

LOCAL LAW 28 OF 2019 TASK FORCE REPORT

The Relevance and Appropriateness
of Accessory Sign Regulations



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Buildings

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INTRODUCTION

This report is the product of a Task Force established by Local Law 28 of 2019 (the Local Law). The Local Law was approved by the New York City Council in 2019 in response to a substantial increase in the number of complaints filed against illegal accessory signs in 2018, which resulted in the issuance of violations by the Department of Buildings (DOB).

The Local Law required the establishment of temporary programs, community outreach and education by various city agencies, as well as an interagency Task Force to evaluate current regulatory practices for accessory business signs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this report to the Mayor and City Council, the Task Force is to present its findings and recommendations on current regulatory practices for accessory signs and how these regulations impact business owners attempting to comply with such regulations. Additionally, the Task Force was required to evaluate the qualifications for special sign hangers and recommend whether changes allowing general contractors to hang certain accessory signs would be worthwhile and feasible.

The 17-member Task Force was formed to elicit broad discussion, input and recommendations from stakeholders including city agencies, community organizations, local business advocates and the industry. Issues examined relate primarily to the current state and needs of small businesses related to installing accessory signs.

Signs are regulated by both the Construction Codes and the Zoning Resolution. The Construction Codes regulate the installation and construction of business signs for safety. For example, the Construction Codes place a limit on the size of a sign that can be installed without a permit and requires that a licensed professional be retained to install a sign. The Zoning Resolution governs many aspects of a sign's appearance, including the permissible location and size of such signs.

Signs complained of and found by DOB to be illegal were primarily of the larger 'vinyl over a rigid frame' type, very commonly installed throughout the City. At most locations where DOB conducted an inspection, a single violation for work without a permit was issued. These structures are akin to awnings extending several feet over the sidewalk, with images and text upon them far exceeding that which is permitted on awnings. The signs are rendered illegal in utilizing the far more permissive projection over the sidewalk applicable only to awnings, but then covering them with text and images as allowed only on signs, not permitted to project as far. While commonly referred to as awnings, they are for zoning purposes, Signs.

EXAMPLE: Legal Sign



An awning with the correctly limited text.

EXAMPLE: Illegal Sign



An awning-type structure rendered an illegal sign by excessive text and images.

ACCESSORY SIGN REGULATION TASK FORCE

Task Force recommendations include the following:

1. **Changes to the Zoning Resolution**

- Changes to permissible sign projections, which would facilitate the legalization of some existing signs, should be made in only a limited number of well-defined business areas.
- Business areas should be selected in consultation with local elected officials and other community stakeholders. Any changes to permissible sign projections in those areas should be evaluated as to the actual benefit provided by such change and should conform to the desires of that community.

2. **Changes to DOB-required permits and the filing process**

- There should be one web page that provides all links to the resources for proper accessory sign installation.
- A simplified application should be considered for accessory sign approval and installation.
- The need for an Asbestos Assessment Report (ACP-5 Form) currently required for sign installation should be reviewed and reconsidered.

3. **Addressing abuse of 311**

- As a disincentive to complaint abuse, the current moratorium against enforcement should continue until the recommendations of the Task Force are implemented and time for compliance has been provided.
- Post-moratorium, unless such accessory sign creates an imminent threat to public health or safety or the Commissioner of DOB determines that such sign is otherwise not eligible, business accessory signs should first be issued warning notices with a six-month compliance period, followed by a violation if necessary.
- Any sudden increase in complaints should trigger an investigation by the Department of Investigation (DOI).
- To the extent possible, DOB should implement a system that monitors complaint volume and intervenes where sudden spikes are observed.

4. **Outreach and community engagement**

- The NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) should coordinate with other agencies and entities, as necessary, to improve currently available resources and materials.
 - This should include plain-language explanations of regulatory requirements accompanied by sample graphics.

- DOB should assign in each borough office one sign application liaison to assist businesses with questions or difficulties.

5. **Grant programs to assist small business owners with compliance**

- SBS should continue its storefront façade improvement program supplemented by funding from NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and New York State.
- The City should provide grants to assist businesses with compliance.

6. **Expansion of who is permitted to install Signs**

- The current pool of 643 licensed Special Riggers is recommended as the best alternative to licensed sign hangers for increasing the number of qualified individuals capable of safely installing and removing signage.
- Pro-active enforcement should occur against unlicensed sign hangers who illegally hold themselves out as licensed and/or permitted to install signage.

