

Chapter 17.84

SIGNS AND BILLBOARDS

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17.84.010 Purpose and findings. 

The purpose of these regulations is to promote the wellbeing of the community by establishing standards that assure the provision of signs adequate to meet essential communication needs

while safeguarding First Amendment rights and providing for a safe, healthy, and visually attractive and appropriate environment. Within this overall framework, it is the intent of these regulations to:

- A. Protect the right to the use and display of signs for the identification of activities and any related products, services, and events;
- B. Protect the right of individuals to privacy and freedom from nuisances;
- C. Protect the value of property and improvements thereon;
- D. Permit signs that are appropriate for their surroundings;
- E. Assure that signs are constructed and maintained in a safe condition;
- F. Assure that signs conform to applicable county, state, and federal codes and regulations;
- G. Prevent signs from interfering with traffic regulatory devices or otherwise obstructing motorists or pedestrian vision;
- H. Reduce traffic hazards and eliminate obsolete signs; and
- I. Provide an efficient and effective means of administration and enforcement. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.020 Applicability.

This chapter does not apply to the owner or occupant of any land who may place or erect on the land or on the outbuildings thereon any sign or notice or advertisement, where otherwise permitted by this title, intended to benefit the land or improvements thereon and advertise the business conducted in the building on the land, or advertise or identify the project in which the land is located. This chapter applies to outdoor temporary and permanent signs including, but not limited to: writing or text (including letter, word, or numeral); pictorial representations (including illustration or decoration); emblem (including device, symbol, or trademark); flag (including banner, streamer, or pennant), and lights and other things or combination thereof that are designed, intended, or used to advertise, attract special attention to, or otherwise inform when any part of the advertising or information content is visible from any public place within an outdoor area.

It is recognized that these standards are neither exclusive, nor exhaustive. In instances where a health or safety concern is identified with regard to any proposed sign, billboard, or advertising device, additional or more restrictive conditions may be imposed. If any part of this chapter is in conflict with regulations of any federal, state, or county agency, other political subdivision (e.g., homeowner's association) the more stringent limitation or requirement will prevail to the extent of the conflict. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.040 Comstock Historic District applicability.

In addition to the requirements set forth by this chapter, all signs located within the Comstock Historic District must comply with the regulations set forth by Chapter [17.48](#) of this title and NRS Chapter [384](#); the regulations set forth supersede this chapter in the event of a conflict. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.050 Permit and fees required.

Any person, firm, association or corporation personally or by agent is required to obtain a sign permit from the community development department director prior to erecting, installing, or modifying a sign or billboard.

- A. No fee is required for a temporary or exempt sign or banner pursuant to Sections 17.84.100 and [17.84.110](#).
- B. The required fee for each of the following types of advertising devices is twenty-five dollars unless different fees are established by resolution approved by the board.
1. Permanent sign measuring thirty-two square feet or less in total area.
 2. Permanent sign measuring between thirty-two and one hundred twenty-eight square feet in total area.
 3. Permanent sign measuring one hundred twenty-eight square feet or more in area. Signs of this size or larger are reclassified as billboards.
 4. Directional sign regulated pursuant to subsection [17.84.080](#) K.
 5. Directional sign regulated pursuant to subsection [17.84.080](#) L. when a resolution is approved by the board. The approved resolution may include initial and reoccurring fees associated with installation and maintenance of each directional sign. Subsection D. applies county-wide in the absence of an approved resolution applicable hereto.
- C. In addition to the required sign fee, the special use permit application fee applies to each proposed billboard. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.060 Permit--Numbering.

On granting a sign permit, the director will assign a permit number which must be legibly painted or printed by the owner onto the front face of each sign or billboard. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.070 Permit--Validity.

The permit remains valid until the sign no longer complies with the provisions set forth by this chapter or the business or attraction for which the sign represents changes physical location, no longer operates, or fails to maintain a valid Storey County Business License. All signs must be immediately removed at the time the business or attraction is no longer operating or when the sign's license or permit is no longer valid. Notice, violation, abatement, and hearing must follow the applicable provisions of this chapter. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.080 General requirements.

All signs, whether temporary or permanent, located in any regulatory zone are regulated as follows:

- A. Non-conforming sign. Non-conforming signs and their supporting structures are regulated by the applicable provisions set forth by Chapter [17.12](#) General Provisions. When a business license is transferred to new ownership, the new business owner must bring all existing on-site and off-site advertising devices into compliance with the provisions of this chapter and NRS [384](#), when applicable, at the time of application for the business license. Before the new business license may be granted, the applicant must furnish proof that all signs have been removed or brought into compliance with the provisions of this chapter.
- B. Number and addition of signs. No more than three signs permitted per business license, excluding secondary signs as defined and regulated pursuant to subsection [17.84.090](#) G.3. and window signs that are painted directly to their interior surface. The addition of signs to buildings and businesses that already have signs not conforming to the County Code in any zone will not be permitted unless all existing on-site and off-site signs are brought into compliance with the standards set forth by this chapter and NRS [384](#), when applicable.
- C. Maintenance. All signs must be maintained so that they remain free of graffiti and cracking, separation, splitting, ripping, chipping, and fading of exposed surfaces including, but not limited to, faces, lettering, and all structural supports (See examples in Figure 8.1). Signs must be maintained so that they remain safe, fully upright and level, and firmly secured to their place of attachment. Guy wires, tie-downs, and lean-to support apparatuses are prohibited unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the director that the supports are crucial to the structural

integrity of the advertising device and that design alternatives are impracticable.



