

Sec. 734-305. On-premises signs; central business district signs (CBD-1, CBD-2, CBD-3 and CBD-S).

The following regulations shall pertain to on-premises business signs in all CBD districts where permitted by section 734-500, Table D, and this section. Off-premises (outdoor advertising) signs in the CBD districts also shall follow the regulations of section 734-306.

Any on-premises business sign erected on a building or lot located within a locally designated historic preservation area as established by, and under the jurisdiction of, the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission (IHPC) shall be exempt from the provisions of this section of this chapter. The type, number, area, height, illumination and location of such signs located within such historic preservation areas shall be as determined by the IHPC. The specific standards and requirements for on-premises business signs shall be as set forth in and specified by the grant of a certificate of appropriateness following all procedures set forth by the IHPC.

(a) Regulations for freestanding identification signs.**(1) Where permitted.**

a. Pole or pylon signs:

1. Shall be permitted only for surface parking lots in the CBD-1 and CBD-2 Districts.
2. Shall be permitted in the CBD-3 District only for surface parking lots. In no case, however, shall pole or pylon signs be permitted on the street frontage of any lot abutting American Legion Mall, Veterans Memorial Plaza, the Indiana War Memorial or University Park.
3. Shall be permitted in the CBD-S District.

b. Ground signs shall be permitted in all CBD districts.

(2) Maximum sign height.

- a. *Pole or pylon signs:* The maximum height of a pole or pylon sign and its supporting structure shall not exceed twenty (20) feet above grade level at the base of such structure, subject to the provisions of section 734-304(g), grade mounding.
- b. *Ground signs:* No part of the sign face or the sign support structure of a ground sign shall be more than four (4) feet above grade level, subject to the provisions of section 734-204(g), grade mounding.

(3) Minimum setbacks, front.

- a. The minimum setback for freestanding identification pole or pylon signs shall be ten (10) feet from the existing street right-of-way line, provided, however, the provisions of subsection (a)(3)c. below shall also be met.
- b. The maximum setback for freestanding identification ground signs shall be zero (0) feet from the existing street right-of-way line, provided, however, the provisions of subsection (a)(3)c. below shall also be met.
- c. No freestanding identification sign shall be erected within any area designated by the Thoroughfare Plan for Marion County as required for right-of-way for a public street unless the owner of such sign provides a written commitment to the Department of Metropolitan Development to relocate such sign out of the right-of-way at his or her expense upon the acquisition of the property by the applicable governmental agency for transportation purposes and shall waive all claims to damages or compensation by reason of the existence or relocation of the sign.

(4) Minimum setbacks, side and rear. If illuminated, no freestanding identification sign facing the side or rear lot line of an abutting lot zoned as a dwelling district shall be located within fifty (50) feet of such side or rear lot line. *Exception:* This provision shall not apply if it can be determined that:

- a. A commercial or industrial use, legally established by permanent variance or lawful nonconforming use, exists upon adjoining property or abutting frontage property, although zoned as a dwelling district.

- b. The illuminated sign is visibly obstructed from the dwelling district.
- (5) **Maximum sign area.** The sign surface area of a freestanding identification sign shall not exceed one (1) square foot in sign surface area for each lineal foot of that lot's street frontage (to which the sign is oriented). In no case, however, shall the maximum sign surface area exceed one hundred (100) square feet.
- (6) **Number of signs.** One (1) freestanding identification sign shall be allowed for each frontage on a separate street. *Exceptions:*
- a. *Extensive frontage.* Where a lot has in excess of three hundred (300) feet of street frontage on the same street, one (1) additional freestanding identification sign shall be allowed for each additional three hundred (300) feet of street frontage on that street. Such additional signs shall be subject to all other provisions of this chapter. In no event shall an additional freestanding identification sign, as permitted in this section, be located any closer than three hundred (300) feet to any other freestanding identification sign on the same lot (refer to Diagram 15).
- b. *Corner lots.* On corner lots, the maximum number and square footage of freestanding identification signs shall be permitted for each street frontage. Such maximum allowances, however, shall not be transferable either in whole or in part from one (1) street to another.

(b) Regulations for building identification signs.

