

Sign Guidelines

The purpose of the Atascadero Sign Ordinance is to maintain and improve the appearance of the City's business districts. The consistent use of signage is important in maintaining a vibrant business district to attract local customers and tourists.

The following guidelines have been developed to promote economic growth and development, to encourage effective communication, and to enhance the appearance of the City of Atascadero.

Do You Need a Permit?

(9-15.003(b))

Most proposed signs will require a building permit
(please refer to *Exempt Signs* and *Prohibited Signs* listed below).

If you have additional questions, please contact the Community Development Department at (805) 461-5035.

When submitting your application, please include the following information for Community Development review:

1. **Building Permit Application.** Available online at www.atascadero.org/signage and at the City Hall Permit Center.
2. **Site Plan.** Identify the location of all existing structures, existing signs, and proposed signs on site.
3. **Construction Plans.** Construction plans must be submitted with a building permit application and must include details on how the sign will be attached to the building. Electrical signs must include a wiring diagram. Any new or modified electrical sign must include a completed State Title 24 Electrical Sign Energy Compliance Form (SLTG-1C).
4. **Elevations.** Provide building elevations where signs are proposed. Include sign dimensions, lettering, length, height, and width. Building elevations should show location of all existing and proposed signs. Be sure to note the size and number of proposed signs.
5. **Colors/Materials Board.** Provide samples/images of proposed colors and materials for all signs. Include manufacturer's color and material names.

Exempt Signs

(9-15.003 (c))

Not all signs will require a sign permit. The following signs may be installed without a permit; however, these signs are still subject to regulations, such as size and display time.

- **Real estate signs**
maximum area: 6 square feet, removed 14 days after sale, must be on-site.
- **Official government flags**
- **Banner/temporary signs**
maximum area: 40 square feet / maximum time: 30 days
(please refer to banner handout for specific regulations)
- **Residential area signs**
maximum 4 square feet
- **Window lettering**
not to exceed 50% of window area
- **Construction signs**
maximum area: 40 square feet / maximum height: 8 feet

Prohibited Signs

(9-15.003(d))

Certain sign types are not permitted within Atascadero's city limits.

- Off-site / billboard signs
- Signs on vehicles*
- Feather/advertising flags
- Animated signs
- Roof signs
- Snipe signs
- Permanent banner signs
- Inflatable signs

* It is not considered a sign when a message is painted directly upon the vehicle, printed on a vinyl sheet magnet and placed directly upon the vehicle, or when permanently affixed to the body or other integral part of the vehicle.

For specific information on sign regulations and guidelines, please refer to the Atascadero Sign Ordinance available online at www.atascadero.org/signage and at the City Hall Permit Center. If you would like to talk to a planner about your proposed signs, stop in at City Hall or call the Community Development Department at (805) 461-5035.



Banner signs are an effective way to promote business but they must comply with City regulations to provide effective communication and to enhance the appearance of the City of Atascadero.

A banner is defined as any sign of non-permanent, lightweight fabric or similar material (such as paper, canvas, vinyl, etc.) that is attached to a building or other structure erected for another purpose. Banners are permitted within the City of Atascadero, and do not require a building permit, provided they comply with the following regulations.

If you have additional questions regarding the regulation of banners throughout Atascadero, please contact the Community Development Department at (805) 461-5035.

Category	Banner Regulations
Size / Number	Businesses may have one (1) banner per public street frontage, with a maximum area of forty (40) square feet
Duration	Banners may be displayed for a maximum of thirty (30) days. Before any new banner may be placed, the previous banner must have been down for a period of sixty (60) days
Attachment	All banners must be secured flat against a building or structure. Fences and block walls are not considered buildings or structures for banner placement.
Exemptions	Non-profit events are exempt from the size and number of banners. Contact the Community Development Department to make sure your event qualifies.

Banner Examples

These images provide examples of common violations and permitted banners.

Banner Violations



1 Free standing signs and feather flags/banners are not permitted because they are not secured flat against a building or structure.

2 Businesses are only permitted to one banner sign at a time, regardless of size. A fence is not considered a secure structure.

3 A banner may be no larger than 40 square feet. The maximum size is for one banner, it is not the aggregate area of multiple banners.



Permitted Banners

Placed flat against

Well-secured to prevent billowing



Within maximum banner size.
Height: 3 feet Width: 7 feet
Approximate size: 21 square feet

Sign Guidelines: Commercial/Industrial Zones

Businesses located in the commercial and industrial zones are permitted up to 125 square feet of signage per site. Check to see if there is an approved sign program for your commercial or industrial site; there may be different regulations for individual centers.

The sign area may be divided between multiple sign types, provided the total square footage does not exceed individual regulations (see below) and total allowed sign area. Remember that color banding and logos are considered signs.

