



Introduction

The Sign By-law regulates all outdoor signs and advertising space. The purpose of the By-law is to ensure that signs are not a safety hazard (i.e. interfere with traffic visibility) and assist in maintaining a clean and positive image for the City, which is why certain types of signs require a permit.

There are many types of signs, if you are considering placing a sign it is important that you review and understand the Sign By-law. If you have specific questions we recommended you call the Municipal Law Enforcement Section at 905.546.2782 or review the Sign By-law (#10-197) on the website www.hamilton.ca/signbylaw before placing a sign.

What does the Sign By-law Control?

The Sign By-law controls the:

- Type (i.e. mobile, ground),
- Size,
- Location,
- Number and,
- Display timelines.

What are some the types of signs and their guidelines?

The most popular types of signs are:

- Posters,
- Mobile,
- Sidewalk/ "A" Frame,
- Ground and,
- Temporary.

Posters (Permit not Required)

Guidelines:

- Do not exceed 28cm wide by 44cm high (11" x 17");
- Only one poster advertising the same event/activity per pole/kiosk/poster sleeve or utility pole;
- A minimum of 200m is required between postings;
- Adhesive tape is used to attach the poster;
- Poster is made of biodegradable material; and
- It is posted no earlier than 21 days before the event and removed within 3 days after the event.

The City may remove and dispose of posters at any time, without notice or compensation. *Refer to Part 5.8 of the By-law.*

Mobile Signs (Permit Required)

Guidelines:

- 14 day display period per permit;
- A maximum of 2 consecutive display periods, with 14 days required where the sign cannot be displayed (i.e. A mobile sign is up on the 1st and 2nd of a particular month cannot go up again until the 16th of that month);
- Cannot be located where it may prove to be a safety hazard;
- Cannot be placed on City/Public property;
- Cannot be located on vacant property or in a required parking space;
- Cannot be illuminated, be moving, animated, or cause noise;
- Must have name and phone number of the sign's owner on it;
- Must be located on property of business being advertised;
- If 2 signs are up, a 50m separation is required;
- Mobile signs are not allowed on a property within the Downtown Community Improvement Project Area, a Business Improvement Area, the Ancaster Village Core Area, or within the Glanbrook Village Core Area;
- A maximum of 6 permits for a single business for a total yearly allowance of 84 days;

- The sign company leasing/renting must have a Business Licence and the sticker must be displayed on sign.

Refer to Part 5, 5.4 of the By-law.

Sidewalk /"A" Frame Signs (Permit Required)

Guidelines:

- Size cannot exceed 0.6m wide by 0.8m high;
- Cannot be permanently secured to anything;
- Only permitted during business' hours of operation;
- Must be as close as possible to the front wall of the business being advertised (to ensure sidewalk or walkways are safe).

Additional regulations for signs in Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), Ancaster Village Core, Community Improvement Project Areas (CIPAs) etc:

- May be placed on public sidewalk, adjacent to curb or front wall of business being advertised but not in Urban Braille System (Urban Braille is a system that provides warning signals and clues to assist the visually impaired and blind in directions);
- Insurance coverage is required.

Refer to Part 5, 5.6 of the Sign By-law.

Are there additional opportunities for mobile signs?

Mobile sign may be used to advertise a grand opening or closing promotional event, but must meet the following criteria:

- Special permit is required;
- 7 day maximum permit period;
- Opportunity may be used by any business only once;
- No other mobile sign exists on property;
- No banner on property advertising the same event;
- Must respect all other mobile sign regulations.



Ground Signs (Permit Required)

Guidelines:

- Municipal address of property must be displayed on sign;
- 50% of sign may be “Read-o-Graph” or Electronic Message Display;
- Electronic Message Display must ‘hold’ for at least 3 seconds;
- Set-back from property line is generally 75% of height of sign;
- 200m separation to another ground sign on same property;
- Maximum sign area is 0.3 times frontage to a maximum area of 18m².

Maximum Height for ground signs:

- 3.5m if under 4.0m²;
- 6.0m > 4.0 m² & < 6.0 m²;
- 7.5m > 6.0 m².

