

Advertising and signage

Rules for exempt and complying development

This fact sheet explains the requirements of the Advertising and Signage Exempt Development Code, which allows certain signage types as exempt development and larger signage that requires complying development approval.

Check planning controls first

This fact sheet is for guidance only and may not contain all the information relevant to every property in NSW. You should refer to the [relevant planning controls](#) before beginning work, or seek professional advice on how the planning controls apply to your property.

The majority of the development that can be done as exempt or complying development in NSW is identified in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008 (the policy). View the policy at the [Exempt and complying development policy web page](#).

Exempt development is minor building work that does not need planning or building approval. Fact sheet *Understanding exempt development* provides more information about exempt development.

Complying development is a joint planning and construction approval that can be granted by council or a private certifier. Fact sheet *Exempt and Complying Development* gives more information about complying development.

Exempt and complying development cannot be carried out on certain land.



Photo credit: NSW Department of Planning and Environment / Adam Hollingworth

Advertising and signage as exempt development

The Advertising and Signage Exempt Development Code allows for commonly used types of signs for businesses and other purposes as exempt development.

To be exempt development:

- you must have consent in writing from the owner of the land on which the sign will be located
- you must have consent in writing from the owner of adjoining land if the sign will be located over adjoining land
- under section 138 of the *Roads Act 1993*, Roads and Maritime Services must approve it if the sign, or part of the sign, will project over a public road (including a footpath)
- the sign must not be erected on or for a building being used as restricted premises
- the sign must not cover any mechanical ventilation outlets located on any building in which the business is carried out
- the sign must not obstruct or interfere with any traffic sign.

All signage must be securely fixed to the building in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards.

If the sign is illuminated, it must:

- conceal all cables in the frame of the sign
- not have animation or moving/flashing images
- comply with the Australian standards for the control of outdoor lighting.

For illuminated signs that are situated on or within 50 m of a residential, rural or environmental protection zone, they can only be illuminated during approved hours of operation.

If there are no specified hours of operation, the sign can only be illuminated between the hours of 7 am and 10 pm on any day.

A sign must not obstruct the sight lines of, or interfere with, any traffic control device, including traffic control lights.

You must contact your local council for permission before removing or pruning a tree or other vegetation.

Number of business identification signs

There is a limit on the number of business identification signs that you can install on any premises. There must not be more than:

- 3 signs to a building if the building only has one commercial tenant
- 6 signs in total on any building
- one sign being constructed or installed for a home business, home industry or home occupation in a residential zone.

Exempt development standards for signage

You must comply with development standards when constructing, installing or displaying the various types of signs identified in the policy.



Figure 1

Typical signage on a commercial property.



Photo credit: NSW Department of Planning and Environment / Adam Hollingworth

Building identification signs

These are signs that identify or name the building and are located on the building façade. The following standards apply:

- Signs must not be located on a heritage item or draft heritage item.
- Signs must not be located in a heritage conservation or draft heritage conservation area.
- Only one sign is permitted for each street frontage.
- The sign must not be more than 2.5 m² in area.
- The sign must be mounted flat against the exterior wall or parapet and not protrude more than 300 mm from the face of the building;
- If sign is illuminated it must comply with requirements on illumination.

Wall signs

These are a type of business identification sign (including signs for home business) that are either flat-mounted or painted on the exterior wall of an existing building or on an existing boundary fence or wall. The wall signs must:

- not be located on a heritage item or draft heritage item
- not be located in a heritage conservation or draft heritage conservation area
- have only 4 business signs for each building and one sign for each elevation
- not be larger than these maximum sizes:
 - home business: 1 m²
 - business zones: 2.5 m² and 5 m²
 - industrial zone: 16 m² or not more than 20% of the surface area of the wall.

If illuminated, the sign must comply with requirements on illumination.

Fascia signs

These are business identification signs located on an existing fascia of the awning of a building.

Fascia signs must:

- be mounted flat and securely fixed in place
- be on a rigid signboard
- fit wholly within the current fascia
- not be illuminated.

Under awning signs

These are a type of business identification sign that is suspended below the existing awning of a building. Standards for under awning signs are:

- one sign for each business for a ground floor tenancy
- maximum size is 1.5 m² in area and 2.5 m in length
- a clearance of 2.6 m above ground level
- the sign must be at a right angle to the building
- the sign must not project beyond the awning fascia.

Top hamper signs

These are business identification signs located above a display window or attached to the transom of a doorway in an existing building. The development standards for top hamper signs are:

- they cannot be installed on a heritage item or draft heritage item
- maximum area is 2.5 m²
- maximum of 600 mm high
- have a clearance of 2.1 m above existing ground level
- only one of these signs for each ground floor tenancy
- if illuminated, the sign must comply with requirements on illumination.



Photo credit: NSW Department of Planning and Environment / Adam Hollingworth

Window signs

These are business signs located on the inside of any window of an existing building. The standards are:

- maximum size of the sign is 20% of the window surface or 6 m² (whichever is smaller)
- the sign must not be illuminated
- for a home business, industry or home occupation, only one sign for each premise.

Replacement of identification signs

For the replacement of existing building identification or business identification signs, or the content of such a sign, the development standards are:

- you may replace only an existing lawful sign
- the replacement must be exactly the same size as the existing sign
- signage must not change the structure or vessel on which the sign is attached
- the sign must not block or interfere with traffic signs.