(1) Lower level building identification signs. Signs located on:

- The first twenty-six (26) feet of building height; or
 - The actual building height, whichever is lesser (measured from grade), shall be considered lower level building identification signs and shall conform to the following regulations.
- a. **Maximum size for lower level building identification signs.** The maximum sign surface area for lower level building identification signs shall not exceed twenty (20) percent of the facade as noted in the formula below:
- Maximum permitted sign surface area = 20% (A × B)
- A = Twenty-six (26) feet or the height of the building, whichever is lesser.
- B = Width of the facade (measured in feet) on which the sign is to be placed.
- (The application of this provision is illustrated in Diagram 17).
- b. **Number of lower level building identification signs.** One (1) sign for each basement, grade level or second story occupant of the building shall be permitted. *Exception:* Buildings in which a single tenant occupies the entire basement, grade level or second story leasable space, or a leasable space with two hundred (200) or more linear feet of street frontage, may have an additional lower level building identification sign on that street frontage only. Provided, the maximum sign surface area permitted for that facade, as noted in subsection (b)(1)a.1. above shall not be exceeded for the total number of lower level building identification signs.
- c. **Location of lower level building identification signs.** Lower level wall signs shall be located only on facades that front on a street.
- d. **Lower level building identification signs on corner lots or lots that have multiple street frontages.** On buildings having more than one (1) street frontage, the maximum allowable square footage of lower level building identification signs shall be permitted for each building frontage. Such maximum allowance, however, is not transferable either in whole or in part from one (1) building to another nor from one (1) occupancy to another occupancy.

- e. *Distance from side or rear lot line when abutting a dwelling district.* If illuminated, no building identification sign facing the side or rear lot line of an abutting lot zoned as a dwelling district shall be located within fifty (50) feet of such side or rear lot line. *Exception:* This provision shall not apply if it can be determined that:
1. A commercial or industrial use, legally established by permanent variance or lawful nonconforming use, exists upon adjoining property or abutting frontage property, although zoned as a dwelling district; or
 2. The illuminated sign is visibly obstructed from the dwelling district.
- (2) **Upper level building identification signs.** Signs located on a building facade above twenty-six (26) feet in height, measured from grade, shall be considered upper level building identification signs and shall conform to the following regulations:
- a. *Placement.* Upper level building identification signs shall be located on a facade above a height of twenty-six (26) feet, measured from the grade level.
 - b. *Maximum size for upper level building identification signs.* The maximum sign surface area for upper level building identification signs shall not exceed ten (10) percent of the facade as noted in the formula below:
Maximum permitted sign surface area = 10% (A × B).
A = height of building (measured from grade, in feet). This figure shall be reduced by subtracting the first twenty-six (26) feet in height of the building, measured from grade level.
B = width of the facade (measured in feet) on which the sign is to be placed.
(The application of this provision is illustrated in Diagram 17).
 - c. *Number of upper level building identification signs.* One (1) sign for each facade of the building shall be permitted, provided the maximum sign surface area permitted for that facade, as noted in subsection (b)(1)a.1. above is not exceeded. These signs may identify either the name of the building or a tenant of that building.
 - d. *Location of upper level building identification signs.* Upper level building identification signs shall be located on any facade or architectural elevation of the building. Provided, however, that on buildings having upper level building identification signs on more than one (1) facade, the maximum allowance for a facade is not transferable either in whole or in part from one (1) building to another nor from one (1) occupancy to another occupancy.
- (3) **Wall signs.** Wall signs shall be of individual letter construction in the CBD-1 and CBD-3 Districts. Where construction materials/methods of buildings would pose practical difficulties for the erection of individual letter wall signs, raceways can be used on which the individual letters can be mounted.
- (4) **Roof signs.** Roof signs shall not be permitted in any CBD district. *Exception:* Signs that are painted on, or otherwise attached flat and directly to, the roof structure, and that do not extend vertically from the roof structure, shall be permitted on public buildings (those buildings owned, operated, controlled or under some jurisdiction of a unit of federal, state or local government). Signs permitted under this exception shall be regulated as upper level business signs for purposes of sign surface area and number.
- (5) **Roof-integral signs.**
- a. *Where permitted.* Roof integral signs shall be permitted in the CBD-2, CBD-3 and CBD-S Districts.
 - b. *Maximum sign area.* Same as section 734-303(b)(1).

- c. *Number of signs.* One (1) roof-integral sign shall be permitted per each building facade (if a single use) or tenant space (if an integrated center), subject to the provisions of section 734-303(b)(1)b.
- d. *Distance from side or rear lot line when abutting a dwelling district.* An illuminated roof-integral sign shall not be permitted within fifty (50) feet of a side or rear lot line of an abutting lot line zoned as a dwelling district when such sign faces such side or rear lot line. *Exception:* This provision shall not apply if it can be determined that:
 1. A commercial or industrial use, legally established by permanent variance or lawful nonconforming use, exists upon adjoining property or abutting frontage property, although zoned as dwelling district.
 2. The illuminated roof-integral sign is visibly obstructed from the dwelling district.

