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CIRCULAR TO PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTES

GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR SIGNS IN THE CENTRAL AREA

Objective

The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) has carried out a review of the guidelines on outdoor signs in the Central Area. These guidelines will be used to guide the locations where outdoor signs are allowed in the Central Area and supersedes the previous Guidelines for Advertisement Signs in the Central Area (Circular [URA/PB/2001/23-CUDD](#) dated 3 Dec 2001).

The Building and Construction Authority (BCA) will adopt this set of guidelines when granting licenses for outdoor signage.

Effective Date

With effect from 14 September 2009

Who should know

Building owners, Management Corporations, Qualified Persons, Professional Engineers, developers, media companies, advertisers, signboard makers and business operators.

Details of Guidelines

1. Singapore's Central Area comprises a number of distinctive districts, each with their own unique character and mix of uses. These areas and the city skyline are the result of careful planning. This includes guiding the location of outdoor advertisements to ensure that the streets are attractive and not over-cluttered with advertisement signs.
2. As such, outdoor advertisement signs are channeled to the key activity corridors within the city where there are high levels of pedestrians and street activities and where advertisement signs can complement the character and activities within the area and contribute to the vibrancy and buzz. Advertisement signs are therefore only allowed along identified designated signage routes along Orchard Road, New Bridge Road / Eu Tong Sen Street and within the Bras Basah. Bugis district as well as parts of Raffles Place, Marina Centre and Singapore River.
3. Outdoor advertisement signs are not allowed in other parts of the Central Area, outside these areas. This includes the residential districts, the financial and business district and the Civic District to ensure that each of these areas retain their unique character and avoid disamenity to the uses there.
4. Where signs are allowed along the designated routes, design guidelines are in place to ensure that the advertisement signs relate to the street level activities and do not have a negative impact on views of the city skyline. Hence, advertisement signs are not allowed on the upper parts of building facades or on the rooftop areas. Advertisement

signs are also not allowed on street furniture and structures along the road, such as overhead pedestrian bridges and gantries. Guidelines are also in place for outdoor advertisement signs on conservation buildings to ensure that they complement the heritage character and do not obscure key architectural features of the building.

5. The guidelines however, do not restrict the display of signboards (see [Annex A](#)) on buildings both within and outside the designated signage routes.

Current Review

6. URA has reviewed the guidelines to balance the needs of the business community and advertising professionals while maintaining the quality of our built environment as a whole. Arising from the latest review, the existing designated signage routes at the Bras Basah, Bugis Area, Orchard Road and Eu Tong Sen Street / New Bridge Road are extended to include the adjacent areas where there will be no disamenity to surrounding uses. These new routes include the main roads at Little India, Somerset Road, Tanglin Road and Eu Tong Sen Street / New Bridge Road towards the Singapore River (see [Appendix 1](#)).
7. The existing control of 15m maximum mounting height for advertisement signs at Singapore River and Raffles Place is also lifted and advertisement signs can be mounted up to 30m and 20m above the walkway level within the respective areas. In addition, for Raffles Place, the maximum signage area of 30sqm per development is relaxed to create more opportunities for advertisement signs. Within the Raffles Place area advertisement signs are now supported based on a set of pre-determined locations for each of the buildings.
8. At selected road junctions within the Orchard Road and Bras Basah, Bugis areas, advertisement signs can also now be mounted on building facades at heights higher than 30m on a case by case basis, subject to detailed evaluation of their impact on the surrounding buildings and uses.
9. The prescribed guidelines are tabulated and attached in [Annex A](#).

