

## Chapter 21.47 SIGN STANDARDS\*

**\*Editor's note:** Any provisions in [Title 21](#) of the Anchorage Municipal Code, ordinances or resolutions of the Municipal Assembly, resolutions of Municipal boards or commissions, or entitlements issued pursuant to this Title that refer to [Section 21.45.160](#) shall hereby be considered as referring to the applicable Sections and/or provisions of [Chapter 21.47](#).

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### **21.47.010 Purpose statement.**

The purpose of this chapter is to promote the public health, safety and welfare by establishing standards and criteria for the construction, installation, maintenance, and operation of signs in the Municipality of Anchorage, which are subject to the provisions of this chapter. It is the further purpose to provide for the removal of those signs that do not comply with these regulations. More specifically, this chapter is intended to:

- A. Enhance and protect the physical appearance of the municipality.
- B. To protect property values.
- C. Promote and maintain visually attractive, high value residential, retail, commercial and industrial districts.
- D. Promote the economic well being of the community by creating a favorable physical image.
- E. Ensure that signs are located and designed to:
  1. Provide an effective means of way-finding in the community.
  2. Afford the community an equal and fair way to advertise and promote its products and services.
  3. Reduce sign clutter and the distractions and confusion that may be contributing factors in traffic congestion and accidents, and maintain a safe and orderly pedestrian and vehicular environment.
  4. Minimize the disruption of the scenic views which when maintained protect important community values.
  5. Respect the unique climatic conditions such as the amount of snow fall and the effect of sustained snow piles, the amount of daylight and the acute shadows regularly occurring on the landscape.
  6. Afford businesses, individuals and institutions a reasonable opportunity to use signs as an effective means of communication.

F. Provide review procedures that assure that signs are consistent with the municipality's objectives and within the municipality's capacity to efficiently administer the regulations.

G. Prohibit all signs not expressly permitted by this chapter.

(AO No. 2003-62(S-1), § 1, 10-1-03)

#### **21.47.020 Application of this chapter.**

A. The regulations contained in this chapter shall apply to signs outside of the public right-of-way and on the property to which the standard or regulation refers, except when specifically stated otherwise. A sign may only be erected, established, painted, created or maintained in conformance with the standards, criteria, procedures, and other applicable requirements of this chapter.

B. Unless otherwise stated in this chapter, all determinations, findings, and interpretations shall be made by the administrative official or other appropriate municipal officials called upon or designated by the administrative official.

C. The following signs and displays are exempted from this chapter:

1. Any sign displaying a public notice or warning required by a valid and applicable federal, state, or local law, ordinance, or regulation;
2. Flags of any nation, government or non-commercial organization;
3. Any sign inside a building that is not attached to the window or door and is not legible from a distance of more than three feet beyond the lot on which the sign is located;
4. Any work of art that does not display a commercial message;
5. Any religious symbol that does not display a commercial message;
6. Any traffic control sign, such as "STOP" or "YIELD," located on private property that meets applicable governmental standards pertaining to such signs and does not display a commercial message.
7. Signs erected by state or local government agencies, or their contractors, to facilitate the construction, maintenance, or operation of transportation facilities.
8. Product dispensers and trash receptacles;
9. Holiday and community special event decorations that do not display a commercial message;
10. Mascots for educational institutions with primarily academic curricula;
11. Signs on athletic fields and scoreboards intended for on-premises viewing;
12. Construction signs of up to 32 square feet;
13. Temporary signs of six square feet or less in area.
14. [*Reserved.* ]

(AO No. 2003-62(S-1), § 1, 10-1-03; AO No. 2005-61(S), § 1, 6-14-05)

#### **21.47.025 Relationship of this chapter to state law.**

No provision of this chapter shall be interpreted as authorizing the erection or maintenance of any sign or display within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way and visible from the main-traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway, or the erection or maintenance of any sign or display beyond 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of the main-traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway with the purpose of the message displayed being read from that travel way, in a manner that would conflict with the provisions of Alaska Statutes Secs. 19.25.075 -- 19.25.180.

(AO No. 2003-62(S-1), § 1, 10-1-03)

### **21.47.030 Computations, rules of measurement, and definitions.**

The following regulations shall control the computation and measurement of sign area, sign height, building frontage and public street frontage:

#### **A. *Determining sign area or dimension of signs.***

1. The sign area shall include the face of all the display area(s) of the sign. The sign area shall include the frame and structural support unless such structural support is determined to be an architectural feature as defined in subSection 21.47.030E or the structural support is located below the sign face area and its accompanying frame, does not contain a message, and is clearly distinguishable from the sign face area. Architectural features that are either part of the building or part of a freestanding structure are not considered signs and are thus exempt from these regulations.

2. For a sign that is framed, outlined, painted or otherwise prepared and intended to provide a background for a sign display, the area of the sign shall be the area of not more than three geometric shapes that encompasses the entire area of the sign including the background or frame.

3. For a sign comprised of individual letters, figures or elements on a wall or similar surface of a building or structure, or an irregular shaped freestanding sign, the area of the sign shall be the area of not more than three regular geometric shapes that encompasses the perimeter of all the elements in the display.

a. When separate elements are organized to form a single sign, but the elements are separated by open space, the area of the sign shall include all the display areas, including the space between the elements.

b. Up to five percent of the permitted sign area may be considered minor protrusions, and extend outside of the maximum limitation of three geometric shapes and are, therefore, exempted from being included as part of the sign area.

4. For freestanding and projecting signs the sign area shall be computed by the measurement of one of the faces when two display faces are joined, are parallel, or are within 30 degrees of being parallel to each other and are part of the same sign structure. For any sign that has two display surfaces that do not comply with the above regulation, or has more than two display surfaces then each surface shall be included when determining the area of the sign.

In determining the area of freestanding signs the following shall be exempted from being considered as part of the maximum permitted area:

a. One-half square foot of sign area shall be exempted for each digit of the street number, up to a maximum of three square feet.

b. The portion of a solid sign base or other sign support, up to a maximum height of four feet that is at least 50 percent screened by landscaping.

c. The air space under a freestanding sign between supporting posts, other air space between a projecting sign and the wall to which it is attached (See Figure 1).

All other exemptions to the area of a sign may only be approved by the urban design commission.

5. Except as provided in schedule 21.47.040 for non-residential uses located within residential zoning districts, the height of a freestanding sign shall be measured from the elevation of the edge of the public right-of-way immediately adjacent to, or nearest the sign structure, to the highest point of the sign, or decorative features.

#### **GRAPHIC LINK: [Figure 1. Calculation of freestanding sign area](#)**

**B. *Determining building frontage and building unit.*** For the purposes of this chapter and for determining allowable wall sign area, the building frontage shall include the building walls that: face a public street, face a parking lot which serves the use, or that

contains a public entrance to the uses therein. For the purposes of these regulations, a public alley is not considered a public street.

1. The building frontage shall be measured along such building wall between the exterior faces of the exterior sidewalls.
2. In the case of an irregular wall surface, a single straight line approximating such wall surface shall be used to measure the wall's length.
3. For multi-occupant buildings, the portion of a building that is owned or leased by a single occupant shall be considered a building unit. The building frontage for a building unit shall be measured from the centerline of the party walls defining the building unit.
4. The primary frontage shall be the portion of a frontage that serves as the main access point to a building or building unit. (See Figure 2)
5. The secondary frontage shall be all other frontages. (See Figure 2)

C. *Determining public street frontage.* For the purposes of this chapter and for determining allowable freestanding sign area, public street frontage is the length of the public street, which is contiguous to the adjacent private parcel for which the sign is being considered. For the purposes of these regulations a public alley is not considered a public street. For the purposes of this chapter, standards, which are based on a minimum length of the public street frontage, shall also apply to "any portion thereof" unless the specific section states otherwise.

