (2) signs, not exceeding fifteen square feet (15sf) each shall be principally permitted.

87.3.3.3.4 In any Industrial Zoning District, two (2) signs, not exceeding twenty square feet (20sf) each shall be principally permitted.

~~87.3.2.2.2 Signs, not illuminated and not exceeding one hundred square feet (100sf) in the aggregate, to advertise the sale of lots in the subdivision in which they are displayed shall be permitted with a Use Permit in any zone. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(2)(b))~~

87.3.3.3.5 Signs advertising the sale of lots in a subdivision shall be permitted with a Special Permit in any zone when not exceeding one hundred (100) square feet in the aggregate.

87.3.2.3 Appurtenant Signs. ~~Signs appurtenant to any permitted use which are not illuminated, are not over seventy five square feet (75sf) in the aggregate, and not divided into more than three (3) single faced or double faced signs shall be permitted with a Special Use Permit in any zone except Residential Zones, in which such signs are not permitted. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(3))~~

87.3.3.4 Appurtenant Signs. Signs, not illuminated, appurtenant to any permitted use to identify or advertise a place of business or a product when conforming to the following requirements:

87.3.3.4.1 In Residential Zoning Districts, signs shall be prohibited unless otherwise allowed with a Use Permit.

87.3.3.4.2 In Commercial or Industrial Zoning Districts, when accompanied by a Commercial General or Industrial General Land Use Designation, signs shall be principally permitted.

87.3.3.4.3 In all other zones, up to three (3) single sided signs, or one (1) double sided and one (1) single sided sign not over seventy-five (75) square feet in the aggregate shall be permitted with a Special Permit.

87.3.3.4.4 Signs not consistent with the above regulations and Section 87.3.2.4.5 shall be permitted with a Special Permit, limited to three (3) square feet per linear foot of the front lot line not over 300 square feet in the aggregate and consistent with the purposes of this section.

87.3.2.4 Signs in Commercial or Industrial Zones.

~~87.3.2.4.1 Signs, appurtenant to any permitted use, which do not exceed three square feet (3sf) per linear foot of the front lot line, shall be permitted in any commercial or industrial zone, subject to the limitations of this paragraph. Any lawfully existing lot shall be permitted to have a sign of at least fifty square feet (50sf) in size. The permitted sign(s) shall not exceed 300 square feet in the aggregate, and shall not be divided into more than six (6) single faced or double faced signs. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(4)(a))~~

~~87.3.2.4.2 Signs, whether appurtenant to a permitted use or not, and not limited as to size or number, may be permitted with a Special Permit in any commercial or industrial zone. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(4)(b))~~

Appurtenant Sign Types



Monument Signs



Under Canopy Signs



Freestanding Sign



Awning Signs



Window Signs



Projecting and Banner Signs



Wall Signs



A-frame & Standing Signs



87.3.3.4.5 Appurtenant Sign Table

Sign Type	Sign Requirements
Monument and Freestanding	<p><i>Quantity:</i> one (1) per business <i>Area:</i> thirty-two (32) square feet <i>Width:</i> eight (8) feet maximum <i>Height:</i> six (6) feet maximum <i>Depth / Projection:</i> two (2) feet maximum <i>Clearance:</i> not applicable <i>Apex:</i> not applicable</p>
Projecting and Banner	<p><i>Quantity:</i> one (1) per facade <i>Area:</i> six (6) square feet <i>Width:</i> four (4) feet maximum <i>Height:</i> four (4) feet maximum <i>Depth / Projection:</i> four (4) feet maximum <i>Clearance:</i> eight (8) feet minimum <i>Apex:</i> not applicable <i>Distance to Curb:</i> two (2) feet minimum</p>
Awning	<p><i>Quantity:</i> one (1) per window <i>Area:</i> not applicable <i>Width:</i> width of facade <i>Height:</i> not applicable <i>Depth / Projection:</i> four (4) feet minimum <i>Clearance:</i> eight (8) feet minimum <i>Apex:</i> not applicable <i>Valance Height:</i> twelve (12) inches maximum <i>Distance to Curb:</i> two (2) feet minimum</p>
Wall	<p><i>Quantity:</i> one (1) (two (2) for corner lots) <i>Area:</i> one (1) square foot per linear foot of Facade <i>Width:</i> ninety (90) percent of the width of Facade <i>Height:</i> roof line or parapet of the structure <i>Depth / Projection:</i> seven (7) inches maximum <i>Clearance:</i> seven (7) feet to sign edge minimum <i>Apex:</i> not applicable</p>
Window	<p><i>Quantity:</i> two (2) per window <i>Area:</i> twenty-five (25) percent of glass <i>Width:</i> not applicable <i>Height:</i> not applicable <i>Depth / Projection:</i> not applicable <i>Clearance:</i> four (4) feet <i>Apex:</i> six (6) feet to top of post maximum</p>
A-frame & Standing	<p><i>Quantity:</i> one (1) per business <i>Area:</i> eight (8) square feet</p>