Submission Requirements

10. Planning permission from URA is not required for putting up outdoor signboards and advertisement signs. Applications to display these signs are to be made to Advertisement Licensing Department, Building and Construction Authority (BCA), prior to the installation of the signs. For any signs located on gazetted conservation buildings or National Monuments, clearance from Conservation Department, URA is also required before applications are made to BCA.
11. Submissions must be made in full compliance with the provisions of the Building Control (Advertisement) Regulations, the Building Control (Temporary Buildings) Regulations and the Guidelines for Outdoor Signs in the Central Area. Please refer [BCA's Website](#) for the details of submission requirements.
12. For applications for outdoor advertisement signs at Orchard Road, Singapore River and Marina Centre, submissions are to include a Co-ordination Signage Drawing, endorsed by the building owner, to indicate the location of both the existing and proposed and future planned signs in relation to the overall building facade.
13. BCA, URA and the relevant Government agencies reserve the right, in their absolute discretion, to reject or refuse any application for the display of outdoor sign where it considers the overall objectives of the Guidelines are not met or where the proposal is contrary to the broader objectives of the planning intention for the area.
14. Please convey the contents of this Circular to the relevant members of your organization. The same set of guidelines will also be available at BCA's website <http://www.bca.gov.sg>. If you or your members have any enquiry concerning this Circular, please do not hesitate to call URA's Ms Karen Koh at Tel: 6321 8180 or URA's DCG Enquiry Line at Tel: 6223 4811 (email: ura_dcd@ura.gov.sg) or BCA's Enquiry Line at Tel: 1800 DIAL-BCA (342-5222) (email: bca_adv_lic@bca.gov.sg). We would be pleased to answer them.

Thank you.

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Annex A

GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR SIGNS IN THE CENTRAL AREA

INTRODUCTION

There are various forms of signs in the built environment such as outdoor advertising, identification and promotional signs. These guidelines are intended to ensure that signs are well located and designed in keeping with the image of the Central Area and Singapore as a distinctive global city.

The guidelines apply to the following types of outdoor signs:

- Advertising signs used for promoting a brand, product, service or event; and
- Signboards for the identification and naming of places, buildings and tenant business names.

APPLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES

Details of the signage guidelines for Central Area are set out below.

A) ADVERTISEMENT SIGNS

The guidelines specify the requirements on the display of all advertisement signs, temporary signs and other types of signs including “art-vertisement” signs, balloon signs and signs on construction hoardings, lamp posts and awnings.

i) Advertisement Signs on Buildings

TABLE 1

NO.	PARAMETER	REQUIREMENTS
1	Areas Allowed	Within the Central Area, commercial advertisement signs are allowed only along the key activity corridors. a. At Bras Basah, Bugis and Little India (Appendix 2); b. At Orchard Road (from Tanglin Road to Somerset Road) (Appendix 3);

		<p>c. At Chinatown (along Eu Tong Sen Street and New Bridge Road) (Appendix 4);</p> <p>d. At Marina Centre (along Raffles Boulevard, Temasek Boulevard and Temasek Avenue) (Appendix 5);</p> <p>e. At Singapore River (between Coleman Bridge and Clemenceau Bridge) (Appendix 6); and</p> <p>f. At Raffles Place (directly fronting Raffles Place Park) (Appendix 7).</p>
2	Location	<p>a. <u>Building Façade</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All advertisement signs are to be neatly mounted on the building facade. • Advertisement signs on building facades adjacent to or fronting residential developments shall not cause visual or noise disamenity to the neighbouring residents. • Sky signs at the roof-top level of the tower or podium of the buildings are not allowed. <p>b. <u>Free-standing and Ancillary Structures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free-standing advertisement signs and advertisement signs on ancillary structures, including entrance and exit structures to Rapid Transit System (RTS) Stations and pedestrian underpasses, overhead bridges, kiosks, boundary walls and road infrastructure, such as gantries, etc are not allowed. This is to maintain unobstructed pedestrian movement along the pedestrian footpaths and walkways to avoid the street becoming cluttered by multiple free-standing structures along the street which will visually impact on the attractiveness of the area.
3	Urban Design Requirements	<p>a. <u>General</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All advertisement signs shall be appropriately sized, well-designed and of good quality. They shall be flush mounted and integrated into the design of the facade and complement the overall architectural design of the building. • All advertisement signs shall be neatly detailed and all structural supports etc shall be visually screened from the top, below and on all sides. <p>b. <u>Articulations</u></p>

- Articulations can be allowed on all advertisement signs. As a guide, they shall not extend 3m beyond the height of the parapet wall and 0.6m from the building facade.