D. *Determining sign setbacks.* The required setbacks for the sign shall apply to all elements of the sign including its frame and base.

**GRAPHIC LINK:**[Figure 2: Primary and Secondary Frontage](#)

E. *Definitions.* The following shall serve as definitions as they are referred to within this Chapter.

1. *Architectural feature* means any construction attendant to, but not an integral part of the sign, which may consist of landscape, building, or structural forms that enhance the site in general; also, graphic stripes and other architectural painting techniques applied to a structure that serves a functional purpose, or when the stripes or other painting techniques are applied to a building provided such treatment does not include lettering, logos or pictures.
2. *Billboard and off-premise sign* means a sign structure advertising an establishment, merchandise, event, service or entertainment which is not sold, produced, manufactured or furnished at the property on which the sign is located. Any other outdoor advertising prohibited by the provisions of Alaska Statutes Secs. 19.25.075--19.25.180 shall also be considered billboards.
3. *Building wall* means any vertical surface of a building or structure (other than a pitched roof) that is integral to and could reasonably be constructed as part of the architecture of the building when a sign(s) are not being contemplated. Examples of building walls include but are not limited to: awnings, canopies, marquees, the vertical portion of gable roofs, parapets, mechanical penthouses, etc.
4. *Flag* means any fabric or bunting containing distinctive colors, patterns or symbols, used as a symbol of a government, political subdivision, corporate or commercial entity, or institution. A corporate or commercial, or institutional flag may only display the name, trademark, or logo of the business or institution on the parcel and such flag may not be used for other business or advertising purposes.
5. *Parcel* means the area of land necessary for a use to be in compliance with the Land use Planning and Zoning Ordinances of the Municipality of Anchorage. The terms "lot" or "tract" may also be referring to a parcel.
6. *Sign* means any visual communication display, object, device, graphic, structure or part, situated indoors or outdoors, or attached to, painted on or displayed from a building or structure, in order to direct or attract attention to, or to announce or promote, an

object, product, place, activity, person, institution organization, or business or the like, by means of letters, words, model, banner, flag, pennant, insignia, device, designs, colors, symbols, pictures, images, illuminations or representation used as, or which is in the nature of an announcement, direction, or advertisement; any exception shall be specifically set out in this chapter.

7. *Sign, banner* means a sign made of lightweight fabric or similar material with no enclosing framework that is mounted to a building or other structure at one or more edges.

8. *Sign, building* means any sign attached to any part of a building including wall, awning, canopy, and projecting signs, and excluding window signs. A wall sign is a building sign that is parallel to and does not extend from the wall more than 12 inches.

9. *Sign, changeable copy* means a portion of a sign with letters, characters, or graphics that are not permanently affixed to the structure, framing, or background allowing the letters, characters or graphics to be modified from time to time manually or by electronic or mechanical devices, such as a bulletin board or electronic message board, and includes scrolling copy. Changeable copy signs may not be used to display commercial messages relating to products or services that are not offered on the property.

10. *Sign, construction* means a temporary sign identifying a project or facility during the time of construction. Such signs typically include the name of an architect, engineer and/or contractor for a building or project located on the parcel.

11. *Sign, ideological or political* means any temporary sign displaying or advocating an idea, opinion or position on any social, cultural, religious or political issue and containing no commercial message.

12. *Sign, entrance or exit* means a sign located at the driveway entrance or exit and intended to provide for safe ingress and egress.

13. *Sign, freestanding* means a sign supported from the ground and not attached to any building. A freestanding sign is a sign supported by one or more poles or a solid base. Pole signs and monument style signs are considered freestanding signs.

14. *Sign, inflatable* means any inflatable shape or figure designed or used to attract attention to a business event or location. Inflatable promotional devices shall be considered to be temporary signs under the terms of this chapter and, where applicable, subject to the regulations thereof.

15. *Sign, instructional* means a sign that has a purpose secondary to the use on the lot and that is intended to instruct employees, customers, or users as to matters of public safety or necessity such as specific parking requirements, the location or regulations pertaining to specific activities on the site or in the building, and including a sign erected by a public authority, utility, public service organization, or private industry that is intended to control traffic; direct, identify or inform the public; or provide needed public service as determined by the rules and regulations of governmental agencies or through public policy.

16. *Sign plate* means a building sign not exceeding two square feet indicating the street number, the name of the person, business, profession or activity occupying the lot, building, or part thereof; or other information pertaining to the use on the lot.

17. *Sign, portable* means any sign designed to be transported on wheels, skids, a bench, runners, brackets, or has a frame to which wheels, skids, runners, brackets, or similar mechanical devices can be attached to or support the sign. A portable sign also includes inflatable devices and mobile signs such as parked trailers or vehicles, which include signs which are visible from the public right-of-way unless such vehicle is used in the normal day-to-day operations of the business.

18. *Sign, projecting* means a sign that is attached to a building wall and extending perpendicular to (or approximately perpendicular to) the building wall and 12 inches or more beyond the face of the wall.

19. *Sign, roof* means a sign, or any portion thereof, erected, constructed, painted, or placed on the roof and includes any sign extending higher than the roof or parapet wall of any building if the principal support for the sign is on the roof, wall or any other structural element of the building.

20. *Sign, rotating* means a sign that meets all dimensional standards and which may revolve on a vertical axis no more than four times per minute.

21. *Sign, temporary* means a sign that is designed to be used only temporarily and is not intended to be permanently attached to a building, structure or permanently installed in the ground. These include, but are not limited to, political signs, special event signs, and for sale or leasing signs. Temporary signs may be displayed as window signs.

22. *Sign, window* means a sign that is applied or attached to a window or door, or a sign located near a window within a building for the purpose of being visible to and read from the outside of the building except for signs that are not legible from a distance of more than three feet beyond the building in which such sign is located. Window signs are permitted in nonresidential districts as set out in 21.47.060 H, without distinction as to method of attachment.

(AO No. 2003-62(S-1), § 1, 10-1-03; AO No. 2005-61(S), § 2, 6-14-05; AO No. 2005-163(S-2), § 1, 5-16-06)

**21.47.040 Signs in residential districts (R-1, R-1A, R-2A, R-2D, R-2M, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-5A, R-6, R-7, R-8, R-9, R-10, R-11(a) , D-2 AND D-3).**

(a) The standards in this chapter only apply to residential parcels in the R-11 District.

Signs for all residential and nonresidential uses in residential districts shall comply with the standards set forth in this section.

A. *Basic regulations for Signs in the Residential Districts (R-1, R-1A, R-2A, R-2M, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-5A, R-6, R-7, R-8, R-9, R-10, R-11 (a) , D-2 and D-3).* Signs for all residential and nonresidential uses in residential districts shall be limited in number, area, height and setback based on the type of use, as set forth in Schedule 21.47.040.

B. *Supplemental standards for all changeable copy signs.*

1. Signs for permitted non-residential uses may have up to 100 percent of the sign area devoted to changeable copy, except as provided in subsection 3.

