

Enforcement

The Director of the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) is authorized and empowered to revoke the permit if the sign owner fails to comply with regulations. The State Department of Transportation (DOT) enforces sign violations on State highways.

Anyone can call and make a complaint if he/she believes a sign is in violation. Complaints about signs within the City and County of Honolulu are received at DPP's Building Code Enforcement Branch. Complaints about signs on State highways are received at the DOT hotline.

The Outdoor Circle (TOC) also serves as a clearinghouse for complaints about potentially illegal signs. TOC can assist you by referring you to the appropriate agency for investigation. When making a complaint be sure to have an address where the sign is located and a detailed description of the sign in question.

DPP Complaints: 768-8000
DOT Complaints: 831-6714
TOC Hotline: 593-0300

Copies of Sign Laws

Copies of the Honolulu County Sign Ordinance and the State of Hawai'i Sign Laws can be found on our website at www.outdoorcircle.org or at most public libraries.

The Outdoor Circle

1314 South King Street, Suite 306
Honolulu, HI 96814
808-593-0300
www.outdoorcircle.org



The Outdoor Circle

Founded in 1912, The Outdoor Circle's mission is quite simple: to keep Hawai'i clean, green and beautiful by preserving, protecting and enhancing our environment for future generations. Perhaps best known for ridding Hawai'i of billboards, TOC engages in many activities to support its mission:

- Plants and protects trees
- Protects view planes
- Provides environmental education to island children
- Advocates to have utility wires placed under ground
- Works to eliminate illegal and inappropriate signs
- Protects open space
- Promotes and sponsors community beautification

Throughout the years, The Outdoor Circle and its branches have helped prevent hundreds of ill-conceived land use plans and inappropriate development from moving forward.

We also are active in government relations serving on numerous boards and task forces. When needed, The Outdoor Circle also becomes involved in court battles to protect the scenic environment.

This Brochure

This is an informational publication created by The Outdoor Circle. It is not a regulatory document nor is TOC a regulatory agency. It is simply meant to educate sign makers, sign users, and the general public about the various sign laws that protect our visual environment. If you have any questions, comments or concerns regarding signs please contact us.

The Outdoor Circle
Keeping Hawai'i clean, green
and beautiful since 1912

Oahu Sign Regulations



A History of Protection

Hawai'i has a long standing tradition of regulating the size and placement of signs. In the early 1900s billboards and other inappropriate signs proliferated throughout the islands, particularly on O'ahu. In 1926, after years of consumer actions and boycotts, The Outdoor Circle persuaded the Territorial Legislature to pass Hawai'i's law banning billboards in the islands. Today, Hawai'i is one of only four states that prohibit billboards.

Why Regulate Signs?

- Regulating signs protects the natural beauty of Hawai'i.
- Sign regulations allow businesses and others to display important information while protecting the visual environment.
- Sign laws provide public safety for vehicles and pedestrians by reducing inappropriate distractions.
- Sign laws ensure that Hawai'i remains free of all billboards.

General Sign Guidelines

Sign regulations have standards that must be followed. These standards primarily relate to size, location, placement, motion, illumination, height and setbacks. Violators may face stiff penalties including criminal charges. Sign makers and users need to check the law BEFORE creating and/or posting signs. Persons who believe specific signs might be in violation of State or County regulations should double check the standards before making a complaint.

Signs & Standards

Subdivision Construction Signs

Standard: Only one sign per street entrance.



Gas Station Pump Island Signs

Standard: Maximum three square feet.

Gasoline Price Signs

Standard: Maximum one square foot in area.

TEMPORARY SIGNS

Definition: Any sign advertising a specific event for a short period

Announcement Signs

[announcing purpose of a building]

Standard: Maximum 16 square feet in areas and 32 square feet in other areas.

Real Estate Signs

Standard: one sign per street frontage, maximum four square feet in and eight square feet in other districts. Allowed only on private property.



Special Event Signs

Displays/Banners
Standard: Portable and wind signs/banners that advertise an opening, occasion, or event.

Limited to one event per six month period, displayed for no longer than seven consecutive days. Allowed only at event venue.



PUBLIC SIGNS

Definition: Signs of a Non-Commercial Nature

Flags

Standard: Maximum of 50 square feet each. No more than five per street lot.

Directional Signs

Standard: Maximum 30 inches in height and one square foot in area.



Historical Plaques

Placed only by agencies recognized by the City or the State.

Address Signs

Standard: Maximum of one square foot in area.



Window Displays

For sale of merchandise on the premises of a ground floor establishment. Sign may be placed inside only along glass surfaces.

PERMITS NEEDED

- Business Signs
- Directory Signs
- Ground & Garden Signs
- Identification Signs
- Roof & Wall Signs
- Hanging & Projecting Signs
- Marquees & Marquee Fascia Signs
- Second Floor Business Signs

Obtaining a Permit

Sign permits may be obtained by contacting:

Department of Planning and Permitting
Frank S. Fasi Municipal Building
650 South King Street, Honolulu, HI 96813

Prohibited Signs

- Wind or portable signs that advertise an establishment, service price, product or commodity
- Roof signs on buildings more than one story or above 16 feet
- Signs that because of size, location, movement, color content or illumination constitute a traffic hazard by diverting drivers' attention
- Any sign advertising an activity not conducted on the premises on which the sign is maintained
- Aerial advertising signs
- Flashing signs
- Any flyer or other sign placed on utility poles
- Any sign on a median, light pole, tree or within the right of way of any state or county road
- "Rolling Billboard" vehicular advertising
- One event banner per six month period and displayed for no longer than seven consecutive days and only at the site of the event.

