



# Guide on Erection & Maintenance of Advertising Signs



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This offers general guidance on the erection and maintenance of advertising signs. The advice contained and the legislations mentioned herein are not exhaustive. A qualified professional should be consulted in case of doubt.

## 2. GENERAL ADVICE

- 2.1 Any person who intends to erect a sign should obtain permission from the building owners and/or owners corporation and prior approval from the electricity supplier concerned as appropriate and check that the sign does not contravene the conditions of the land leases.
- 2.2 Sign owners should arrange to have their signs inspected and properly maintained regularly to ensure continuing safety.
- 2.3 The signboard owners may be liable for damages or injury caused by his sign.
- 2.4 A sign shall not contain obscene or indecent materials.

## 3. ADVICE FROM BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

- 3.1 Application of the Buildings Ordinance (Cap 123) and Public Health & Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132)
- 3.1.1 A Sign permanently attached, fixed, annexed or secured to a building normally falls within the definition of “building” or “building works” and is subject to the control of the Buildings Ordinance.
- 3.1.2 A sign that is liable to cause danger to the structure of a building may be removed under section 26(4) of the Buildings Ordinance. Any structure erected solely for the purpose of exhibiting advertisements and which is dangerous or is likely to become dangerous may be removed under section 105 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance.
- 3.1.3 Save where exempted by the Building Authority, no building or other structure shall be erected in, over or upon any portion of any street.

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## 3.2 Appointment of Authorized Persons & Registered Contractors

- 3.2.1 Approval and consent from the Building Authority should be obtained for the erection of any advertising sign which is within the definition of building or building works under the Buildings Ordinance.
- 3.2.2 An Authorized Person should be appointed to co-ordinate the work.
- 3.2.3 A Registered Contractor should be appointed for the erection of advertising signs.

## 3.3 Projection, Clearance and Location

- 3.3.1 A sign shall not
- obstruct or reduce the width of the escape route or stair provided to a building or service lane
  - obstruct or reduce the required natural lighting and ventilation or open air provided to buildings
  - project more than 4.2m from the main building line or beyond the center line of a street
- 3.3.2 A sign shall
- have a minimum clearance of 3.5m and a minimum clear distance of 1m from the curb if projecting over a pavement
  - have a minimum clearance of 5.8m if projecting over a street
  - have a minimum clearance of 7m if projecting over a tramway
- 3.3.3 Two adjacent signs shall have a minimum lateral distance of 2.4m.
- 3.3.4 Two signs erected from the opposite side of a street shall have a minimum clear distance of 3m.

## 3.4 Material and Structural Safety

- 3.4.1 A sign shall be
- made of durable, fire resistant material proofed against rust and corrosion
  - structurally safe as not to cause any injury to the public and shall not cause any adverse effect on the buildings to which it is fixed
- 3.4.2 The structure of a sign shall be securely fixed to avoid falling or swinging. It shall have a minimum of two support points on the building to which it is affixed.

- 3.4.3 A sign shall not be affixed to or take support from another sign.
- 3.4.4 The structural steel members of a sign shall have at least two coats of paint or other treatment for corrosion protection.
- 3.4.5 Electrolytic reaction shall be avoided (e.g. steel screws shall not be directly fixed to aluminium bars).
- 3.5 Other Points
  - 3.5.1 Details of the sign owner should be prominently displayed on the sign.
  - 3.5.2 A damaged or defective sign should be repaired or renewed.
  - 3.5.3 A sign should be removed when no longer required.

#### 4. **ADVICE FROM ELECTRICAL & MECHANICAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

- 4.1 A neon sign or any other sign with current using equipment shall conform to electrical safety requirements under the Electricity (Wiring) Regulations of the Electricity Ordinance (Cap. 406) and the technical guidelines given under Code of Practice for the Electricity (Wiring) Regulations.
- 4.2 The electrical installation of a neon sign or any other sign with current using equipment shall be undertaken by a Registered Electrical Contractor / worker.
- 4.3 Every switch for a discharge lighting circuit shall be identified with a permanent label.
- 4.4 The neon tubes and current using equipment shall be installed so as to be free from contact with inflammable materials and exposure to mechanical damage.
- 4.5 Ancillary equipment including inductors, capacitors, resistors and transformers shall either be totally enclosed in a rigid and effectively earthed metal container or alternatively be placed in a suitably ventilated enclosure of incombustible material or of fire-resisting construction.
- 4.6 The transformer, discharge tube and other parts of high voltage circuits shall be located out of reach of the public.
- 4.7 Fireman's Switch

