




City of Tacoma Planning and Development Services	Page 1 of 3	Director's Rule 02-2020
	Publication: 4/10/2020	Effective: 4/10/2020
	Code & Section Reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Land Use and Zoning TMC13.06.090.I	
	Type of Rule: Modification of Temporary Sign Standards During COVID-19 Emergency	
	Ordinance Authority: TMC 13.05.080 Director Decision Making Authority and 13.05.150 Enforcement	
Index: Land Use; Sign Standards, Enforcement Provisions	Approved  Peter Huffman, Director	Date 4/10/20220

Summary Proposal: That certain limitations on the location, number, and zoning designation for temporary signs be alleviated during the current public health emergency and that Land Use/Zoning enforcement for these types of signs be temporarily suspended.

Termination of this Director's Rule: This Rule will terminate automatically on September 30, 2020, or when the City of Tacoma lifts its state of emergency related to COVID-19, whichever date is later.

Problem Statement: The Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC), section 13.06.090.I, sets forth the sign regulations for the City. The purpose of the sign code is to "establish sign regulations that support and complement land use objectives set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, including those established by the Highway Advertising Control Act (Scenic Vistas Act). Signs perform important communicative functions. The reasonable display of signs is necessary as a public service and to the proper conduct of competitive commerce and industry. The sign standards contained herein recognize the need to protect the safety and welfare of the public and the need to maintain an attractive appearance in the community."

At the same time, businesses in Tacoma, particularly small businesses, are struggling to maintain visibility in the current emergency. Businesses which remain open (usually for delivery services or curb-side pickup) may be surrounded by closed business, may be hard to locate, and require additional visibility. One way to address the issue is to allow for additional temporary signage at a business. Temporary signs include A-boards, banners, and feather signs (window signs are allowed in all districts and are limited to 25% of window area).

Under the current zoning code, not all zoning districts which allow commercial uses also allow temporary signage. The zones that do allow signage allow varying types and varying amounts of signage. See the table at the end of this document for background. Violations of the sign code are subject to enforcement under TMC 13.05.150, including, if necessary, fines and abatement. The enforcement authority for the sign code is given to the Director of Planning and Development Services, with the primary purpose of "the benefit of the health, safety and welfare of the general public, and not for the benefit of any particular

person or class of persons.” Provided that the health, safety, and welfare of the general public is not compromised, enforcement actions may be delayed.

In the current situation, given the needs of businesses, it is reasonable to allow for increased temporary signage for any commercial use in the City. Further, given limited resources, enforcement of the sign code where health and safety are not compromised should be a low priority.

Detailed Proposal: Effective immediately, any business in a commercial, industrial, or mixed-use district shall have the ability to use temporary signs as follows (based on the most permissive temporary sign regulations for any district):

Temporary Signs	All Districts
A-boards	2 per business, 12 square feet per side, 4 feet in height. Such signs may be located off-site, but must remain within the same district in which the business is located. <i>For signs on sidewalks, a minimum 5-foot clear sidewalk width must be maintained.</i>
Banners	1 per business, 60 square feet maximum.
Feather Signs	1 per 50 feet of street frontage, per site, with maximum of 2 signs per street frontage. Each sign allowed up to 12 square feet in area and ten feet in height.

The definitions and development standards for each type of sign, as set forth in TMC13.06.090.I apply:

“Sign, A-Board.” A sign which consists of two panels hinged or attached at the top or side, designed to be movable and stand on the ground. Also commonly known as sandwich board signs.

“Sign, banner.” A sign intended to be hung either with or without a frame, possessing characters, letters, illustrations, or ornamentations applied to paper, plastic, or fabric of any kind.

1. Commercial banner. A banner used for commercial purposes, which includes “For Lease,” “Grand Opening,” “Sale,” etc.
2. Cultural, civil, and educational banner. A banner used for cultural, civic, or educational events, displays, or exhibits.

“Sign, feather.” A portable freestanding type sign, affixed to a light weight pole, intended to advertise temporary promotions, services, and events.



TMC.13.06.090.I.3.k. Temporary signs.

Special regulations governing temporary signs are as follows:

- (1) The duration of display of a temporary sign shall not exceed six months in any 12-month period, unless otherwise noted.
- (2) No flashing temporary signs of any type shall be permitted.
- (3) All temporary signs must be authorized by the public or private property owner.
- (4) All temporary signs shall be securely fastened and positioned in place so as not to constitute a hazard to pedestrians or motorists.
- (5) No temporary sign shall project over or into a public right-of-way or property except properly authorized banners over streets (see Title 9).
- (6) All temporary signs shall meet vehicular sight distance requirements established by the Traffic Engineer.

Summary of current temporary sign allowances.

	CIX	C-2 CCX UCX M-1 M-2 PMI	C-1	DCC	DMU	DR	T Non-Residential Districts with VSD	NCX URX	HM HMX	PDB	RCX
A-boards	Most*	Yes	Yes	Most*	Most*	Most*	Yes	Most*	No	No	Most*
Banners		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Limited	No	No
Feather Signs		Yes	Yes	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	No	No	No

*This is the most permissive amount of signage in any district, to distinguish from the districts which also allow this type of signage, but in a lesser amount.