c. Mounting height

- To ensure that advertisement signs relate directly to the activities at street level and are not visible on the skyline or seen from far distances from the city, advertisement signs shall be located not more than 30m (approximately 6-storeys) above the open walkway and not more than 20m height for those at Raffles Place.

d. Signage Nodes (Orchard Road and Bras Basah, Bugis Areas)

- A higher mounting height can also be considered at designated signage nodes. This is to create a more dynamic streetscape and add to the vibrancy of the key nodes, which are locations of high pedestrian traffic. Static and non-reflective advertisement signs, which include projected light images, can be allowed up to the full building height on the building corners fronting strategic road junctions within the Orchard and Bras Basah, Bugis areas and selected street blocks along Selegie Road as shown in [Appendix 8 & 9](#). These signage proposals will be evaluated and supported, on a case-by-case, based on their design merits and in relation to any potential disamenity to the adjacent building uses.

e. Orchard Road

- Majority of the buildings along Orchard Road have been guided to achieve a high standard of design and quality. In order to ensure that the overall architectural design of these building facades is not negatively impacted by advertisement signs, only non-opaque advertisement signs are allowed, if mounted on glass building facades.
- The advertisement signs shall not cover more than 50% of the facade area up to the full height of the podium block or 30m above the walkway level, whichever is lower.

f. Raffles Place

- All signs are to be located within the designated signage locations for signs on each of the building facades as shown in [Appendix 10 to 14](#).

g. Conservation Areas

- All signs on gazetted conservation buildings are to comply with

the Guidelines for Display of Signs in Conservation Areas in terms of their size, type and detailed placement on the buildings. More details of the Conservation Guidelines are available at URA's website at <http://www.ura.gov.sg/conservation/Cons%20Guidelines.pdf>

- Approval from Conservation Department, URA are required before applications for an advertisement licence are made to the Building and Construction Authority (BCA). Signs which are exempt from licensing – e.g. those below 5 sqm in size – are also subject to compliance with the Conservation Guidelines.

h. Illumination of Signs

- Within the Orchard Road, Singapore River, Marina Centre and Raffles Place areas, the light fittings, if any, to illuminate the signs are required to be designed as an integral part of the sign in the form of backlit panels or positioned in unobtrusive locations and hidden from view. The use of projecting light fittings (i.e. with extended brackets) mounted externally on the building facade to illuminate the sign is not supported.

ii) Temporary Signs

TABLE 2

NO.	PARAMETER	REQUIREMENTS
1	Definition	A temporary sign refers to any sign for a display period of less than 2 months.
2	Duration	The maximum display period for each temporary sign is two calendar months. There is to be a minimum period of two weeks before the display of a replacement sign at the same location. This is to ensure that temporary signs do not degenerate into permanent displays. Longer display periods can be considered for temporary event signs, such as public exhibition, shows/ performances, to coincide with the duration of the event.
3	Areas Allowed	<p>Temporary signs are allowed within the Central Area both along and outside the designated signage routes.</p> <p>a. <u>Along Designated Signage Routes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary signs shall subject to the same set of guidelines for advertisement signs in Table 1.

		<p>b. <u>Outside Designated Signage Routes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary signs are allowed to be used only for the promotion of events and activities taking place within the building on which the signs are displayed and are not allowed for the promotion of goods and services or advertisement of commercial products.
4	Urban Design Requirements for temporary signs located outside the designated signage routes	<p>a. <u>General</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All temporary signs are required to be neatly detailed and appropriately placed on the building facade such that they are in keeping with the overall architectural design of the building facade. All structural supports, frames, etc., where provided, are to be well-detailed and visually screened from view from the top, below and on all sides. • Within the areas of CBD and the Civic District, the use of projecting light fittings (e.g. on extended brackets) mounted on the building facade to illuminate the temporary signs is not supported. All light fittings are required to be fully integrated into the design of the supporting frame and concealed from view. <p>b. <u>Content</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary signs are limited to the display of information pertaining to promotional events and public events and activities taking place within the building only and which are organised by the building owner / MCST or tenants with registered businesses operating from the building – e.g. festive sale, trade fair, exhibition, special discount, student enrolment, etc. The key promotional message and name / date and details of the event must be the predominant component of the sign and the supporting graphics / pictures are not to exceed 50% of the size of the sign. <p>c. <u>Number and Size</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each temporary sign is not to exceed a maximum of 30sqm in size. The signs are to be mounted not more than 30m above the ground level. Up to a maximum of three temporary (banner) signs are allowed to be displayed on the building facade at any given time. The combined size of all temporary signs is not to exceed 50% of the surface area of the building facade (measured from the ground level up to 30m), or 30sqm for one sign, 60sqm for two signs and 90sqm for three signs, whichever is lesser. <p>d. <u>Conservation Buildings / National Monuments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that temporary signs do not obscure any of the key architectural features of gazetted conservation buildings and National Monuments, all temporary signs are to comply with the