2. Electronic changeable copy is prohibited for all building signs and is prohibited for freestanding signs except as provided in subsection 3.

3. Electronic changeable copy is permitted for freestanding and building signs on parcels that are nine acres or greater with a minimum of 500 feet of frontage on a street of Class II or greater classification in the official streets and highways plan. Electronic changeable copy shall not change more than one time per 20-second period. Electronic changeable freestanding signs are permitted up to a maximum of 80 percent of the actual sign area. One electronic changeable copy building sign per 300 linear feet of frontage is permitted up to a maximum size of 20 square feet per sign.

4. *Multi-occupant facilities.* When a freestanding sign is permitted on a site that has more than one occupant, it is the property owner's responsibility to determine if the sign area shall be devoted to identification of the building(s), the anchor occupant, all occupants, or some combination thereof.

C. *Instructional signs.* Instructional signs that are clearly intended for instructional purposes shall be permitted as needed on a lot in a residential district when the lot is

devoted to a multi-family or nonresidential use provided such signs comply with the following:

1. The signs are not larger than necessary to serve the intended instructional purpose, but in any event do not exceed six square feet in area;
2. The number of instructional signs located on the site are the minimum needed to serve the intended instructional purpose;
3. The signs are not located or designed to be legible or serve to attract attention beyond the perimeter of the site.

The signs may be placed on the base of a permitted freestanding sign with out the area of such instructional sign, or the background, being considered as part of or added to the area of the freestanding sign.

TABLE INSET:

Schedule 21.47.040 Signs in the Residential Districts (R-1, R-1A, R-2A, R-2D, R-2M, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-5A, R-6, R-7, R-8, R-9, R-10, R-11 (b) , D-2, and D-3)				
Type	Maximum Number Permitted	Maximum Area Per Sign	Standards for Freestanding signs	
			Maximum Height	Min. Setback from ROW
<b>(A) Signs for Each Single-Family Dwelling; Duplex or Townhomes:</b>				
1. Permanent Signs				
a. Building Signplates	1 per dwelling unit	2 sq ft (c)	--	--
b. Freestanding Signs	1 per building	2 sq ft (f)	5 ft	0
2. Temporary Signs (a)	2 per dwelling unit	6 sq. ft.	5 ft	0
3. Signs for Residential Subdivisions	2 per subdivision entrance	30 sq ft	8 ft	5 ft
<b>(B) Multi-Family Buildings:</b>				
1. Permanent Signs				
a. Building Signplates	1 per public entrance to building	2 sq ft	--	--
b. Freestanding Signs	1 per development entrance or per 500' of	30 sq ft	8 ft	Equal to height of

	public street frontage, whichever is greater			sign
2. Temporary Signs				
a. Freestanding Signs (a)		6 sq ft		
(C) Permitted Nonresidential Uses:				
1. Permanent Signs				
a. Building Signplates	1 per address	2 sq ft	--	--
b. Primary Building Signs	Not Applicable	1/2 sq ft of sign for every lineal ft of primary building frontage	--	--
c. Freestanding Signs	1 per 500 feet of public street frontage	40 sq ft (d)	8 ft (e)	10 ft
2. Temporary Signs				
a. Freestanding Signs (a)	2	6 sq ft		
(D) Instructional Signs	Shall be exempt from requirements when in compliance with SubSection <a href="#">21.47.040C</a>			
(a) See also SubSection <a href="#">21.47.040D</a>				
(b) The standards in this section only apply to residential parcels in the R-11 District.				
(c) A sign plate is not in violation of these regulations if a larger sign is determined to be necessary to accommodate identification as mandated by the municipality.				
(d) A sign which is located within 40 feet of a property line of a parcel which is either occupied by, or is zoned for, a single family or two-family dwelling unit shall be limited to a maximum area of 30 square feet.				
(e) Sign height is measured from the natural grade at the base of the sign.				
(f) For parcels larger than one acre located within the R-6, R-7, R-8, R-9, R-10, and R-11 (b) residential zoning districts, one freestanding sign no greater than eight square feet shall be permitted.				

**GRAPHIC LINK:** [Figure 3. Non-residential Uses/](#)[Figure 4. Subdivision Entrance Sign](#)

D. *Temporary signs.*

1. *For single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, or townhomes:* Two temporary signs are permitted at any given time on any one parcel. These temporary signs may be displayed for an unspecified amount of time provided these signs do not contain any commercial messages except for the sale or leasing of the property on which the sign is located.

2. *For multiple-family developments and nonresidential uses:* Two (2) temporary freestanding signs that do not exceed six (6) square feet each may be erected for an unspecified time.

3. *Vacant parcels.* The following signs are permitted for an unspecified period of time:

a. For a parcel less than one acre, one temporary sign is permitted up to a maximum of 16 square feet.

b. For a parcel greater than one acre, one temporary sign is permitted up to 32 square feet. A parcel that also has frontage on a second public street is entitled to a second sign, not to exceed 32 square feet, provided that the length of the frontage along the second public street is a minimum of 300 feet.

Such signs may not be used to display commercial messages referring to products or services that are unrelated to current or pending activities on or uses of the property.

(AO No. 2003-62(S-1), § 1, 10-1-03; AO No. 2005-61(S), § 3, 6-14-05; AO No. 2005-163(S-2), § 2, 5-16-06)

**21.47.050 Signs in the Public Lands and Institutions (PLI) District, the Residential Office (R-O) District, and the Watershed (W) District.**

Signs in the Public Lands and Institutions (PLI) District, the Residential-Office (R-O) District, and the Watershed (W) District shall conform to the standards set forth in this section.

A. *Basic standards for building signs.*

1. *Maximum area of permanent building signs.* Building signs shall conform to the maximum area limitations set forth in Schedule 21.47.050 A.

TABLE INSET:

Schedule 21.47.050 A Building Signs in the PLI, R-O and W Districts		
Sign Type	Maximum Number Permitted	Base Area Permitted on a Single Building Frontage
(A) Signplate	1/address	2 square feet
(B) Building Sign on Primary Frontage (a)(b)		1 sq. ft. per lineal ft of primary frontage (c)
(C) Building Sign on Secondary Frontage (a)(b)		0.6 sq. ft. per lineal ft. of secondary frontage (c)
(D) Instructional Sign	Shall be exempt from regulations when in compliance with <a href="#">Section 21.47.050D</a>	
(a) <a href="#">Section 21.47.030B</a>		
(b) The maximum sign area that is permitted for primary frontage may be transferred to a		

secondary frontage provided that the maximum sign area on any secondary frontage does not exceed one square foot for each lineal foot of frontage. See also the wall sign bonuses which are permitted pursuant to SubSection 21.47.050B 2.

(c) The maximum building sign area for a building or any portion of the building which is setback more than 200 feet from the right-of-way that provides primary access to the site may be increased by 25 percent, provided the building is visible from any portion of the adjacent street.

**2. Placement of building signs.**

a. The building signs permitted in Schedule 21.47.050 A may be placed on the wall, awnings, canopies, parapets, or be a projecting sign in compliance with Subsection "b".

b. Projecting signs shall be limited to occupants that have a minimum of ten feet of occupant building frontage provided that:

i. All projecting signs shall have a maximum height of 14 feet and a minimum clearance of eight feet from the ground to the bottom of the sign. A projecting sign may be a minimum of six feet from the ground when it is located above a landscaped area or other area that does not permit pedestrian traffic beneath the sign.

ii. Projecting signs shall be placed on the building so the signs are intended to be viewed by the pedestrians on the abutting street or pedestrian way.

