

What is a storefront sign?

A storefront sign is typically a commercial sign, which according to the NYC Zoning Resolution is defined as “Any writing (letter, word, numeral), pictorial representation (illustration/decoration), emblem (device, symbol, trademark), flag (pennant, banner), or any similar figure that is

- a structure, or is attached to, painted on or represented on any structure;
- used to announce, direct attention to or advertise;
- visible from outside a building or within a building when illuminated and located in a window.”

A storefront sign has different requirements from advertising signs, which refer to goods and services sold at another location, i.e., a Coca-Cola billboard in Times Square. In addition, advertising signs are not permitted in certain areas.

Zoning Rules & Regulations

Many aspects of a sign (height, size, illumination etc.) are governed by its zoning district and location. In New York City, there are three types of zoning districts:

- residential
- commercial
- manufacturing

Each district has different rules and regulations when it comes to signs. For example, Times Square has unique sign requirements (big, bold and bright) that do not apply anywhere else. Residential districts have the most restrictive sign regulations.

Signs that do not require a permit

Non-illuminated signs that are six (6) square feet in total area or less, or those that are painted on an exterior wall, do not need a permit, but they must comply with the local zoning regulations for signs.

Sign permits, requirements and fees

Signs greater than six (6) square feet in total area must be approved by DOB, and comply with the local zoning regulations for signs. A registered architect, licensed engineer, or in some instances, a licensed sign hanger, must submit plans.

Permit fees are based on the percentage of the estimated cost of the job.

Checklist

Sign regulations are complicated.

We suggest the following:



Consult with a registered architect, licensed engineer or licensed sign hanger.

To find an architect or engineer, contact a professional organization such as your local chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and/or the New York State Society of Professional Engineers.

For a list of licensed sign hangers, log on to NYC.gov/buildings and click on Resources, Sign Enforcement Program or call 311.



To find your zoning district, log on to the NYC Department of City Planning's web site NYC.gov/planning. To view sign requirements, click on the Zoning Resolution, Article III, sections 32–60 (commercial), 22–30 (residential) and 42–50 (manufacturing), or call the Zoning Information Hotline 311.



Review Building Code Section 27–498 and Policy and Procedure Notices (PPNs) online at NYC.gov/buildings for technical specifications and requirements.

This brochure provides general guidelines. If you have specific questions, call the DOB office in your borough.

New York City Department of Buildings

Executive Offices / 212-566-5000
280 Broadway, New York, NY 10007

Manhattan Borough Office
280 Broadway, New York, NY 10007

Bronx Borough Office
1932 Arthur Avenue, Bronx, NY 10457

Brooklyn Borough Office
210 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn, NY 11202

Queens Borough Office*
120-55 Queens Boulevard, Kew Gardens, NY 11424
(*new location effective Summer 2003)

Staten Island Borough Office
Borough Hall, Staten Island, NY 10301

Bureau of Electrical Control
Municipal Building
1 Centre Street, New York, NY 10007

Investigation and Discipline / 212-442-2000
11 Park Place, New York, NY 10007

Department of Investigation / 212-825-5959
80 Maiden Lane, New York, NY 10038

Call 311 to:

- Report illegal construction work
- Reach DOB Program Units or Borough Offices

For comprehensive information about DOB, to check the status of a filing on the Building Information System (BIS), and to download plan/work approval forms and the Building Code, visit NYC.gov/buildings.

Mission

The NYC Department of Buildings ensures the safe and lawful use of buildings and properties by enforcing the Building Code and Zoning Resolution. We facilitate development with integrity, efficiency and professionalism.

Michael R. Bloomberg, MAYOR
Patricia J. Lancaster, AIA, COMMISSIONER



about

Storefront Sign Requirements



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