		<p>prevailing Guidelines for the Display of Signs in Conservation Areas in terms of their size, type and detailed placement on the buildings. More details of the Conservation Guidelines are available at URA's website at http://www.ura.gov.sg/conservation/Cons%20Guidelines.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearance from Conservation Department, URA and PMB are required on all signs to be mounted on conservation buildings and National Monuments, before an application for an advertisement licence is made BCA. Signs which are exempt from licensing – e.g. those below 5 sqm in size – are also subject to compliance with the Conservation Guidelines.
5	Other Requirements	All proposals for temporary signs are subject to evaluation and compliance with special requirements specific to the staging of national events, e.g. - Formula One (F1) Grand Prix.

iii) Other Types of Advertisement Signs

TABLE 3

NO.	PARAMETER	REQUIREMENTS
1	"Art-vertisement" Signs	"Art-vertisement" signs can be supported on a case-by-case basis based on the merits of the design at open spaces <u>located along the designated signage routes only</u> . The displays shall comprise sculptural 3-dimensional elements or 2-dimensional cut-outs (treated front and back) with no commercial advertisement messages or logos. Any "advertising" is therefore purely by association, in relation to other supporting campaigns.
2	Signs located on Bus / Taxi Shelters	Advertisement signs can be allowed on dedicated advertisement panels at bus shelters and taxi stands managed by the Land Transport Authority (LTA). Creative advertisement signs can also be allowed on the roof area of selected bus shelters located along the designated signage routes for limited periods, provided that these signs are unique, well-designed, 3-dimensional displays. More details are available at BCA's website on the Guidelines for Advertisement Signs at Bus Shelters at http://www.bca.gov.sg/Advertisers/advertisers.html).
3	Signs located on Lamp posts	<p>a. Temporary signs are permitted on lamp posts located within the development boundary. However, these signs can only be used for the promotion of development and tenant related events and activities only (e.g. the launch of tenant's new collection or product, end of season sale, new outlet opening, etc). Third-party commercial advertisements are strictly not allowed.</p> <p>b. Signs on lamp posts are required to be mounted individually on each lamp post and are not permitted to be displayed between two lamp posts or across multiple lamp posts.</p>

		<p>c. <u>Design Specifications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All signs shall be designed, constructed, finished and maintained to a high standard. • The scale, proportion and form of the signs are to be appropriately sized. No banner sign is to have an area greater than 2sqm. • Each lamp post can carry one set of banners, which can either be single or double-sided. • The following information is to be clearly indicated on the banner sign: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The name of the event / activity; ii. The date / duration of the event; and iii. The venue of the event, name and unit no. of the tenant or name of the development. <p>d. For temporary signs mounted on public street lamp posts, they are subject to compliance with the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and Land Transport Authority (LTA) prevailing guidelines for the use of street lamp posts. These signs are only allowed to be used for the display of national or tourism-related events and activities.</p>
4	Signs located on Flag Poles	Flag poles are to be used specifically for the display of state/ country flags only and are not to be used for the display of other types of signs including other types of flags, business signs or advertisement banners.
5	Signs at Construction Site	Project information and marketing signs for the marketing of developments are allowed on the construction hoardings. These signs are however, to be limited to the display of information pertaining to the on-site development only. The display of commercial/product advertisements or information on other development projects is not allowed, except where the signs are located on construction sites along the designated signage routes.
6	Real Estate Signs	Signs pertaining to the sale, lease or rental of a property / building are permitted only at the property / building to which the signs pertain. Such signs are to be mounted on the building facade and allowed for a maximum display period of two months. Any extension of the licence is subject to evaluation and approval.
7	Balloon Signs	Balloon signs are permitted as event signs if located at the event venue. They must display clearly the event name, date and details. The sponsor name / logo must be kept subservient to the overall design of the balloon. The size of the balloon is not to exceed 3m in diameter and clearance of the relevant authorities e.g. CAAS, DSTA is to be obtained before an application for an advertisement licence is made to BCA.
8	Signs located on	Whilst business signs can be supported on awnings, canopies and blinds,

