

# Sign Ordinances

It is important to comply with a city's sign regulations, as many of them are only handshake agreements and can be revoked by city councils if continuously violated. A number of cities publish Real Estate Sign Regulation Manuals. ***This information is deemed reliable, but is not guaranteed and is provided for reference purposes only.***

## Aliso Viejo

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PLEASE NOTE THAT THE COMMUNITY OF ALISO VIEJO IS SUBJECT TO TWO SETS OF SIGN REGULATIONS:

1. CITY'S SIGN ORDINANCE; AND
2. ALISO VIEJO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (AVCA)

PLEASE REFER TO THE BOUNDARY MAP.

## Section 15.34.170 of the Municipal Code

EXEMPT SIGNS (outside AVCA's Boundaries)

### B. Exempt Small Commercial Real Estate Signs.

Temporary real estate signs, including building-mounted and freestanding signs advertising the sale, lease, or rental of nonresidential property are exempt from sign permit requirements subject to the following provisions:

1. Signs shall not exceed four square feet in area and a height of four feet if freestanding.
2. Signs shall be removed within 24 hours of the close of escrow or execution of lease.
3. No flags or balloons shall be displayed.
4. No rider shall be attached to the sign.
5. No more than one sign per available lease space or unit shall be permitted in single-story building, but in no case shall such signs be permitted above the ground floor in multi-story buildings.

### C. Exempt Residential Real Estate and Directional Signs.

1. Sale and Lease Signs. Temporary real estate signs, including freestanding and building-mounted signs, advertising the sale, lease, or rental of residential property are exempt from sign permit requirements subject to the following provisions:
  - a. Such signs shall not exceed four square feet in area, and a height of four feet if freestanding, with the exception of single-family detached residences where colonial signs up to six feet in height shall be permitted. (Due to their design, "colonial" signs are slightly higher than regular real estate signs.)
  - b. Such signs shall be removed within 24 hours after close of escrow, lease, or rent.
  - c. No flags or balloons shall be displayed.
  - d. A rider not exceeding six inches in height by 24 inches in length or eight inches in height by 18 inches in length may be attached to the top of the sign.
  - e. Such signs shall be placed so that they do not obscure fire hydrants, traffic signs or traffic signals, block motorists' line of sight, or otherwise inhibit or interfere with vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
  - f. No part of any sign shall be within three feet of the back of sidewalk, but in no event shall a sign be within three feet of the lot line.
  - g. Such signs shall be placed at the immediate entrance of the subject residential unit, with the exception of single-family detached residences where such signs shall be placed only in the front yard of the subject property. Only one sign per available lease space or residential unit shall be permitted.

2. Directional Signs. Temporary off-site open house directional signs shall be permitted in residential districts subject to the following:
  1. Signs shall not be permitted on public property or in the public right-of-way. An owner of real property or his/her agent may display the sign on real property owned by another with that owner's prior consent.
  2. Signs shall not exceed four square feet in area, and a height of four feet, including the vertical post.
  3. Signs are only permitted to be posted during the time an owner or owner's agent is on the premises and the premises are open for viewing.
  4. The signs shall be installed no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and removed no later than sunset.
  5. The signs shall not be installed in a manner which creates a hazard to traffic or pedestrians.
  6. No flags, pennants, balloons, or other attention-attracting devices shall be displayed.

**Sign Retrieval:**

Signs removed by the City may be retrieved at 12 Journey, Ste. 100, Aliso Viejo or call (949) 425-2530

