

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q. What is needed to apply for a sign permit?

A. A Local Business Tax Receipt through the City Clerk's office prior to any permit being released, a completed sign application w/ required supporting documentations, and letter of authorization from owner or authorized agent

### Q. What types of signs require a permit?

A. All new signs, sign face changes, window/door graphics require a permit thru the City of Punta Gorda.

### Q. How large & what type of sign is permitted?

A. The size of sign depends upon the type of sign proposed. Below is what is permitted in all Districts other than City Center:

#### Ground Signs

- (1) A sign that is permanently attached to the ground or which has supports which places the bottom of the sign less than 1 foot from the ground directly beneath the sign.
- (2) If the sign design includes a base that is not part of the sign face, the width of the ground sign base shall be not less than 75% of the width of the sign face.
- (3) Setbacks shall be adequate to protect the visibility sight triangle.
- (4) Both sides of a two-sided ground sign shall be identical in design.
- (5) For single-occupant and multi-occupant projects, there shall be only one ground sign plus one additional ground sign for street frontage on a second street, provided that the frontage on that street is at least 150 feet in length and an entrance to the project is located on such street.
- (6) No two on-site ground signs shall be within 300 feet of each other on a single parcel.
- (7) Outparcels in shopping centers and office centers shall not be allowed principal ground signs.
- (8) In residential areas, for multi-family and non-residential uses such as churches, country clubs and other permitted uses, ground signs shall not exceed 6 feet in height and 32 square feet in area.
- (9) For commercial uses along US 41 [outside of the CC district], ground signs shall not exceed 15 feet in height and 64 square feet in area.
- (10) For non-residential uses located in the Environmental Preserve District (EP), Neighborhood Center District (NC) and the Special Purpose District (SP), ground signs shall not exceed ten (10) feet in height and 40 square feet in area.
- (11) Pole signs and pylon signs are not considered ground

signs and are not permitted in any zoning district.

#### Wall Signs

- (1) Any sign directly painted on or attached to and extending not more than 6 inches from an exterior wall in a parallel manner.
- (2) Such signs shall be located only on the street frontage side of principal buildings and shall not be limited as to number.
- (3) No wall sign shall project above the highest point of the building wall on the same side of the building as the sign.
- (4) On a corner lot, an additional wall sign shall be permitted on the secondary street frontage, not to exceed 50% of the building frontage allowance.
- (5) All uses shall be permitted wall signs, provided total area does not exceed one square foot of wall sign for each linear foot of building frontage.
- (6) On a multi-tenant building, or multi-entrance building, each tenant with an outside entrance, or each entrance to the business serving the general public may have a separate wall sign on the wall with the public entrance.
  - a. The total area of the sign shall not exceed one square foot of wall sign for each linear foot of tenant wall frontage.
  - b. One wall sign, not exceeding 4 square feet in area shall be permitted on any side or rear entrance open to the public. Such sign may only be lighted during the operating hours of the business.
- (7) Multi-Family residential and Public uses shall be permitted one wall sign.
  - a. Such sign shall not exceed two square feet in area.
  - b. Such sign shall be illuminated only by direct, external illumination.

#### Window Signs

- (1) Any sign that is applied to or otherwise displayed from the inside or outside of glassed areas of a building.
- (2) Signs are allowed on the window glass of the first and second floors of buildings within the following parameters:
  - a. Window signs may be painted on or otherwise displayed from the inside surface of any window, including "temporary" type signs such as neon signs and open signs.
  - b. Window signs shall cover no more than 33 percent of each window section or pane.
  - c. Window signs shall not have flashing lights, or lights of changing degree of intensity or color or signs with electrically scrolled messages or have flashing or reflective disks.

## City of Punta Gorda Zoning & Code Compliance

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**PUNTA GORDA**  
*It's Happening On The Harbor®*

Created by Julie Ryan, City of Punta Gorda Growth Management Department

# Sign Standards & Rules



## City of Punta Gorda

City Code of Ordinance;  
Chapter 26, Article 11, Sign Standards

Section 11.2. Rules of Interpretation

(a) Individual Sign Area.

