

# 1 **Article 10. Signs and Lighting**

## 2 **Section 1001 Purpose**

3 The purpose of this Article is to:

- 4 (a) Encourage signage that is both clear and of appropriate scale for the project.
- 5 (b) Upgrade the visual character of commercial areas
- 6 (c) Provide a comprehensive sign program that creates consistent design criteria for the entire
- 7 Island of Saipan.
- 8 (d) Enhance the visual quality of signage through the use of complementary sizes, shapes,
- 9 colors, and methods of illumination.
- 10 (e) Provide signage requirements that meet commercial tenant needs.
- 11 (f) Preserve the right of free speech and expression.

## 12 **Section 1002 Exemptions**

13 The following are exempt from the requirements of this Law:

- 14 (a) Artwork;
- 15 (b) A sign that cannot be viewed from a public right-of-way, public park, public facility, or
- 16 public open space;
- 17 (c) A sign required by law or regulation;
- 18 (d) A government sign regulating the flow of traffic;
- 19 (e) A flag of a government entity;
- 20 (f) A political campaign sign that is more than 50 ft from an intersection and no more than 6 ft
- 21 high;
- 22 (g) A sign integrated into or on a coin-operated machine, vending machine, gasoline pump or
- 23 telephone booth;
- 24 (h) A sign painted, mounted or displayed on a vehicle or equipment that is regularly moved in
- 25 the normal day-to-day operations of an on-site business; and
- 26 (i) A sign carried by a person.

## 27 **Section 1003 General Requirements for Non-Single Family Development**

28 A sign for non-single family development shall meet the requirements of this Section.

### 29 (a) **Placement**

- 30 (1) A commercial sign shall not be placed in the ROW.
- 31 (2) A personal or event sign may be placed in the ROW only if permitted by DPW.
- 32 (3) A sign shall always complement a building's character and design (e.g., walls
- 33 signs should avoid covering building columns). A new commercial building
- 34 shall provide a specific place for signs, such as a reveal (inset) in the facade, a
- 35 canopy with concealed wiring, etc. See Figure 2.

36 (b) **Language.** The text of a sign shall always be in English, Chamorro or Carolinian. Other

37 languages are optional. If text in any other language is included, it shall be exactly

38 translated into English in lettering at least as large as the foreign text.

39 (c) **Size.** The size of a sign shall be determined by the area of the smallest rectangle that can be

40 scribed around all lettering, logos, and sign graphics (see Figure 1). Frames and supports

41 outside this area do not count toward the sign size.

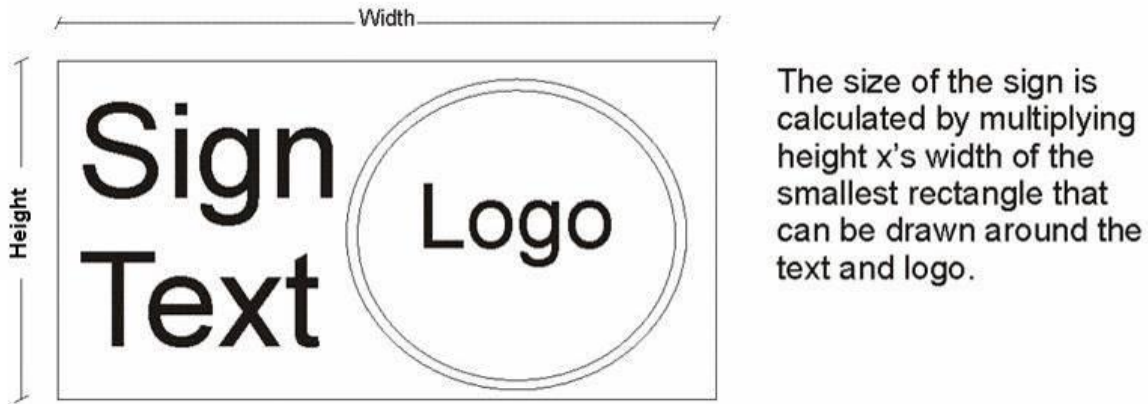
42 (d) **Height.** The height of a sign shall be measured from the average grade to the top of the

43 sign lettering or graphics. The frame of a ground-mounted sign may extend 3 ft above the

44 sign lettering or graphics if it involves a cornice or other finishing device, if approved by

45 the Administrator or the Board.