1.0 **ACCESSORY SIGN REGULATION TASK FORCE**

The Local Law charged the Task Force with completing an “evaluation of the relevance and appropriateness of current regulatory practices for accessory signs” as well as “the issues faced by businesses, especially small businesses, in complying with these regulations.” The Task Force was further required to “evaluate the special sign hanger qualifications” and to “make recommendations as to (i) whether such qualifications should be changed and (ii) the feasibility and implications of amending such qualifications to allow certain general contractors to hang or attach accessory signs.”

1.1 **Task Force Membership**

The Task Force consisted of the following members:

- **Edward Fortier**, Executive Director of Special Enforcement, designee of the Commissioner of Buildings, Co-director of the Task Force
- **Frank Ruchala**, Director of Zoning Division, designee of the Chair of City Planning, Co-director of the Task Force
- **Lily Fan**, Director of Enforcement, designee of the Chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission
- **Warren Gardiner**, Chief of Staff, designee of the Commissioner of Small Business Services
- **LaVonne Brown**, designee of the Commissioner of the Department of Citywide Administrative Services

- **Jessica Walker**, President and CEO of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce
- **Linda M. Baran**, President and CEO of the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce
- **Samara Karasyk**, Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce
- **Thomas J. Grech**, President and CEO of the Queens Chamber of Commerce
- **Lisa Sorin**, President of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce
- **Anthony Basso**, owner of Big Three Wine & Liquor, appointed by the Chair of the New York City Council’s Committee on Small Business
- **Wilma Alonso**, Executive Director of the Fordham Road Business Improvement District, appointed by the Chair of the New York City Council’s Committee on Small Business
- **Dante Dano, Jr.**, President and Business Manager of Local 137, appointed by the Speaker of the New York City Council
- **James Mauceri**, President and CEO of Mauceri Signs & Awnings, appointed by the Speaker of the New York City Council
- **Marwan Sinno**, owner of United Hardware, appointed by the Speaker of the New York City Council
- **Youssef Mubarez**, Director of Public Relations at the Yemeni American Merchants Association, appointed by the Mayor
- **David Estrada**, Executive Director of the Sunset Park BID, appointed by the Mayor

1.2 Agency, Public, and Industry Input

The Task Force was comprised of small business owners, representatives of city agencies, chamber of commerce members, sign hangers, and small business advocates. The diverse representation of stakeholders allowed for well-rounded suggestions from many affected groups. Task Force meetings were convened in order to exchange, develop and confirm recommendations for improving the process of installing new compliant signs and legalizing others already installed.

1.3 Working Group Review

A diligent evaluation by the Task Force included review of:

- The relevant provisions of the Construction Codes (CC) and Zoning Resolution (ZR).
- Resources currently available to the business community.
- The processes required for the installation of accessory signs.
- Recent outreach to relevant communities and stakeholders.

2.0 SIGN OVERVIEW

Both the ZR and CC definitions of the term **Sign** are very inclusive, capturing the various ways messages may be conveyed. It is important to distinguish between an Awning, which may have a very substantial projection with only limited text upon it and a Sign, which is limited in projection over the sidewalk, but may have the images and text ordinarily desired by businesses.

2.1 Zoning Definition of a Sign

The Zoning definition of a **Sign** is very broad and includes any outdoor writing, picture, emblem, flag, or figure used to announce, direct attention to, or advertise. Signs include those that are hung, pasted, painted, affixed, erected, tied to, or otherwise represented on any fixture, building, or structure.¹

2.2 Construction Code Definition of a Sign

A **Sign** is defined in relevant part as: any letter, figure, character, mark, plane, point, marquee sign, design, poster, pictorial, picture, stroke, stripe, line, trademark, reading matter or illuminated service, which shall be constructed, placed, attached, painted, erected, fastened or manufactured in any manner whatsoever, so that the same shall be used for the attraction of the public to any place, subject, person, firm, corporation, public performance, article, machine or merchandise, whatsoever, which is displayed in any manner outdoors.²

2.3 Construction Code Definition of an Awning

An architectural projection that provides weather protection, identity or decoration and is wholly supported by the building to which it is attached. An awning is comprised of a lightweight frame structure over which a covering is attached.³

2.4 Sign Types

While this report and analysis deals exclusively with Accessory Signs, the reader should be aware that there are other types of signs that are referenced and regulated by the CC and ZR.