## Section 9.1.74 of the Municipal Code

### PERMITTED TEMPORARY SIGNS

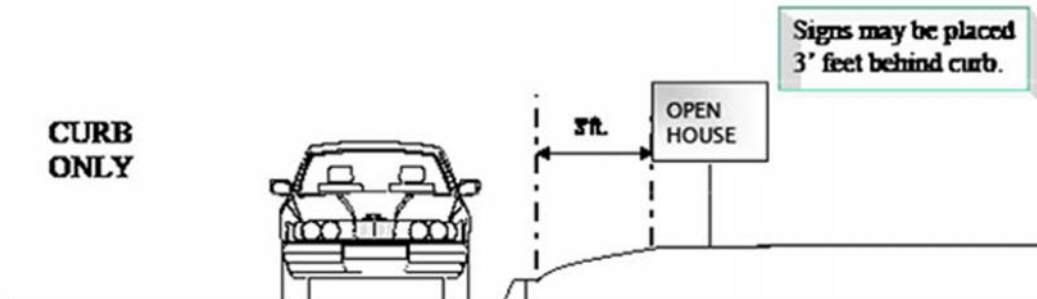
- F. Residential real estate signs. Temporary non-illuminated on-premise real estate signs advertising the sale, rent, or lease of the property and the identification of the person or firm handling the sale, lease or rent, shall be permitted on any building site subject to the following:
1. For residential building sites with four or less units, total aggregate sign area, including riders, shall not exceed six square feet per sign face. For residential building sites with five or more units, total aggregate sign area, including riders, shall not exceed 20 square feet.
  2. If located in a window, the real estate sign shall not cover more than 20 percent of the window or window pane in which it is placed.
  3. Maximum height for free-standing signs shall be six feet and one sign is permitted per street or golf course frontage up to a maximum of two signs per building site.
  4. No part of any sign shall be placed between the back of the curb and the sidewalk. Also, signs shall not be placed within a public right-of-way or in areas adjacent to designated scenic corridors.
  5. Signs shall be removed within five days after close of escrow, lease or rent.
- G. Residential off-premise open house directional signs. Temporary non-illuminated off-premise open house directional signs shall be permitted subject to the following:
1. A maximum of two signs are permitted, each with a maximum area of four square feet per sign face and a maximum height of four feet.
  2. Signs are permitted only when the premises are open for inspection and when an owner or owner's agent is on the premises and shall be installed no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and removed no later than sunset.
  3. No part of any sign shall be placed between the back of the curb and the sidewalk. Also, signs shall not be placed within a public right-of-way. Signs may be posted on private property with the prior consent of the property owner.
  4. Signs may be located only in the immediate vicinity of street intersections and shall not be located mid-block, unless topography, landscaping, and/or other physical constraints interfere with sign visibility, in which case the sign may be located more distant from the intersection. The intent of the foregoing provision is to prohibit unnecessary multiple open house signs located mid-block.





Off Premises Residential Real Estate Open House Sign Placement Guide  
Excerpts from the Laguna Niguel Municipal Code section 9-1-74(f)

**CURB ONLY**



**CURB AND SIDEWALK**



**PARKWAY BETWEEN CURB AND SIDEWALK.**



**OPEN HOUSE SIGN REGULATIONS**

1. Open house signs can be a maximum of 4 sq. feet and maximum of 4 feet in height.
2. Flags, banners signs, sandwich boards signs or balloons are prohibited.
3. No sign shall be placed on public property or in the Right-of Way and only be placed on private property with owner's permission.
4. Signs may be placed in the vicinity of a street intersection. No mid-block signs are permitted.