Figure 8.1: The free standing signs retain their upright position with neat and professional designs. The tether at the bottom right sign prevents sign face swinging due to wind forces; this device exhibits an appropriate and attractive method of mitigating this effect. The signs are maintained appropriately in order to preserve their structural integrity and visual appearance.

D. Historic design. Signs located within the Comstock Historic District must comply with applicable provisions under this chapter, Chapter [17.48](#), and NRS [384](#).

E. Lighted and illuminated signs. Signs and billboards which are lighted, illuminated, or otherwise employ the use of direct or indirect lighting, lights, or other forms of illumination, must comply with applicable regulations set forth by this chapter, Chapter [8.02](#) Dark Skies, and NRS [384](#), when applicable. Lighted or illuminated signs located in or within two thousand feet of the Comstock Historic District or a CR, E, or R zone must be Compact Florescent Lighting (CFL), or Light Emitting Diode (LED) type lighting. CFL and LED light emitting devices which are made to look like incandescent light "bulbs" are permitted to be plainly visible. No neon (see Section [17.84.090](#) H.) or blinking, flashing, chasing, or motion lighting is permitted.

F. Changeable copy or variable image signs. These types of signs are prohibited within two thousand feet of CR, E, and R zones and the Comstock Historic District. A special use permit is required in other zones. A special use permit is not required for changeable copy or variable image signs displaying only the time and temperature when located beyond two thousand feet of CR, E, and R zones and the Comstock Historic District.

G. Off-site location. Signs and billboards located off-site are only allowed where permitted by Section [17.84.140](#) Billboards, or by the allowable provisions for a variance under Chapter [17.03](#) Administrative Provisions.

H. Murals. A special use permit is required for the application or placement of a mural. Murals proposed within the Comstock Historic District must also comply with NRS [384](#), this chapter, and Chapter [17.48](#) Historic Overlay District. The definition and intent of murals is provided for

in Figure 8.2 below.



Figure 8.2: Murals are non-commercial images such as paintings or enlarged photographs applied directly to walls, ceilings, or other exterior surfaces. They are typically large in size. Murals typically exhibit few or no words and are not intended to advertise or otherwise bring attention to any attraction. Non-commercial images, such as those illustrated above, are intended to enhance the beauty, highlight the social or historical character, or otherwise depict a message or theme that is common to the immediate community in which the mural is displayed. The themes depicted above, for example, are as follows: (top left) Ely, Nevada - diversity and unity of the ever-changing mining community; (bottom left) Carson City, Nevada - celebration of the history of the Virginia and Truckee Railroad; (right) Virginia City, Nevada - painted wall intended to continue the historic storefront facade to the side of a normally unattractive stucco and brick wall.

I. Outdoor advertising adjacent to interstate/primary highways. As regulated pursuant to [NRS 410.320](#), outdoor advertising may not be erected or maintained within six hundred sixty feet from the nearest edge of the right-of-way of the interstate and primary highway systems which is visible and placed with the purpose of having its message read from the main-traveled way of the interstate and primary highway systems, except the following:

1. Directional, warning, landmark, informational and other official signs and notices including, but not limited to, signs and notices pertaining to natural wonders, scenic, and historic attractions. Only signs which are required or authorized by law or by federal, state or Storey County authority, and which conform to national standards promulgated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 131, are permitted;
2. Signs, displays, and devices which advertise the sale or lease of the property upon which they are located;

3. Signs, displays, and devices which advertise the activities conducted or services rendered or the goods produced or sold upon the property upon which the advertising sign, display, or device is erected;

4. Signs, displays, and devices located in zoned commercial or industrial areas, when located within six hundred sixty feet of the nearest edge of the right-of-way and visible from the main-traveled way of the interstate and primary highway systems. This exemption shall not apply in the C-R zone;

5. Nonconforming signs in defined hardship areas which provide directional information about goods and services in the interest of the traveling public and are approved by the Secretary of Transportation pursuant to 23 U.S.C. § 131(o) and the board.

J. Right-of-way visibility. Signs located near property lines and intersecting driveways and public rights-of-way are allowed outside of the vision clearance triangle as demonstrated in Figure 8.3. Any sign, with exception of traffic regulatory signs installed by a government agency, located within the vision clearance triangle must have a base that is higher than eight feet above street/grade level or a total height not exceeding two feet above street/grade level. In instances where a safety or traffic hazard is identified with regard to these requirements, additional or more restrictive conditions may be imposed. Otherwise, setback requirements apply as follows:

1. C, CR, E, and R zones--Seven-foot clearance setback;

2. All other zones--Twenty-five-foot clearance setback.

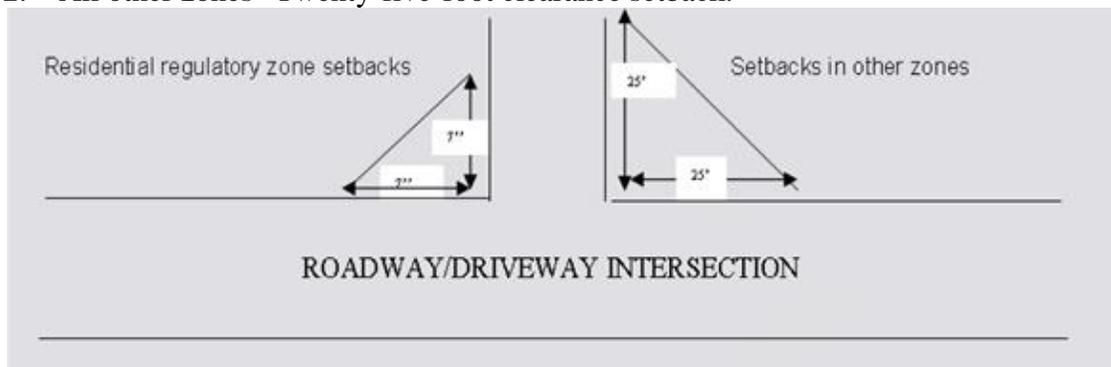


Figure 8.3: Setback requirements for devices installed within the Vision Clearance Triangle maintain clear visibility for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. In some instances more restrictive requirements may be necessary to maintain a safe travel environment. Regulations pertaining to the Vision Clearance Triangle are also found in section [17.12.050](#)

K. Directional signs general. Directional signs display a type of service or attraction which is located away from local arterial or collector roadways as defined in the Functional Classifications of the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.

1. With exception of traffic regulatory devices installed by a government agency, directional signs may only be placed at the location where the traveler must change direction from one public right-of-way to another in order to reach the destination. The sign must display a directional element, such as an arrow, pointing to the associated attraction.
 2. Directional signs located within one hundred feet of CR, E, or R zones must not exceed two square feet in area and those located in other zones must not exceed thirty-two square feet in area.
 3. Directional signs are determined for approval by the director, subject to review by the board with action by the planning commission.
 4. A special use permit is required for sandwich-board directional signs.
 5. The director may issue a sign permit if it is determined that there is a need to guide the traveling public, to avoid confusion, or to reduce or eliminate a safety risk. The permit is subject to approval by the board with action by the planning commission.
 6. If the director determines that there is no need or that a safety or traffic hazard may be created, the sign permit application may be denied. The denial may be appealed to the board pursuant to Chapter [17.03](#) Administrative Provisions.
- L. Directional signs in Virginia City by resolution. It is recognized that Virginia City tourism-based businesses and attractions located away from the "C" Street corridor may benefit from centrally placed and consolidated directional signage installed in and around primary pedestrian corridors. Implementing a consolidated community-wide design for directional signage in this area may better communicate key attractions in the area and contribute to the enhancement of a pedestrian-oriented downtown environment.
1. The designated boundaries of this area and the design and placement of directional signs therein will be regulated as defined and established by resolution approved by the board with action by the planning commission.
 2. The boundaries applicable to this section include Gold Hill and Virginia City.
 3. The regulations established by Section [17.84.080](#) K. apply in the absence of an approved resolution and completed consolidated directional sign devices associated therewith.
 4. Approval of the resolution and completion of all consolidated directional sign devices may as provided for in the resolution to nullify the regulations under Section [17.84.080](#) K. within the established geographic boundaries thereof.
 5. Directional signs existing within the established boundaries under resolution are considered non-conforming and must be removed within twelve months of completion of all consolidated directional sign devices.

M. In addition to the regulations of this chapter, signs located in C (not including CR), E, or R zones are limited to the following:

1. All home occupations are subject to a special use permit, and no sign larger than two square feet in connection is allowed therewith.
2. Signs are limited to the place of business.
3. Only one sign is allowed except for an opposing face of exactly the same color, shape, size, and configuration applied thereto in order to convey its message to opposing pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
4. No billboards, bulletin boards, blackboards, whiteboards, or banners are permitted, except for on-site exempt signs and banners pursuant to Section 17.84.100.
5. A variance is required for any lighting or illumination of signs. No neon, blinking, flashing, chasing, or lighting which is otherwise in motion, reader boards and variable image displays, including those which display time and date, or translucent lighted signs are permitted.

N. Signs located in A, F, I, P, and SPR zones, and where allowable by the applicable provisions of this chapter, are limited to the following sizes and measurements:

1. Signs located in the F zone may not exceed thirty-two square feet in size and six feet above grade level.
2. Sign faces which are thirty-two square feet or less in total area may not exceed six feet above grade level.
3. Sign faces between thirty-two square feet and one hundred twenty-eight square feet in total area may not exceed ten feet in total height with a base no higher than two feet above grade level.
4. Sign faces from one hundred twenty-eight square-feet but less than two hundred eighty-eight square feet in total area are limited to eighteen feet in total height with a base no higher than two feet above grade level. A special use permit is required.
5. A special use permit is required for sign faces at or exceeding two hundred eighty-eight square feet in total area. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.090 Comstock Historic District sign requirements.