- **Accessory (A.K.A. 'Business') Sign:** A sign that directs attention to a business at the sign's location.
- **Advertising Sign:** A sign that directs attention to goods or services at a location other than the premises where the sign is located. Advertising signs are permitted in only a limited number of zoning districts throughout the City.

¹ Appendix A: Sign in the Zoning Resolution

² Appendix B: Sign in the Construction Code

³ Appendix C: Awning in the Construction Code

- **Construction Sign:** A sign that is required to be displayed at a premises during construction or demolition.
- **Non-commercial Sign:** A sign that draws attention to a non-profit entity.

3.0 NEW YORK CITY SIGN REGULATORY SUMMARY

This section examines the current structure of sign regulations in New York City. Included is an overview of the ZR and CC provisions that are applicable to Accessory Signs, permits and licensed sign hangers.

In combination, the ZR and the CC dictate all aspects of sign installation. This includes the permissible size, location, projection and illumination of a sign, as well as who may act as applicant for a sign permit and who may install the sign. There are at times additional limitations in special districts and other specified locations.

New York City sign regulations seek to promote safe and compliant sign installation. Stated generally, the zoning provisions tell us what type of signs may be installed and where, while the CC provisions tell us how signs must be safely secured to their supporting structures.

3.1 Zoning Resolution

In light of the illegal conditions frequently observed, most relevant to our review here are zoning restrictions upon the surface area and projection of a sign. There are also further restrictions for the location, height and illumination of a sign. The permissible use of a sign depends upon the zoning district in which the sign is located. All signs are strictly limited in Residential Districts, while advertising signs are prohibited in all Residential and most Commercial Districts. There are additional regulations applicable to signs within special districts, historic districts or within view of certain public parks and arterial highways.⁴

3.1.1 Surface area of a Sign

This is the entire area of any color or material, which is distinct from the building upon which it is mounted. The measurement is of the entire sign, not just text or images.⁵ Allowable surface area is generally a multiplier of the street frontage.⁶

3.1.2 Limits of Sign Projection

Generally, double or multifaceted signs may project up to 18" across the street line, while all other signs may project up to 12".⁷

⁴ Appendix D: Sign Regulation Chart

⁵ Appendix E: Surface Area

⁶ Appendix F: Allowable Surface Area

⁷ Appendix G: Projection in Commercial Districts

3.1.3 Awning Projections and Limits of Text Upon Them

Awnings are intended to be of the type typically found at cafes and produce stores, used to protect from the elements.

- They may extend not more than eight feet beyond the street line.⁸
- Text of only the business name and/or address is limited to letters not exceeding 12 inches high and up to 12 square feet in total.⁹

3.1.4 Projections in Special Districts

Projections may be further limited or prohibited in certain Special Districts.

3.2 Construction Codes

The CC provides guidance on the safe installation and removal of sign structures, including when permits and licensed sign hangers are required. Most signs require permits, with minor exceptions as noted in 3.2.2 below. The type of permit depends on the specifications of the sign.

3.2.1 Required Permits

- Sign permits are required for the erection, installation or alteration of signs.¹⁰
- Permits typically include a sign (SG) permit for the size, content and location, as well as an Alteration Type 3 (ALT3) permit for the structural/installation details.
- Other permits that may be required include:
 - Annual Illuminated Sign Permit for signs that are both illuminated and extend beyond the building line.
 - Electrical Permit for any sign that would require an electrical connection.

3.2.2 Permit Exemptions (in relevant part)

- A sign permit shall not be required where the sign is:
 1. Painted directly on the exterior wall surface of a building or on the surface of a fence.
 2. A wall sign of not more than six square feet (0.56 m²) in area.¹¹

3.2.3 Who may act as Applicant

- The applicant for approval of construction documents (SG and ALT3) shall be the Professional Engineer (PE) or Registered Architect (RA) who prepared or

⁸ Appendix H: Awning Projection

⁹ Appendix I: Text on Awnings

¹⁰ Appendix J: Sign Work Permits

¹¹ Appendix K: Sign Permit Exceptions

supervised the preparation of the construction documents on behalf of the owner.¹²

- Exception to PE/RA Requirement: a licensed sign hanger may act as applicant for a limited universe of accessory signs, including those that are up to 150 square feet in surface area and 300 pounds in weight. This encompasses a large number of small business signs and eliminates the need to retain a PE or RA for such work.¹³

3.3 Sign Installation: Sign Hanger Classifications, Requirements, and Exemptions

Sign hanger classifications, requirements, and exemptions, are contained in the Construction Codes.¹⁴

3.3.1 Sign Hanger Classifications and Requirements

There are two classifications of DOB licensed sign hangers who are permitted to attach signs to buildings and structures in the City.

