

# **Grand Cayman**

# **Sign**

# **Guidelines**

**2014 Revision**

**CAYMAN ISLANDS**  
**Department of Planning**

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## SECTION 1

### 1.1 Overview

Signage provides important wayfinding information for visitors and residents in addition to attracting customers to commercial ventures. When applied indiscriminately and without regard for context, signage can confuse travelers, distract motorists, create safety hazards, and detract from the natural beauty of the Islands. However when signage is placed in a thoughtful and purposeful manner, signage can enhance a community by improving circulation, enhancing the tourist experience, and adding to the cultural character of the community.

### 1.2 Legislation

Section 13 (1) (g) of the *Development and Planning Law (2011 Revision)* states the display of advertisements and signs are not considered development and do not require planning permission, except those specified by the Authority. Section 13 (4) further states: “the use for the display of advertisements on any external part of a building that is not normally used for that purpose shall be treated for the purposes of this section as involving a material change in the use of that part of the building”.

In January 2009, the Central Planning Authority approved the Department’s first draft Sign Guidelines (CPA/02/09; Item 4.1). This first revision of the Guidelines was approved by the Authority on April 30, 2014 (CPA/11/14; Item 6.7), where they further delegated to the Director of Planning the authority to grant administrative approval to sign applications that comply with the Guidelines, with the exception of digital signs.

## SECTION 2

### 2.1 Purpose

These Guidelines are intended to provide clarity with respect to what constitutes a material change of use or development and therefore requires planning permission per Development & Planning Law (2011 Revision) Section 13(1)(g) and 13(4). Their purpose is to establish reasonable standards for the design, construction, location and maintenance of all exterior signs in the Cayman Islands.

The Sign Guidelines have the following objectives:

- Preserve and protect the public health, safety, welfare, and convenience.
- Provide for an effective form of communication while preserving the scenic beauty of the Cayman Islands.
- Enhance the potential economic value and quality of development within the community, as well as promote and aid the tourism industry;
- Promote the effectiveness of signs by preventing over-concentration, improper placement, excessive clutter, size, and number;
- To improve business identification and communication;

### 2.2 Scope

The requirements of these Guidelines apply to all signs, sign structures, awnings, and other types of sign devices.

### SECTION 3: Definitions

**A-Board Sign** – A self-supporting portable sign.

**Alteration**—A change in the size or shape of an existing sign. *Copy or colour change of an existing sign is not an alteration. Changing or replacing a sign face or panel is not an alteration.*

**Animated Sign**—A sign employing actual motion, the illusion of motion, or light and/or colour changes achieved through mechanical or electronic means.

**Area of Sign**—The actual area of the sign copy as applied to any background. Copy area on any individual background may be expressed as the sum of the geometrically computed shape or shapes encompassing separate individual letters, words, or graphic elements on the background. See Section 8 for examples.

**Directional sign** - Signs used to indicate the direction to entrances, exits, parking areas, restrooms, or other business related facilities on the site on which the sign is located.

**Directory sign** - A sign which gives the names of the businesses or individuals located in the building or complex where it is located.

**Fascia sign** - A building-mounted sign

**Freestanding sign** – A sign principally supported by one or more columns, poles, or braces placed in or upon the ground.

**Monument Sign** - A ground sign with low overall height

**Pole sign** - Any sign supported by poles, uprights or braces which are not concealed in an enclosed base,

**Public Information Sign** - Any sign or banner which is intended to identify community, civic and social events, special events, facilities, no-trespassing areas and is not a commercial sign.

**Wayfinding Sign** – A sign, frequently off-premise, specifically designed to provide directional or destination information.

**Window Sign** – A sign affixed to the surface of a window with its message intended to be visible to the exterior environment.

## SECTION 4: EXEMPTED SIGNS

The following categories do not require planning permission to erect a sign, subject to specific restrictions.

### 4.1 Public Works Signage

These signs are required by public bodies to provide information or directions about the services available. Planning permission is not required, provided that they do not exceed 4 square feet and are non-illuminated. These would include:

- Bus stop signs
- Notice board at public recreation areas
- A warning notice at an electricity sub-station
- Road Signs
- Beach Access Signs
- Public information signs

### 4.2 Election Signs

Election signs do not require planning permission if they are erected after dissolution of the Legislative Assembly and setback a minimum 12 feet from road edge. The maximum size shall be 32 square feet and maximum height of 12 feet.

### 4.3 Real Estate Signs

Real estate signs do not require planning permission, as long as they comply with the following.