For specific regulations on sign types, please refer to the Atascadero Sign Ordinance.

Sign Type	Regulations	Size
Aggregate area of following signs not to exceed 125 square feet		
Standard Wall Sign 9-15.005(a)(1) - or -	One sign per building face with public street or parking lot frontage	One square foot per lineal foot of business frontage (Maximum size: 40 square feet)
Multi-Tenant Signs 9-15.005(a)(5)	Centers with 3+ tenants may have 1 tenant wall sign per business street frontage	One square foot per lineal foot of business frontage (Maximum size: 20 square feet)
Monument Sign 9-15.005(a)(2)	One sign per 200 lineal feet of public street frontage per site with a landscaped base	Maximum 60 square feet (Maximum height: 10 feet)
Suspended or Projecting Sign 9-15.005(a)(3)(4)	One sign per business (minimum 8 foot ground clearance)	Maximum 15 square feet

Sign types not counted toward 125 square feet maximum		
Window Lettering & Graphics 9-15.005(c)(10)	Signs should be directly painted on window or affixed by decal	Maximum 50% coverage of the window area
Portable/A-Frame Signs 9-15.005(a)(9)	One Per Street Frontage and must be located on property (not on sidewalk / road/ alley)	Maximum width: 2 feet Maximum height: 5 feet Minimum height: 3 feet
Freeway-oriented Wall Signs 9-15.005(a)(6)(ii)(iii)	Sites adjacent to Highway 101 or Highway 101 street frontage may have a sign	Size based on building size and lineal feet of building frontage (Maximum size: 60 square feet)
Freeway-oriented Pole Signs 9-15.005(a)(6)(i)	Restaurants, service stations, hotels/motels, and new automobile dealerships adjacent to Highway 101 or Highway 101 street frontage may have one sign	One square foot per lineal foot of freeway-oriented business frontage (Maximum size: 150 square feet Maximum height: 50 feet)



The K-Jon's **wall sign** is clean against the wall and easy to read. The gold outline against the navy coloring adds depth to the sign.



The **multi-tenant signs** at Mission Oaks are consistent in size and orientation that creates a cohesive look for the shopping center.



The Atascadero Pet Hospital **monument sign** clearly identifies the business. The addition of landscaping and a decorative base create a positive sign aesthetic.



Big Lots' **freeway wall sign** clearly displays the business name and is easy to read for those traveling on Highway 101.

Sign Guidelines: Downtown Districts

Businesses located in the downtown districts are permitted one square foot of sign area per lineal foot of business street frontage. Total signage cannot exceed 50 square feet and all businesses are permitted at least 20 square feet of sign area.

The sign area may be divided between multiple sign types, provided the total square footage does not exceed individual regulations (see below) and total allowed sign area.

The design, materials, illumination, and location of signs in the downtown districts will be reviewed for consistency with the Downtown Design Guidelines, available online at www.atascadero.org and at the City Hall Permit Center.

Sign Type	Regulations	Size
Aggregate area of following signs not to exceed 50 square feet		
Wall Sign 9-15.005(b)(4)(i)	One sign per business (corner buildings may have two signs, can/box signs are not allowed)	One square foot per lineal foot of business street frontage (Maximum: 50 square feet)
Awning Sign 9-15.005(b)(4)(ii)	May be used in place of allowed wall signs (business may not have both)	Maximum 25% coverage of the awning face
Projecting Sign 9-15.005(b)(4)(iii)	One sign per business	Maximum 9 square feet per side (if double-sided, both sides counted in total sign area)

Sign types not counted toward 50 square feet maximum		
Window Lettering & Graphics 9-15.005(b)(4)(v)	Signs should be directly painted, or affixed by decal, on window	Maximum 20% coverage of the window area, or 20 square feet, whichever is less
Multi-Tenant Directory Sign 9-15.005(b)(4)(vi)	Design must be consistent with architectural style and features of building facade	Maximum 72 inches per tenant
Building Name Sign 9-15.005(b)(4)(vii)	Sign permitted on buildings with 3+ tenants	Maximum 20 square feet
Portable/ "A-Frame" Signs 9-15.005(b)(4)(vii)	One Per Street Frontage and must be located on in front of property (not on sidewalk / road / alley)	Maximum width: 2 feet Maximum height: 5 feet Minimum height: 3 feet



Pink Salon's vibrant **wall sign** creates a bold look against the building and draws attention to the business.



The **projecting sign** for Studio 101 West is fun and expresses the type of business. The curve on the bracket adds an artful decoration.



Punky's Italian Ice **window lettering** projects a fun vibe. The pink and white contrast nicely with the darker window.