1. A Master Sign Hanger is permitted to hoist, lower, hang or attach any sign, unrestricted by weight.
2. A Special Sign Hanger is restricted to installing signs no greater than 150 square feet in area and no heavier than 1,200 pounds.

This report discusses only Special Sign Hangers, as Master Sign Hangers are not likely to be involved with the installation of small business signs.

3.3.2 Exemptions: When a Licensed Sign Hanger is Not Required

1. Signs not exceeding 75 square feet (7 m²) in area, measured on one face only, nor exceeding 25 pounds (11 kg) in weight;
2. Signs supported directly on the ground.

3.4 Awning installation

- General Contractors (GCs) are allowed to install awnings, which are lightweight frame structures over which a covering is attached. These structures are typically found at cafes and produce stores and are used to protect from the elements.
 - Awnings must conform to the limitations of text provided for in the ZR so they are not rendered signs.¹⁵

¹² Appendix L: Who May Act as the Applicant for Sign Jobs

¹³ Appendix M: Exception Allowing Licensed Sign Hanger as Applicant for Small Accessory Signs

¹⁴ Appendix N: When Sign Hanger is Required and License

¹⁵ Appendix I: Text on Awnings

4.0 RELEVANCE & APPROPRIATENESS OF CURRENT REGULATORY PRACTICES FOR ACCESSORY SIGNS

4.1 In the Construction Code

The current requirement of permits for sign installation is appropriate to assure conforming and safe installation.

4.2 In the Zoning Resolution

As conveyed by representatives of the Department of City Planning (DCP), the provisions of the ZR are appropriate because there is a negative view toward the aesthetics of signage in most communities. Other Task Force members concurred with this generally but questioned the relevance of long-standing zoning regulations to modern street conditions in certain business districts.

5.0 REGULATORY AND PROCEDURAL CHANGES CONSIDERED

5.1 Zoning Changes

The Task Force considered the best course to facilitate the legalization of as much existing signage as possible, as well as changes that may be appropriate to the streetscape in certain business districts. The primary illegality is the excessive projection of many signs. Options for the legalization of some signs include grandfathering or zoning text changes.

5.1.1 Grandfathering

- Any proposed grandfathering should have limits as to excess size and amount of copy/text beyond that which is permitted by zoning.
- In landmarked areas, Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) approval would still be required and grandfathering would not supersede LPC regulations.
- DCP notes that grandfathering should not be done on a citywide basis, as oversized signs may not be desired in many communities.
- Legalization of the sign by application, permit and authorized installation would still be required to assure conformance with grandfathering limits and that the sign is installed correctly.

5.1.2 Zoning Text Amendments

- Citywide zoning text amendments would require a tremendous effort and are unlikely to be adopted, as neighborhoods vary greatly on what is viewed as acceptable.

- Changes to permissible sign projections facilitating the legalization of some existing signs should be made only in a limited number of very specific business areas.
- Each area should be evaluated as to the actual benefit provided by such change and should conform to the desires of that community.

5.2 DOB Application and Permitting Changes

- As explained in 3.2.1 above, there are multiple applications and permits necessary for the installation of signage. Combining some of the applications may simplify this process and reduce the related costs.
- Industry members assert that the Asbestos Assessment Report (ACP-5 Form) currently required for sign installation is costly and unnecessary as they are always found to be negative. The need for this certification should be reviewed and reconsidered.

5.3 Abuse of the 311 Complaint System

- DOB must respond to all complaints; however, there is no accountability for people who abuse 311 for personal reasons.
- As a disincentive to complaint abuse, the current moratorium against enforcement should be continued until Task Force recommendations are implemented and time for compliance has been provided.
- Post-moratorium, unless such sign creates an imminent threat to public health or safety or the DOB Commissioner determines that such sign is otherwise not eligible, business accessory signs should first be issued warning notices with a six-month compliance period, followed by a violation if necessary.
- In the event of an increase in complaints, an investigation by DOI would be appropriate and discourage abuse.
- DOB should implement a system that monitors complaint volume and intervenes where sudden spikes are observed. DOB notes that while complaint data is broadly available, the ability to monitor substantial increases in particular complaints or violations would need to be further explored.