## Section 9.37.130

### LOCATION AND HEIGHT

- a. All signs, unless otherwise provided for in this Chapter, shall be erected upon the premises occupied by the person or business sought to be identified by such signs.
- b. No sign shall be located upon or project over a public right-of-way, except projecting signs and signs promoting civic and non-profit activities sponsored by the civic and non-profit organizations subject to the review and approval of the Director of Community Development and in accordance with Section 9.37.160 (Special Use Sign Permits).
- c. No sign shall be attached to any public utility pole or public property except non-advertising signs or public notices of public utility companies as may be required in their operations which provide service for the health and welfare of the general public or as required by any Federal or State law or agency thereof.
- d. No sign shall be placed in such a manner that the visibility of a sign on adjacent properties is obscured as viewed from a public or private right-of-way.
- e. No sign shall extend above the eave line or parapet of the building on which it is located, with the exception of signs located on mansard roofs of buildings without wall area for signage, provided that the sign does not exceed the roofline.
- f. Signs shall be placed at or near the entrance to a building or site to indicate the most direct access to the business.
- g. The maximum height of permanent detached signs is six (6) feet. The Community Development Director has the discretion to grant up to a twenty-five (25) percent increase in allowable height, if the Director finds the sign design to be extraordinarily creative and significantly contributing to the character of Dana Point and that the site characteristics warrant the additional height. Sign height shall be measured from the ground (finished grade) directly surrounding the sign to the top of the sign. When signs are constructed on hillsides or embankments where the sign supports are at varying lengths, height shall be measured from the horizontal mid-point of the sign. Signs may exceed the maximum height if approved in conjunction with a variance in accordance with Section 9.37.080.
- h. Signs located within any required building setback, access intersection or street intersection area shall be located in accordance with the sight distance requirements of Section 9.05.090. No sign shall be located so as to promote a safety hazard as determined by the Director of Community Development.

## Section 9.37.110 of the Municipal Code

### EXEMPTIONS

The provisions and regulations of this Chapter shall not apply to the following signs, nor shall the area of such signs be counted toward the maximum allowable sign area for any premises or use.

(b) Four (4) Real Estate Open House or Garage Sale directional signs per intersection provided they are:

1. Each no more than four (4) square feet in area;
2. Contain no advertising message;
3. Are located entirely on private property; and
4. Not in excess of one per public street corner, per direction.

(h) One (1) real estate sign per street frontage provided such sign:

1. Is located entirely on the property offered for sale or lease; or on private property;
2. Does not exceed six (6) feet in height;
3. Does not exceed four (4) square feet in area; and
4. Is removed upon the close of escrow or when the rental or lease has been accomplished, whichever event occurs first.

## Section 9.37.130

### LOCATION AND HEIGHT

- a. All signs, unless otherwise provided for in this Chapter, shall be erected upon the premises occupied by the person or business sought to be identified by such signs.
- b. No sign shall be located upon or project over a public right-of-way, except projecting signs and signs promoting civic and non-profit activities sponsored by the civic and non-profit organizations subject to the review and approval of the Director of Community Development and in accordance with Section 9.37.160 (Special Use Sign Permits).
- c. No sign shall be attached to any public utility pole or public property except non-advertising signs or public notices of public utility companies as may be required in their operations which provide service for the health and welfare of the general public or as required by any Federal or State law or agency thereof.
- d. No sign shall be placed in such a manner that the visibility of a sign on adjacent properties is obscured as viewed from a public or private right-of-way.
- e. No sign shall extend above the eave line or parapet of the building on which it is located, with the exception of signs located on mansard roofs of buildings without wall area for signage, provided that the sign does not exceed the roofline.
- f. Signs shall be placed at or near the entrance to a building or site to indicate the most direct access to the business.
- g. The maximum height of permanent detached signs is six (6) feet. The Community Development Director has the discretion to grant up to a twenty-five (25) percent increase in allowable height, if the Director finds the sign design to be extraordinarily creative and significantly contributing to the character of Dana Point and that the site characteristics warrant the additional height. Sign height shall be measured from the ground (finished grade) directly surrounding the sign to the top of the sign. When signs are constructed on hillsides or embankments where the sign supports are at varying lengths, height shall be measured from the horizontal mid-point of the sign. Signs may exceed the maximum height if approved in conjunction with a variance in accordance with Section 9.37.080.
- h. Signs located within any required building setback, access intersection or street intersection area shall be located in accordance with the sight distance requirements of Section 9.05.090. No sign shall be located so as to promote a safety hazard as determined by the Director of Community Development.



## Section 9.37.150

### PERMITTED SIGNS

(a) Permitted Temporary Signs in Residential Districts.

