

## PLANNING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION: SIGNS & ADVERTISING

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### **Why do we have planning laws that relate to signs and advertising?** [\[Top\]](#)

Signs and advertisements are an important way of promoting businesses, attractions, services and events. Carefully designed advertisements and signs can enhance the quality of our surroundings by adding colour, interest and vitality to the environment.

However, most people also recognise that advertisements and signs that are over-large, poorly located or badly and inappropriately lit can undermine the quality of a place. Too many signs can appear cluttered and confusing. Signs in open areas such as the countryside or the coastal areas can detract from the character and appearance of these areas.

In addition to the visual aspect, badly placed or inappropriate signs may be a nuisance to public safety. For example, freestanding signage can be very harmful, particularly to the visually impaired, or people who have problems getting around (e.g. anyone who has to steer a pushchair into the street to avoid an A-Board). Badly placed signs near roads can also pose issues for traffic. Signs that are too large can block driver views of the road. Illuminated signs can create a distraction or 'dazzle' drivers.

In order to manage signs and advertising, planning permission is required. The main purpose of this is to help everyone involved in the display of outdoor advertising to contribute positively to an attractive, cared for and safe environment.

Planning law does not mean that all signs are 'banned'. Rather it provides a way to ensure that signs are appropriate and that they do not spoil the character of the environment, and subsequently the enjoyment of residents or visitors, or affect public safety.

Effective control and management of advertising is an integral part of enhancing quality of place, the appeal and attractiveness of our parishes and in supporting a quality sense of welcome and well-being for visitors and residents alike.

## Is planning permission required for all signs? Exemptions [\[Top\]](#)

In Guernsey, planning permission is not required for all signs. There are a number of exemptions, which cover such things as the temporary display of contractors' signs, house nameplates, signs for charity and public events, and garden produce (i.e. hedge veg) to name but a few.

A full list of signs that don't require planning permission is set out in the Land Planning and Development (Exemptions) Ordinance, 2007 (Class 8) which sets out the information in detail. It can be accessed by [here](#) or by visiting the planning website [www.gov.gg/planning](http://www.gov.gg/planning). [Exemptions guidance notes](#) are also available.

If you've read the exemptions and still aren't sure whether you need planning permission to display your sign, please contact a planning officer who will be happy to help you. Call **717200** for more information.

## When is planning permission needed for a sign or advertisement? [\[Top\]](#)

For signs that do not fit within the exemptions, planning permission is needed. This requirement is set out in the Land Planning and Development (Guernsey) Law, 2005 (Section 13 (f)), which is available on the website [here](#).

If you're unsure whether your sign is exempt or not, planning officers will be happy to provide further information and advice.

## Which planning policies relate to signs? [\[Top\]](#)

Planning decisions are guided by planning policies within the Island's two Development Plans, the urban and rural area plans. These are available on the Planning Policy pages of the States website, under [detailed development plans](#).

In essence, planning policy states that to protect and enhance the character of Guernsey, advertising material should be generally restrained in terms of both the number of signs displayed and their size/form.

Advertisements should not adversely affect any form of traffic, including pedestrians, or other public safety, for instance, where it will cause obstruction to the public highway or lighting will result in glare or dazzle.

The key policies that apply to signs in commercial areas are Policies CEN11 and CEN12 of the Urban Area Plan. These are:

Policy **CEN11**: We will seek to ensure that shopfronts and associated features which contribute to the character of individual buildings and the area are retained and repaired as part of any development scheme. The provision of a new shopfront or alteration of an existing shopfront will only be permitted where:

- a) The scheme is well designed and would enhance the street scene;
- b) If practicable and appropriate, the proposals provide separate access to upper floors in accordance with Policy HO5; and
- c) Safe and convenient access would be provided for people with mobility and sensory impairment.