- Standard “For Sale” sign, up to six (6) square feet located on seller’s property;
- The sign must be setback at least 12 feet from the road edge;
- Multiple signs shall be neatly stacked to avoid a cluttered appearance
- Signs located off- premise require planning permission
- Signs may not be posted within a road reserve

Real Estate signs for commercial development, up to sixteen (16) square feet are permissible subject to:

- Any sign over six (6) square feet shall include information of the proposed development.
- Any photographs of sales agents must be no larger than those on the standard six square feet signs.
- Signs greater than 16 square feet will require planning permission .

### 4.4 Construction Site Signs

During active construction of an approved development, signs may be placed on site to identify the future use of the property as well as the relevant businesses involved in the construction. The signs should be grouped in one location and not exceed a total area of six square feet each.

Planning permission is not required for these signs, however all such signs shall be removed within seven (7) days after the issuance of a Final Certificate (of Occupancy).



Figure 4.4: Example of Construction Site Signage

#### 4.5 Miscellaneous Signage

Signs which are displayed on buildings or land as a means of identification, direction or warning are permitted provided they are no larger than 4 square feet. These would include, but are not limited to the following types of signs:

- Signs that are not visible from a public or private road
- “Beware of Dog” sign
- No Parking
- Accessible Parking Space
- House number
- Commercial Directional Signs
- Decals – Decals and/or logos affixed to windows or door glass panels, such as those indicating membership in a business group or identifying credit cards accepted at the establishment.
- Private Drive Signs—On-premise private drive signs are limited to one (1) per driveway entrance, not exceeding two (2) square feet in area.
- Name & Address—One sign indicating address, number and/or name of occupants of the premises, that do not exceed two (2) square feet in area and do not include any commercial advertising or other identification
- Security and Warning Signs—On-premise signs regulating the use of the premises, such as “no trespassing” and “no soliciting” signs that do not exceed one sign 2 square feet in area in residential areas and one sign 5 square feet in area in commercial and industrial zones.

## SECTION 5: PERMITTED SIGNS

This section provides guidance for the design of signs for certain buildings and uses of land.

### 5.1 Signs for Residential Uses

- A. Single Family Homes & Duplexes – Signs not to exceed 3 square feet in total sign area per road frontage.

Allowable signs include, but are not limited to: address signs, home identifier signs, home occupation signs. Signs may be freestanding (no higher than 3 feet), mounted to a permanent structure or displayed in a window.



Figure 5.1: Example of a home identifier sign.

- B. Subdivisions - One freestanding sign not to exceed 32 square feet, one sign shall be permitted for each separate street frontage and/or for each means of ingress/egress.
- C. Apartments - One freestanding sign not to exceed 32 square feet, one sign shall be permitted for each separate street frontage and/or for each means of ingress/egress.

Wall signs may be permitted provided they do not to exceed 6 sq.ft. of the area of the façade upon which they are placed.

## 5.2 Signs in Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Zones

Each commercial building or group of commercial buildings should have a consistent and comprehensive sign program at the street as well as pedestrian level. Location, scale and legibility should be considered in developing a sign program. A Master Sign Plan is recommended to be included in a development application package for new development.

### Freestanding Signs

Freestanding signs shall be limited to one per property except for a property that has frontage on more than one street, in which case one shall be permitted for each street frontage. If a property has frontage that exceeds 300 lineal feet on a given roadway, one additional sign on the street frontage may be permitted.

Freestanding signs shall have a maximum size of 32 sq.ft. and a maximum height of 12 feet.

### Building Signs

- a. Office Buildings – The total area of all fascia and window signs applied to any given façade shall not exceed 10% of the building facade, which includes window and door area.
- b. Commercial Buildings (Single Tenant) - The total area of all fascia and window signs applied to any given façade shall not exceed 10% of the building facade, which includes window and door area.
- c. Shopping Centres - The total area of all fascia and window signs applied to any given façade shall not exceed 10% of the building facade, which includes window and door area.
- d. One fascia sign is permitted per tenant building frontage, size not to exceed 50% of tenant linear frontage (i.e. Tenant with a 30 foot frontage may have up to a 15 sq.ft. fascia sign)
- e. One pedestrian oriented sign per tenant building frontage, maximum 6 square feet.
- f. Signs for multi-businesses within the premise should be uniform (i.e. same size, material, etc.)

### Canopy Signs

- a. Signs may be affixed or applied to the face of a freestanding or building canopy provided the sign does not exceed 40% of the face area of the canopy or 10% of the building façade to which it is attached, whichever is greater.