(3) Open House Sign

Type: Free standing

Permit Required: No, unless proposed in conjunction with a temporary sales facility

Max Number: One sign per corner per direction, plus one sign per site

Aggregate Area: 4 sq. ft.

Max Height: 4 ft.

Additional Standards:

- A. Open house signs may be displayed only until dusk and when the property is available for inspection.
- B. Placement shall be permitted on private property only.
- C. Signs shall be placed so that they do not obscure and are not attached to fire hydrants, traffic signals/signs or otherwise inhibit or interfere with vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
- D. No wind signs (flags, balloons) shall be displayed. However, one flag shall be permitted on site.

(5) Real Estate Sign

Type: Freestanding or Wall

Permit Required: No

Max Number: One per street frontage

Aggregate Area: 4 sq. ft.

Max Height: 6 ft.

Additional Standards:

- A. Copy may include only information relating to the sale, lease or rental of the premises on which the sign is located.
- B. Signs shall be removed upon close of escrow or when lease or rental has been accomplished.

## Zoning Division Reference Documents

### SIGNS—REAL ESTATE

Real Estate Signage (Definition: "a sign advertising or promoting the sale, lease, or rental of real estate.")

- Allowed without a sign permit in all zones.
- Exempt from maximum allowable sign area calculations for lot.
- Must advertise the property on which it is located.
- A maximum of one (1) 'rider' sign, 18 inches wide and 6 inches high is allowed.

Specifications:

- Content: Not regulated.
- Number: 1 per frontage.
- Size: 3 square feet per sign face (maximum).
- Height: 4 feet (maximum).
- Location: Minimum 5 feet inside property line—7 feet inside property line if at a corner; Shall not be positioned so as to create a vehicular or pedestrian hazard; corner cutback applies per §25.50.006; if wall-mounted, minimum side setback equal to 10% of frontage, but does not have to exceed 5 feet.

Open House Signage (Definition: "a temporary sign communicating that a property is available for inspection by prospective buyers and that the owner of the property or the owner's agent is on the premises during the time the property is open for inspection.")

- Allowed without a sign permit in all zones.
- Must be affixed to a single wood or metal pole.
- 'Rider' signs are prohibited.

Specifications:

- Content: Shall contain only the wording "Open House" with a directional arrow, except that the identification of the sign's owner may be affixed in a space not exceeding 3½ inches wide and 3 inches high placed in the upper left corner of the sign; Format shall be green, red, or blue lettering on a white background.
- Number: Only one such sign per each direction of any intersection at any time.
- Size: 2 square feet per sign face (maximum).
- Height: 4 feet (maximum).
- Location: Shall not be placed on public property or within the public right-of-way, but only on private property with the prior consent of the property owner; Shall not be positioned so as to create a vehicular or pedestrian hazard.
- Time: Shall be installed no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and removed no later than sunset on the day of the open house; Shall only be posted during the time that the owner/agent is on the premises and the premises are open for inspection.

Important Note Regarding Brochure or Leaflet Holders: Please be advised that boxes, containers, or other devices used for the purpose of holding real estate information or advertising materials are prohibited.



Effective immediately, the following rules apply to real estate signs for United and Third Mutual.

**FOR SALE SIGNS:**

1. A maximum of one (1) "For Sale" or "For Lease" or "For Rent" sign may be placed at a Manor. It may be in a window, on a gate, or on a post placed within one (1) foot of the building. Signs are not allowed on balcony or stairway railings. The maximum size is 6 square feet, and if placed in a window it may be no larger than 20% of the window size. No illumination is allowed. The maximum character size is twelve (12) inches. There is no restriction as to how long the sign may remain posted. Security will photograph then where feasible remove excessive or improperly posted signs.