Visible materials for signs and supporting structures within the Comstock Historic District must be or appear to be of substance that can be shown to have existed for advertising purposes up to and including the year 1942, and must be appropriate in design for that time period. A Certificate of Historical Appropriateness from the Comstock Historic District Commission must be submitted to the director prior to approval of any sign within the Comstock Historic District. The

following standards apply exclusively to all signs located on buildings as established pursuant to the terms of NRS [384](#). Location, size, and number of signs in C and C-R zones are as follows:

- A. Signs are not permitted on sides or rear of buildings unless there is direct public access from an abutting legal public right-of-way. If such public access exists, signs must conform to regulations for building fronts.
- B. Signs are not permitted to extend from buildings or from porches over streets with any overhang over streets, curbs, or shoulders.
- C. Signs are not permitted on porch posts or other porch-supporting apparatus unless the signs are traffic or informational signs installed by a government agency.
- D. Signs are not permitted when installed on a building where any window, door, or opening has been altered, blocked, or removed for the purpose of installing or displaying the sign, with exception of an advertisement or other display which is painted or otherwise applied directly to the interior surface of a window pane.
- E. Signs placed upon buildings and porches are regulated as follows:
 - 1. Signs above ground floor windows must comply with the following limitations:
 - a. Only one sign permitted between floors;
 - b. Signs must have a maximum dimension of fifteen inches in width times the length of the building when installed on the face of a porch. Signs may be thirty-six inches in width times the length of the building when installed on the face of the building.
 - c. Signs must be of rectangular shape. Signs may be placed either on the building face or the face of the porch;
 - d. Any number of business activities may be advertised on a sign;
 - e. The base of a sign must be at least 8 feet above sidewalk/boardwalk.
 - 2. Signs between ground floor windows and doors are regulated as follows:
 - a. Signs may be of any shape;
 - b. The cumulative area of all signs must not exceed five square feet per business license.
 - 3. Building titles, names, dates, and other messages, including advertisements, that were painted directly to the exterior walls, parapet walls, and between the windows of the upper floors of the building at or prior to the year 1942 may be reapplied exactly as they existed at that time. Photographic proof of messages existing at that time must be submitted to the director with a Certificate of Historical Appropriateness from the Comstock Historic District Commission

before the sign may be applied. These applications do not count toward the maximum allowed signs per business license.

F. Signs on ends of porches are prohibited.

G. Signs perpendicular to building face on building with or without porches are regulated as follows:

1. Maximum size of twelve inches times the width of sidewalk, or equivalent in square feet;
2. Minimum height of lower edge of sign must be no lower than eight feet above sidewalk or boardwalk;
3. A secondary sign which is securely attached to or suspended from the base of a primary hanging sign (together known as a double-hanging sign) is allowed when the secondary sign is equal in length to the primary sign and is no more than six inches in total in width as illustrated in Figure 9.2 below. The space between the primary and secondary sign may not exceed two inches. Secondary signs as defined in this chapter are considered part of the primary sign and do not count toward maximum allowed signs per business license. Only one secondary sign for each primary sign applicable to this subsection is permitted.
4. One sign is allowed for every twenty-five feet of sidewalk or boardwalk.

H. Neon signs. Neon signs are prohibited outside of buildings or within windows or openings visible from a public place. This limitation includes lighted signs that appear similar to neon signs, such as those which employ light emitting diodes (LED) that are configured so that they appear as continuous streams of light. (See examples in Figure 9.1.)

I. No more than three signs per business license are allowed, excluding secondary signs as defined by this chapter and described above and window signs in accordance with subsection D.



The following signs and devices are exempt from the provision of this chapter and required sign fees. The regulations under Chapter [17.12](#) General Provisions apply to exempt signs. Exempt signs do not count toward the maximum allowed signs per business license. All signs located within the Comstock Historic District must comply with the regulations under this chapter and NRS [384](#). The provisions set forth supersede this section in the event of a conflict. Any display or types of signs not listed in this section and not in conflict with the provisions of this chapter are subject to approval of the director.

- A. Two signs with a maximum area of thirty-two square feet each, located within an A zone, used only to advertise the agricultural products produced or sold on the premises or identifying the premises or its occupants.
- B. Customary holiday decorations and signs in the nature of decorations which are seasonal, clearly incidental, and customarily associated with any national, local, or religious holiday and removed within thirty days of the official recognized date of the associated holiday.
- C. Religious symbols located on a building or otherwise on-site which are used for organized religious worship and related services.
- D. Scoreboards related to and located within established athletic fields and arenas.
- E. Commercial and non-commercial advertisement and sponsor signs which are attached to the interior portion of fencing which surrounds a designated athletic field or arena. Signs must not be plainly visible from any public place outside of the premises.
- F. "Vacancy," "no vacancy," "open," "closed," "yes," "no," "full," "sorry," and similar type signs associated with commercial uses provided that the area of the sign does not exceed two and one-half square feet in area.
- G. Motor vehicle for-sale signs provided that:
 - 1. The message of each sign is directly related to the sale of the motor vehicle on or in which it is located;
 - 2. There are no more than three signs per vehicle, including posters, stickers, and other advertising devices allowed by this chapter;
 - 3. The sign is attached to or located within the vehicle. Stickers may be placed directly onto the exterior surfaces of the vehicle or its windows;
 - 4. The sign or combination thereof does not exceed three square feet in total area;
 - 5. The vehicle is located in either an approved sales lot or on private property with the owner's consent; and

6. The sale of the vehicle or vehicles and location and placement thereof is not in violation of any federal, state, or county regulations.

H. Advertising on vending machines, such as that shown in the illustration to the right, which



depicts the product contained therein.

I. The official flag of a government, governmental agency, nation, public institution, religious corporation or similar entity, or flags flown on a temporary basis for the purpose of honoring declared national or civic holidays.

J. House and property addresses, familial name signs, and devices that are similar in nature and clearly do not facilitate the purpose of advertising a commercial or noncommercial business, service, or attraction.

K. Traffic and pedestrian control and information signs which are installed by a government agency.

L. Traffic and pedestrian control and information signs which are installed by a private property owner in A, C, and I zones when the sign is located on the property at which the associated business, service, or attraction is located. The signs are limited to fifteen square-feet in total area and shall not conflict with a vision clearance triangle as regulated by subsection [17.84.080 J](#).