**GRAPHIC LINK: Figure 5. Building Signs**

**B. Basic standards for permanent freestanding signs:**

1. *Maximum number, area and height, minimum setback of permanent freestanding signs.* Permanent freestanding signs shall comply with the maximum number, area and height limitations and minimum setback from the street right-of-way set forth in Schedule 21.47.050 B.

2. *Sign area proportions:* For any freestanding sign, the horizontal portion (width) of the face shall not exceed four times the height of the face.

TABLE INSET:

Schedule 21.47.050 B Freestanding Sign Standards in the PLI, R-O, and W Districts		
	PLI	R-O
(A) Maximum Height	15 ft.	15 ft.
(B) Maximum Area	120 sq. ft.	80 sq. ft.
(C) Number/Frontage	1 per 300 ft. frontage up to a maximum of two	
(D) Minimum Separation	200 ft	
(E) Minimum Setback from R.O.W.	None on a Class II or greater street; otherwise 10 ft	
(F) Minimum Setback from Side Lot Line (b)	10 ft	
(G) Entrance and Exit Signs (a)		
Maximum Area	6 sq ft	

Maximum Height	5 ft
<p>(a) Entrance and Exit signs, which are permitted in addition to the above freestanding signs, shall be limited to two for each entrance/exit driveway.</p> <p>(b) If the side lot is adjacent to a Residential District (not including R-O) then the minimum setback from the side lot line is 30 feet.</p>	

C. *Supplemental standards for freestanding signs.*

1. *Number of freestanding signs allowed.*

- a. Lots with less than 300 lineal feet of frontage on any one street may have only one freestanding sign per that street frontage.
- b. Lots with 300 or more lineal feet of frontage on any one street may have two freestanding signs per that street frontage.
- c. No more than two freestanding signs are allowed along any one frontage. Freestanding signs must be separated by a minimum distance of 150 feet. On corner lots, the property frontage on both streets shall be considered when measuring the separation.

2. *Wrapping structural steel supports.*

- a. Signs that are eight feet or less in height with exposed structural steel support: The structural steel supports shall have a covering that totals at least four times the width of the structural steel at its widest point and is parallel to the sign face.
- b. Signs that are greater than eight feet in height: All structural steel supports shall have coverings that collectively total at least 33 percent of the width of the sign at its widest point.
- c. The width of the covering shall be symmetrical for all supports. (See Figure 6)
- d. The depth of the support coverings shall not exceed the depth of the sign. (See Figure 6)
- e. In all circumstances, the covering shall extend from four inches above the ground to the base of the sign face.
- f. The following materials shall not be used for covering structural steel supports:
  - i. T-111
  - ii. Plywood
  - iii. Particle Board
  - iv. Sheet Metal of less than 24 gauge
  - v. Aluminum of less than .063 inches

**GRAPHIC LINK:**[Figure 6: Examples of pole wrap. Poles depicted in plan view](#)

**GRAPHIC LINK:**[Figure 7. Freestanding sign in PLI Zone](#)

D. *Supplemental standards for all changeable copy signs.*

1. Freestanding signs may have up to 30 percent of the actual sign area devoted to changeable copy. Building signs and projecting signs may have up to 30 percent of the actual sign area or 120 square feet, whichever is less, devoted to changeable copy.
2. Changeable copy may only be changed manually, provided, however, if the business or institution has frontage on a street of Class II or greater classification in the official streets and highways plan, the copy may be changed electronically or mechanically as well as manually.
3. Copy which is changed electronically or mechanically shall not be changed more than one time per 20-second period, however if the business or institution has frontage on a street of Class II or greater classification in the official streets and highways plan, the changeable copy shall not change more than one time per two seconds.
4. Scrolling copy is allowed if these requirements are met:

a. The message is completed within no less than two seconds and no more than five seconds.

b. The complete message remains static before scrolling recommences for no less time than required for other changeable copy signs in the district.

E. *Instructional signs.* Signs that comply with the definition of "instructional sign" shall be permitted as needed provided such signs comply with the following:

1. The signs are not larger than necessary to serve the intended instructional purpose;
2. The number of instructional signs located on the site are the minimum needed to serve the intended instructional purpose; and
3. Instructional signs shall not exceed six square feet in area.
4. The signs may be placed on the base of a permitted freestanding sign without the area of such instructional sign, or the background, being considered as part of or added to the area of the freestanding sign.

F. *Temporary signs.* Temporary signs in the PLI, R-O, and W Districts are permitted pursuant to Schedule 21.47.050 E as set forth below:

TABLE INSET:

Schedule 21.47.050 E Temporary Signs in the PLI, R-O, and W Districts	
	Requirement
Maximum Area	100 square feet (32 square feet rigid material)
Maximum Number of Signs Per Principal Use	1
Maximum Number of Display Days	60 (a)
Lighting	Internally illuminated or lighted signs are prohibited.
Motion	Animation or flashing is prohibited
Maximum Height (Freestanding)	Same as permanent signs
Yards	Same as permanent signs
(a) For temporary signs involving the sale, rent, or lease of the property on which the sign is located, the time limit is unlimited.	

G. *Display of commercial flags.* In the PLI, R-O, and W Districts, a maximum of three flagpoles may be erected on any parcel provided that:

1. A maximum of three commercial flags may be displayed simultaneously;
2. The maximum length of the flag pole shall be 30 feet; and
3. The total maximum size of all commercial flags displayed shall not exceed 120 square feet. Subject to the total maximum size of commercial flags, a commercial or non-commercial organization may display alongside a national or governmental flag, one organizational flag not larger than the national or governmental flag.
4. The corporate or commercial flag may only display the name, trademark, or logo of the business on the parcel and such flag may not be used for other business or advertising purposes.

H. *Unified sign plan:* To recognize and accommodate irregular site shapes (which are typically characterized by narrow lot frontages resulting in some buildings with

extraordinarily large setbacks and limited visibility to a public street) multiple contiguous lots and/or tracts may be considered as a single site for the purposes of determining the size, number, and placement of freestanding signs permitted pursuant to this chapter. Solely for the purposes of this section:

1. The number and area of the freestanding signs permitted, pursuant to Schedule 21.47.050 B, shall be determined based on size and frontage of the multiple properties being considered as a single parcel.
2. After a unified sign plan has been approved by the municipality and a permit has been issued, the sign rights or limitations shall be recorded with the state district recorder's office as a deed restriction.
3. Revocation of a unified sign plan must be approved by all participants in the plan; all signs on the affected properties must be in compliance with this code before the plan can be revoked.
4. This section shall not be interpreted as authorizing the erection or maintenance of any sign or display within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way and visible from the main-traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway, or the erection or maintenance of any sign or display beyond 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of the main traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway with the purpose of the message displayed being read from that travel way, in a manner that would conflict with the provisions of Alaska Statutes Secs. 19.25.075--19.25.180. (AO No. 2003-62(S-1), § 1, 10-1-03; AO No. 2005-61(S), § 4, 6-14-05; AO No. 2005-163(S-2), § 3, 5-16-06)

**21.47.060 Signs in the nonresidential districts (B-1A, B-1B, B-2A, B-2B, B-2C, B-3, B-4, I-1, I-2, I-3, MC, MI, R-11(a) and T).**

Signs in the nonresidential districts (B-1A, B-1B, B-2A, B-2B, B-2C, B-3, B-4, I-1, I-2, I-3, MC, MI, R-11(a) and T) shall conform to the standards set forth in this section.