**OPEN HOUSE SIGNS:**

1. "Open House" signs may only be present on Saturday and Sunday, between 10:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. Security will remove any signs present beyond the permitted days and hours.
2. At the entrance to or anywhere within a cul-de-sac a maximum of three (3) "Open House" signs per manor may be placed. These signs may be up to 24" x 24" in size. There are no other specifications regarding the appearance of these signs. Security will photograph then remove excessive or improperly posted signs.
3. "Open House" directional (designated by an arrow) signs may be placed at street intersections and cul-de-sac entrances only. No mid-block signs are allowed.
4. Directional signs must conform to an approved design: 24" x 9" corrugated plastic with vinyl letters and using approved colors, font and logo (see example attached).
  - 4a. Available for purchase from RESS - Real Estate Signs & Supplies (949) 855-1355.
5. At any street intersection or cul-de-sac entrance there may be no more than
  - a. one (1) directional sign pointing in any one direction, and
  - b. four (4) total directional signs, regardless of the number of open houses in the vicinity.
6. The rules allow for both a 24"x24" sign and a 24"x9" directional sign to be placed at a cul-de-sac entrance.
7. Security will photograph, then remove all duplicate, excessive, and improperly placed directional signs. If you know which properly placed sign was installed first, remove the subsequently placed sign(s). If you do not know which properly placed sign was installed first, randomly remove the excessive sign(s).
8. Removed signs will be deposited at the Service Center and disposed of every Wednesday in accordance with current practice.

## Section 9.29.225 of the Municipal Code

### EXEMPT SIGNS

The following signs are exempt from the sign permit requirements set forth in this division:

(a) On-site residential real estate signs, including window signs, advertising the sale, lease, or rent of the property shall be permitted subject to the following:

1. Signs shall not exceed four square feet in area, and a height of four feet, with the exception of single-family detached residences where colonial signs shall be permitted.
2. Signs shall be removed within 24 hours after close of escrow, lease, or rent.
3. No flags or balloons shall be displayed.
4. A rider not exceeding six inches in height by 24 inches in length or eight inches in height by 18 inches in length may be attached to the top of the sign.
5. Signs shall be placed so that they do not obscure fire hydrants, traffic signs or traffic signals, block motorists' line of sight, or otherwise inhibit or interfere with vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
6. No part of any sign shall be within three feet of the sidewalk, or six feet of the curb, whichever is greater.
7. Sign shall be placed at the immediate entrance of the subject residential unit, with the exception of single-family detached residence where the sign shall be placed only in the front yard of the subject property. Only one sign per available lease space or residential unit shall be permitted.

(b) Off-site open house directional signs shall be permitted subject to the following:

1. Signs shall not be permitted on public property. An owner of real property or his/her agent may display the sign on real property owned by another with that person's prior consent.
2. Signs shall not exceed four square feet in area, and a height of four feet including the vertical post.
3. Signs are only permitted to be posted during the time an owner or owner's agent is on the premises and the premises are open for inspection.
4. The signs shall be installed no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and removed no later than sunset.
5. The signs shall not be installed in a manner which creates a hazard to traffic or pedestrians.
6. No flags, pennants, balloons, or other attention-attracting devices shall be displayed.

(d) Nameplate signs not exceeding one square foot in area shall be permitted in locations approved by the director of community development.

(e) One sign, not more than one foot by one foot, listing the hours during which the premises are open, and emergency numbers, may be displayed in the window of each business establishment.

## Section 9.3.543 of the Municipal Code

### SIGNS

(f) Signs Exempt from a Permit. The following signs shall be allowed without a sign permit and shall not be included in the determination of type, number or area of signs allowed on a building or parcel.

#### 2. Temporary Signs.

- h. Real Estate Sale or Lease Signs (not including banners). One property sale or lease sign is allowed on each 600 lineal feet of street frontage of the property. Such sign may be single or double faced and is limited to nine (9) square feet for lots less than one acre, not more than sixteen (16) square feet for lots more than one acre and placed a minimum setback of twenty (20) feet from the curb, otherwise not more than twelve (12) square feet, and thirty-two (32) square feet for lots immediately adjacent to the I-5 Freeway, or up to sixty (60) square feet at the discretion of the Community Development Director;
- i. Open House Sign. Only one sign is allowed on each frontage of the property. Such a sign may be single or double faced and is limited to three (3) square feet or less. The sign supporting structure shall not exceed four (4) feet in height. Such a sign shall be erected and removed on the day the open house is held and shall not be fastened or attached in any way to a building face or architectural element.