M. Temporary or permanent signs erected to warn of danger or hazardous conditions so long as the hazards may exist, including signs indicating the presence of underground cables, gas lines, and other potentially dangerous conditions.

N. Political signs and posters not exceeding two square feet in the CR, E, or R zones and thirty-two square feet in all other zones. Signs may not be displayed before sixty days of the primary election or caucus or for more than thirty days following the election. Unsuccessful primary candidates must remove, or cause to be removed, their signs or posters no later than ten days after the primary election. Political signs may not be affixed or placed on the public domain. The public domain placement restriction does not apply to political signs placed on the county-owned property located at the north and south intersections of "B" and "C" Streets in Virginia City as shown in Appendices A and B. The sign owner is responsible for knowing or contacting the community development department about the location of the abutting state right-of-way and for

complying with state regulations therein. The county is not responsible for state right-of-way non-compliance or penalties imposed against the sign owner for violation of those regulations.

O. Real estate for-sale and open-house signs not exceeding five square-feet in CR, E, R, and SPR zones and thirty-two square-feet in all other zones. Signs must be removed within fourteen days following the sale of the property for which the sign represents. Commercial advertisement signs indicating the presence or existence of a real estate office, business, or service are not considered real estate for-sale signs and are not exempt signs pursuant to this section.

P. Yard, rummage, and garage sale signs not exceeding six square-feet in area that are removed within twelve hours after the sale and not displayed in public view before twelve hours of the sale and are in public view for no more than two consecutive or non-consecutive days within a twelve-month period.

Q. On-site temporary signs and banners displaying a non-commercial message related to household or familial celebrations (e.g., "birthday," "newborn baby," "anniversary," "welcome back," etc.).

R. "No trespassing," "no hunting," "no fishing," "no loitering," and like signs not exceeding two square-feet in C, CR, E, and R zones and sixteen square feet in all other zones.

S. Signs such as building contractor signs not exceeding four square-feet in total area within C, CR, E, and R zones and thirty-two square-feet in total area in all other zones and which are placed upon the property at which the associated project is located. These signs must be removed within fourteen days after the associated project has been completed.

T. Commemorative or historical non-advertisement plaques and tablets installed by a



government or non-profit entity.

U. One on-site barber pole of traditional design (i.e., red, white, and/or blue rotating swirl absent of text), such as that illustrated to the right, not exceeding twelve inches in width and forty-eight inches in length and directly attached to the associated building in which the barber service is provided. The device may rotate during the hours that the associated barber is open for business. Lighting placed on or within the device is permitted when in accordance with the applicable provisions of this chapter and Chapter [8.02](#) Dark Skies.

V. Displays of string lights outside of a seasonal and/or customary nature, local, or religious holiday, provided that:

1. They are not placed on the public domain;
2. They are decorative displays which only outline or highlight landscaping or architectural features of a building;
3. They are steady burning, clear/white, and do not blink, flash, or exhibit intermittent changes in intensity, animation, or rotating characteristics;
4. They comply with the regulations of Chapter [8.02](#) Dark Skies;
5. They are no greater in intensity than five watts for each bulb, or equivalent to the lumen intensity produced by a five-watt incandescent bulb (approximately seventy-three lumens);
6. They are not placed on or used to outline any type of sign, billboard, or advertising device or their support structures unless otherwise allowed by the provisions of this chapter and Chapter [8.02](#) Dark Skies;
7. They are not assembled or arranged to convey messages, words, commercial advertisements, slogans, and/or logos;
8. They are commercial grade UL Listed for long-term outdoor use and do not otherwise create a safety hazard with respect to placement and connection to power supply as determined by applicable codes and regulations. The power supply must be a dedicated weather-protected and GFCI protected receptacle. The use of extension cords shall not be permitted;
9. They are maintained and repaired so that no individual light bulb is inoperative for more than a period of thirty consecutive days. In the event that the bulbs are not maintained or repaired for a period exceeding thirty days, the string lights must be removed.

W. Points of entry and public interest signs. In addition to the regulations of this chapter, non-commercial point of entry and public interest signs (See examples in Figure 10.1.) that are owned, leased, or otherwise managed by any federal, state, or county agency, or a political subdivision thereof (e.g., homeowner's association or general improvement district), are permitted provided that they comply with the regulations below and the provisions under Sections [17.84.040](#), [17.84.050](#), [17.84.060](#), and [17.84.080](#). Changeable copy and variable image signs are prohibited. Point of entry signs installed at the entrance(s) of a planned unit development or subdivision; multi-family dwelling complex; industrial, shopping, or other commercial center; education facility or campus; or other building complex are permitted when they are managed and maintained by a federal, state, or county agency, or a political subdivision thereof, or the management of the property. All signs under this subsection are subject to approval of the director and comply with the following regulations:

1. The sign must conform to the purpose and intent of this chapter and NRS [384](#), where applicable;
2. The owner or political subdivision is responsible for sign placement, maintenance, and compliance with all applicable regulations;
3. Encroachment permits must be obtained, where applicable;
4. The sign must have proper access and maintenance easements;
5. No more than one sign may be erected at any given location, with exception of one similar sign that may be placed at both sides of a point of entry. The maximum sign face area, excluding supporting structures, may not exceed thirty-two square feet;
6. The sign and all parts thereof must be non-commercial and relate directly to the point of entry or public interest.