Figure 5.2: Examples of Canopy Signs



### Projecting Signs

- Projecting signs shall be limited to one per building façade or tenant space. For a use that fronts more than one street, one projecting sign shall be permitted for each street frontage.
- The area of any projecting sign shall not exceed 50% of tenant linear frontage on which such sign is mounted, except that no such sign shall be larger than 32 square feet.
- No projecting sign shall extend in a vertical dimension above the highest architectural point of the façade to which it is mounted.

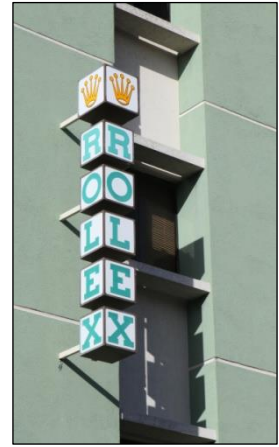


Figure 5.3: Example of a Projecting Sign

### Digital Signs

- The sign must have an automatic dimmer control to produce a distinct illumination change between the higher day-time illumination level and the lower night-time level. Day or night, no sign may be of such intensity or brilliance as to impair the vision of a reasonably eye-sighted motor vehicle driver or to otherwise interfere with the driver's operation of a motor vehicle. Also, no sign may be of such intensity or brilliance that it interferes with the effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal.
- Digital signs shall have a minimum display time of 8 seconds. The transition time between messages is limited to 1 second.
- The following digital display features and functions are prohibited: scrolling, flashing, spinning, rotating, fade, dissolve, full video or any other moving effects.
- Digital signs (freestanding or building) may be no larger than 32 square feet.
- Signs must be turned off between the hours of 10:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m.



Figure 5.4: Sign with 30% digital display

### 5.3 Industrial Uses

- The total area of all fascia and window signs applied to any given façade shall not exceed 10% of the building facade, which includes window and door area.
- One fascia sign is permitted per tenant building frontage, size not to exceed 50% of tenant linear frontage.
- One pedestrian oriented sign per tenant building frontage, maximum 6 square feet.
- Freestanding signs shall have a maximum size of 32 sq.ft. and a maximum height of 12 feet.
- Signs for multi-businesses within the premise should be uniform (i.e. same size, material, etc.)

## 5.4 Institutional Uses

- a. Freestanding signs shall have a maximum size of 32 sq.ft. and a maximum height of 12 feet.
- b. The total area of all fascia and window signs applied to any given façade shall not exceed 10% of the building facade, which includes window and door area.
- c. One fascia sign is permitted per tenant building frontage, size not to exceed 50% of tenant linear frontage.

## SECTION 6: PROHIBITED SIGNS

The following signs are prohibited:

- Signs which do not relate to the occupants or activities occurring on the site
- Banners, A-frame, Flag, and other temporary signs.
- Signage attached to fences or sign boards used as fencing material.
- Signs affixed to staircases
- Animated Signs
- Balloon or Inflated Signs
- Billboards
- Human signs
- Neon Signs
- Rolling Signs
- Signs containing strobe lights
- Blinking, flashing, rotating and animated light sources.
- An illuminated sign placed along the shoreline or that can be viewed from the shoreline.
- Signs located within public rights-of-way
- Signs placed on or painted on a vehicle parked with the primary purpose of providing signage. Business logos, identification or advertising on vehicles primarily and actively used for business purposes and/or personal transportation are permitted (See Figure 6.2)



Figure 6.1: Temporary Sign blocking sidewalk



Figure 6.2: Vehicle being used for signage

## SECTION 7: ADDITIONAL STANDARDS IN ALL ZONES

- A. Sign Placement – All signs and sign structures must be erected and attached totally on or within the site or property to which they refer, at least 12 feet behind any applicable right-of-way.
- B. Fascia or Wall Signs
  - a. Vertical extensions: Fascia or wall signs may not extend above the top of the building wall upon which they are mounted.
  - b. Horizontal extensions: Fascia or wall signs may not extend beyond the wall or structure to which they are attached.
- C. Projecting Signs - Projecting signs are not allowed on rooftops or on pitched roofs.
- D. Directional Signs
  - a. Directional signs that meet the standards of this subsection are allowed in all zones and are not counted in the total square footage of permanent signage allowed on any property or site.
  - b. One entrance and exit sign may be placed at each driveway entrance. Only the site address and directional words such as “Entrance Only”, “Deliveries”, “One Way”, etc. are permitted on these signs.
  - c. Size: Freestanding directional signs may be up to 4 square feet in area and 4 feet in height. Fascia directional signs may be up to 4 square feet in area.
  - d. Directional signs in any zone may have internal or external illumination.
- E. Window Signs - Any sign displayed on or in a retail window, greater than 5% of the total window area, will require planning permission.
- F. Temporary Signs
  - a. Construction Site Signage - See Section 4.4
  - b. Special Event Signs - Special event signs for private organizations and businesses require planning permission, but can be assessed administratively, as long as they are posted for no longer than a total of 7 days and removed within 3 days of the last day of the event.