- (1) The area of any sign face shall be computed by means of the smallest single regular geometric form (parallelogram, triangle, circle, semi-circle or other regular geometric shape) that will encompass the extreme limits of the following including the blank areas between display elements:
  - a. Writing
  - b. Representation
  - c. Emblem, logo or other display
  - d. Any material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or structure against which it is placed.
  - e. All changeable copy area on a changeable copy sign.
- (2) The area does not include:
  - a. Any supporting framework, base or bracing
  - b. Decorative fence or wall when such fence or wall otherwise meets the regulations of this Code and is clearly incidental to the display itself.
- (3) For a single wall on a single-occupant building, or a single business name on a ground Sign, all pieces of information or other graphic representations on that wall shall be measured as though part of one sign, encompassed within one regular geometric form, which may not exceed the maximum permitted sign area. A separate geometric

Form may be used for each entrance to the business that is open to the public. The area of all signs combined shall not exceed the total signage area permitted as defined herein.

(b) Multi-Faced Sign.

- (1) Where the sign faces of a double-faced sign are parallel or the interior angle formed by the faces is 60 degrees or less, only one display face shall be measured in computing sign area.
- (2) If the two faces of a double-faced sign are of unequal area, the area of the sign shall be the area of the larger face.
- (3) In all other cases, the areas of all faces of a multi-faced sign shall be added together to compute the area of the sign.
- (4) Sign area of multi-faced signs is calculated based on the principle that all sign elements that can be seen at one time or from one vantage point should be considered in measuring that side of the sign.

(c) Sign Height.

- (1) The height of a sign shall be computed as the distance from the base of the sign at normal grade to the top of the highest attached component of the sign.
- (2) Normal grade shall be construed to be the newly established grade after construction, exclusive of any filling, berming, mounding or excavating solely for the purpose of locating the sign.

(d) Building Frontage.

- (1) Building frontage shall mean the horizontal length of a building on the side with its principal entrance.
- (2) If that side is a straight wall, then the building frontage shall be the length of the wall.
- (3) If the side is not a straight wall, the building frontage shall be the horizontal distance from the corner at one end of the side of the building with the principal entrance to the other corner on the same side of the

building.

(e) Non-commercial Speech.

- (1) Non-commercial speech signs are permitted in lieu of commercial signs anywhere that other signs are permitted subject to the same general regulations and restrictions applicable to such signs.
- (2) The non-commercial message may occupy the entire face or any portion thereof.

(f) Signs in MP and PD Areas.

- (1) Only signs exempt from permit requirements are permitted in MP districts.
- (2) Within Planned Development districts, signs are permitted subject to the regulations and restrictions of this Article.

(g) Permits Required.

It shall be unlawful to erect, construct, alter, change the sign face, sign display or sign structure of any type or classification of a sign in the City of Punta Gorda without first obtaining a sign permit issued by the Zoning Division indicating compliance with the provisions and regulations of this Chapter unless specifically exempted herein.

(h) Sign Placement.

No sign of any type or classification including exempt signs, shall be erected, altered or maintained in such location or position as to present any unfinished side toward adjacent property or within view from the public right-of-way.

(i) Visibility Triangle.

Signs shall not be placed in such a manner that the sign or any portion of the sign structure obstructs visibility at street intersections, drives and driveways. Any sign in violation of this section shall be removed by the property owner within three (3) days of receiving notification from the Zoning Official or his/her designee.

(j) Sign Design.

All permanent signage permitted herein must be designed to be architecturally compatible with the building design on the site.

Sign Permit Application Checklist

- Applicant has applied for an Local Business Tax Receipt (LBT) prior to the release of a sign permit
- A Sign Permit Application form is completed and submitted with all of the following:
  - ✓ Letter of authorization from the property, building, and/or authorized agent
  - ✓ Two (2) complete set of drawings showing:
    - ✓ New sign details, location, size, dimensions, depth of letters square footage, and sign material
    - ✓ Total signage to include type and square footage MUST be calculated when replacing or adding to signage currently on site
    - ✓ Measurement indicating the length of the structure, building and/or unit where sign will be placed
    - ✓ Legible site plan including location of proposed sign
    - ✓ Method of attachment to wall, or 2 sets of signed sealed engineering drawings which meets current Florida Building Code standards. Note: Engineering drawings are not required for vinyl graphics
  - ✓ A recorded notice of commencement is required for all contracts in excess of \$2,500.00

Note: All signs with the exception of window graphics and hand painted signs MUST be installed by a contractor licensed to perform work within the City of Punta Gorda.

If located in the Historic District a Certificate of Appropriateness application is also required to be submitted for Historic Preservation Advisory Board (HPAB) approval. This process can take 45-60 days.