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*Figure 1. Method of measuring sign size*



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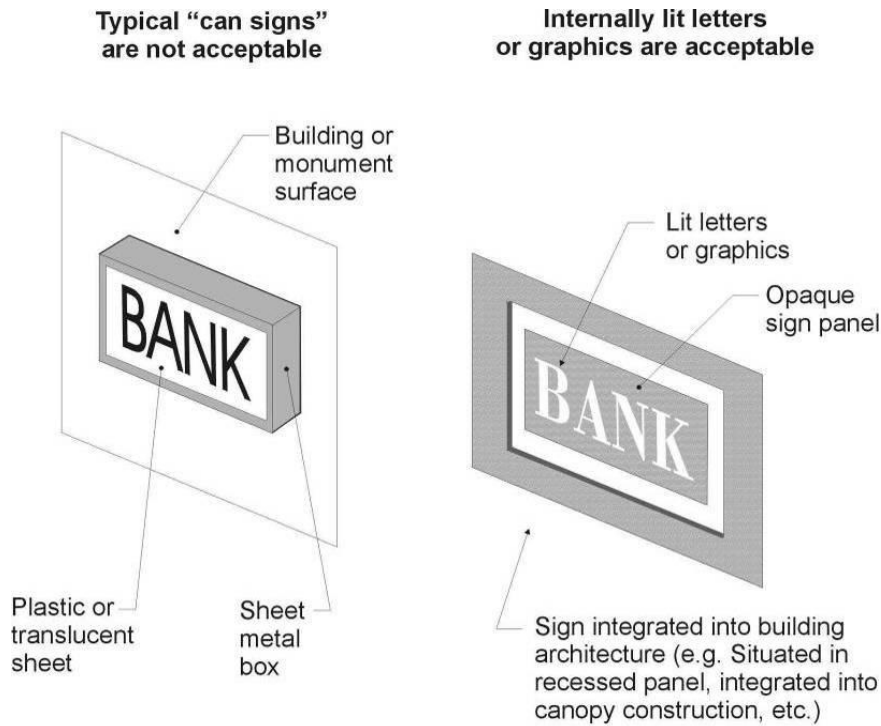
*Figure 2. Appropriate sign location and size*

**Section 1004 Prohibited Signs**

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- The following signs are prohibited:
- (a) A ground sign taller than 12 ft in height.
  - (b) A neon sign is allowed, except a sign employing moving or flashing light or video is prohibited. An informational sign that scrolls is acceptable with letters that are one ft in height or less. A non-moving sign that indicates price changes is acceptable.
  - (c) A sign employing an exposed electrical conduit.
  - (d) A visible ballast box or other equipment.
  - (e) An audible or odor-producing sign.
  - (f) A building or ground sign made of cardboard or other material that resembles the structure of cardboard.
  - (g) An above roof sign
  - (h) An off-premises sign, including a billboard (except a public directional, a site identification sign, or a personal event sign for a garage sale or similar event ), advertising a place, service, or a specific product that is provided off-site (outside the lot where the sign is placed).

