

Town of Bar Harbor Signage - Frequently Asked Questions Section 125-67(BB)

“What kind of sign is the Design Review Board looking for?” In general, the DRB is hoping you bring us an attractive and creative sign that is harmonious with the character of its situation. The Town of Bar Harbor is unique, and we hope to enhance the village centers and roadways of our town by ensuring that signage is distinctive and one-of-a-kind.

“How much signage can I have?” The aggregate square footage of all signs is two square feet per one foot of road frontage with a maximum square footage calculation of 100 square feet. For instance, if you have 32 feet of road frontage, you may have up to 64 square feet of signage at your property. If you have 50 feet or more of road frontage you may have up to 100 square feet of signage. (125-67-(BB)(5)(d))

“How big can my sign be?” In downtown Bar Harbor and Town Hill the maximum size for any individual sign is 24 sq. ft (125-67(BB)(5)(e)). Along Routes 3 and 102 the maximum size of a sign is determined by the posted speed limit (125-67(BB)(5)(i)):

25 mph or under	=	24 sq. ft.
26 mph to 49 mph	=	32 sq. ft.
50 mph or over	=	50 sq. ft.

“What ‘counts’ in my signage square footage?” Any free-standing sign that is integral to your building including: wall signs, hanging signs, door & window signs, roof signs, and lettering on awnings. A frame or box displaying a restaurant menu that is no larger than a menu distributed to patrons is exempt from signage calculations. Additionally, “Open/Closed,” and hours of operation signs are exempt as well. Sales flyers or other notices up to two square feet per tenant are also exempt.

“What colors can I use?” In general most colors are acceptable, provided the Board finds that the selected colors will blend harmoniously with the sign design, building style, and the architectural styles of surrounding buildings. Fluorescent or other bright colors may be rejected unless used in small quantities as accents. Colors chosen from the “Historic Colors” palate of various paint manufacturers are nearly always acceptable. High gloss finishes are not acceptable due to glare.

“Can I have a neon sign?” Outdoor neon signs are prohibited, except that neon signs containing only the words “vacancy” or “no vacancy” are permitted if less than a maximum area of two square feet. Indoor neon signs which are visible from the public way are allowed, but only for the purpose of displaying whether the business is open or the general type of merchandise available for purchase. For example, a sign may say “beer”, but not “Budweiser.” Allowable neon signs may not have an aggregate square footage of more than two square feet and is included in your total square footage calculation (125-67(BB)(3)(f)&(6)(c)).

“Can I have blinking lights?” The code prohibits signs consisting in whole or in part of: visible moving parts, blinking, intermittent or glaring illumination, light emitting diode (LED) motion signs, pennants, ribbons, streamers, spinners or other similar devices, smoke, vapors, noxious odors, or noise (125-67 (BB)(3)(f)).

“How may I light my sign?” The Town of Bar Harbor has adopted the Dark Skies Ordinance. This means all lighting greater than 1800 lumens (approx. 100 watts) should not be visible from above. Lighting for signage should be shielded and mounted on top of your sign, aiming downward, or beside your sign without aiming above horizontal. Please note that glare can be a problem for pedestrians and motorists. No sign lighting will be approved if the Board determines the lighting will cause a hazard or nuisance. (125-67(Z)).

“Can I light my sign from the inside?” Internally illuminated signs in the Downtown, Town Hill, and Village Historic Districts are prohibited. Outside of those districts signs may be internally illuminated only by lights or signage that contain an opaque background (125-67(BB)(3)(h) & (Z)(4)(a)(2)).

“What other things should I know about my signs?”

- Clearance from bottom of sign to sidewalk: 10 feet.
- Maximum height of free-standing signs: 20 feet above ground level.
- Maximum wall sign size: No more than 10% of the wall area it's mounted on.
- Maximum window & door sign size: No more than 30% of the window or door area.
- A roof sign can sit no higher than the top of the roof it's mounted on and can be only 24" tall.
- Sandwich boards are included in the aggregate signage calculation for each building and shall not be located in a public way.

What do I need to do to get my signage approved? All signs within the villages of Bar Harbor and Town Hill and along Routes 3 and 102 must be approved by the Design Review Board. Applicants are also required to apply for a building permit before erecting any approved signage. Please check with the Bar Harbor Planning Department for an application form and information on the necessary submittals BEFORE erecting any signage on your property.