Internal signs

For advertisements or signs within a building (for example, a sports stadium or shopping centre), the development standards are that the signs must not be seen from outside the site or the building.

Community notice and public information signs

For a sign giving information about a public or community institution or organisation, or advertising its services or activities on a site, the development standards are:

- only one sign facing any road frontage
- maximum area of 3.5 m²
- the sign must be no higher than 5 m above ground level
- the sign must be wholly located within the boundaries of the site
- the sign must not be illuminated.

If the site is a heritage item or draft heritage item, the sign cannot be attached to the building

Temporary event signs

For signage or banners advertising a commercial, community or retail event or a private function (including sponsorship of the event or function), the development standards are:

- only one banner and one other type of temporary sign facing any road frontage
- maximum area of 6 m²
- the signage must be located within the property boundary, or if on a building, wall or fence, it must not project more than 100 mm
- the signage must be no higher than 5 m above ground level
- the signage must be temporary.

If the banner is for a commercial or retail event not in a residential zone:

- it must not be illuminated and cannot be displayed earlier than 14 days before the event
- it must be removed 2 days after the event.

Real estate signs

Temporary signs advertising properties for sale or rent must be placed within the property for sale or rent. The development standards for developments of between one to 9 dwellings are:

- only one sign for each parcel of land or dwelling
- maximum size of 1.5 m² in area
- the sign must be no higher than 3 m above ground level
- the sign must not be externally illuminated
- the sign must be removed within 14 days of the sale or before construction starts on the land.

In any other case:

- only one sign per road frontage
- maximum size 10 m²
- the sign must be no higher than 5 m above ground level
- the sign must not be illuminated
- the sign must be removed within 14 days of the sale.

For heritage items or draft heritage items, signs must not be attached to the building.

For land subdivision of lots more than 10:

- maximum size 10 m²
- the sign must be no higher than 5 m above ground
- the sign must be correctly installed
- the sign must be removed when 90% of lots are sold or within 2 years.

Election signs

The display of any poster that contains electoral matters is permitted. The signs can cover electoral matters and show the name of the candidate and the party, as well as a picture of the candidate.



Photo credit: NSW Department of Planning and Environment / Adam Hollingworth

Advertising and signage as complying development

Under the Commercial and Industrial Alterations Code, you can only erect projecting wall signs and freestanding pylon and directory board signs on land that is in a business, industrial or special purpose zone.

Complying development standards for signage

Under the Commercial and Industrial Alterations Code, you must meet the following development standards for the construction or installation of business identification signs. Refer to Figure 2.

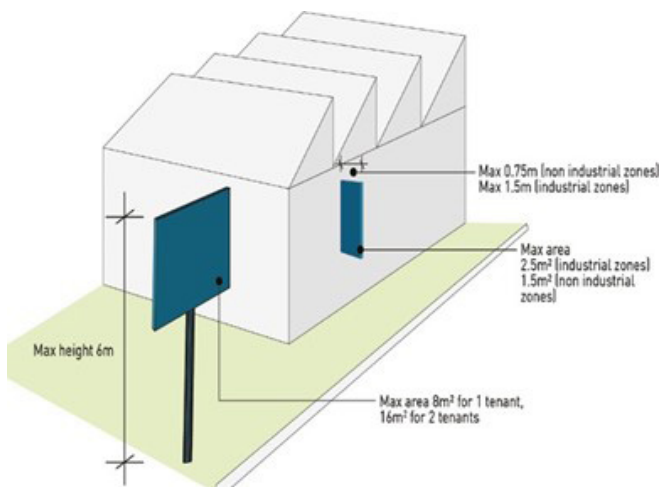


Figure 2

Signage that can be complying development for industrial buildings.

Projecting wall signs

For signs that project from the exterior wall of an existing industrial or commercial building, the signage development standards are:

- only 4 business signs for each building
- one sign for each elevation
- the sign cannot project beyond the parapet or eave of the building
- maximum size of 2.5 m² for industrial zones
- the sign must not project more than 1.5 m horizontally from the walls of the building.

In any other zone, the sign must:

- be no more than the maximum size of 1.5 m² in area
- not project more than 0.75 m horizontally from the walls of the building.

If the sign is over a public road, you must get approval from the local council and from Roads and Maritime Services, in keeping with the *Local Government Act 1993* and *Roads Act 1993*.

Freestanding pylon and directory signs

These are signs displayed on a freestanding structure that are mounted on the ground on one or more supports. The development standards to comply with are:

- only one freestanding sign for each street frontage
- the lot must be wider than 15 m
- the sign must be no higher than 6 m above ground level
- maximum size of 8 m² unless the premise has more than one commercial tenant, in which case an area of 16 m² is allowed
- the sign must be at least 3 m from any protected tree.



Photo credit: NSW Department of Planning and Environment / Salty Dingo

Other things to consider

- Works must comply with the Building Code of Australia and be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
- If you propose to remove or prune any existing trees or vegetation, you should contact your council first. You may need approval for this.
- Any structures that would be located on public land, or on or over a public road (including temporary structures), require separate approval from the relevant council or Roads and Maritime Services. This is in keeping with the *Roads Act 1993* and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

If your proposal does not meet the required standards for either exempt or complying development, you may still be able to do the work, but you will need development approval first. In this case, you should contact your local council to discuss options.



Photo credit:

NSW Department of Planning and Environment

More information

To find out more, visit the [Exempt and complying development web page](#) or call the department's Codes Team on 02 8289 6600 or email codes@planning.nsw.gov.au.

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