6.0 OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

6.1 Concern Regarding the Effectiveness of Outreach

- City agencies are not reaching those businesses that do not use the City's online resources or are not in areas of concentrated violations

- There should be a systematic way to conduct outreach to help achieve mass compliance.
 - It would be helpful to utilize a trigger, such as the issuance of business licenses, tax filings or commercial leases, to issue notification to business owners of sign installation requirements.

6.2 Suggestion to Improve Coordination and Cooperation Between City Agencies, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Chambers of Commerce, and Local Development Corporations to Coordinate On-going Outreach.

- DOB has and continues to conduct outreach specifically in areas with high concentrations of violations including distribution of a pamphlet printed in multiple languages.
- SBS is pursuing all avenues, including SBS fairs and combined work with DOB staff to perform outreach. Current SBS outreach includes Mobile Outreach events and Small Business Resource Fairs.

6.3 SBS Should Improve Currently Available Resources and Materials

- Plain language explanations of regulatory requirements accompanied by graphics would significantly assist businesses owners.

6.4 Grant programs should be explored and expanded

- SBS currently assists business owners with available grants.
- SBS has a storefront façade improvement program and provides technical assistance to community-based organizations (CBOs) who are interested in starting their own storefront improvement programs.
- SBS cannot designate city-tax levied funds for these programs, so many are in coordination with EDC.
- SBS was clear in stating that available grants are very limited and could never address a citywide need.
- The group suggested the City provide grant funds annually to assist with legalization and compliance.

6.5 Business owners have difficulty in navigating the procedures at DOB

- Beyond making all possible materials available to business owners, there are often still questions and confusion as to procedures.
- It would be helpful for DOB to assign in each borough office, one individual with extensive sign application knowledge to assist business owners with questions or difficulties.

7.0 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING SPECIAL SIGN HANGER QUALIFICATIONS

- It is the opinion of many Task Force members that the limitation of 25 currently licensed Special Sign Hangers increases costs and the time necessary for compliance.
- The feasibility and implications of amending qualifications to allow DOB registered GCs to hang signs was discussed.
- Industry representatives stressed that the GC pool generally is inexperienced and incapable of properly hanging signs and would create great hazards.
- Industry representatives further cite the substantial insurance expense of \$19 for every \$100 of worker salary as indicative of high-risk work and the need for extensive knowledge.
- The industry instead recommends that the pool of 643 currently Licensed Special Riggers be permitted to install and remove signs.
- Riggers have substantial experience with safely hoisting.
- The suggestion of the Licensed Riggers to supplement the Licensed Sign Hangers was broadly supported by the Task Force. No objections were raised.
- The problem of unlicensed sign hangers also requires correction.
- Pro-active enforcement was discussed as necessary to deter business owners from being lured into illegal work.

8.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Zoning changes could be pursued in select business areas where there is support and in consultation with local elected officials

- In some cases, zoning text changes are the best way to address legalization of existing signs
 - Changes to permissible sign projections would facilitate the legalization of some existing signs but should be made only in a limited number of very specific business areas.
 - Business areas should be selected in consultation with local elected officials and other community stakeholders. Any changes to permissible sign projections in those areas should be evaluated as to the actual benefit provided by such change and should conform to the desires of that community.

- Grandfathering would not be most beneficial for legalization of existing signs, leaving businesses with new signs having to comply while surrounding signs may be much larger.

8.2 DOB Application Process Should be Clarified and Simplified

- There should be one web page that includes all links to the resources for proper accessory sign application and installation.
- A simplified application should be considered for all aspects of accessory sign approval and installation.
- The need for an Asbestos Assessment Report (ACP-5 Form) currently required for sign installation should be reviewed and reconsidered.

8.3 The 311 Complaint System is Subject to Abuse

- There is no accountability for people who abuse the 311 system.
- The current moratorium against enforcement should be continued until Task Force recommendations are implemented and time for compliance has been provided.
- Post-moratorium, unless such sign creates an imminent threat to public health or safety or the Commissioner of DOB determines that such sign is otherwise not eligible, business accessory signs should first be issued warning notices with a six-month compliance period before violation issuance.
- DOI should investigate the source of complaints when spikes are observed.
- DOB should implement a system to monitor complaint volume and intervene when sudden spikes are observed.

8.4 Community Outreach Should be Improved

- SBS should coordinate as necessary to improve currently available resources and materials.
- This must include plain-language explanations of regulatory requirements accompanied by graphics.
- DOB should assign in each borough office, one individual with extensive knowledge to assist businesses with questions or difficulties.

