FAQ’s Regarding Signage in Mesa

➢ Do I need a permit to install a sign?

A permit is required for installation of all new signs and for modification or replacement of existing signs. Exclusions to this rule can be found in Section 11-41-8(B) of the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

➢ Does maintenance of my sign require a permit?

A permit is not typically required for standard sign maintenance such as painting, replacing bulbs or minor electrical repairs. For cabinet or monument signs, the plex face may be replaced provided it is an opaque background. All other repairs or changes require a permit.

See Section 11-41-8H of the Zoning Ordinance for more detailed information.

➢ Can I have temporary signs like banners or A-frames?

Display of banners and non-rigid signs require a 30-day Use Permit, and can only be issued for the initial grand opening of a new business, new occupancy or new proprietor or management. A-frame signs and all other portable signs are prohibited except as specified in Sections 11-41-6(H), 11-41-7(B) and 11-41-8(B) of the Ordinance. Complete information on temporary signs can be found in Section 11-41-7 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Use Permits for banners are issued by the Development & Sustainability Department and do not typically require a plan review.

➢ How big can my sign be?

Attached signs: Refer to Chapter 41 of Mesa’s Zoning Ordinance for specific criteria since allowable sign area is dependent on the zoning district of the property. Generally, a business within a Commercial zone is allowed 2 sq ft of sign area for every linear foot of suite or building frontage with a maximum total sign area of 160 sq ft. Businesses with less than 100 ft of frontage are allowed 2 total signs and businesses with more than 100 ft of frontage are allowed 3 total signs.

Detached signs: Overall height and sign area are dependent on the zoning district of the property and the property street frontage. Maximum individual sign height is 12 feet with 80 sq ft of sign copy area. Detached signs for properties or buildings within a Group C-O-I (commercial-office-industrial) development have different criteria that are specifically defined in Chapter o.

See Section 11-41-6 of the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance for specific information.

➢ How do I calculate my sign area?

Sign area is specifically defined and explained in Section 11-41-5 Sign Area. Briefly, sign area is determined by a single continuous perimeter composed of parallelograms, circles, ellipses, trapezoids and triangles around the sign copy. Or, a combination of any 2 of the above which enclose the extreme limits of the sign copy where the 2 shapes used are connected at a tangent point. If a backing or background is used, it must be included in the sign copy area. For detached signs with multiple panels, the outer most dimensions of the cabinet or total area of the panels determines the sign copy area.
Where on my property or building can I put my sign?

Signs must be installed on the specific portion of the building your business occupies; you cannot place a sign on a suite or portion of the building that is not occupied by your business. Multi-tenant buildings typically have an established sign band to provide consistent signage locations across or around the building.

Freestanding signs must be placed on the specific property being identified. Off-site signs are prohibited. Signs may not be located within any public easements, may not be within the right of way or future right-of-way for arterial streets, and shall not be closer than 50’ to another freestanding sign.

What can I do with an existing pole sign on my property?

Pole signs or detached signs that do not have a monument base are considered non-conforming signs. A non-conforming sign can be maintained as is or repaired with no changes or upgrades to the sign or structure. If the sign is being upgrading or any new signage is being installed on the property, attached or detached, all non-conforming signs must be brought into full compliance with current sign standards before new signs may be installed.

See Section 11-41-2 of the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance for specific information.

Does Mesa have design criteria for signs?

Attached signs: should be individual letters such as pan channel, plastic, metal or other durable material. Detached signs: should be monument-style with a base of metal or masonry; should incorporate design features associated with the building or structure; should constitute an architectural component of the overall development with similar colors, finishes and materials; internally illuminated signs should provide an opaque background so that only the sign copy is illuminated such as routed copy.

See Section 11-41-8E of the Zoning Ordinance for more detailed information.

What is a comprehensive sign plan and do I need to follow it?

The purpose of a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) is to provide for the establishment of signage criteria that are tailored to a specific development, and which may vary from specific Ordinance provisions. The intent is to provide for flexible sign criteria that promote superior design through architectural integration of the site, buildings and signs. (11-41-8D13)

Once approved by the city, the CSP is the established sign requirement or “ordinance” even if it is more restrictive than Chapter 41 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance. All signs within the applicable development must follow the comprehensive sign plan criteria including number, size, location, and design of the sign.

CSP’s can be viewed at the City of Mesa Planning Division offices at 55 N. Center St.

What kind of information do I need to provide for a sign permit?

✓ Permit Application
✓ Detailed description or explanation of all proposed or existing signage
✓ 3 copies each: -Detailed site plan identifying the sign & building location(s)
  -Construction drawings of signage including dimensions of signage
  -Color elevations showing the proposed signage
  -Plans or elevations identifying existing signage with dimensions
  -Engineered footing details or ASA footing detail (for ASA members)
  -Construction specifications such as electrical wiring and attachment details
✓ Approval letter from landlord or Management Company for the proposed signage
Where can I get a site plan to include with my submittal?

Site plans can be obtained by written request from the Development & Sustainability Document Retrieval desk. There is no guarantee that the City has a site plan on file.

Or, provide your own site plan drawn to scale that includes: north arrow, property lines and dimensions, building locations and dimensions, street right of way dimensions, building or suite frontage dimension for attached signs, and the proposed sign location(s).

Where and when can I submit my sign permit application?

Submit all sign permit application materials to the City of Mesa Development & Sustainability Permits Services, located at 55 N Center Street, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday.

How long does it take to get a sign permit?

Plan review of sign submittal documents takes up to ten (10) City of Mesa business days from the date submitted. Signs may require more than one plan review before approval can be granted.

Expedite review may be requested at time of submittal with the applicable additional fees. Typically, expedite review reduces to 5 city business days and is an additional 100% of the permit fee (or double the permit cost).

How much will my sign permit cost?

Refer to the Development Services Schedule of Fees and Charges for current sign permit fee information.

Where can I find a copy of Mesa’s sign ordinance?

The sign requirements and criteria for Mesa are specified in Chapter 41 of the Zoning Ordinance. A copy can be viewed or downloaded at: http://www.mesaaz.gov/planning.

Who do I call if I have more questions?

Contact the Development & Sustainability at 480-644-4273 or visit the office to speak with a staff member.