

Digital Sign Displays

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the difference between on- and off –premises signs?

An on-premises sign directs attention to a use or an activity that occurs on the same property as the sign. An off-premises sign directs attention to a use or an activity at a location other than where the sign is placed.

Off Premises:



On Premises:



2. What regulations are in place for digital displays?

All signs are regulated by Chapter 28 of the City Code titled “Signs and Billboards.”

Specifically off-premises digital displays are regulated under the pilot program ordinance adopted on October 18, 2007 which limits the total number of such signs to 15 and provides standards for message dwell time; malfunction; brightness (nit levels); 2,000 foot minimum spacing distances between digital displays and the removal of at least 3 times the equivalent square footage of existing sign faces to install a digital sign face.

On-premises digital displays are limited only by the regulations of the on-premises sign ordinance adopted on December 8, 1994 which provides dimensional standards for the the placement of such signs based on zoning and roadway type (see questions #3 and 4 below). Currently there are no restrictions on message dwell time, malfunction, brightness, spacing distances between digital displays (other than the 150 foot spacing for all on-premise signs) nor any limitations on removing existing static sign faces to install a digital sign face.

The Unified Development, Chapter 35 of the City Code, provides additional sign standards for certain zoning districts (see questions # 6 and 7 below).

3. What are the maximum size limits under the 1994 on-premises sign ordinance?

The nonresidential zoning districts, the maximum sign limits are shown in table below:

Street type	Freestanding Single Tenant		Freestanding Multiple Tenant		Attached Sign	
	<i>Height (ft.)*</i>	<i>Size (SF)</i>	<i>Height (ft.)*</i>	<i>Size (SF)</i>	<i>% of facade</i>	<i>Min. SF</i>
Local	16	75	20	125	25	50
Arterial B (and Commercial Collector)	24	150	32	250	25	75
Arterial A	40	240	50	500	25	75
Expressway	50	375	60	650	25	100

**Up to additional 10 feet in height may be provided where there is a grade difference.*

4. What is the basis for determining Arterial B, Arterial A and Expressways?

The Major Thoroughfare Plan, adopted in 1978 and as amended from time to time

http://www.sanantonio.gov/planning/pdf/GIS/map_download/0908GG10.pdf

5. What is the minimum spacing distance between signs?

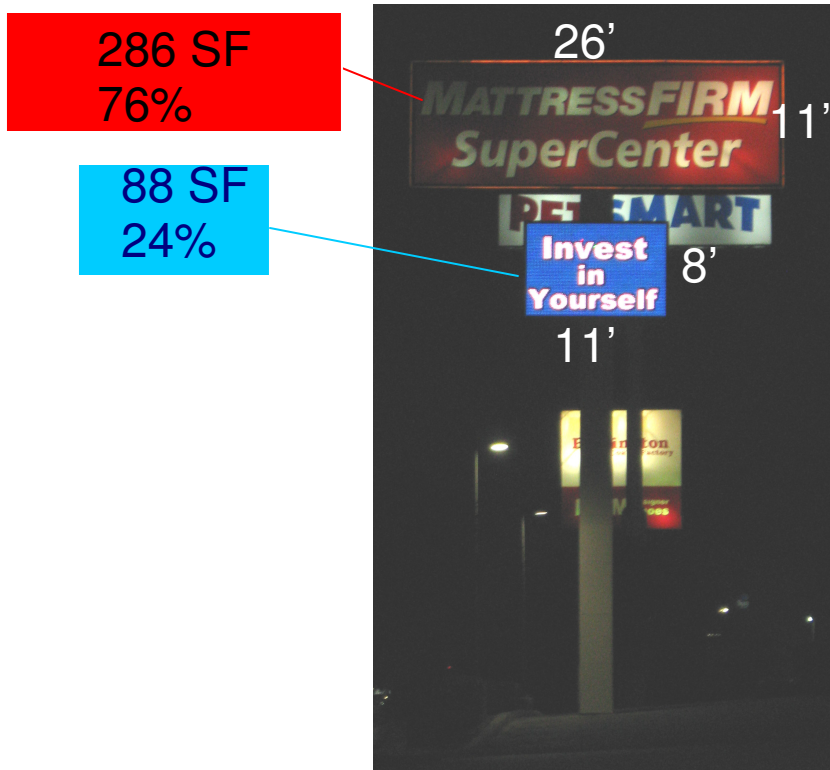
Off-premises signs must be spaced at least 1,500 feet apart. Digital off-premises signs must be spaced 2,000 feet apart.

On-premise signs must be spaced at least 150 feet apart provided however one freestanding sign per lot is permitted. Where there are multiple street frontages (such as a corner lot) at least one sign per frontage is permitted.

6. Are digital displays allowed in Scenic Corridors and Urban Corridors?

Scenic Corridors prohibit the installation of new off-premises sign structures, but do not prohibit installation of new on-premises sign structures.

Urban Corridors prohibit the installation of new off-premises sign structures and limit installation of new digital on-premises sign structures to no more than 25% of a sign face.



7. Are digital displays allowed in Historic Districts?

No. As of January 15, 2009, digital/LED signs are prohibited in all Historic Districts as well as the RIO districts and public property. A map indicating all urban design districts including Historic, RIO, Neighborhood Conservation, Arts & Entertainment and Corridor Districts can be found online at <http://www.sanantonio.gov/planning/pdf/Neighborhoods/NCDs/0906GP09.pdf>

8. What areas are subject to the sign ordinance?

The City's sign and billboard ordinance (Chapter 28) applies both within the San Antonio City Limits and up to 5 miles beyond the City Limits in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). A map of the ETJ line is online at http://www.sanantonio.gov/planning/pdf/GIS/map_download/0703GT02.pdf

9. How can I learn about the meetings for digital sign displays?

<http://www.sanantonio.gov/dsd/digitalsigns.asp>

10. Who is on the digital sign committee?

- Neighborhood associations (5 representatives invited)
- Apartment Association
- Sign industry (4 representatives invited)
- Conservation Society
- Board of Realtors
- Electric Board
- Restaurant Association
- Scenic San Antonio
- Technical Adviser (Daktronics)

12. How can I obtain a copy of the City’s sign ordinance?

The ordinance is available through the Municipal Code Corporation website at <http://www.municode.com/resources/gateway.asp?pid=11508&sid=43>

13. I have seen signs that do not appear to conform to the sign ordinance, how is that allowed?

Signs erected prior to the effective date of the sign regulations have non-conforming rights. In general, an on-premises sign may reface an existing non-conforming sign, however replacement of a non-conforming sign cabinet is not permitted. In some cases, the Board of Adjustment may approve variances from the dimensional standards and spacing criteria of the on-premises sign ordinance.

14. How can I report a potential sign violation to an inspector?

You may call 210/207-1111 or the City’s Customer Service line at 311.

15. Can I remove an illegal sign?

Any citizen may remove a sign located within a City right of way, such as a “bandit sign,” if it does not feature a decal with the City of San Antonio seal indicating that a permit was obtained. Permitted right of way signs can only be placed in right of way Friday through Monday. Signs are not permitted in State right of way, which includes any numbered roadways such as the Interstates, State Highways, Loops and Spurs.



Legal (has decal)



Illegal (no decal)