8.5 Grant Programs are Needed to Assist Small Business Owners with Compliance

- SBS will continue to operate its storefront façade improvement program, and provide technical assistance to CBOs interested in developing their own storefront improvement program tailored to their business district

- The Task Force suggests that there be grants provided by the City to assist businesses with compliance.

8.6 An Expanded Pool of Installers Would be Beneficial

- The existing pool of 25 Licensed Special Sign Hangers is too small, which some believe adds cost and delay to the permitting process for small business owners trying to comply.
- The group of 643 currently licensed Special Riggers is recommended as the best alternative for increasing the number of qualified individuals capable of safely installing signage.
- Pro-active enforcement should occur against unlicensed sign hangers.

APPENDIX A: SIGN IN THE ZONING RESOLUTION

ZR §12-10 Sign

A **sign** is any writing (including letter, word, or numeral), pictorial representation (including illustration or decoration), emblem (including device, symbol, or trademark), flag, (including banner or pennant), or any other figure of similar character, that:

- (a) is a structure or any part thereof, or is attached to, painted on, or in any other manner represented on a building or other structure;
- (b) is used to announce, direct attention to, or advertise; and
- (c) is visible from outside a building.

APPENDIX B: SIGN IN THE CONSTRUCTION CODE

CC §H102.1 Sign

Any letter, figure, character, mark, plane, point, marquee sign, design, poster, pictorial, picture, stroke, stripe, line, trademark, reading matter or illuminated service, which shall be constructed, placed, attached, painted, erected, fastened or manufactured in any manner whatsoever, so that the same shall be used for the attraction of the public to any place, subject, person, firm, corporation, public performance, article, machine or merchandise, whatsoever, which is displayed in any manner outdoors. Every sign shall be classified and conform to the requirements of that classification as set forth in this chapter.

APPENDIX C: AWNING IN THE CONSTRUCTION CODE

CC §202 Awning

An architectural projection that provides weather protection, identity or decoration and is wholly supported by the building to which it is attached. An awning is comprised of a lightweight frame structure over which a covering is attached.

APPENDIX D: SIGN REGULATIONS CHART

SIZE REGULATIONS IN COMMERCIAL & MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS					
DISTRICT	SIGN TYPE	SIZE OF INDIVIDUAL SIGN (max)	SURFACE AREA FOR ALL SIGNS ¹ ON A ZONING LOT	SURFACE AREA FOR ILLUMINATED OR FLASHING ² SIGNS	HEIGHT ABOVE CURB LEVEL (max)
C1 C2	Accessory	150sf	3 x street frontage (150sf total)	Illuminated Only: 3 x street frontage (50sf total)	25ft
C3	Accessory	50sf	50sf (total)	Not Permitted	25ft
C5 (exc. C5-4)	Accessory	200sf	3 x street frontage (200sf total)	Not Permitted	25ft
C4 C5-4 C6 (exc. C6-5 C6-7)	Accessory	500sf	5 x street frontage (500sf total)	5 x street frontage (500sf total)	40ft
C6-5 C6-7 C7	Accessory	No Restriction	No Restriction	No Restriction	No Restriction
	Advertising				
C8	Accessory	Illuminated or Flashing: 500sf Non-illuminated: 750sf	6 x street frontage	5 x street frontage	40ft Illuminated 58ft Non-illuminated or Indirectly Illuminated
	Advertising	Indirect Illumination ⁴ 500sf Non-illuminated: 750sf			
M1 M2 M3	Accessory	Illuminated or Flashing: 500sf Indirect Illumination: 750sf ⁵ Non-illuminated: 1,200sf ⁶	6 x street frontage	5 x street frontage	40ft Illuminated 75ft Non-illuminated or Indirectly Illuminated ⁷
	Advertising	Indirect Illumination ⁴ 750sf ⁵ Non-illuminated: 1,200sf ⁶			

Up to 3 illuminated non-flashing window signs totaling no more than 8 square feet are exempt

Illuminated signs that change periodically to show the time, temperature or similar information are not considered flashing signs

Flashing signs are not permitted in C6-1A districts

Illuminated or flashing signs are not permitted

500 square feet in M1 districts that allow residential use

750 square feet in M1 districts that allow residential use

58 feet for indirectly illuminated sign within 500 feet of a residence district or C1 through C6 district

APPENDIX E: SURFACE AREA

ZR §12-10 Definition of Surface Area

The 'surface area' of a *sign* shall be the entire area within a single continuous perimeter enclosing the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, or any figure of similar character, together with any material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate such *sign* from the background against which it is placed. In any event, the supports or uprights on which such *sign* is supported shall not be included in determining the *surface area* of a *sign*.