(a) For the R-11 District, the standards in this section only apply to non-residential parcels.

*A. Basic standards for building signs.*

1. *Maximum area of permanent building signs.* Building signs shall conform to the maximum area limitations set forth in Schedule 21.47.060 A.
2. *Placement of building signs.*
  - a. The building signs permitted in Schedule 21.47.060 A may be placed on the wall, awnings, canopies, parapets, or be a projecting sign in compliance with subsection "b."
  - b. Projecting signs shall be limited to occupants that have a minimum of 10 feet of occupant building frontage provided that:
    - i. All projecting signs shall have a maximum height of 14 feet and a minimum clearance of eight feet from the ground to the bottom of the sign. A projecting sign may be a minimum of six feet from the ground when it is located above a landscaped area or other area that does not permit pedestrian traffic beneath the sign.
    - ii. Projecting signs shall be placed on the building so that the signs are intended to be viewed by the pedestrians on the abutting street or pedestrian way.
3. *Additional building signs for multiple story buildings:* In addition to the building signs in SubSection 21.47.060A one additional sign is permitted on each of the building's primary and secondary frontages according to the following. For a building with two floors the additional permitted sign area is 40 square feet for an eligible building wall. This additional sign area may be increased by ten square feet for each additional floor in the building provided that the sign is placed at the floor height for which the bonus is given.

**GRAPHIC LINK:** [Figure 8. Building Signs-General](#)

TABLE INSET:

Schedule 21.47.060 A Building Signs in All Non-Residential Districts (B-1A, B-1B, B-2A, B-2B, B-2C, B-3, B-4, I-1, I-2, I-3, MC, Mi, R-11(a) and T)		
Sign Type	Maximum Number Permitted	Base Area Permitted on a Single Building Frontage (b)
(A) Signplate	1/address	2 square feet
(B) Building Sign on Primary Frontage (c)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.2 sq. ft. per linear ft. of primary frontage in the B-2A, B-2B, and B-2C Districts.</li> <li>• 2 sq. ft. per lineal ft. of primary frontage in all other Districts regulated in this <a href="#">Section 21.47.060</a>. (d)</li> </ul>
(C) Building Sign on Secondary Frontage		1.2 sq. ft. per lineal ft. of secondary frontage
(D) Building Sign on Door of Rear Entrance		2 sq. ft. per each door
(E) Instructional Sign	Shall be exempt from regulations when in compliance with <a href="#">Section 21.47.060D</a>	
<p>(a) The standards in this Chapter only apply to non-residential parcels in the R-11 District.</p> <p>(b) See Sub <a href="#">Section 21.47.030B</a>.</p> <p>(c) The maximum sign area that is permitted for primary frontage may be transferred to a secondary frontage provided that the maximum sign area on any secondary frontage does not exceed two square feet for each lineal foot of frontage.</p> <p>(d) The maximum building sign area for a building or any portion of the building that is setback more than 200 feet from the right-of-way that provides primary access to the site may be increased by 25 percent, provided the building is visible from the street.</p>		

**B. Basic standards for permanent freestanding signs:**

1. *Maximum area and height, minimum setback of permanent freestanding signs.* Permanent freestanding signs shall comply with the maximum area and height limitations and minimum setback from the street right-of-way set forth in Schedule 21.47.060 B.

2. *Sign area proportions:* For any freestanding sign greater than 15 feet in height but less than 20 feet, the horizontal portion (width) of the face shall not exceed four times the height of the face. For any freestanding sign between 20 feet and 25 feet in height, the horizontal portion (width) of the face shall not exceed three times the height of the face.

**C. Supplemental standards for freestanding signs.**

1. *Number of freestanding signs allowed.*

a. Lots with less than 300 lineal feet of frontage on any one street may have only one freestanding sign per that street frontage.

TABLE INSET:

Schedule 21.47.060 B Freestanding Sign Regulations					
	B-1A, B-1B,	R-11 (Commercial and Industrial parcels)	B-2A, B-2B, B-2C	B-3, B-4, I-1, I- 2, I-3, MC, MI	T- Com
(A) Maximum Height	12 ft.	12 ft.	8 ft.	25 ft.	12 ft.
(B) Maximum Area	80 sq. ft.	80 sq. ft.	64 sq. ft.	0.7 sq. ft. per 1 lineal foot of frontage (c)	80 sq. ft.
(C) Number/Frontage	See sub <a href="#">Section 21.47.060C</a>				
(D) Separation	150 ft.				
(E) Minimum Setback from R.O.W.	0 ft.	10 ft.	0 ft.	0 ft.	10 ft.
(F) Minimum Setback from side lot line (b)	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.	10 ft.
(F) Entrance and Exit Signs (a)					
Maximum Area	6 sq. ft.				
Maximum Height	5 ft.				
<p>(a) Entrance and exit signs, which are permitted in addition to the above freestanding signs, shall be limited to two for each entrance/exit driveway.</p> <p>(b) If the side lot line is adjacent to a Residential District (not including R-O) then the minimum setback from the side lot line is 30 feet.</p> <p>(c) The maximum allowable area shall not be less than 70 square feet nor greater than 200 square feet.</p>					

b. Lots with 300 or more lineal feet of frontage on any one street may have two freestanding signs per that street frontage.

c. Except in a commercial development as described in sub[Section 21.47.060.C.1.d](#), no more than two freestanding signs are allowed along any one frontage. Freestanding signs must be separated by a minimum distance of 150 feet. On corner lots, the property frontage on both streets shall be considered when measuring the separation.

d. If a commercial development comprises more than a single platted lot, and one or more of the platted lots or fragment lots of the commercial development have frontage on a classified street of Class 3 or greater, then each platted lot or fragment lot having a building and frontage of 100 feet or more on the Class 3 or greater street shall be permitted a freestanding, monument style sign, subject to the limitations of this subsection. In addition, if a building central to the commercial development has frontage

of less than 100 feet on the Class 3 or greater street, then one freestanding, monument style sign adjacent to each entrance to the property from the Class 3 or greater street shall be permitted subject to the limitations of this subsection. The height limitation shall be eight feet, excluding the base; the total area of each sign shall not exceed 120 square feet; pole signs are prohibited; and each sign shall comply with all other requirements of this chapter. Signs permitted by this subsection are in addition to all other signage within the commercial development permitted by this chapter including freestanding signs along frontage on classified streets of less than Class 3, and building signs.