- 1 (i) A back-lit translucent awning or backlit awning sign.
- 2 (j) A mounted or freestanding reader-board sign is not permitted, except that a cinema or
- 3 community center may have a changeable letter sign.
- 4 (k) A sign, not required by law or regulation, that is attached to a light or utility pole, except as
- 5 approved by CUC.
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9 **Figure 3. Illustration of an appropriate and inappropriate sign**

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11 **Section 1005 Requirements for Specific Types of Signs**

12 **(a) Ground Sign**

- 13 (1) A ground sign shall meet the requirements of this Section. (example Figure 4)
- 14 (A) Only one ground sign is allowed per lot smaller than 1,000 sm. For a lot
- 15 larger than 1,000 sm, more than one monument sign may be permitted as
- 16 long as such signs are placed no closer than 150 ft apart along the street
- 17 front.
- 18 (B) Landscaping shall be used in conjunction with a ground sign to enhance
- 19 the appearance.
- 20 (C) A ground sign shall be set back at least 3 ft from any public ROW.
- 21 (D) The lettering and logos of a ground sign may be internally-lit but the
- 22 background of the sign face shall not be internally illuminated.
- 23 (E) A ground sign may be externally illuminated only with steady, stationary,
- 24 down-directed, and shielded light sources directed solely onto the sign.
- 25 (F) Ground Sign Size Limits
- 26 (i) A single tenant sign shall be no more than 10 ft in height and 40 sf in
- 27 area per face (2 sign faces are allowed).
- 28 (ii) A multi-tenant (more than 3 tenants) sign shall be no more than 12 ft in
- 29 height and 50 sf in area per face.

- 1 (iii) A ground sign for a multifamily development shall be no more than 6  
 2 ft in height and 28 sf in total sign face area.  
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 5 *Figure 4. Example of a monument sign, one type of ground sign.*  
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7 **(b) Building Sign**

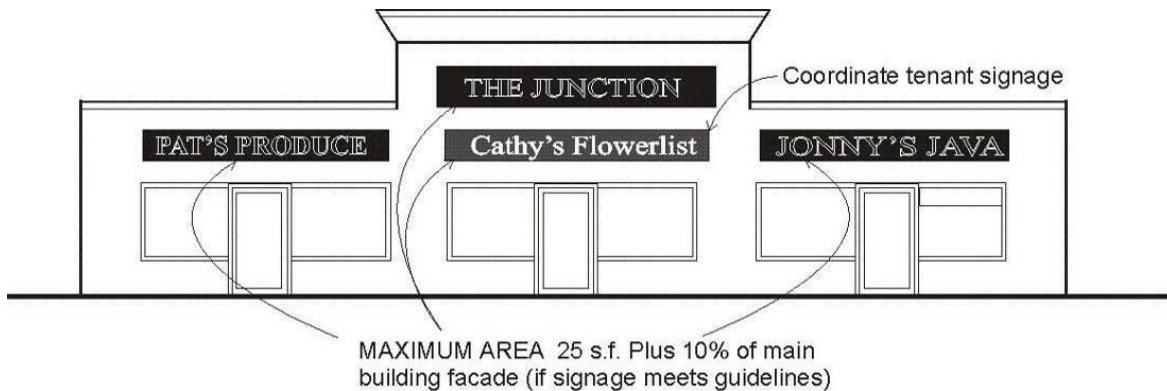
8 A building sign shall meet all the requirements of this Section.