APPENDIX F: ALLOWABLE SURFACE AREA

ZR §32-642

C1 C2 C3 C4 C5 C6 C7 C8

In all districts, as indicated, non-illuminated signs with total surface areas not exceeding those shown in the following table are permitted:

DISTRICT	MAXIMUM SURFACE AREA
C3	50 square feet
C1 C2	Three times the street frontage of the zoning lot (in feet), but in no event more than 150 sq. ft. for interior or through lots or 150 sq. ft. on each frontage for corner lots .
C5-1 C5-2 C5-3 C5-5	Three times the street frontage of the zoning lot (in feet), but in no event more than 200 sq. ft. for interior or through lots or 200 sq. ft. on each frontage for corner lots .
C4 C5-4 C6-1 C6-2 C6-3 C6-4 C6-6 C6-8 C6-9	Five times the street frontage of the zoning lot (in feet), but in no event more than 500 sq. ft. for interior or through lots or 500 sq. ft. on each frontage for corner lots .
C8	Six times the street frontage of the zoning lot (in feet), but in no event more than 750 sq. ft. for each sign .
C6-5 C6-7 C7	No restrictions as to size

APPENDIX G: PROJECTION IN COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

ZR §32-652 Permitted projection in all other Commercial Districts

C1 C2 C3 C4 C5 C6-1 C6-2 C6-3 C6-4 C6-6 C6-8 C6-9 C8

In the districts indicated, except as otherwise provided in Section 32-653 (additional regulations for projecting signs), no permitted sign shall project across a street line more than 18 inches for double- or multi-faceted signs or 12 inches for all other signs.

APPENDIX H: AWNING PROJECTION

CC §3202.2.3.1 Store front awnings

Store front awnings may project beyond the street line not more than 8 feet (2438 mm), provided no part of the awning is less than 8 feet (2438 mm) above the ground or sidewalk level, except for a flexible valance which may be not less than 7 feet (2134 mm) above the ground or sidewalk level, and provided that the awning box or cover does not project more than 12 inches (305 mm).

APPENDIX I: TEXT ON AWNINGS

ZR §32-653 Additional Regulations for Projecting Signs

C1 C2 C3 C4 C5 C6 C7 C8

In all districts, as indicated, permitted **signs** other than **advertising signs** may be displayed as follows:

- (a) *Non-illuminated signs* may be displayed on awnings or canopies permitted by the Administrative Code, with a *surface area* not exceeding 12 square feet and with the height of letters not exceeding 12 inches. Any commercial copy on such *signs* shall be limited to identification of the name or address of the *building* or an establishment contained therein.

APPENDIX J: SIGN WORK PERMITS

CC §28-105.2 Classification of Work Permits (in relevant part)

For the purposes of this Code, work permits shall be classified as follows:

- 7. Sign permits: for the erection, installation or alteration of signs.

APPENDIX K: SIGN PERMIT EXCEPTIONS

CC §28-105.4.5 Sign permits not required.

A sign permit shall not be required where the sign is:

1. Painted directly on the exterior wall surface of a building or on the surface of a fence;
2. A wall sign of not more than six square feet (0.56 m²) in area;
3. Erected by employees of a City agency, including traffic and other similar signs;
4. A ground sign offering the sale or rental of the premises on which it is erected, provided the sign does not exceed 12 square feet (1.1 m²) in area;
5. Temporary and erected during construction work and related thereto;
6. Temporary for special decorative display use for holidays, public demonstrations, or the promotion of civic, welfare or charitable purposes, except that signs that utilize streets or cross streets shall be subject to the requirements of the Department of Transportation; or
7. Temporary signs offering the sale or rental of real property when erected on the premises offered for sale or rent.

APPENDIX L: WHO MAY ACT AS THE APPLICANT FOR SIGN JOBS

CC §28-104.6 Applicant

The applicant for approval of construction documents shall be the registered design professional who prepared or supervised the preparation of the construction documents on behalf of the owner.

APPENDIX M: EXCEPTION ALLOWING LICENSED SIGN HANGER AS APPLICANT FOR SMALL ACCESSORY SIGNS

RCNY §105-04 Applications filed by a Licensed Sign Hanger

- a) **Scope.** This rule establishes when licensed Master Sign Hangers and Special Sign Hangers may file applications for permits to install signs and related structural elements.
- b) **References.** See Administrative Code (AC) section 28-104.6, item 5, and Administrative Code, Title 28, Article 415.