Sign Type	Sign Requirements
	<i>Width:</i> twenty-six (26) inches maximum <i>Height:</i> forty-two (42) inches maximum <i>Depth / Projection:</i> not applicable <i>Clearance:</i> not applicable <i>Apex:</i> forty-two (42) inches maximum

87.3.3.5 Existing Billboards. It is the objective of this code to provide regulations to implement the Outdoor Advertising Act.

87.3.3.5.1 Existing Billboard, an advertising display affixed to any post within 660 feet of a state highway or freeway, with an active and compliant Outdoor Advertising Display Permit;

87.3.3.5.2 Failure to provide an active and compliant Outdoor Advertising Display Permit is evidence that the structure does not qualify as an existing billboard which may require removal of the structure;

87.3.3.5.3 Placement, restabilization and reconfiguration, including alterations to approved size, structural design, number of posts and height shall not be permitted;

87.3.3.5.4 Maintenance of existing billboards shall be subject to a Zoning Clearance Certificate prior to the issuance of a building permit per Section 312-2.2 of the Humboldt County Code;

87.3.3.5.5 Maintenance activities proposed within Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas per Article 5 Land Resources of the California Coastal Act shall be subject to any applicable permit requirements per Title 3, Division 1, Chapter 3 of the Humboldt County Code;

87.3.3.5.6 Maintenance activities that occur without prior approval are declared a public nuisance as defined by Section 351-3 and considered a Category 4 Violation as defined by Section 352-3(h) and Section 352-6;

87.3.3.5.7 The County may declare its intent to require removal of an existing billboard by providing the existing billboard owner notice of such intent a minimum of seven (7) years prior to actual removal of the sign. Upon the expiration of the designated time period, the County may require removal in accordance with the requirements of the Outdoor Advertising Act. The removal of the billboard structure and restoration of the site to its original condition shall be completed within 30 days of compensation. If the permit holder and property owner fail to remove the billboard structure and restore the site within the designated time period, the billboard shall be declared a public nuisance

as defined by Section 351-3 and considered a Category 4 Violation as defined by Section 352-3(h) and Section 352-6.

~~87.3.2.5~~ **87.3.3.6 Directional Signs.**

~~87.3.2.5.1~~ **87.3.3.6.1 Signs Permitted.** Directional signs and/or guide signs shall be located in any zone to indicate directions to public recreational areas, visitor serving facilities, and any other facilities for which the Director has determined that such a sign is necessary for the public convenience and/or safety. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(5)(a))

~~87.3.2.5.2~~ **87.3.3.6.2 Location.** Signs shall be located only along arterial roadways and higher order streets. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(5)(b))

~~87.3.2.5.3~~ **87.3.3.6.3 Design Criteria.**

~~87.3.2.5.3.1~~ **87.3.3.6.3.1** Directional signs shall contain only the name of the use(s), a directional arrow or a directional statement, and the approximate distance to the use(s). (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(5)(c)(1))

~~87.3.2.5.3.2~~ **87.3.3.6.3.2** Where feasible, directional signs shall be designed to accommodate more than one use. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(5)(c)(2))

~~87.3.2.5.3.3~~ **87.3.3.6.3.3** The display surface of any such sign shall not exceed twenty-four by twenty-four inches (24"x24") for each use, with a maximum aggregate area of display surface not to exceed 100 square feet. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(5)(c)(3))

~~87.3.2.5.4~~ **87.3.3.6.4 Permit Required.** A Special Permit is required for placement of a directional sign in any zone. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(B)(5)(d))

87.3.3.7 Design Standards.

87.3.3.7.1 Illumination.

87.3.3.7.1.1 Signs in non-residential zoning districts shall be internally or externally illuminated except where specifically prohibited.