- 4.7.1 The Fireman's switch of an approved type shall be situated in a conspicuous position, not more than 3m from ground level. For an exterior installation it shall be as nearly as possible vertically below the sign, or alternatively, a notice shall be placed directly below the sign to indicate the position of the switch, which shall bear a name plate. For interior installation it shall be near the main entrance to the building. Where more than one Fireman's Switch is installed on any one building, such switches shall be clearly marked to distinguish one from another.
- 4.7.2 The 'ON' and 'OFF' position of the Fireman's Switch shall be conventional. (i.e. push upward – 'OFF'; push downward – 'ON')
- 4.7.3 The switch is to be affixed on a board approximately 300mm long by 250mm wide, which is painted white and edged with a 50mm red border. The inscription 'NEON SIGN-FIREMAN'S SWITCH' in English is to be painted on the top and in Chinese at the bottom of the board in black. The switch is to be positioned in the middle of the board.

#### 5. **ADVICE FROM CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT**

- 5.1 No sign shall be erected above airport height limits under the Hong Kong Airport (Control of Obstructions) Ordinance, Cap 301.

#### 6. **ADVICE FROM COUNTRY AND MARINE PARKS AUTHORITY**

- 6.1 Regulation 10(1)(a) of the Country Parks and Special Areas Regulations stipulates that a permit in writing granted by the Country and Marine Parks Authority is required for displaying of any sign, notice, poster, banner or advertisement in country parks.
- 6.2 In general, permanent commercial signs will not be allowed to be displayed in country parks and special areas.



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- 6.3 The application for permission to erect and display a sign in country parks, or special areas, shall include the following details:-
- 6.3.1 The purpose for displaying the sign.
- 6.3.2 A sketch of the sign to be displayed showing dimensions, design, and colour of the sign.
- 6.3.3 A location plan for the proposed sign.
- 6.4 A copy of the application shall be sent to the respective District Lands Office in addition to the copy sent to the Director of Agriculture and Fisheries, who is also the Country and Marine Parks Authority.

#### **7. ADVICE ON TOBACCO ADVERTISEMENTS**

- 7.1 The Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance (Cap. 371) imposes requirements on tobacco advertisements.
- 7.2 Every tobacco advertisement shall contain health warning in accordance with the provisions of the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance, Cap 371.

#### **8. ADVICE ON MEDICAL ADVERTISEMENTS**

- 8.1 The Undesirable Medical Advertisement Ordinance (Cap 231) imposes restrictions to certain advertisements relating to medical matters.
- 8.2 Section 3 of the Ordinance prohibits any person to publish or cause to be published any advertisement likely to lead to the use of any medicine, surgical appliance or treatment for the purpose of treating human beings for, or preventing human beings from contracting any disease or condition specified in Schedule 1 or treating human beings for any purpose specified in Schedule 2 of the Ordinance.
- 8.3 Section 4 of the Ordinance also prohibits any person to put advertisements relating to abortion.

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#### **9. ADVICE FROM TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT**

- 9.1 Advertising signs shall not be erected on expressways and other roads with high speed limits; at locations which require a motorist's full concentration such as junctions and crossing points or at locations where the signs may impede already restricted visibility such as at horizontal and vertical curves.
- 9.2 The colours and shape of advertising signs shall not be such that they could be confused with traffic signs.
- 9.3 Advertising signs shall not obstruct the operation and safety of transport facilities such as the Central-Mid Levels Escalator System, traffic signs, traffic lights and surveillance cameras.
- 9.4 Signs shall not be located such that they may cause distraction to drivers. The Transport Department should be consulted regarding the installation or erection of any such signs which will be visible to drivers of motor vehicles.
- 9.5 A sign shall not obstruct traffic signs, traffic lights, traffic surveillance cameras or the operation and safety of transport facilities.

#### **10. ADVICE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE**

- 10.1 Any light or illuminated sign exhibited
- (a) shall not obscure, restrict or interfere with, or is likely to obscure, restrict or interfere with, the functions or use of any signal station or aid to navigation;
  - (b) is not likely to be mistaken for a light or signal proceeding from any signal station or aid to navigation; or
  - (c) shall not in any way interfere with, or is likely to interfere with, the safe navigation of vessels in the waters of Hong Kong.
- 10.2 Signs not in accordance with 10.1 above shall be removed or extinguished or screened.
- 10.3 Occulting flashing lights may not be used on roof of advertising signs visible from seawards.

# PROJECTION and CLEARANCE of SIGNS 廣告招牌的相距空間及位置