2. *Wrapping structural steel supports.*

a. *Signs that are eight feet or less in height with exposed structural steel support:* The structural steel supports shall have a covering that totals at least four times the width of the structural steel at its widest point and is parallel to the sign face.

b. *Signs that are greater than eight feet in height but less than 15 feet in height:* All structural steel supports shall have coverings that collectively total at least 33 percent of the width of the sign at its widest point and are parallel to the sign face.

c. *Signs 15 feet or greater in height that have a single structural steel support:* The structural steel support shall have a covering that totals at least 25 percent of the width of the sign at its widest point and is parallel to the sign face.

d. *Signs 15 or greater in height that have more than one structural steel support:* The structural steel supports shall have coverings that collectively total at least 33 percent of the width of the sign at its widest point.

e. The width of the covering shall be symmetrical for all supports. (See Figure 9)

f. The depth of the support coverings shall not exceed the depth of the sign. (See Figure 9)

g. In all circumstances, the covering shall extend from four inches above the ground to the base of the sign face.

h. The following materials shall not be used for covering structural steel supports:

i. T-111,

ii. Plywood,

iii. Particle board,

iv. Sheet metal of less than 24 gauge,

v. Aluminum of less than .063 inches.

**GRAPHIC LINK:**[Figure 9: Examples of pole wrap. Poles depicted in plan view.](#)

**GRAPHIC LINK:**[Figure 10. Freestanding sign-Figure 11. Freestanding sign](#)

3. *Multi-occupant facilities.* When a freestanding sign is constructed on a site that has more than one occupant, it is the property owner's responsibility to determine if the sign area shall be devoted to identification of the building(s), the anchor occupant, all occupants, or some combination thereof.

D. *Supplemental standards for all changeable copy signs.*

1. Freestanding signs may have up to 50 percent of the actual sign area devoted to changeable copy. Building signs and projecting signs may have up to 50 percent of the actual sign area or up to 150 square feet, whichever is less, devoted to changeable copy.

2. Copy which is changed electronically or mechanically shall not be changed more than one time per two-second period.

3. Scrolling copy is allowed if these requirements are met:

a. The message is completed within no less than two seconds and no more than five seconds.

b. The complete message remains static before scrolling recommences for no less time than required for other changeable copy signs in the district.

E. *Instructional signs.* Signs that comply with the definition of "instructional sign" shall be permitted as needed provided such signs comply with the following:

1. The signs are not larger than necessary to serve the intended instructional purpose;
2. The number of instructional signs located on the site are the minimum needed to serve the intended instructional purpose; and
3. Instructional signs shall not exceed six square feet in area.
4. The signs may be placed on the base of a permitted freestanding sign without the area of such instructional sign, or the background, being considered as part of or added to the area of the freestanding sign.

F. *Unified sign plan.* To recognize and accommodate irregular site shapes (which are typically characterized by narrow lot frontages resulting in some buildings with extraordinarily large setbacks and limited visibility to a public street) multiple contiguous lots and/or tracts may be considered as a single site for the purposes of determining the size, number, and placement of freestanding signs permitted pursuant to this section. Solely for the purposes of this section:

1. The number and area of the freestanding signs permitted, pursuant to Schedule 21.47.060B, shall be determined based on size and frontage of the multiple properties being considered as a single parcel.
2. After a unified sign plan has been approved by the municipality and a permit has been issued, the sign rights or limitations shall be recorded with the state district recorder's office as a deed restriction.
3. Revocation of a unified sign plan must be approved by all participants in the plan; all signs on the affected properties must be in compliance with this Code before the plan can be revoked.
4. This subsection shall not be interpreted as authorizing the erection or maintenance of any sign or display within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way and visible from the main-traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway, or the erection or maintenance of any sign or display beyond 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of the main traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway with the purpose of the message displayed being read from that travel way, in a manner that would conflict with the provisions of Alaska Statutes Sections [19.25.075](#)--[19.25.180](#).

G. *Display of commercial flags.* In a "B" or "I" District a maximum of three flagpoles may be erected on any parcel provided that:

1. A maximum of three commercial flags may be displayed simultaneously;
2. The maximum length of the flag pole shall be 30 feet; and
3. The total maximum size of all commercial flags displayed shall not exceed 120 square feet. Subject to the total maximum size of commercial flags, a commercial or non-commercial organization may display alongside a national or governmental flag, one organizational flag not larger than the national or governmental flag.
4. The corporate or commercial flag may only display the name, trademark, or logo of the business on the parcel and such flag may not be used for other business or advertising purposes.

H. *Temporary signs.* Temporary signs in nonresidential districts are permitted pursuant to Schedule 21.47.060H as set forth below:

1. Banners shall not be deemed signs for purposes of sign permitting requirements under [Title 23](#) and the temporary sign removal cash bond requirement in 21.20.007 provided that these conditions are met:
  - a. The banner is maintained in an "as new" condition at all times and is displayed and secured so as not to encroach into a public right-of-way.
  - b. Notice is filed with the Municipality, land use enforcement division, at commencement of each display period.

c. The banner is displayed for no more than 30 consecutive days from the commencement date specified in the notice, and for no more than 120 total days annually.

2. Balloons, pennants, ribbons, and streamers are considered decorative display and not signs for purposes of sign permitting under [Title 23](#) and the temporary sign removal cash bond requirement in 21.20.007. Balloons, pennants, ribbons, and streamers must meet these requirements:

a. Balloons, pennants, ribbons, and streamers shall be maintained in an "as new" condition at all times and shall be displayed and secured so as not to encroach into a public right-of-way.

b. Balloons, pennants, ribbons, and streamers are decoration within the scope of enforcement of AMC 15.20.020.B.11 and shall not create a public nuisance by reason of condition or inappropriate location.

3. Poster advertisement and other window applications that are affixed or attached to a window or door, or are applied or attached within a building and located near a window for the purpose of being visible to and read from the outside of the building, are permitted without being subject to number, sign permitting under [Title 23](#) and the temporary sign removal cash bond requirement in 21.20.007. The total combined area of poster advertisement and other window application shall not exceed 50 percent of the window area.

TABLE INSET:

Schedule 21.47.060 H Temporary Signs	
	<i>Requirement</i>
Maximum Area	100 square feet (32 square feet rigid material)
Maximum Number of Signs Per Principal Use	2 (a)
Maximum Number of Display Days	120 (b)(c)
Lighting	Internally illuminated or lighted signs are prohibited.
Motion	Animation or flashing is prohibited
Maximum Height (Freestanding)	Same as permanent signs
Set Back From Lot Lines	Same as permanent signs
(a) Ideological and political signs are exempt. (b) For decorative display, window poster/other window application, and temporary signs involving the sale, rent, or lease of the property on which the sign is located, the number of days is unlimited. (c) Maximum number of display days per year for all temporary <b>signage</b> if not subject to specific exception or exemption.	