Type of Sign: Real Estate or Leasing Signs

District/Land Use: All Districts

Max Height (in no case above eaves):

- 6 ft.
  - Max. Height (Square Feet)\*\*: 9 sq. ft.
  - For lots less than one acre. One Sign per 600 ft. of street frontage.
- 6 ft.
  - Max. Height (Square Feet)\*\*: 16 (minimum 20 ft. setback from curb, otherwise 12)
  - For lots greater than one acre. One sign per 600 lineal feet of frontage.
- 9 ft.
  - Max. Height (Square Feet)\*\*: 32 or up to 60 with Community Development Director approval.
  - For lots less abutting the I-5 Freeway. One sign per 600 lineal feet of street frontage.



## Section 17.84.030 of the Municipal Code

### SPECIFIC REGULATIONS BY SIGN TYPE

#### Sign Type: Open House

Max. Number of Signs Permitted: 1 sign on site plus 5 offsite directional signs. Maximum of 1 sign per intersection directing traffic in same direction.

Max. Size per Sign: 4 sq. ft.

Max. Height per Sign: 4 ft.

Sign Permits Required: None

Other Special Considerations: One house sign shall be allowed only while the open house is in progress, cannot remain over night, cannot be affixed to any public above ground structure (such as utility poles), cannot be placed in the public right-of-way and cannot interfere with traffic.

#### Sign Type: Real Estate Signs Other Than Open House Signs

Max. Number of Signs Permitted: 1 per building or site.

Max. Size per Sign: 24 sq. ft. if within a commercial zone.

12 sq. ft. if within a residential zone.

Max. Height per Sign: Freestanding sign – 6 ft.

Sign Permits Required: Adm. Sign Permit

Other Special Considerations: Cannot be lighted; must be located on-site; sign area of the real estate sign shall not count towards total sign area permitted for the site.

## Section 9.3.543 of the Municipal Code

### SIGNS

(f) Signs Exempt from a Permit. The following signs shall be allowed without a sign permit and shall not be included in the determination of type, number or area of signs allowed on a building or parcel.

#### 2. Temporary Signs.

- h. Real Estate Sale or Lease Signs (not including banners). One property sale or lease sign is allowed on each 600 lineal feet of street frontage of the property. Such sign may be single or double faced and is limited to nine (9) square feet for lots less than one acre, not more than sixteen (16) square feet for lots more than one acre and placed a minimum setback of twenty (20) feet from the curb, otherwise not more than twelve (12) square feet, and thirty-two (32) square feet for lots immediately adjacent to the I-5 Freeway, or up to sixty (60) square feet at the discretion of the Community Development Director;
- i. Open House Sign. Only one sign is allowed on each frontage of the property. Such a sign may be single or double faced and is limited to three (3) square feet or less. The sign supporting structure shall not exceed four (4) feet in height. Such a sign shall be erected and removed on the day the open house is held and shall not be fastened or attached in any way to a building face or architectural element.

Type of Sign: Real Estate or Leasing Signs

District/Land Use: All Districts

Max Height (in no case above eaves):

- 6 ft.
  - Max. Height (Square Feet)\*\*: 9 sq. ft.
  - For lots less than one acre. One Sign per 600 ft. of street frontage.
- 6 ft.
  - Max. Height (Square Feet)\*\*: 16 (minimum 20 ft. setback from curb, otherwise 12)
  - For lots greater than one acre. One sign per 600 lineal feet of frontage.
- 9 ft.
  - Max. Height (Square Feet)\*\*: 32 or up to 60 with Community Development Director approval.
  - For lots less abutting the I-5 Freeway. One sign per 600 lineal feet of street frontage.