Figure 10.1: The point of entry signs (left and bottom) and place of interest sign (top right) are owned and managed by public entities and their message is non-commercial. The message in each device relates directly to the point of entry or public interest for the viewer.

(Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.110 Temporary signs and banners.



Any sign or banner, except those listed in Sections 17.84.100 and [17.84.120](#) displayed for a period of time not exceeding thirty consecutive or non-consecutive days in a twelve-month period of time is considered a temporary sign or banner.

A. The following are considered temporary signs:

1. Banners, posters, pennants, sandwich-board signs; fliers; blackboards and whiteboards; signs attached to temporary structures directly associated with operating special events, fairs, carnivals, and concessions; and devices which are supported, worn, or otherwise displayed on and by human or animal subjects (otherwise known as "human signs").

B. The following are not considered a temporary signs or banners:

1. Tethered balloons, streamers, inflatable devices, and similar devices.
2. Any sign which is in any way attached, painted to, or otherwise attached to a vehicle, trailer, or other mobile device, as defined in Section [17.84.120](#) C.

C. In addition to all other applicable provisions of this chapter, all temporary signs and banners must comply with the following regulations:

1. They must be professionally painted or printed. Those which become tattered, torn, or otherwise fall into disrepair must be immediately removed or replaced with a similar size and type sign.
2. They may not exceed twelve square-feet in total area, with exception of banners which may not exceed the allowable limitations set forth by subsection D.;

D. Banners that are mounted to a wall or canopy must be secured taut and not placed over any permanent sign. A temporary banner mounted in such a manner that it becomes suspended between two points (e.g., between buildings, poles, trees, etc.) must comply with the following regulations:

1. They may not exceed two feet in height;
2. They may not be closer than five feet to the objects from which it is suspended, and;
3. They must be mounted no less than eighteen feet over a public right-of-way.

- E. No more than one banner may be attached to any two points.
- F. Any banner which is suspended over a right-of-way is subject to approval of the director.
- G. A second sign or banner of exactly the same color, shape, size, and configuration may be applied to the opposite side of the sign in order to convey its message to opposing pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
- H. Temporary signs and banners may not be publically displayed more than thirty consecutive or non-consecutive days in a twelve-month period.
- I. Sandwich-board directional signs may be displayed for extended periods with a special use permit. These directional signs must comply with the regulations under Subsections [17.84.080](#) K. and 17.84.080 L. The time in each twenty-four hour period that the directional sandwich board sign must be removed and not displayed must be stipulated in the approved special use permit. No sign may be placed on the public domain.
- J. No more than four temporary signs or banners may be displayed for any one household, business, firm, or non-governmental entity within a twelve-month period.
- K. Only one temporary sign or banner may be displayed at any given time. In a multi-tenant shopping center, two temporary signs or banners may be displayed. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.120 Prohibited Signs.

The following signs and advertising devices are prohibited in any zone:

- A. Within, attached to, or hanging over a public right-of-way or on the public domain, with exception of permitted signs regulated pursuant to Sections [17.84.090](#), 17.84.100, and temporary banners.
- B. Located on private property without the expressed permission of the property owner.
- C. Mobile signs that are affixed to a frame or chassis having wheels and capable of being carried, or otherwise portable and designed to stand free from a building or other structure and fulfill the purpose of advertising. Mere removal of wheels or temporary securing of the mobile sign to the surface of real estate does not classify it as a free-standing sign. Ordinary identification of a business or service on an associated utility vehicle (e.g., construction contractor's vehicle or equipment such as those illustrated in Figure 20.1 below) is not considered a mobile sign and is thus exempt from the restrictions of this subsection. When uncertainty exists regarding the provisions of this subsection, the advertising device will be

subject to the review and approval of the board with action by the planning commission.



Figure 20.1: The images shown on the top two vehicles (allowable) contrast with those below (prohibited) in that they clearly relate to the service provided in association with the vehicle. The bottom vehicles depicted are examples of mobile signs which facilitate off-site advertising.

- D. Inflatable signs, including those which are made of Mylar, vinyl, plastic, rubber, or any other material which is supported by gasses contained therewith, or its parts, at pressure which is equal to or greater than the surrounding natural atmospheric pressure.
- E. Paper signs and fliers displayed on the exterior of buildings, trees, and other structures lasting more than twelve hours in a one year period.
- F. Bulletin boards, including blackboards and whiteboards, where other signs of similar size or structure are prohibited.
- G. Portraying sexual, sexually-related, or other "adult" material in a provocative or otherwise obscene manner within or in view of a public place.
- H. Located in such a place that they negatively impact visual corridors and view sheds from public places, or obscure a view of the road, or other vehicular and pedestrian rights-of-way ahead, or curves, grades, or interstate highways or railways. The integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association of properties to their surrounding environment and view sheds (The Comstock Historic District and natural and largely undisturbed environment surrounding many rural properties county-wide are considered sensitive for the purposes herein and should be protected against visual impacts caused by signs and billboards).
- I. Emit noise, flames, smoke, steam, or other matter.
- J. Employ movement including, but not limited to, pennants, flags of non-national origin, banners, streamers, balloons, disks, searchlights, and lasers.

K. Employ direct, indirect, internal flashing, or other illumination with light source or reflectivity of such brightness that it constitutes a hazard to ground or air traffic or a nuisance as determined by the Designee or any federal or Nevada State agency.

