



City of Arcata Community Development Department

736 F Street • Arcata, CA 95521

Phone: (707)822-5955 • Fax: (707)825-2029

www.cityofarcata.org

SIGN PERMIT

OVERVIEW

The Sign Permit review process reviews signs for conformity with Land Use Code requirements. The purpose of a Sign Permit is to appropriately limit the placement, type, size, and number of signs allowed within the City, and to require the proper maintenance of signs. A Master Sign Plan is an option for parcels that meet the conditions described in Land Use Code §9.38.030.D.

Sign Permits are required prior to placing or erecting any new sign and for all changes to existing signs in all zoning districts. Any alteration to an existing sign must comply with applicable Land Use Code provisions.

HOW TO APPLY

Sign Permit applications are available at the Community Development Department, or on the Department's website at www.cityofarcata.org. Staff can assist you with the materials needed for a complete application packet. Submit the completed application packet along with the application fee to the Department for processing.

THE PROCESS

Step 1: Application Filing and Initial Review

Once your application has been submitted and fees collected, Staff will perform an initial application review for completeness. If this application accompanies another application, they should be filed at the same time. Please follow the attached checklist carefully when preparing your application as this is what staff relies on to determine completeness. Should your application be found incomplete, you or your designated agent will be contacted and advised what items must be submitted before processing can continue.

Preliminary Review Option: Applicants can pay a fee to get the permit review process started rather than waiting until all required items are submitted for staff to begin review of your project. This will provide you with an assessment of how the proposed use complies with applicable standards. The application must be complete to proceed beyond that.

Step 2: Environmental Review

Sign Permit approval by the Director is considered a ministerial project which would, in most cases, be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process. Permit applications forwarded to the HDRC are considered a discretionary action subject to CEQA. The assigned planner will review your application to determine if the project is statutorily or categorically exempt from CEQA, or if further environmental review is required. If the project is exempt from CEQA, then Step 2 is complete. If the

project is not CEQA exempt, then an initial study will be prepared to make the required environmental determination.

Step 3: Review Procedure and Review Authority

The Director will review and approve Sign Permit applications in compliance with the findings required by §9.38.030.E, except when Design Review is required. Design Review is required for Master Sign Plans, sign permit application proposing over 20 square feet in area, signs for nonresidential uses in residential zoning districts (except signs for home occupations of two square feet maximum), and all signs located in Neighborhood Conservation Areas or on historic structures or sites (§9.38.030.B.2). The Director may also refer a Sign Permit application to the Historic and Design Review Commission for review and decision as part of a development project that is otherwise subject to Design Review, or as a Sign Permit application that is not part of a larger project.

Step 4: Conditions of Approval and Findings

In approving a Sign Permit, the review authority may impose any conditions deemed reasonable and necessary for Land Use Code compliance and to ensure that approval will comply with the required findings. The violation of any required condition may constitute grounds for permit revocation.

Step 5: Appeals

Director and Historic and Design Review Commission actions are appealable to the Planning Commission. Appeals to the Planning Commission must be filed with the Community Development Department within 10 calendar days of the actual date of the final decision. Appeals must be submitted in writing and be accompanied by the required fees.

EXPIRATION OF PERMITS

Sign Permit and Master Sign Plan approval will expire 12 months from the date of approval unless the sign has been erected or a different expiration date is stipulated at time of approval, or where an extension of time is approved in compliance with Land Use Code §9.38.030.F. The expiration date will be automatically extended to concur with the expiration date of the companion building permit or other applicable permits.

Sign Permit Application Checklist

Visit the Community Development Department page at www.cityofarcata.org. Select the Land Use Code from the menu and then see § 9.38 for complete Sign permit regulations.

- Preliminary Review Option: Applicants can pay a fee to get the permit review process started rather than waiting until all required items are submitted for staff to begin review of your project.

Talk with Arcata Community Development Department Planning Staff to determine which of the following items must be submitted along with a completed and signed application form. **Incomplete or inaccurate information will cause a delay in permit processing.**

Submit:

- Application form with the required signatures.
- Application fee deposit as indicated on the application form.
- Written authorization from the property owner(s) for the placement of the proposed sign(s) on the site.
- Completed application for Design Review if required (§ 9.38.030.B.2).
- 8 copies of a site plan and building elevations, drawn to scale or photographed, showing the proposed location of each sign in relation to other signs on the site and building, including each existing and proposed sign of any type, whether or not requiring a permit.
- Plans for the sign(s), drawn to scale, accurately detailing the design and proposed appearance of the sign(s), including mounting and lighting details.
- A complete color scheme for the sign.
- Computation of the total sign area, the area of each individual sign, the height of each sign, and the total number of existing and proposed signs on the parcel.
- Ensure the proposed sign meets the required standards for sign types and allowable uses within specific land use zones. See:
 - LUC § 9.38.080, Sign Standards by Zone
 - LUC § 9.38.090, Standards for Specific Sign Types
- Include additional information and supporting documentation as needed to assist the processing of the permit(s). It is advisable to review the following required findings to ensure the application material supports these findings:
 - LUC § 9.38.030.E, Sign Permit and Master Sign Plan Requirements Findings for Approval
 - LUC § 9.38.070, General Requirements for all Signs
 - LUC § 9.38.080, Sign Standards by Zone
 - LUC § 9.38.090, Standards for Specific Sign Types.

Subject to changes or additions at any time. Applications may require additional information for continued processing.