- 9 (1) A building sign shall be designed and located to fit with the building's  
 10 architecture. For example, a building sign might fit within a recessed panel or  
 11 on a building element such as a fascia or canopy.  
 12 (2) A building sign should not cover an architectural element such as a window or  
 13 portion of a buildings ornamentation or trim.  
 14 (3) A building sign may include product advertising.  
 15 (4) A buildings sign shall fit parallel to or project perpendicular from a building  
 16 facade.  
 17 (5) A projecting sign shall not extend more than 4 ft from the building facade and  
 18 clear the sidewalk by at least 8 ft.  
 19 (6) The maximum combined surface area of all building-mounted signs for a given  
 20 facade is 25 sf plus 10% of the area of the building's main facade (see Figure  
 21 5).  
 22 (7) A can sign is not permitted. Generally, this type of sign is of low quality, easily  
 23 broken, and not integrated into the building's architecture.  
 24 (8) A building sign with back-lit letters or graphics that are part of a sign that is  
 25 integrated into the building's architecture is permitted (see example in  
 26 Figure 3).  
 27 (9) A building sign made of molded plastic or other high quality, durable material,  
 28 with or without internal lighting, that is provided by a brand name product  
 29 manufacturer is permitted.  
 30 (10) The lettering and graphic(s) of a building sign may be internally-lit but the  
 31 background of the sign face shall not be internally illuminated (it shall be  
 32 opaque).  
 33 (11) A building sign may be externally illuminated only with steady, stationary,  
 34 down-directed, and shielded light sources directed solely onto the sign.  
 35 (12) One or more internally lit letters or graphics are acceptable.  
 36 (13) Each building tenant is allowed only one building sign per building face. A  
 37 miscellaneous tenant sign is allowed in addition to a building sign.  
 38 (14) A portable sign shall be placed within 10 ft of the individual tenant entrance if

possible, and if not, within 10 ft of the main building entrance.

(c) **Window sign**

- (1) A permanent window sign shall be fabricated of permanent, durable material that does not fade or degrade in direct sunlight
- (2) A temporary window sign, including a banner sign on or in a window, may be displayed for up to 60 days. A temporary window sign shall contain the date of posting in letters at least 2 inches tall as follows: Posted: [date].
- (3) A window sign may include product advertising.
- (4) The total of all window signs in a given window shall not cover or obscure more than 20% of the window area.



*Figure 5. Illustration of maximum size of building signs*

(d) **Public and Directional Sign**

- (1) A public and directional sign includes a directional sign, street name marker, pedestrian trail marker, project tenant directory, kiosk, theme element, and miscellaneous exterior site signage. These types of signs should share consistent design patterns and express the character of a sub-area.

(e) **Personal or Event Sign**

- (1) A personal or event sign may be erected without a sign permit provided it:

- (A) Has the installation date printed in letters at least 2 inches high;
- (B) Is displayed for less than 30 days;
- (C) Is removed within 5 days after the event; and
- (D) Does not, except as provided in subsection (h):
  - (i) Advertise a brand-name product;
  - (ii) Contain a brand name symbol or logo; or
  - (iii) Contain a product price.

- (2) A personal sign includes:

- (A) Garage sale sign;
- (B) Yard sale sign;
- (C) Moving sale sign;
- (D) For rent sign;
- (E) For-sale-by-owner sign; or
- (F) Lost pet sign.

- (3) An event sign includes:

- (A) Parade sign;
- (B) Farmers market sign;

- 1 (C) Church meeting or social sign;  
2 (D) Rosary or wake sign; or  
3 (E) Concert, festival or entertainment sign.  
4 (4) A pole mounted personal or event sign is not permitted.  
5 (f) **Portable Sign. A portable sign shall:**  
6 (1) Be constructed of safe materials;  
7 (2) Be securely anchored;  
8 (3) Use only approved electrical systems;  
9 (4) Not obstruct pedestrian movement; and  
10 (5) Not obstruct or be dangerous to motor vehicle traffic.  
11 (g) **Banner Sign**  
12 (1) A banner sign, except as window sign, shall not:  
13 (A) Advertise a brand-name product;  
14 (B) Contain a brand name, symbol or logo; or  
15 (C) Contain a product price.  
16 (2) Provided, a banner sign for an event (not including an event related to retail sale  
17 of a product) may include a brand name, logo, or symbol on no more than 40%  
18 of the total sign area.

## 19 **Section 1006 Lighting**

- 20 (a) All street lighting, parking lot lighting and area lighting shall either be full cut-off “dark  
21 sky” lighting or “pedestrian-oriented” lighting (see Section 103 under “pedestrian-oriented  
22 space”).  
23 (b) Provided, that uplighting of landscape features is permitted.  
24 (c) “Pedestrian-oriented lighting” shall be no taller than 15 ft mounting height.