



Portable Signs on Public Property

Portable signs – also known as sandwich boards – can add vitality to downtown streets and be a valuable tool for businesses. Although they are commonplace around Victoria, portable signs on public space have not been previously permitted. New bylaw changes have been approved in the City of Victoria to regulate their use and allow them on public property where certain criteria are met. The City is responsible for managing the use of public space for the benefit of all members of the community, and these regulations will balance the value to businesses with the need to maintain safe and clear passage for all sidewalk users.

In order for these signs not to interfere with the safe use of streets by the public, and to reduce sidewalk clutter, not all businesses will be able to have portable signs under the new regulations. It is the City's goal to balance the needs of all users – pedestrians, wheelchairs, mobility scooters, those with mobility issues, visitors, residents and businesses.

Who can have a portable sign?

Businesses are eligible to place one portable sign on the public space immediately in front of their business. The sidewalk must be a minimum width of 2.6 m; sidewalks less than 2.6 m wide will not be permitted to have a portable sign. To see the width of the sidewalk outside your business, visit the City's VicMap at www.victoria.ca/map.

How can I get a portable sign?

Portable signs can only be placed on public property – for example, City sidewalks – when a portable sign permit has been issued by the City. This permit allows the City to regulate the number of signs by only allowing them where streets are wide enough to allow both the signs and safe pedestrian passage. Portable signs themselves can be purchased from many printing and sign shops in the city.

How do I apply for a portable sign permit?

Business owners should complete and submit an application form, available at City Hall and on the City's website at www.victoria.ca/portablesigns. Portable sign permit holders will also be required to maintain valid liability insurance of at least \$2 million. Check your business insurance policy for coverage (usually covered).

Each portable sign permit issued will also be accompanied by a portable sign decal. This decal – issued when the portable sign is first permitted, and then each year upon renewal – must have the permit number written in and be placed on the portable sign.

When do these rules come into effect?

The bylaw changes come into effect on January 16, 2014. As of that date portable signs on public property will be expected to have a permit and display a decal. Portable sign permits will be available at City Hall and online starting December 2, 2013.

Is there a cost for the permit?

The City is charging for portable sign permits in order to cover the administrative costs and to charge fair market value for the commercial use of public space, similar to charges for sidewalk cafes. See the sidebar on reverse for a breakdown of fees.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Business Licence Clerk
T 250.361.0572
E portablesigns@victoria.ca

1 CENTENNIAL SQUARE, VICTORIA, BC V8W 1P6 | www.victoria.ca/portablesigns

What will my sign need to look like?

Signs can have a maximum of 80% of surface area as changeable text (i.e. chalkboard) and must have at least 20% permanent text. They can be no larger than 60 cm W x 60 cm D x 90 cm H and cannot be illuminated. Attachments such as balloons or pamphlets are not permitted, and portable signs must not be attached or secured to any object when displayed on public property.

My business is in an arcade. Can I have a sign?

The owner or property manager of a private property arcade can apply for a portable sign on behalf of their tenant businesses. It is up to that owner or property manager to use the portable sign as they see fit. The sign must be placed at the entrance to the arcade. Owners or property managers of a private property arcade should include proof of ownership or a letter from the owner when applying.

What if my business is not on the ground floor?

Only businesses with a minimum of 1.5 m of street frontage are permitted to have portable signs in the City of Victoria. This includes businesses that have a dedicated entry from the street that leads directly to their upper or lower floor business only. Other non-ground floor businesses can take advantage of other types of signage and advertising.

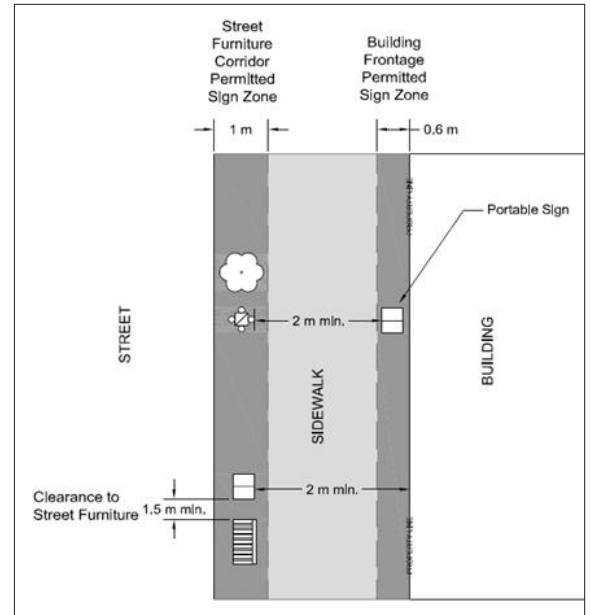
My business doesn't meet the criteria for a portable sign. What are my options?

Many options exist to advertise your business other than by using a portable sign on public space. These include projecting signs, fascia signs, window signs, awnings and traditional illuminated signs. In addition you can speak to your landlord or building owner about communal signage options, like kiosks. For more information on other sign types on private property, please contact City of Victoria Permits and Inspection Division at 250.361.0342.

Rules For Placing Your Portable Sign

Portable signs must:

- Be clean and in good condition
- Display a valid decal and permit number, issued with your portable sign permit
- Be placed **only** outside of the business it relates to in a way that allows 2 m of clear sidewalk width
- Be placed against the edge of the building or at the curb edge, but be at least 1.5 m away from other sidewalk items (e.g. benches, garbage cans, bike racks) and not interfere with people getting into or out of parked cars
- Only be placed during the posted operating hours of the related business
- Not be attached or secured to any object
- Not contain advertising for anything other than the business it relates to
- Be at least 2 m away from any other portable sign
- In the event of snow, only be placed on sidewalk after snow has been cleared



Fees for Portable Signs

There are two types of fees – administrative fees, and fees for use of public space.

Each year: \$30 administrative fee + \$5 use of public space charge + GST = \$35.25