- c) **Licensed Sign Hanger.** The term Licensed Sign Hanger shall refer to the holder of a Master Sign Hanger or Special Sign Hanger license.
- d) **Conditions for Filing Sign Applications.** Pursuant to Section 28-104.6, item 5, a Licensed Sign Hanger may file applications for permits to install a sign and any related structural elements, provided he or she complies with all the following:
1. The sign application must comply with the applicable provisions of the New York City Building Code and Zoning Resolution.
 2. The application must be limited to wall-mounted, accessory signs.
 3. The area of the display face of any sign must not exceed one hundred fifty (150) square feet. The area of the sign includes the entirety of individual letters, groups of letters, symbols, images, or any portion thereof.
 4. The sign, or any portion of it, must not project more than 18 inches beyond the face of a building, regardless of the building's setback.
 5. The entire sign must be mounted below the height of the second story ceiling.
 6. The sign must not exceed three hundred (300) pounds in total weight. The total weight includes all portions of the sign and any related structural elements, including individual letters, groups of letters, symbols, images, associated electrical components, structural supports, hardware, framework, or any portion thereof, even if the sign is erected in stages or portions over time. If structural work beyond a frame or support used to provide rigidity is required, a registered design professional must design all structural plans.
 7. Signs must be mounted by means of mechanical anchors installed in accordance with the table below. Anchors must be fastened 12 inches on center, with a minimum of four anchors used. The anchors must be able to support an allowable stress of five times the weight of the sign and any related structural elements. (*Anchoring chart omitted*)
- e) **Prohibited filings.** Notwithstanding subdivision (d) of this section, a Licensed Sign Hanger may not file applications for permits to install any of the following:
1. Any rooftop mounted sign;
 2. Any sign projecting more than 18" across a street line;
 3. Any marquee;
 4. Any digital sign; or
 5. Any related structural elements other than those referenced in subdivision (d) of this section.

A registered design professional must file the applications listed in subdivision (e).

APPENDIX N: WHEN SIGN HANGER IS REQUIRED AND LICENSE

CC §28-415.1 Sign Hanger License Required

It shall be unlawful to hoist or lower or to hang or attach any sign upon or on the outside of any building or structure in the City unless such work is performed by or under the direct and continuing supervision of a person licensed as a sign hanger under the provisions of this article.

CC §28-415.2 Exemptions to the Licensed Sign Hanger Requirement

The provisions of this article shall not apply to the following:

1. Signs not exceeding 75 square feet (7 m²) in area, measured on one face only, nor exceeding 25 pounds (11 kg) in weight;
2. Signs supported directly on the ground; or
3. Directional signs; or
4. Temporary signs erected during the construction or alteration of a building and related to such work; or
5. The erection or placing of any signs by employees of the City, any City department or other City agency.

CC §28-415.3 Classification

Such licenses shall be classified as follows:

1. Master sign hanger license. Authorizes the holder thereof to hoist or lower or to hang or attach any sign, irrespective of weight, upon or on the outside of any building.
2. Special sign hanger license. Authorizes the holder thereof to hoist or lower or to hang or attach any sign not exceeding one hundred fifty square feet in area, measured on one face only, nor exceeding one thousand two hundred pounds in weight, upon or on the outside of any building.

CC §28-415.4 Additional Qualifications

Applicants for a sign hanger license shall have the additional qualifications set forth in sections 28-415.4.1 through 28-415.4.2.

§28-415.4.1 Master sign hanger qualifications

All applicants for a master sign hanger license shall submit satisfactory proof establishing that the applicant has at least five years practical experience in sign hanging within the seven years preceding the date of the license application under the direct and continuing supervision of a licensed master sign hanger; and the applicant shall also have a knowledge of and ability to read plans and specifications relating to sign construction and erection, including supporting framework and other supports, and a knowledge of the problems and practices of

sign construction and hanging and be familiar with the equipment and tools used in sign hanging.

§28-415.4.2 Special sign hanger qualifications

All applicants for a special sign hanger license shall submit satisfactory proof establishing that the applicant has at least three years practical experience in sign hanging within the five years preceding the date of the license application under the direct and continuing supervision of a licensed sign hanger; and the applicant shall also have a knowledge and ability to read plans and specifications relating to sign construction and erection, including supporting framework and other supports, and a knowledge of the problems and practices of sign construction and hanging and be familiar with the equipment and tools used in sign hanging.