(AO No. 2003-62(S-1), § 1, 10-1-03; AO No. 2005-61(S), § 5, 6-14-05; AO No. 2005-163(S-2), § 4, 5-16-06)

### **21.47.070 Prohibited signs.**

The following signs are prohibited:

- A. Roof signs, except for signs with no more than 20 percent of the actual sign area extending no more than 20 percent of the building height above the roof or parapet wall.
- B. Billboards and other off-premise signs.
- C. Any sign or display within 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way and visible from the main-traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway, or any sign or display beyond 660 feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way of the main traveled way of an interstate, primary or secondary highway erected or maintained with the purpose of the message displayed being read from that travel way, that would conflict with the provisions of Alaska Statutes Sections [19.25.075](#)--[19.25.180](#).
- D. Portable signs.
- E. Flashing, moving, animated, coursing, blinker, racer-type, intermittent, moving or revolving signs and/or devices except as defined in AMC 21.47.030.E.20, whirligig devices, inflatable signs and oversize tethered balloons, spinners, and other similar types of attention-getting devices except for pennants, ribbons, streamers, and latex balloons not exceeding 16 inches in diameter, when maintained in "as new" condition. Pennants, ribbons, streamers, and latex balloons not maintained in "as new condition" shall be deemed unsightly and subject to enforcement under 15.20.020.B.11. Changeable copy signs are not prohibited when in compliance with the applicable regulations in this chapter.
- F. Signs in the AF Antenna Farm District except for warning signs and identification placards required in sub [Section 21.45.265](#).A.10.  
(AO No. 2003-62(S-1), § 1, 10-1-03; AO No. 2005-61(S), § 6, 6-14-05; AO No. 2005-163(S-2), § 5, 5-16-06)

### **21.47.080 Supplemental sign standards.**

- A. *Illumination of permanent and temporary signs.* Permanent and temporary signs shall be permitted to be illuminated in compliance with the following:
  - 1. Signs shall not include animated, flashing, moving or intermittent illumination except that the messages may change no more frequently than the rates specified in subSections [21.47.040B](#), [21.47.050C](#), and [21.47.060C](#).
  - 2. Temporary signs shall not be internally illuminated. Any external illumination of these signs shall be permitted only in commercial and industrial zones.
  - 3. All internally illuminated building or free-standing signs with the exception of neon-lighted signs with exposed neon tubes shall comply with the following:
    - a. Except as provided in c. of this subsection below, the sign shall be constructed with either: an opaque background and translucent letters and symbols; or, a translucent darker colored background with a lighter contrasting color for the letters and symbols. Registered trademarks and logos are exempt from this provision.
    - b. No internal lighting shall include exposed incandescent or fluorescent bulbs.
    - c. A changeable copy sign with dark colored letters or symbols on a lighter contrasting translucent background may be internally illuminated if the internally illuminated area of the sign does not exceed 20 square feet.
    - d. During daylight hours between sunrise and sunset, luminance shall be no greater than 5,000 candelas per square meter for LED signs. At all other times, LED luminance shall be no greater than 800 candelas per square meter.
  - 4. Freestanding signs more than 15 feet high shall only be internally illuminated. Signs less than or equal to 15 feet in height may be either internally or externally illuminated.

5. The external illumination of freestanding signs shall comply with the following:
  - a. Any external lighting of signs that have a height of between eight feet and 15 feet must be from the top of the sign and directed downward;
  - b. The lighting of signs that have a height of eight feet or less may be illuminated from the top of the sign or from the ground.
6. Externally illuminated building signs may only be illuminated from the top of the sign.
7. Light sources for externally illuminated signs must be shielded and directed so that the light shines on the sign and that the light source is not visible beyond the property line.
8. Freestanding signs accessory to a single-family dwelling, two-family, or townhome use in a residential district shall not be illuminated.
9. Signs on a building or parcel in a residential district that has multi-family uses shall not be internally illuminated.
10. For signs on permitted non-residential uses in residential districts the illumination may be from external sources or by internal illumination of the letters and logos only; internal illumination of the background portion of the sign is prohibited.

11. *Reserved.*

B. *Preservation of sight lines.* For the purpose of assuring that drivers and pedestrians have adequate visibility at the intersection of a roadway, street, driveway, trail, or alley, no sign or portion of a sign between a height of two and one-half feet and eight feet shall conflict with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Sight Distance Triangle specifications.

C. *Construction standards.*

1. The construction, erection, safety and maintenance of signs shall comply with the Uniform Sign Code as amended.
2. Signs shall be structurally sound and located so as to pose no threat to pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
3. Permanent signs shall be fabricated on and of materials that are of good quality and good durability.
4. Electric signs and all permanent signs involving structural requirements of the building code shall be installed, repaired, altered and serviced only by a contractor licensed to perform such tasks.
5. No sign shall be erected so as to obstruct any window, door, fire escape, balcony, platform, stairway, ladder, vent or other means of ingress and egress of any building.
6. No sign shall be attached to a utility pole, tree, trash receptacle, bench or other structure not intended or approved as a sign support.
7. Temporary signs shall be durable and weather-resistant and fastened or anchored sufficiently, whether attached to the building or positioned in the ground.
8. No sign regulated by any of the provisions of this section shall be erected in the right-of-way, in proximity to railroad crossings, or at the intersection of any streets in such a manner as to obstruct free and clear vision; or at any location where, by reason of the position, shape, or color, it may interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with, any authorized traffic sign signal or device; or which makes use of the words "STOP," "LOOK," "DANGER," or any other word, phrase, symbol or character in such a manner as to interfere with, mislead, or confuse traffic.
9. In the event there is a conflict between the provisions of this section and the provisions of any applicable building codes, the provisions of the applicable building code shall govern.

D. *Maintenance.* All signs shall be maintained in accordance with the following:

1. The property owner, occupant, or other person responsible for the sign shall maintain the sign in a condition fit for the intended use and he or she shall have a continuing obligation to comply with all building code requirements.
2. If the administrative official finds that any sign is unsafe, insecure, a menace to the public, notice shall be given in writing by the administrative official to the owner. The owner of the business shall, within 48 hours of such notification, correct such unsafe condition or remove the sign. If the correction has not been made within the 48 hours, the sign may be removed or altered by the municipality to comply with these regulations at the expense of the owner or occupant of the property upon which the sign is located. The administrative official may cause any sign, which, in the municipality's opinion, creates a danger to persons or property to be removed immediately and without notice.
3. Whenever any sign, either conforming or nonconforming to these regulations, is required to be removed for the purpose of repair, refurbishing, or repainting, the same may be done without a permit or any payment of fees provided that all of the following conditions are met:
  - a. There shall be no enlargement or increase in any of the dimensions of the sign or its structure.
  - b. The sign shall be accessory to a legally permitted, conditional or nonconforming use.
4. The administrative official may order any sign to be repaired whenever needed to keep the sign in a safe condition. All supports, guys, braces and anchors for such signs shall be maintained in a safe condition.
5. The sign face of any permanent sign which advertises a business that has not been conducted on the premises for 180 consecutive days or fails to serve the purposes for which it was intended, or evidences a lack of maintenance, shall be removed by the owner, agent, or person having the beneficial use of the building, structure or land upon which such sign is located, within 30 days after written notice by the administrative official and the sign area shall be replaced by a neutral, single background color panel or similar cover. If the sign is comprised of individually raised letters then the letters shall be removed. Upon failure to comply with such notice within the time specified in such order, the administrative official is hereby authorized to cause removal of such sign, and any expense incident thereto shall be paid by the owner of the property on which such sign is located.  
(AO No. 2003-62(S-1), § 1, 10-1-03; AO No. 2005-61(S), § 7, 6-14-05; AO No. 2005-163(S-2), § 6, 5-16-06)

### **21.47.090 Regulations for nonconforming signs.**

- A. *Legal nonconforming permanent signs.* Any permanent freestanding or building sign lawfully built prior to the adoption of this chapter that does not comply with the maximum height, maximum area, location, or the number of signs permitted as set-forth in this chapter shall be considered a legal nonconforming sign.
- B. *Amortization of permanent signs.* Any permanent sign exceeding current size or height requirements by greater than 50 percent, must be brought into compliance with this chapter within ten years from the date of adoption of this subsection.
- C. *Termination.* Except as provided in 21.47.080.D, a nonconforming sign shall immediately lose its legal nonconforming status, and therefore shall be brought into conformance with this section or removed, when any of the following occur:
  1. The size or shape of the sign is changed.
  2. The location of the sign is changed.
  3. The business is sold and there is a change of use of the premises. A change of use occurs when the type of use is not within the same use category as the immediate prior allowable use type, determined by reference to the Tables of Allowed Uses under this

title. Prior to completion of Project 21 ([Title 21 Code Revision](#)), use type and use category shall be determined in reference to [Section 21.05.010](#) Tables of Allowed Uses of Public Review Draft #2.