## SECTION 8: CALCULATING SIGN AREA

### Calculating Sign Area

- Signs containing integral background areas: The area of a sign that includes a clearly defined background area shall be calculated based on the area of the smallest shape that encompasses the perimeter sign's background area.
- Signs without integral background areas: The area of a sign that consists of individual letters, words and symbols, which are placed upon a wall or awning and are not encompassed by a frame or boundary, shall be measured by the overall height of the tallest letter by the overall length of the entire sign.

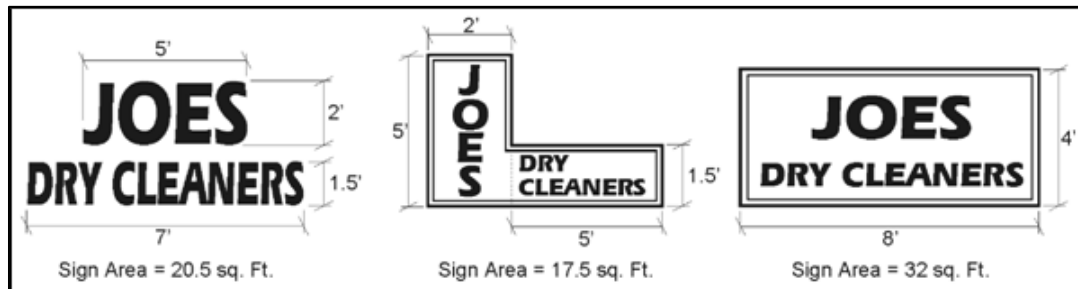


Figure 8.1: Examples for Calculating Monument Signs

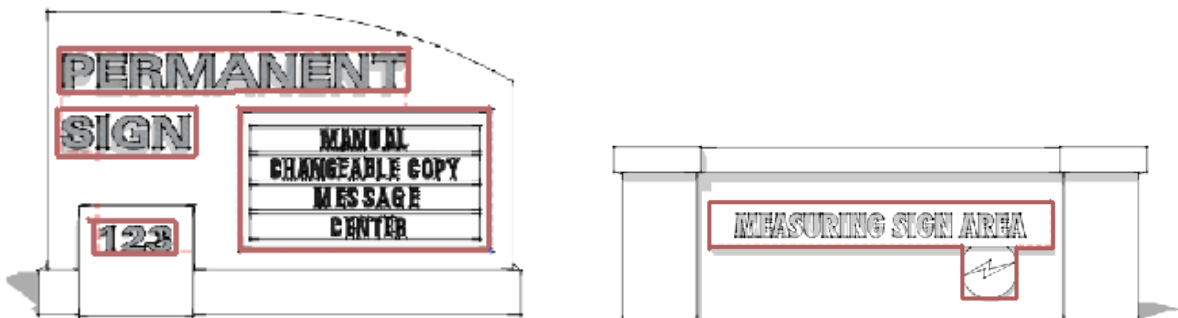


Figure 8.2: Examples for Calculating Monument Signs

## APPENDIX 1: Guideline Summary Table

Type	Permitted	Road Frontage Setback	Side/Rear Setback	Height	Size	Illumination Allowed?
<b>Agricultural Zones</b>						
1. Freestanding	1/establishment	12 ft.	6 ft.	12 ft.	32 sq.ft.	No
<b>Commercial Zones</b>						
1. Freestanding	1/street frontage	12 ft.	6 ft.	12 ft.	32 sq.ft.	Yes
2. Monument	1/street frontage	12 ft.	6 ft.	6 ft.	32 sq.ft.	Yes
3. Fascia/Building	1/business	n/a	n/a	n/a	10% façade	Yes
4. Canopy	First floor only	n/a	n/a	n/a	10% façade	Yes
5. Projecting	1/business	n/a	n/a	n/a	1/2 linear frontage	Yes
6. Directory	1/complex	12 ft.	6 ft.	8 ft.	32 sq.ft.	External
7. Directional	as needed	12 ft.	6 ft.	4 ft.	4 sq.ft.	External
<b>Industrial Zones</b>						
1. Freestanding	1/street frontage	12 ft.	6 ft.	12 ft.	32 sq.ft.	Yes
2. Monument	1/street frontage	12 ft.	6 ft.	6 ft.	32 sq.ft.	Yes
3. Fascia/Building	1/business	n/a	n/a	n/a	10% façade	Yes
4. Canopy	First floor only	n/a	n/a	n/a	10% façade	Yes
5. Projecting	1/business	n/a	n/a	n/a	1/2 linear frontage	Yes
6. Directional	as needed	12 ft.	6 ft.	4 ft.	4 sq.ft.	External
<b>Institutional Zones</b>						
1. Freestanding	1/street frontage	12 ft.	6 ft.	12 ft.	32 sq.ft.	Yes
2. Monument	1/street frontage	12 ft.	6 ft.	6 ft.	32 sq.ft.	Yes
3. Fascia/Building	1/tenant	n/a	n/a	n/a	10% façade	Yes
4. Canopy	First floor only	n/a	n/a	n/a	10% façade	Yes
5. Projecting	1/tenant	n/a	n/a	n/a	1/2 linear frontage	Yes
6. Directory	1/complex	12 ft.	6 ft.	8 ft.	32 sq.ft.	External
7. Directional	as needed	12 ft.	6 ft.	4 ft.	4 sq.ft.	External
<b>Single-Family Residential</b>						
1. Freestanding	1	12 ft.	6 ft.	6 ft.	3 sq.ft.	Yes
2. Building	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	2 sq.ft.	Yes
<b>Multi-Family Residential</b>						
1. Freestanding	1/entrance	12 ft.	6 ft.	6 ft.	32 sq.ft.	Yes
2. Monument	1/entrance	12 ft.	6 ft.	6 ft.	32 sq.ft.	Yes
3. Building	1/building	n/a	n/a	n/a	10% façade	Yes
4. Directional	as needed	12 ft.	6 ft.	8 ft.	4 sq.ft.	External