(6) Projecting signs.

- a. *Where permitted.* Projecting signs shall be permitted in any CBD district, except in the CBD-1 District on lots that front Monument Circle. Projecting signs shall be permitted as lower level signs only for basement, grade level or second story occupants of the building.
 - b. *Maximum sign area.* The sign surface area of a projecting sign shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet.
 - c. *Number of signs and placement.* One (1) projecting sign shall be permitted per tenant space, to be placed on the building facade from which the tenant gains direct access into their business.
 - d. *Maximum projection from a building and minimum front setback.*
 1. No projecting sign or sign structure shall extend more than eight (8) feet from or beyond its supporting building. *Exception:* A projecting sign or sign structure shall not extend more than three (3) feet from or beyond its supporting building when such sign or structure is located on and oriented toward East or West Market Street between Capitol Avenue and Alabama Street.
 2. The horizontal projection of any projecting sign may extend to a point not closer than two (2) feet from an imaginary perpendicular vertical plane at the street pavement line, curb or outside edge of the sidewalk. Refer to Diagram 11 for illustrative guides to these provisions.
 - e. *Clearance from grade.* All portions of a projecting sign or sign structure shall be not less than eight (8) feet above the finished grade.
- (7) **Awning or canopy signs.** Awning or canopy signs shall be permitted in any CBD district subject to the regulations of section 734-400, awning and canopy sign regulations. *Exception:* An awning or canopy sign or sign structure shall not extend more than three (3) feet from or beyond its supporting building when such sign or structure is located on and oriented toward East or West Market Street between Capitol Avenue and Alabama Street.
- (8) **Marquee signs.** Marquee signs shall be permitted in any CBD district subject to the regulations of section 734-401, marquee sign regulations. *Exception:* A marquee sign or sign structure shall not extend more than three (3) feet from or beyond its supporting building when such sign or structure is located on and oriented toward East or West Market Street between Capitol Avenue and Alabama Street.

(9) Suspended signs.

- a. *Where permitted.* Suspended signs shall be permitted in any CBD district.
- b. *Maximum sign area.* The maximum sign surface area for a suspended sign shall not exceed five (5) square feet.
- c. *Number of signs.* One (1) suspended sign shall be permitted per each building facade (if a single use) or grade level tenant space (if an integrated center).
- d. *Clearance from grade.* All portions of any suspended sign or sign structure shall be not less than eight (8) feet above the finished grade.

Refer to Diagram 13 for illustrative guides to these provisions.

(c) Regulations for incidental signs.

Incidental signs shall be permitted in any CBD district subject to the regulations of section 734-303(c), incidental signs.

(d) Window signs.

- (1) *Where permitted.* Window signs shall be permitted in any CBD District.
- (2) *Maximum sign area.* The sign copy area of window signs shall not exceed twenty (20) percent of the window surface area on which it is placed or through which it is viewed, however, in no case shall the sign copy area exceed one hundred (100) square feet.
The sign surface area of window signs shall be calculated separately from the calculation of other signs and shall not be included in the total area of other signs permitted.
The administrator, upon request by the applicant, shall have the power to modify the requirements of this provision and approve alternatives for those requirements as long as the alternative plan is appropriate for the site and its surroundings and is compatible and consistent with the intent of the stated standards. Such modification shall be noted on the alternative plan, stamped approved by the administrator and become a part of the requirements for the improvement location permit. Under no circumstances, however, shall the administrator modify the content of a sign.

(e) Special regulations for promotional banners.

Temporary promotional banners, located on permanent banner poles or on street light standards structurally modified to accommodate banners, erected by or sanctioned by the City of Indianapolis, shall be permitted in the CBD-1, CBD-2, CBD-3 and CBD-S Districts. Only such banners promoting community activities, cultural or sports programs important to the city's image or economy; or not-for-profit organizations serving the community shall be permitted under this provision. Individual promotional banners may be displayed for a maximum of thirty (30) days. Banners shall not exceed thirty (30) inches wide and eighty-five (85) inches long. A banner program, indicating location of permanent banner poles or street light standards and size of promotional banners to be displayed, shall be submitted for regional center review and approval. The banner program shall also be submitted to the division of inspections of the department of code enforcement for its review and approval, if banner poles are proposed to be located within the public right-of-way. Once a banner program has been approved, individual temporary banners shall not require additional approval. Any changes to the banner program, however, shall require the appropriate agency review and approval. An ILP shall not be required if the provisions noted above are satisfied.

(G.O. 1, 2000, §§ 1I, 1J; G.O. 2, 2002, § 17; G.O. 96, 2009)

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