	awnings, canopies and blinds	etc., commercial product advertisements are strictly not allowed. If sponsorship logos are incorporated together with the building / tenant name sign, the size of the sponsor's logo shall not exceed 2sqm or one-third of the overall surface area of the awnings, canopies and blinds, whichever is smaller.
9	Temporary Signs on Event Structures on State or Private Land	Temporary signs for community, sporting or private events can be supported subject to consent from the landowner and clearance from the relevant government agencies on the interim use of the site for staging of such events. The name / details of the event and supporting graphics / pictures of the event must be the predominant component (more than 50%) of the sign. While such temporary signs are not allowed to advertise sponsors' products, the acknowledgement of the sponsorship in the form of sponsor names and logos can be allowed. Such event signs are to be confined within the event venue only, either as a backdrop sign or secured to the frames of the tents or temporary structures that are set-up for the event.

B) SIGNBOARDS

Business signboards or signs for identification purposes are generally allowed on all buildings.

Signboards on conservation buildings and National Monuments are required to comply with the prevailing Guidelines for the Display of Signs in Conservation Areas in terms of their size, type and detailed placement on the buildings. More details of the Conservation Guidelines are available at URA's website at <http://www.ura.gov.sg/conservation/Cons%20Guidelines.pdf>. Clearance from Conservation Department, URA and PMB are required before an application for an advertisement licence is made BCA. Signs which are exempt from licensing – e.g. those below 5 sqm in size – are also subject to compliance with the Conservation Guidelines.

TABLE 4

NO.	PARAMETER	REQUIREMENTS
1	Building Name / Logo Signs	<p>There is no restriction on buildings having lighted or non-lighted signs for the names and / or logos of buildings.</p> <p>a. <u>On Building Facade</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs can be mounted at any location on the building facade but must be appropriately sized and placed such that they relate well to the scale and design of the building architecture. <p>b. <u>On building parapet or roof top</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs mounted on the building parapet or roof top are required to be 3-dimensional and consist of individually boxed-up letters without any exposed framing or brackets. This is to ensure that the rear of the sign is suitably treated.

		<p>c. <u>As free-standing sign</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs located at street level must not exceed 1.5m in height. For signs that are located on State land and Road Reserve, clearance from SLA and LTA on the proposed sign is required before an application for an advertisement licence is made to BCA.
2	Building Owner Name / Logo Signs	The main company name / logo sign of building owner can be allowed on buildings but the size of such sign is limited to a maximum area not exceeding 40sqm. If located above the building parapet or roof top, the signs are required to be 3-dimensional and consist of individually boxed-up letters without any exposed framing or brackets.
3	Tenants Name / Logo Signs and Business Signs	<p>a. Business signs displaying particulars of the business and services offered are allowed on the shop front of all business premises.</p> <p>b. Tenant name / logo signs are also allowed to be located on the building façade but are required to be grouped and coordinated in relation to the overall design of the building façade. Sky signs on the building roof will not be allowed.</p> <p>c. Free-standing signs for individual tenants are not permitted. However, a common integrated tenant directory and information sign can be supported, on a case-by-case basis, within the development boundary provided that it does not obstruct pedestrian movement along the open / covered walkways and is subject to detailed evaluation in terms of the design, size and height. As a guide, the size of such signs is not to exceed 3m (H) by 1m (W).</p>
4	Building Facility / Directional Signs	Such signs are subject to clearance from LTA (and SLA if located within the State land) before an application for an advertisement licence is made to BCA. As a guide, only signs that guide motorists can be considered.