## APPENDIX 2: APPLICATION PROCESS & FEES

Fees:     \$75.00 per sign face 30 sq.ft. or less  
           \$500.00 per sign face greater than 30 sq.ft.  
           \*double-sided signs count as two signs

Application packages for signs shall include the following documents:

- a. A sign application form & fees;
- b. One copy of the land register and registry extract map, both less than 60 days old.
- c. Two (2) site plans folded to 8.5"x11. The site plan shall indicate the proposed location of the sign(s).
- d. Two (2) copies of sign drawings/elevations illustrating the size, content, colour(s), and materials of sign(s);
- e. If applicable, two (2) elevations indicating proposed sign locations on buildings; and,
- f. Proof of notices to immediate adjacent property owners (notifications are not required for special event signs for charitable organizations).

Once a complete submittal package is received by the Planning Department, the application is assigned to a Current Planner. The application will be scheduled for Central Planning Authority (CPA) consideration. The Authority may approve, adjourn or refuse the request.

Planning Department staff may require additional information from the applicant as deemed necessary to conduct a complete review.

### APPENDIX 3: PUBLIC INFORMATION BILLBOARDS OUTSIDE OF DECLARED ELECTION PERIODS

Subject to compliance with other laws (such as Election Law, Roads Law etc), Public Information Billboards outside of Declared Election Periods shall conform to the following guidelines or shall be subject to consent from the Central Planning Authority.

Size:

- Billboards shall have a maximum size of 128 sq ft (8ft x 16ft).

Placement:

- Signs and billboards cannot obstruct or interfere in any way with the public's ability to clearly view governmental signs, traffic, visibility or passage within the public right-of way, including vehicle travel lanes, sidewalks and bike lanes.
- Signs are not allowed to be attached to a utility or governmental pole/post/building.
- Public Information Billboards should be limited to two (2) billboards per Electoral District, in a suitable location.

Content displayed:

- Messaging must be of clear interest to the general public.
- Billboards should limit the use of any colours or logos which are indicative of a political party.
- Public Information Billboards are to be sponsored by public sector agencies or officials only, and such sponsor shall be identified on the sign (e.g. "message brought to you by XX public service agency").

Anyone who is unsure if their sign complies with these guidelines is invited to write to the Central Planning Authority for further guidance. Please include a sketch of your proposed signage, including dimensions, messaging and proposed location.