L. Obstruct or impair the display of any permanent regulatory or advisory traffic sign or parking sign or traffic signal.

M. Obstruct, obscure, or impair the safe passage of pedestrians, cyclists, or persons with disabilities.

N. Placed on the roof of buildings unless a special use permit is granted.

O. Painted or attached to trees, fences, utility poles, rocks when located in their current natural place or state, or similar natural and man-made structures and objects.

P. Installed on a building such that any window, door, or opening will be altered, blocked, or removed for the purpose of installing or displaying the sign. An advertisement or other display which is painted directly onto the interior surface of a window is permitted.

Q. Placed on a wall of a building exceeding an area equal to twenty-five percent of the wall area. (See Figure 20.2.)

R. Placed on a wall so as to extend beyond the outer edge of any wall of the building on which it is located. (The sign must remain entirely within the visual profile of the building. See Figure 20.2 below).

S. Placed more than six inches and less than ten feet parallel to the face of any building or structure to which it is attached. (See Figure 20.2 below.)

T. Attached or placed adjacent to any utility pole, traffic sign post, traffic signal, historical marker or any other official traffic control device.

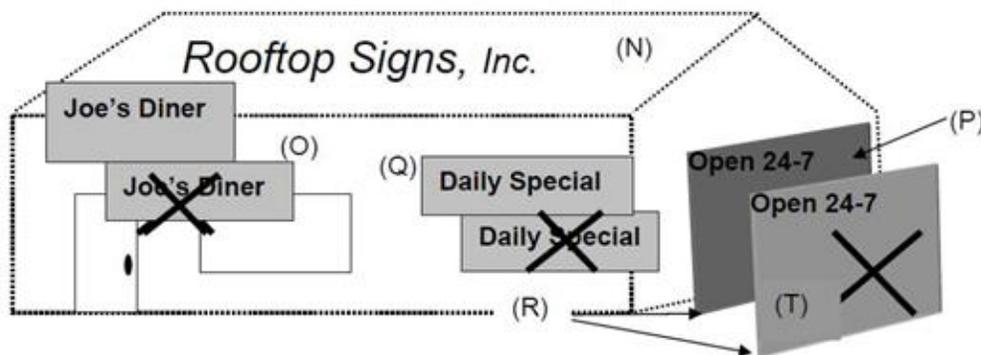


Figure 20.2: The mark "X" in the above diagram demonstrates a sign that is out of compliance with one or more provisions of this section. Signs absent of said mark indicate compliance with the applicable regulations as follows: (O) sign covers or otherwise alters a door, window, or opening; (Q) sign extends beyond the outer edge of the wall of the building; (R) sign is more

than 6 inches and less than 6 feet from the building wall; (P) sign exceeds 25 percent of the wall; (N) sign is painted directly onto the roof unless a special use permit is granted. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.140 Billboards.

Any sign face measuring one hundred twenty-eight square feet or more in total area is classified as a billboard and must comply with federal, state, and county regulations, including this section and Section [17.84.080](#).

A. Special use permit required. The regulations of this section and title are considered the minimum requirements for billboards. A special use permit is required before erecting or displaying a billboard. The special use permit may impose conditions as deemed appropriate by the board with action by the planning commission.

B. Other permits and requirements. No billboard or its supporting devices may be erected until plans developed by a licensed engineer for the proposed project have been reviewed by the fire and community development departments and a building permit has been issued. A building permit may not be issued until the special use permit has been granted and all requirements of the county have been satisfied. The issuance of a building permit or any other authorizations prior to approval of the special use permit must not be construed as an approval to commence construction of a billboard.

C. Transfer of entitlement. The owner(s) of a billboard may not sell, transfer, ground lease, or assign a billboard or property on which a billboard is located in whole or in part to any person, partnership, joint venture, firm, company, or corporation without a minimum of ninety days notification to the director prior to closing.

D. Best management practices. Preparation and construction within a billboard site including, but not limited to, the development, operation, and reclamation of all roads, access corridors, foundation pads, equipment storage and staging areas, and all related facilities must conform to grading and slope stability requirements, fire codes, and all Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) best management practices.

E. Distances limitations. No billboard may be permitted or otherwise erected or displayed:

1. Less than six hundred sixty feet from federal aid rights-of-way and primary highway systems (e.g., Interstate 80).

2. Within two thousand feet of:

- a. Roadway intersections and interchanges, interstate highway rest areas, or on any public right-of-way where there will be a line-of-sight obstruction to a roadway corner, bend, interchange, or intersection, including vehicular, pedestrian, or railroad crossing;

- b. Another billboard;

c. Any public or private school, church, hospital, health care facility, residential care facility, public park, or government office building;

d. Any CR, E, P, or R zone, the Comstock Historic District, and within one thousand feet of the following public rights-of-way: Six Mile Canyon Road, Seven Mile Canyon Road, State Route 341, and State Route 342 for billboards exceeding one hundred twenty-eight square feet. Billboards measuring one hundred twenty-eight square feet or less which are owned and managed by the county or an entity thereof may be allowed with a special use permit adjacent to State Route 341 and 342 in the Comstock Historic District when they are located in a C, C-R, I, or P zone and no closer than two hundred feet of any occupied structure, unless the owner of that structure provides written consent to the county.

