

Information Sheet

Show Window Signs, Displays & Information on Business Front Windows

Purpose: This information sheet has been prepared to provide businesses with information pertaining to the proper use of show window signs, displays and other information that may be installed on business front windows as regulated by the Germantown Sign Regulations (Chapter 14 of the Code of Ordinances).

Definition of a Show Window Sign: A temporary sign attached to or located within three (3') feet of the window opening of a business storefront. These signs may be used by businesses to advertise sales and specials offered on the premises by the business.

Definition of Window Opening: window area on business front/sides, including the glass area on doors. *The area taken up by merchandise displays, furniture, material storage, equipment and similar items located within one foot of the window is excluded from the window opening area.*

Business Districts Allowed to Display Show Window Signs: Show window signs may only be erected in commercial districts zoned SC-1, C-1 and C-2.

Maximum Allowable Space of Storefront Windows that can be Used to Display Show Window Signs:

The total of all show window signs displayed cannot occupy more than fifteen (15%) percent of *each individual* window opening of the business front. Window space on doors is included. *The area of the window opening that is obscured by merchandise displays, furniture, material storage, equipment and similar items located within one (1) foot of the window is excluded from the allowable area.*

- Example:**
- 1) Size of the individual window opening of a storefront = 24 square feet
(Note – each window is calculated separately);
 - 2) 15% of 24 square feet = 3.6 square feet. The maximum area of the window opening that can be used to display show window signs is 3.6 square feet;

Content on Show Window Signs:

- 1) Show window sign content may only advertise sales and specials offered on the premises by the business.
- 2) Show window signs **cannot** contain or consist of:
 - a) Picture of human figures, animals, food or cartoons.
 - b) Obscene, indecent or immoral statements.
 - c) Flashing, fluttering, neon, pulsating, strobe, reflective materials or other similar type lights and devices.
 - d) Banners, posters, pennants, balloons, ribbons, streamers, strings of light bulbs, spinners or other similar type devices except when approved by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Merchandise Displays:

- 1) Merchandise temporarily displayed in storefront windows that is available for purchase on the premises is allowed. Merchandise displays are not classified as show window signs. The space that merchandise displays occupy is not computed in the allowable space authorized for show window signs.
- 2) Merchandise displayed cannot contain or consist of flashing, running, spinning, neon or colored lights.

Poster Displays: Posters advertising charitable or non-profit events and other events which serve to inform the public about an event of general interest are allowed under the following conditions:

- 1) Posters cannot exceed three (3) square feet.
- 2) Posters must be located on the inside of the window.
- 3) Posters combined with show window signs cannot occupy more than fifteen (15%) percent of the window opening.
- 4) Identification of commercial sponsors including company logos cannot exceed ten (10%) percent of the poster size.
- 5) Posters must be removed within two (2) days after the termination of the event.

Banners: Banners are prohibited except when approved by the Design Review Commission (DRC). The Design Review Commission may allow banners for the following purposes only:

- 1) Charitable and non-profit events.
- 2) Special occasions that allow participation by all tenants occupying the center.
- 3) The opening of new or reconstructed centers.

Banners will not be allowed for individual businesses for any purpose.

Other Interior Signs: signs located more than three feet but less than ten feet from the show window are not subject to the 15 percent size limitation but must adhere to all other sign regulations. Internal illumination is not allowed. Signs over ten feet from the show window are exempt from regulation as long as any illumination is not flashing.

Illumination: illumination of show window signs and other interior signs within ten feet of the show window shall be turned on only when the business is open and turned off during the hours when the business is closed.

Lighted Signs: Neon, Light Emitting Diode (LED) and similarly lighted signs that are setback a minimum of ten (10') feet from the front windows of the storefront are permitted provided the sign does not blink, flash, pulsate, flutter, spin, run or give the appearance that there is movement on the sign.

Display of Other Information on Business Front Windows: Businesses may attach to the front windows or doors, decals, numerals, names, addresses, hours of operation and/or credit information provided that the total combined area of such information does not exceed one (1) square foot.

All signs, displays and information located on business front windows except as provided herein and those approved by the Design Review Commission (DRC) are illegal and constitutes a violation of the Sign Ordinance subject to the penalties stated therein.

Any conflict arising between this information sheet and the Germantown Sign Ordinance will be resolved in favor of the Sign Ordinance.

Questions pertaining to this subject may be addressed with Code Compliance by calling 757-7263.