



Last updated: January 2020

What is a sign and when is a permit needed?

Any structure, device or visual display which communicates information or attracts the attention of persons for any purpose is considered a sign.

Sign Bylaw 7867, 2017 regulates the installation, alteration, maintenance and removal of signs, advertisements, and structures within the City of New Westminster. In the Zoning Bylaw, each district has requirements for the types and size of signs allowed.

To put up new signage or changing the existing signage for a business, a Sign Permit is required.

www.newwestcity.ca/sign-permits



Application Steps

1. The applicant submits a Sign Permit application to the Building Division.
2. The applicant pays the required fee and submits two complete sets of sign plans.
3. Plans are reviewed by the Planning Division for Sign Bylaw compliance.
4. Plans are reviewed by the Building Division for Building Code compliance.
5. The applicant applies for a Street Occupancy Permit if access to a city street or sidewalk is need for installation
6. When all requirements have been met, the Sign Permit is issued and the applicant may begin work.
7. When the sign installation is completed, the engineer or associated firm deposits a letter with the City stating the sign has been installed and inspected under the engineer's supervision in accordance with the submitted plans.
8. The Building Division conducts the final inspection.

Structural Engineering

A structural engineer must ensure that all signs are properly supported or attached to the building. Structural engineering is required for new sign structures and the refacing of older signs that were installed without permits. For signs that require structural engineering, submit a B-letter and sealed shop drawings as part of the application.

The following types of signs require Sign Permits, but are exempt from structural engineering sign-off:

- all under-awning and under-canopy signs;
- fascia signs, awning signs, canopy signs, and projecting signs and structures below 25kg in weight;
- freestanding signs lower than 2.2 meters in height; and
- development signs smaller than 3.0 square metres.

Frequently Asked Questions

How much is the permit fee?

The flat rate fee for a Sign Permit is \$500.

Do I need to use a professional sign company?

No. A professional sign company is not required. However, they can help the owner determine the best signage program for their business, as well as connect them to engineers and contractors.

Do I need a permit if I am only changing the face of the sign?

Maybe. Sign Permits are not required for face changes on signs that were previously installed with permits. If the existing sign structure was installed without permits, then a new Sign Permit is required for any face changes. To find out if the sign on your building has a previous Sign Permit, please contact the Planning Division.

What if my business is in a heritage building?

There are special design guidelines for signs on commercial buildings along Columbia Street and Twelfth Street, Designated heritage buildings, and buildings on the Heritage Register. Some signs may also need a Heritage Alteration Permit. For more information on the heritage status of a building, please contact the Planning Division.

What if I install my sign without getting a Sign Permit first?

You could be fined daily and subject to enforcement.

Do all signs require a Sign Permit?

The following types of signs must meet the requirements of the Sign Bylaw (e.g., size and location) but are not required to obtain a Sign Permit:

- Community event signs
- Display boxes & menu boards
- Election signs
- Heritage plaques
- Home based business signs
- Portable signs and sandwich boards
- Real estate and open house signs
- Service station pump signs
- Temporary banners
- Window signs



What's New?

Amendments to Sign Bylaw 7867, 2017 were adopted by Council on January 13, 2020. The purpose of the amendments is to streamline the approval process and improve clarity for applicants.

The amendments include the following changes:

- face changes no longer require permits, provided the existing sign structure was previously installed with a permit;
- reduced structural engineering requirements for smaller and lighter signs;
- improved clearance requirements for sloping sites;
- improved application review process for signs on Heritage buildings; and
- conflicts with the Zoning Bylaw were removed.

Contact

Applying for a permit or have a question about fees? Call the Building Division at 604-527-4580.

Questions on what's allowed? Contact the Planning Division at 604-527-4532 or plnpost@newwestcity.ca