87.3.3.7.1.2 Signs in Residential Zoning Districts shall only be externally illuminated and must be located at least fifty (50) feet from any residence.

87.3.3.7.1.3 Light sources must be steady, stationary, and static in color and shall utilize full-cutoff lighting, downward casting, shielding, visors etc.

87.3.3.7.1.4 Lighting shall not produce glare that creates a public nuisance or hazard for motorists or pedestrian.

87.3.3.7.1.5 The light source for externally illuminated signs must be shielded and positioned so that light is only directed at the face of the sign and does not spill beyond where it is needed.

87.3.3.7.1.6 Lighting shall use the lowest light level necessary and when feasible lighting should be on demand or shall only operate between sunrise and sunset or 30 minutes after closing, whichever comes first.

87.3.3.7.1.7 Exposed bulbs are not permitted.

87.3.3.7.1.8 Design features consisting of neon or other small diameter tubing illuminated by fluorescing gas is not allowed as part of any type of sign.

87.3.4 Prohibited Signs. The following signs and sign materials are prohibited:

- I. **Digital, Animated or Changeable Copy Signs.** Signs that include any part that appears to rotate, flash, blink, move, change color, emit sound, or change intensity, except for approved fuel price signs, standard barber poles, time and temperature signs that are located in commercial and industrial zones. This includes but is not limited to electronic message boards, large television or projector screens, etc. Except when placed on such property by the public agency having jurisdiction or expressly authorized by such public agency.
- II. **New Billboards.** A structure with a flat surface upon which an advertisement is placed or affixed to any post within 660 feet of a state highway or freeway.
- III. **Off-Premise Signs.** Signs that are not appurtenant to a use associated with the property in which the sign is located.
- IV. **Decorative Signs.** Banner signs, feather banners, yard signs, and inflatable signs, except when used as a temporary sign consistent with Section 87.2.3 (Temporary Signs).
- V. **Hazardous Signs.** Signs adversely affecting traffic control or safety. Any sign that creates a traffic safety hazard by interfering with a driver's sight distance, including signs visible from any public road, street or right of way containing colors or reflective paint that blinds the vision of drivers, or signs which simulate or imitate the appearance of any traffic sign or signal, or which makes use of the words "STOP," "GO," "SLOW," "TURN HERE," "DANGER," or contain other words,

phrases symbols or characters otherwise likely to interfere with, mislead or confuse drivers.

- VI. **Obsolete Signs.** Any appurtenant sign face identifying a use or activity that has not occupied the site for more than six months. Any off-premise sign face advertising an activity that has not taken place for more than six months.
- VII. **Signs on Public Property.** Signs within a public street, road or right-of-way, or placed on any other public property, except when placed on such property by the public agency having jurisdiction or expressly authorized by such public agency.
- VIII. **Signs on Natural Features and Other Structures.** Signs affixed to or painted on trees, rocks, or other natural features, or on utility poles, street sign poles, traffic signal equipment and poles, or garbage receptacles.
- IX. **Roof Signs.** Any sign erected, constructed and placed on or over the roof of a building or of any architectural feature to which it is affixed.
- X. **Dilapidated Signs.** Signs that have been declared a nuisance as defined by Section 351-3 and must be removed due to inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, or abandonment.

87.3.3 General Prohibitions on Signs. The following signs shall be prohibited in all zones except as provided in this Section. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(C))

~~87.3.3.1 No sign shall endanger the public health and safety by causing distractions to operators of motor vehicles on public rights of way, such as shall be caused by signs employing motion, sound, mechanical devices, blinkers, flashing lights, animation or unusual lighting. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(C)(1))~~

~~87.3.3.2 No sign shall be erected adjacent to any right of way in such a manner as to obstruct free and clear vision of operators of motor vehicles, or at any locations where, by reason of position, shape or color, such sign shall interfere with, obstruct the vision of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal or device, or which makes use of the words "stop," "danger," or any other word, phrase, symbol, or character in such manner as to interfere with, mislead or confuse motor vehicle operators. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(C)(2))~~

~~87.3.3.3 No red, green or amber lights or illuminated signs shall be placed in such a position that they could be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal or device. (Former Section CZ#A314-33(C)(3))~~

~~87.3.3.4 No sign shall be erected in such a manner as to obstruct free and clear vision of pedestrian traffic on rights of way or to otherwise endanger pedestrians. (Former Section CZ#A314 33(C)(4))~~