4. The nonconforming sign is accessory to a nonconforming use that has lost its nonconforming status.

5. Nonconforming signs in relation to principal structures. If more than 50 percent of the assessed value of the principal structure on a property is replaced, repaired or renovated, the existing sign(s) for the principal structure shall be removed or brought into compliance with the provisions of this chapter at the time of the replacement, repair, or renovation.

6. Change which increases nonconformity. In accordance with 21.55.100, change shall be permitted in the direction of conformity to the requirements of this chapter. A sign will lose its legal nonconforming status immediately upon any change which increases nonconforming. Municipal permit fees are waived for nonconforming signs to be brought into full conformity, if an estimate by a licensed and bonded contractor with a designated date of completion of the new conforming sign is provided within two years of the passage of this ordinance.

D. *Amortization of illuminated signs.* Any illuminated sign that does not meet the requirements of 21.47.080A, with the exception of sub [Section 21.47.080.A.3.a](#), shall be altered to comply with the requirements of this chapter by May 31, 2008. All LED signs shall comply with the luminance standards of sub [Section 21.47.080](#) by November 30, 2005.

E. *Amortization of pole signs.* Any sign where the structural steel supports are visible and which does not meet the requirements of 21.47.050 C 2 or 21.47.060 C 3, shall be altered to comply with the requirements of this chapter within three years from the date of adoption of this chapter.

F. *Amortization of animated signs.* Any sign which contains non-complying animation, changeable copy, or flashing or moving parts shall be altered to comply with the requirements of this chapter within 180 days from the date of adoption of this chapter which is October 1, 2003.

G. *Maintenance of nonconforming signs.* Nonconforming signs shall continue to be maintained in safe condition pursuant to the building regulations of the municipality until such sign is required to be removed as set forth in this section.

H. *Reconstruction of damaged sign.* If a sign and/or its support are damaged to the extent where the repair cost exceeds 50 percent of the replacement cost of the sign, the sign shall be removed or brought into compliance. If the repair costs do not exceed 50 percent of the replacement cost of the sign, the administrative official may authorize the sign to be repaired, provided all repair work is completed within 90 days, subject to the administrative official extending the time for good cause, of the date the administrative official determines the damage requires replacement or permits repair. In no event may a sign be maintained in an unsafe condition during the process of this determination or the period necessary for repairs.

I. *Historic signs.* The urban design commission may grant exceptions to these standards whenever a sign or property has been designated a historic sign pursuant to the guidelines and criteria established and adopted by the urban design commission.

J. *Extension of time to comply.* The dates established in this section for a sign to be brought into compliance with the requirements of these regulations may be appealed to the zoning board of examiners and appeals by the owner or lessee of the nonconforming sign pursuant to [Section 21.30.110 of Title 21](#). In evaluating the extension of time for a nonconforming use, the zoning board of examiners and appeals shall consider, in

addition to the criteria of [Section 21.30.160](#), the following factors to determine whether the owner of the sign has had reasonable amount of time to recoup his investment:

1. The value of the sign at the time of construction and the length of time the sign has been in place;
2. The life expectancy of the original investment in the sign and its salvage value, if any;
3. The amount of depreciation and/or amortization of the sign already claimed for tax or accounting purposes;
4. The length of the current tenant lease or expected occupancy compared to the date the sign is to be brought into compliance;
5. The extent to which the sign is not in compliance with the requirements of this chapter; and
6. The degree to which the board determines that the sign is consistent with the purposes of this chapter.

(AO No. 2003-62(S-1), § 1, 10-1-03; AO No. 2005-61(S), § 8, 6-14-05; AO No. 2005-163(S-2), § 8, 5-16-06)

**21.47.100 Administrative provisions.**

A. *Compliance with this chapter.* No person shall erect, locate, move, alter, or replace any sign or cause a sign to be located or maintained, unless all provisions of this chapter have been met.

B. *Approval requirements for signs:* To ensure compliance with these regulations proposed signs shall be required to receive a permit from the department of planning as set forth in Schedule 21.47.100 B. Other signs specified in the schedule do not require a permit.

C. *Status of prior violations.* All violations of the sign regulations repealed by the adoption of this ordinance shall remain violations of the ordinances of the Municipality of Anchorage and all penalties and enforcement remedies set forth herein shall be available to the municipality as though the violation were a violation of this ordinance. Provided, however, that if the effect of this ordinance is to make a sign, that was formerly unlawful or nonconforming, become lawful and/or conforming, then no enforcement action shall be taken except for the imposition and collection of penalties, other than the removal of the sign, for the violations that occurred prior to the effective date of this ordinance.

TABLE INSET:

Schedule 21.47.100 B Administrative Requirements		
	Permit	No Permit*
Sign Plate		X
Permanent Building Sign	X	
Permanent Freestanding Sign	X	
Entrance/Exit		X
Instructional		X
Temporary - on a parcel		X

Temporary - for a Business		X
Construction signs		X
Temporary for any Residential Unit		X

\*Unless otherwise required by [Title 23](#)

D. *Application and review requirements.*

1. An application for a sign permit shall be made to the administrative official on the form provided and in the manner required.
2. When any person other than the owner of the property submits a sign application, the owner of the property or a designated agent for the owner shall also sign such application.
3. The administrative official shall review and act on the sign applications for permanent signs for which a permit is required to assure compliance with the standards set forth in this chapter.

(AO No. 2003-62(S-1), § 1, 10-1-03)

**21.47.105 Procedure for obtaining an administrative variance for signs.**

A. The planning director may grant an administrative variance from the height restrictions and/or setback requirements for freestanding signs, provided:

1. Special topographic circumstances exist that would result in a material impairment of visibility of a conforming sign from the adjacent roadway,
2. There is no reasonable conforming alternative to the variance,
3. Any setback variance does not result in an encroachment into a public right-of-way, and
4. A fee has been received.

B. The director shall make written findings and conclusions for each variance request.

C. If the request for an administrative variance is denied, the applicant may apply for a variance under AMC 21.47.110.

(AO No. 2005-61(S), § 9, 6-14-05)

**21.47.110 Variances and appeals.**

The urban design commission shall hear and decide on any request for a variance to the regulations in this [Chapter 21.47](#) including:

A. The maximum sign area, the maximum sign height, the location of the sign, and the number of signs on the parcel. In evaluating the request for a variance to the maximum sign height the urban design commission may consider whether there are special topographic circumstances that would result in a material impairment of visibility of the sign from the adjacent roadway which significantly diminishes the owner's or user's ability to continue to communicate adequately and effectively with the public through the use of the sign.

B. The portion of the sign structure that should be exempt from being considered part of the sign area if such exemption has not been granted by the administrative official pursuant to sub [Section 21.47.030](#)A4.

(AO No. 2003-62(S-1), § 1, 10-1-03)