Policy **CEN12**: Proposals to display internally illuminated fascia, wall, projecting, neon or box advertisements will generally be resisted. New or replacement advertisements will only be permitted if by reason of design, positioning, materials, proportion or illumination they would:

- a) Be appropriately positioned in relation to the street level of the building on which they are fitted;
- b) be satisfactory in scale and appearance and not detract from the visual amenity of the street scene; and
- c) Not create a safety hazard.

Illuminated signs are generally not permitted and, as a rule, signs above first floor windowsill level will be considered unacceptable.

In Conservation Areas, only painted signs and applied lettering will be appropriate and designers should be prepared to compromise on matters of "corporate" design.

In the Rural Area, the aim is to protect and enhance the open and undeveloped character of the rural area and to restrain development. Policies RGEN5, which looks at character & amenity, RGEN6, which looks at design, RCE1 – Protecting open land and avoiding unnecessary development and RCE3 – Areas of High Landscape Quality may apply.

This is only a general guide to planning policy as it relates to signs. Policies can be read in full on the Planning website at [www.gov.gg/planning](http://www.gov.gg/planning).

#### **How is the law relating to signs enforced? [\[Top\]](#)**

Both the parish authorities and the Police, along with other States departments, have taken steps recently to enforce the law in relation to signs, with the result that a number of illegal, unattractive and potentially hazardous signs have been removed. However, to an extent we rely on the vigilance of others in dealing with illegal signs and will pursue complaints where received.

It is worth being aware that in some circumstances, the Department may need to take enforcement action to seek the removal of unauthorised signs. More information is available in the [Planning Enforcement Guidance Note](#).

#### **Is building control permission needed for a sign or advertisement? [\[Top\]](#)**

Adverts and signs are not normally subject to building control.

#### **Signs & adverts summary [\[Top\]](#)**

We hope this note is a helpful first step in resolving any confusion over signs and advertisements. However, we recognise that delivering a better environment through signs and advertisement management requires partnership working, both internally and externally to the States, and concerted action over an extended time period.

If you have a sign that you would like to display, we recommend that your first port of call is the [planning website](#) where many of your questions relating to signs will be answered.

If you have done that and are still unsure or need further information, please contact a planning officer who will be happy to help you. You can call **717200** to speak to a duty planning officer, who will be able to advise you.

## Specific questions relating to signs and advertising [\[Top\]](#)

<b>Question:</b>	<b>Does flying a flag with a logo on it constitute advertising material?</b>
<b>Answer:</b>	Yes
<b>Question:</b>	<b>Do movable adverts/signs such as 'A' Boards require permission?</b>
<b>Answer:</b>	Yes
<b>Question:</b>	<b>As well as planning permission, do I need to get landowner permission to display a sign, even on States land?</b>
<b>Answer:</b>	Yes
<b>Question:</b>	<b>Do terre à l'amende signs require permission?</b>
<b>Answer:</b>	<p>No - displaying a terre à l'amende sign on a wall or a building does not require planning permission provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the Royal Court has granted an application, in respect of the land in question, for notices to be published in La Gazette Officielle to the effect that the land is terre mis à l'amende,</li><li>• the sign is not illuminated, either internally or by external illumination,</li></ul> <p>The size of the sign, measured in any dimension, does not exceed 60 centimetres.</p>
<b>Question:</b>	<b>Planning policy and directional signs for businesses – what is the Department's approach?</b>
	<p>While in exceptional circumstances limited directional signage for tourist or certain public establishments has been approved where justified in the particular circumstances of the case and of an appropriate scale and design, the Department's consistent approach to the erection of directional signage to serve commercial businesses has been to generally resist advance directional signage throughout the Island.</p> <p>This approach has been taken in the interests of protecting the character and amenity of the locality concerned and preventing the proliferation of signage in the rural area.</p>

### Contact us

For further information or advice on planning or building control issues, please contact us using the following details:

Environment Department  
Sir Charles Frossard House  
La Charroterie  
St Peter Port  
GY1 1FH  
Tel: 01481 717200

***Have you visited our website?***  
Go to [www.gov.gg/planning](http://www.gov.gg/planning) for further  
planning guidance and information

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