3. Within two hundred feet of any occupied structure.

4. With more than one display face, with exception of a second billboard face of the exact same shape, size, and configuration which is applied to the billboard's opposite side as to convey the device's message to opposing pedestrian and/or vehicular traffic, and not more than twenty inches apart.

5. When one or more signs or billboards already exist on the wall of a building.

F. Support structures. Structures supporting billboards must conform to the local building code and be unobtrusive and recessive in their appearance. Billboards must be supported by a single monopole structure unless they are painted directly onto a permitted building, wall, or other permitted structure not specifically intended to support the billboard.

G. Billboard support structures must be coated with a non-reflective beige or gray-colored finish. Other colors and finishes may be permitted or required as part of the special use permit.

H. Lighting. All direct and indirect lighting of a billboard must conform to the regulations under Subsection [17.84.080](#) E. and Chapter [8.02](#) Dark Skies. If any proposed billboard will employ use or display of variable images or changeable copies, will be placed within two thousand feet of any traffic signals or traffic signs, or will be located within a road boundary, the billboard owner must provide the county a traffic engineering report created by a licensed traffic engineer. The report must confirm that the advertising device and its placement will be safe for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The report must consider all factors relevant to traffic safety including applicable criteria contained in this title. The report will be completed at the cost of the applicant. The county may require an independent review of the report by a qualified person at the expense of the applicant.

I. Facility closure. Any billboard not meeting the standards of this chapter and the applicable federal, state, and county regulations will be considered closed. The process of removing the billboard and its supporting structures and reclaiming the site to the condition existing prior to its development must commence immediately and must be completed within one hundred eighty days of closure. Further specifications pertaining to site reclamation will be determined by the conditions of the special use permit.

J. Reclamation extension. If necessary, such as during times of Force Majeure, a request for a reasonable extension of the completion of removal and reclamation may be submitted to the director for approval. The application for extension must include all applicable documentation necessary to demonstrate that final removal and reclamation will take longer than the time allowed under the provisions of this chapter and that reasonable steps have been taken by the owner to conform to the requirements set forth by this chapter.

K. Reclamation surety bond. A surety bond must be posted by the applicant of any billboard of or exceeding two hundred eighty-eight square feet in area. The surety bond assures that a closed billboard and the land in which it is located is restored to a condition existing prior to installation of the billboard. The surety bond must be posted prior to disturbance of the land. The amount of the surety bond necessary to remove the structure and reclaim the land will be determined by a qualified licensed engineer or environmental manager at the expense of the applicant and will be subject to third-party review as determined appropriate by the county. Additionally, the following requirements will apply:

1. The applicant must submit to the director proof that a cash deposit, certified check, irrevocable bank letter of credit, or surety bond has been deposited to ensure completion of reclamation work that is consistent with the requirements for reclamation under the special use permit, including estimated costs associated with removal of each billboard and all associated equipment and accessory structures and restoration of the site to a natural state.
2. The surety bond will be released after the county has determined that the land has been returned to a state existing prior the facility's existence.
3. The required certification must include all applicable documentation necessary for certification of closure.
4. Before the bond is released, the county will reserve the right to retain the service of an independent, qualified person, at the expense of the permit holder to verify that final reclamation has been completed in a manner which is determined by the director to be satisfactory.

L. Liability insurance and indemnification. The permit holder and his or her assigns, heirs, or successors:

1. Must provide proof of liability insurance to the county and maintain satisfactory insurance for all aspects of the facility in the amount of at least one million dollars. The county may require additional liability insurance coverage as needed. "Storey County" must be named as the "additional insured".
2. Must agree to the extent not prohibited by law, to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Storey County from any costs, damages, claims, causes for action, penalties, fines, liabilities, and judgments of any kind or nature to the extent such liability arises from or in connection with the permit holder's and operator's negligent use, operation, management, or maintenance of the premises. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.150 Variances.

A. Applications for a variance may be made pursuant to this chapter and Chapter [17.03](#) Administrative Provisions, and may be allowed where, in the opinion of the board with action by the planning commission, the same is necessary and is not in violation of the letter and spirit of the standards set forth in this title.

B. A variance may not be granted where a violation of the provisions set forth by NRS [384](#) or any provision of this chapter applicable to the Comstock Historic District would take place.

C. Variances may include application for signs installed off-site where it can be shown that failure to allow such signs will work a hardship on the respective business or attraction, and is necessary to the conduct thereof. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.160 Violation--Report.

All sheriff, public works, fire, community development, and community services department employees must report any violation of this chapter to the director. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.170 Complaint by state personnel.

Should the State Highway Engineer file a complaint with Storey County showing that any sign erected is a hazard to traffic, the director must immediately order the removal of the sign. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.180 Nuisance Declared.

All signs not in compliance with the provisions of this chapter are declared to be nuisances and detrimental to the health, safety, economics, and general welfare of the people of this county and may be abated under the provisions of Section [17.03.045](#). (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.260 Violation--Liability.

Any person who violates any provision of this chapter is liable to Storey County for any expense, loss or damage incurred by Storey County by reason of the violation. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

17.84.270 Violation--Remedies not exclusive.

Nothing in this chapter may be construed to limit or prohibit the prosecution of the owner(s), or others, for a violation of this chapter by criminal complaint or by a civil action provided for by law. (Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

Appendix A: Political Sign County Public Domain Exemption (South Location).



(Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)

Appendix B: Political Sign County Public Domain Exemption (North Location).



(Ord. No. 12-244, § I, 12-4-2012)