Zoning areas/restrictions where ground signs are NOT permitted:

- Single detached dwelling;
- Semi-detached dwelling;
- Duplex;
- Triplex;
- Fourplex/quadruplex;
- Street townhouse;
- Mobile home;
- Residential Care Facility with 6 or less residents;
- Lodging house with 6 or less residents;
- Retirement home with 6 or less residents;
- Emergency shelter with 6 or less residents.

Refer to Part 5, 5.2 of the By-law.

Temporary Signs (Permit Required)

Examples of temporary signs include portable signs, lawn/sidewalk signs and new home development. Guidelines:

- The maximum size is 2.2m² for each sign surface;
- Permit period 1 year however, the sign copy can be changed throughout the year as long as the size and location remain the same;

- If placed on private property, they must be 15m from an intersection, 3m from a driveway line, 1.5m from a street line and have a 10m separation distance;
- Advertise an activity, product or service available on that property.

Refer to Part 5, 5.6 of the By-law.

Where can I find information on other types of signs?

Information on other signs such as Wall Signs, Banners, Billboards, Inflatable Signs etc., can be found on the website:

www.hamilton.ca/signbylaw.

What types of signs are NOT permitted?

The City of Hamilton does not allow the following:

- Flashing or animated video screens (with the exception of electronic word displays);
- Signs that create a safety issue (i.e. block visibility on streets or create other hazards);
- Signs supported entirely or partly by the roof of a building or structure and extending above the roof;
- Signs displayed on a vehicle, trailer or truck that are parked on a property and are being used more as a sign than a vehicle;
- Signs that block or are displayed in a parking space or space required under the City’s zoning by-law that is to be used for parking; or
- Signs within 400m of the right of way of Highway 403, the Queen Elizabeth Way, the Lincoln M. Alexander Parkway or the Red Hill Valley Parkway and visible from the traveled portion.

No person shall place any sign on a:

- Tree;
- Pole on any median, traffic island or central boulevard; or
- Traffic signal or traffic control device.

Refer to Part 5, 5.1 of the By-law.

What if I want to ask for an exemption to the Sign By-law?

You need to fill out an application form. You may be granted approval if you can prove that the general intent and purpose of the By-law can be maintained. For more information on the process for requesting an exception you can review the variances section of the by-law. *Refer to Part 6.0 of the By-law.*

What are the penalties for violations of the Sign By-law?

Failure to comply with the requirements of the Sign By-law may result in:

- The sign being immediately removed at the owner's expense and the costs added to the property taxes;
- *An Order to Comply being issued; and/or
- Charges under the Provincial Offences Act which provide for a maximum fine(s) of \$5000.00 for an individual and \$10,000.00 for a corporation in addition to other court proceeding necessary to obtain compliance.

*An "Order to Comply" is a document provided to the property owner/occupant that gives direction on what actions need to be taken by a certain deadline date (compliance date).

The Order to Comply may:

- Require the sign to be removed immediately or by a specific date; and/or
- Require the sign to be brought into compliance (i.e. request that changes be made so that the sign meets all of the regulations and requirements).

Refer to Part 7.0 of the By-law.

How do I retrieve my sign if it has been removed?

Signs that have been removed will be stored for 28 days and will be available for pick-up during this time period. To make arrangements to pick up a sign please call 905.546.2782. After 28 days the City may dispose of the sign without notice or compensation.

This document is intended for convenience and to provide general information only. Please refer to the complete Sign By-law (10-197), which may be amended from time to time, for specific regulations for signs and advertising devices before making any sign-related decisions.

For more information contact:

Municipal Law Enforcement Section

Parking and By-law Services Division
Planning and Economic Development Department
Hamilton City Centre - 77 James Street North
Main Floor, Suite 250
Hamilton, Ontario, L8R 2K3
Email: mle@hamilton.ca
Website: www.hamilton.ca/signbylaw

Monday – Friday

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Sign By-law Complaints:
Phone: 905.546.2782
Sign Permit Inquiries:
905.546.2424 Ext. 1206
Sign Variance Inquiries:
Phone: 905.546.2424 Ext. 4221



Hamilton

PARKING AND BY-LAW SERVICES DIVISION
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT