



Commercial Signage Regulations

Version 5.0 - 2022



ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPALITIES AND TRANSPORT



The Department of Municipalities and Transport was established by Law No. 30 of 2019, and its main priorities are to realize the vision of H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, which draws on the vision of the UAE's Founding Father, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan to embrace progress by placing great value on the importance of pursuing development in line with both the needs of present and future generations and the community in general.

The authority embodies the values of good governance, driven by the needs of the community it serves and working with a passion to accomplish its aims. The Department focuses on finding the most effective means of providing essential, modern, responsive and comprehensive municipal services across three regional municipalities, and supports Abu Dhabi's global position as a leader in innovation-led urban planning and transportation, as part of the Abu Dhabi government's commitment to maintaining the highest standards to the benefit of all citizens and residents of the emirate.

The DMT is responsible for continually investing in the development of better infrastructure, facilities and transportation sectors within the emirate, guiding, regulating and monitoring urban development to enhance Abu Dhabi's reputation as a world-class destination to live, work and visit.

The DMT also ensures the highest standards of safety, security, sustainability and technological development of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi's land, air and maritime transport networks, in accordance with the highest international standards and the UAE's legislation with the objective of being the region's connection to the world.

The Department's aspirations are driven by the simple proposition of innovating and building sustainable smart cities, fostering a capacity to change and adapt in order to maintain excellence in services and sustaining prosperity for future generations, allowing the entire Abu Dhabi community to reach their full potential.

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Introduction

The Commercial Signage Regulations (referred to as the Regulations) defines the type, size and position of commercial signs on buildings in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. For the purpose of the Regulations, a commercial sign is defined as a permanent sign on a building that advertises a business within the building.

The Regulations aim to:

- Raise the standard and consistency in the quality and position of commercial signs;
- Reduce the adverse effects of visual clutter;
- Protect the existing architectural features of buildings; and
- Enhance the overall appearance of buildings.

Objective

The objective of this Manual is to present the regulations for commercial signs that set standards for:

- Permitted signage typologies;
- Signage location and position on a building; and
- Signage specifications and dimensions.

Regulation Structure

The Regulations are divided into the following sections:

Table 1: Regulations Structure and Content

	Title	Content
1	General Signage Regulations	Applies to commercial signs on all buildings.
2	Commercial Building Signage	Specific regulations regarding sign type, size and position on a building.
3	Retail Malls Signage	
4	Villa Signage	
5	Industrial Signage	
6	Other Signage	Signs that may be permitted but that may not meet the requirements of the Regulations.

1. General Signage Regulations

1.1 General Regulations

The general regulations apply to all commercial signs (on both commercial and industrial buildings) unless otherwise stated.

Placement

1. A sign must be mounted on a building as follows:
 - Directly against the building surface;
 - Where the storefront is in a building recess, the sign must be flush with the building; or
 - Between the columns of a colonnade.
2. No sign or portion of a sign shall:
 - Cover any major architectural element of a building; and
 - Obstruct views into and out of the business premises (excludes glass fascias).
3. All signs within a signage zone on a building must be:
 - Consistent in height and position; and
 - Designed to complement the building in order to convey a positive image.

Components

1. All cables, wires, lighting, and associated electrical equipment shall be contained within the sign. No external lighting shall be installed onto the sign.
2. All cables to a sign shall be concealed in the wall or in a conduit that is neatly finished and integrated into the design of the building.
3. No sign shall have light bulbs protruding or exposed. All light bulbs must be contained within the sign.
4. Only signs that are 3D without background and banners may be externally illuminated, light fixtures must not protrude more than 15 cm from a sign.

Content

1. A sign may include:
 - Phone numbers or websites, but these shall only cover 10% of the total signage area and may be 2 dimensional;
 - a second language (in Latin letters); and
 - a business logo.
2. No sign or portion of a sign shall advertise 3rd party products.

Technical Specifications for Projecting Sign

Figure 1: Projecting Sign Dimensions

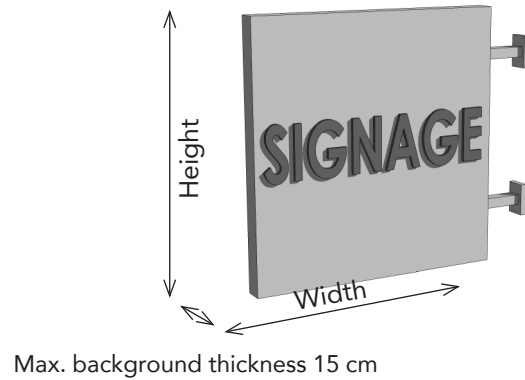
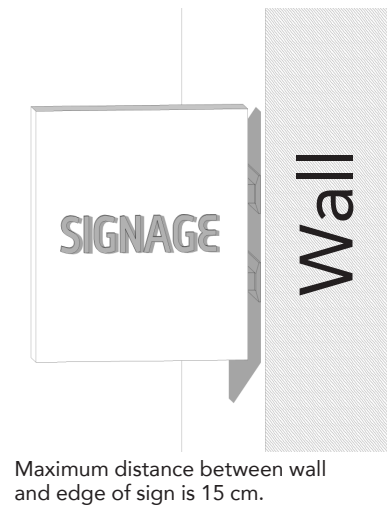


Figure 2: Projecting Sign on Wall

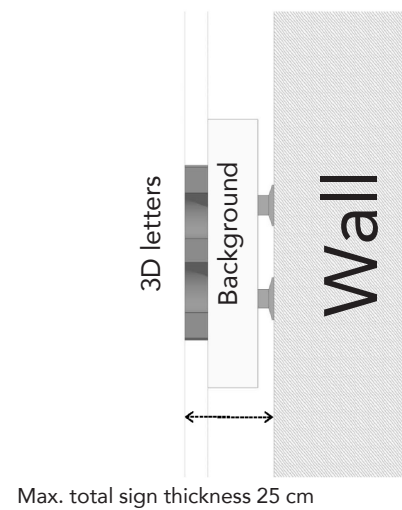


Technical Specifications for Horizontal Sign

Figure 3: Horizontal Sign Dimensions



Figure 4: Cross Section of Horizontal Sign



1.2 Signage Typology

There are six types of commercial signs that are permitted. The primary signs in Table (2) are signs that are predominantly used for businesses on the ground floor.

The secondary signs in Table (3) are signs that are predominantly used at the mezzanine level or as supplementary signs to identify a business within a colonnade.

Table 2: Primary Signs





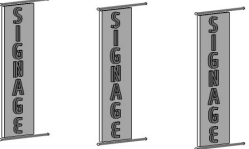

Sign Type	Description	Illustration
1. 3D Stencil Cut	Letters (minimum 0.5 cm in depth) cut into a background or a stencil cut plate layered onto a background.	
2. 3D with Background	3D letters mounted on a background.	
3. 3D without Background	3D letters mounted directly onto the building or surface.	

Table 3: Secondary Signs

Sign Type	Description	Illustration
4. Internal Window Sign	3D internally lit letters mounted in a window	
5. Banner	A sign that is displayed perpendicular to the building.	
6. Projecting Sign	Stencil cut or 3D letters on a background sign displayed perpendicular to the building.	

2. Commercial Buildings

2.1 Signage Regulations for Commercial Buildings

The location of a commercial business within a building will determine the location of a sign. Figure 5 illustrates the zones of a commercial building and Table (4) summarises the regulations for signs within each zone.

Figure 5: Building Zones

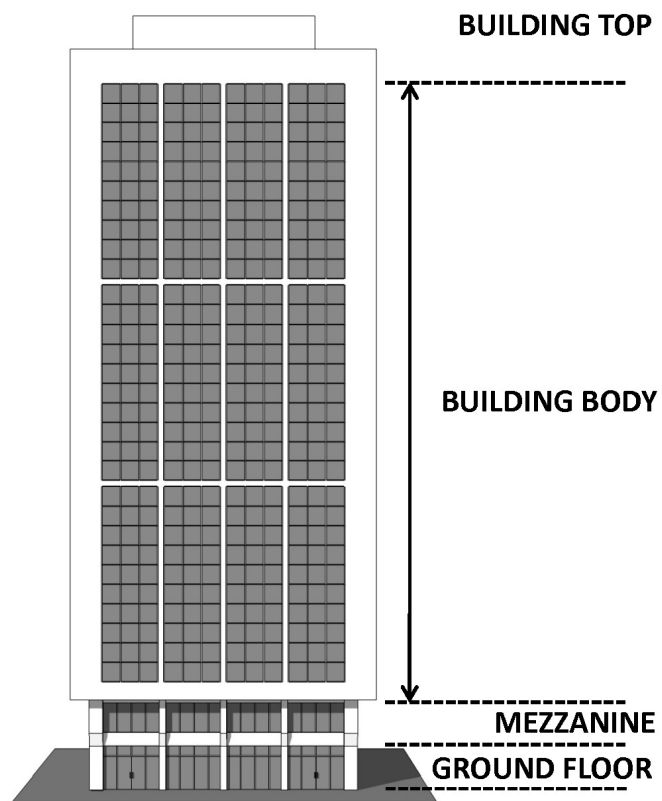


Table 4: Summary of Signage Regulations for Commercial Building

Business Location	Sign Locations	Regulations
Ground floor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fascia• Parapet	Page 11
Mezzanine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mezzanine	Page 12
Building body	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building top• Some businesses may have a sign on the mezzanine or ground floor	Page 13

2.1.1 Signage Regulations on Ground Floor

Fascia Signage Zone

- Signage must be on fascia if height is equal to or greater than 80 cm.
- Glass storefront with no defined fascia - minimum height from ground = 2.5 meters.

Parapet Signage Zone

- Signage may be located on the parapet if the fascia signage zone is less than 80 cm.

Parapet and Fascia Signage Zones

- If the height of both the fascia and parapet is less than 80 cm:
 - 3D without background on parapet signage zone; or
 - Stencil cut or sticker on fascia.

Fascia or Parapet

- If a business occupies the entire ground floor along one of the signs listed may be used:
 - 3D with background on fascia; or
 - 3D without background on parapet.

Figure 6: Business at the Ground Floor with Street Frontage

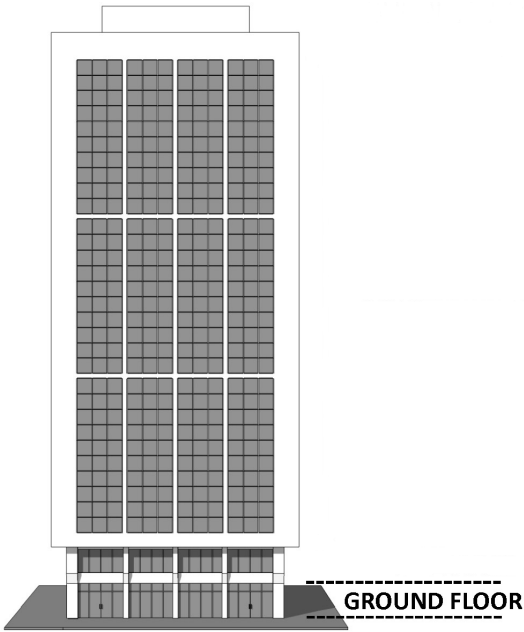
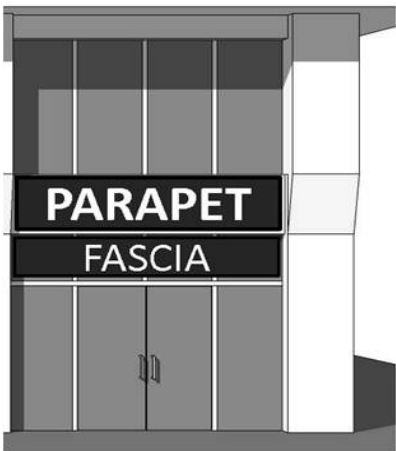


Figure 7: Ground Floor Signage Zones



Fascia: the area on the storefront between the top of the door and the beginning of the next floor.

Parapet: the area containing the slab that separates the ground floor and the mezzanine / first floor.

Table 5: Permitted Signs for Business at the Ground Floor Level

	Stencil cut	3D with background	3D without background
Fascia Signage			
Parapet Signage	3D without background 		

2.1.2 Signage Regulation on Mezzanine

- Must be separated from any sign on the parapet by a minimum of 20 cm.
- Shall not exceed the height of the mezzanine or a maximum height of 2 metres, whichever is less.
- A banner or projecting sign is only allowed for the following businesses located within the mezzanine:
 - Medical clinic
 - Salon
 - Health club
 - Businesses determine by DED.

Figure 8: Business at the Mezzanine Level

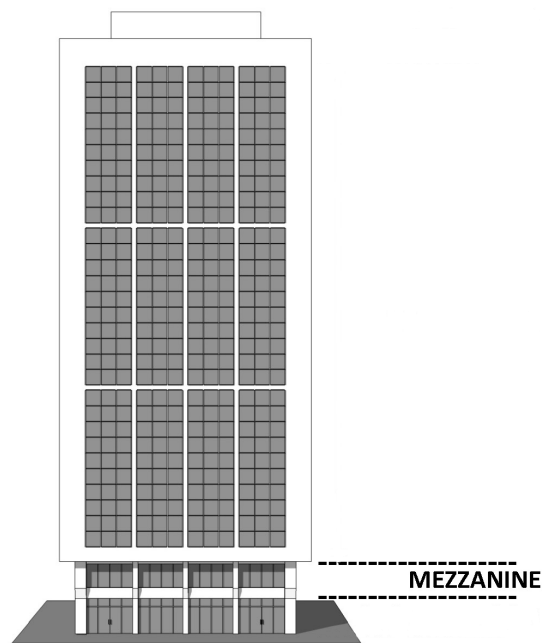


Figure 9: Mezzanine Level Signage Zone

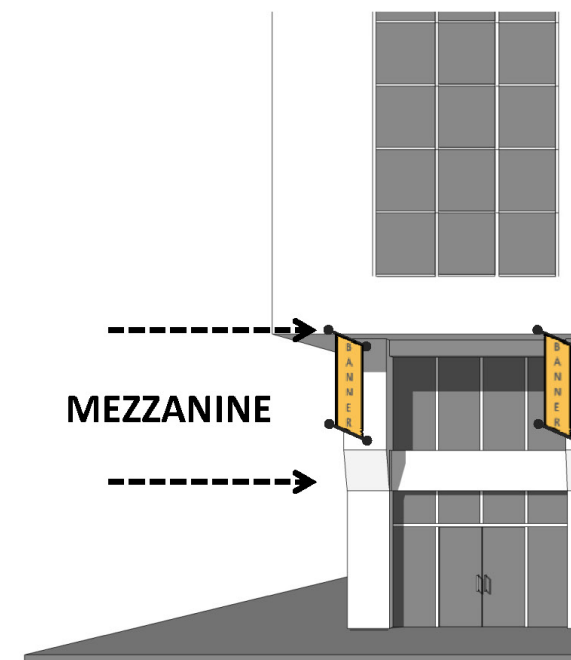


Table 6: Permitted Signs for Business at the Mezzanine Level

	Banner	Projecting	Internal Window
Mezzanine Signage			

2.1.3 Signage Regulation on Building Body

Building Top

- Sign not to exceed 2 metres height and 75% of the width of the building.
- Only one sign is allowed per elevation.
- Only for an anchor tenant of a building.
- Only a business name, building name or logo are allowed.

Building Entrance

- Maximum sign area = 0.56 m2
 - Eg: 75 cm x 75 cm,
 - 85 cm x 65 cm,
 - 1 m x 50 cm.
- A banner or projecting sign is allowed for the following businesses located within the building body, provided the sign does not replace the sign of a businesses that is located in the mezzanine:
 - Medical clinic
 - Salon
 - Health club
 - Businesses determine by DED.

Figure 10: Business at the Building Body

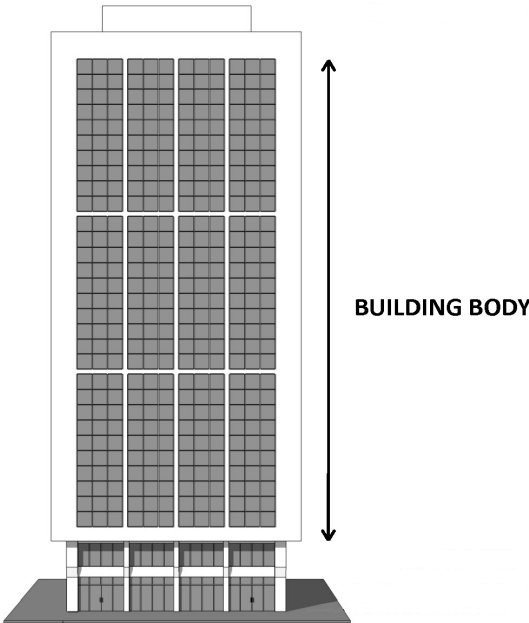


Figure 11: Building Top and Mezzanine Signage Zones

BUILDING TOP SIGNAGE ZONE

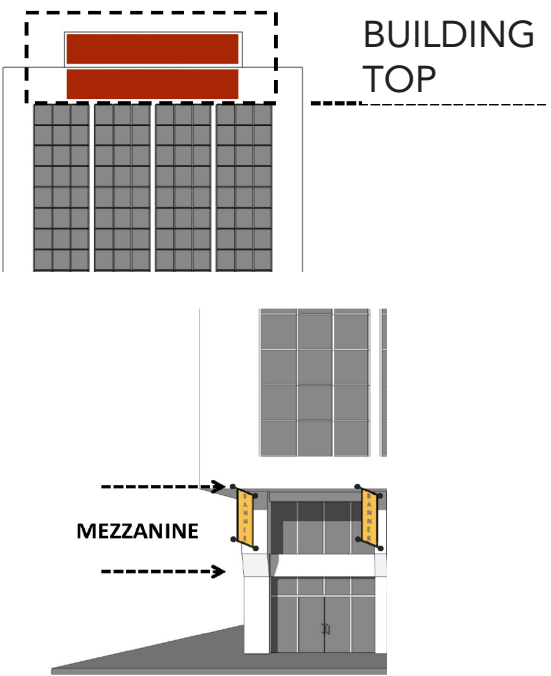


Table 7: Permitted Signs for Business at the Building Body

Building Top Signage	3D without background		
	SIGNAGE		
Building Entrance	Stencil cut	3D with background	3D without background
	SIGNAGE	SIGNAGE	SIGNAGE
* Signs with background only used on glass fascia			

2.2 Signage Regulation for Colonnades

The regulations in this section apply to commercial buildings that have colonnades. In this circumstance, businesses located at ground level may have a commercial sign in one of the following locations depending on the design of the colonnade:

- Internal colonnade signs located on the:
 - Fascia; or
 - Parapet.
- Between columns; or
- On the external parapet.

Refer to Table (8) for a summary of regulations.

Table 8: Summary of Signage Regulations for Colonnades

Sign Location	Condition	Regulations
Fascia or Parapet	Condition 1 If the colonnade is designed such that the height of the colonnade or distance between columns does not obstruct the fascia or parapet.	Page 12
External Column Signage Zone (Between Columns)	Condition 2 If the fascia or parapet signage zones are obscured by the colonnades, or if each of the fascia and parapet are less than 80 cm.	Page 13
External Parapet	Condition 3 If there is not an adequate amount of space for a sign to be located between the columns.	Page 14

2.2.1 Signage Regulation - Internal Colonnade

Fascia Signage Zone

- Signage shall be on fascia if height is equal to or greater than 80 cm.
- Glass storefront with no defined fascia - minimum height from ground = 2.5 metres.

Parapet Signage Zone

- Signage shall be located on the parapet if the fascia signage zone is less than 80 cm.

Figure 12: Internal Colonnade Signage Zones



Table 9: Permitted Signs for Business at the Ground Floor - Internal Colonnade

	Stencil cut	3D with background	3D without background
Fascia Signage			
Parapet Signage	3D without background 		

2.2.2 Signage Regulation - Between Columns

External Column Signage Zone (Between Columns)

- The sign shall be located between the columns in front of the storefront and the bottom of the sign should be a minimum of 2.4 meters from the ground.
- Maximum height of sign - 1 meter.

Internal Column Signage Zone (Storefront)

- A business may also have one projecting sign.
- The minimum height of the bottom of the sign should be equal to the height of the door.
- Maximum surface area is 0.56 m²
 - Eg: 75 cm x 75 cm,
 - 85 cm x 65 cm,
 - 1 m x 50 cm.

Figure 13: External Colonnade Signs Zone - Between Columns



Table 10: Permitted Signs for Business at the Ground Floor - Between Columns

	Stencil cut	3D with background	3D without background
External Column Signage			
Internal Column Signage	Projecting		

2.2.3 Signage Regulation - External Parapet

External Column Signage Zone (Between Columns)

- The sign shall be located on the external parapet.
- If the height of the parapet is more than 1.5 meters, the bottom of the sign must be a maximum of 30 cm from the top of the colonnade arch or architectural feature.



Internal Column Signage Zone (Storefront)

- The minimum height of the sign from the ground should be equal to the height of the door.
- Thickness not to exceed 15 cm.
- Maximum surface area is 0.56 m²
 - Eg: 75 cm x 75 cm,
 - 85 cm x 65 cm,
 - 1 m x 50 cm.

Figure 14: External Colonnade Signs Zone - External Parapet



Table 11: Permitted Signs for Business at the Ground Floor - Between Columns

External Column Signage	3D without background
	
Internal Column Signage	Projecting 

3. Retail Malls

3.1 Signage Regulation - Retails Malls

Signage Zones

- On each mall facade, signage zones must be identified which will represent the position of all signs that will be permitted on the mall facade.
- Combined, all signage zones may cover a maximum of 20% of each facade/street frontage, including the primary malls signs, mall entrance signs and signs for tenants.
- The signage zones should form a logical pattern that is consistent with and complement the style of the building (signage zones should not be randomly placed on the facade).
- The size of a signage zone should be of a scale that is compatible with the position on the facade, and the size and architectural design of the building.

Approval Process

- The retail mall owner/management must define all signage zones on the mall facades.
- A submission must be made to DED which includes elevation(s) and a corresponding table showing each signage zone and specific details consisting of:
 - The dimensions and area of each facade
 - The total number of signage zones on each facade
 - The total area of all signage zones on each facade
 - The dimensions and area of each signage zone
 - The sign type of each signage zone



Regulations for malls that have facades with a height of over 15 meters:

- Signs must be either 3D with background or 3D without background.
- The area of each sign must not exceed 12 m².
- The height of the letters for a sign must not exceed 2 meters.

Regulations for malls that have facades with a height of 15 meters and under:

- Signs must be either 3D with background or 3D without background.
- The area of each sign must not exceed 6 m².
- The height of the letters for a sign must not exceed 1 meter.

Table 12: Permitted Signs for Business at the Ground Floor - Internal Colonnade

	3D with background	3D without background
Fascia Signage		

4. Villa Signage

4.1 Signage Regulation on Villas

These regulations apply to commercial signs for businesses in a villa. A businesses that has an individual entrance to a villa may have one sign along a street frontage in the following location:

- On the top / body of the villa; or
- On the boundary wall of the villa.

Regulations

Top / Body of Villa

- Total area of a sign must not exceed 3.75 m²
- Example of sign dimensions:
 - 1 m x 3.75 m,
 - 1.5 m x 2.5 m.

Boundary Wall

- Total area of a sign must not exceed 1.5 m²
- Example of sign dimensions:
 - 2 m x 75 cm,
 - 1.5 m x 1 m.

Figure 15: Villa Signage Zones

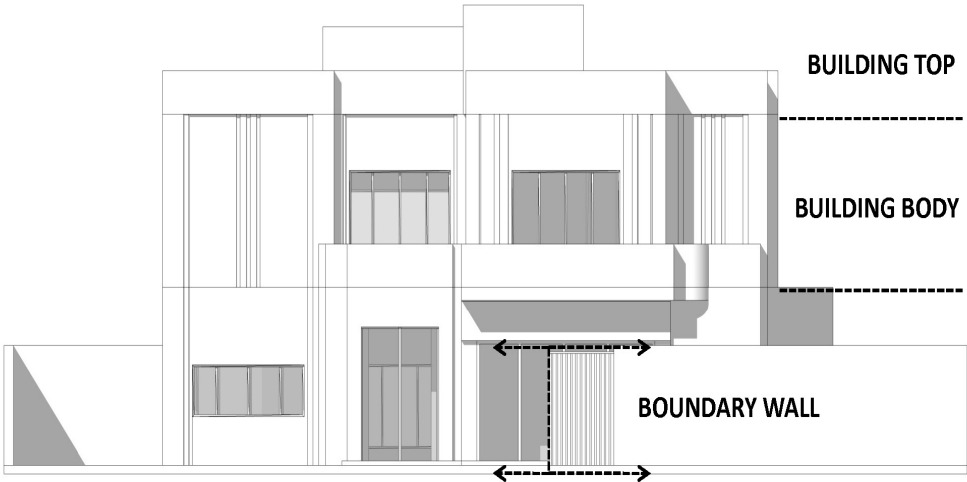


Table 13: Permitted Signs for Business in Villa

	3D without background
Top / Body of Villa	SIGNAGE
Boundary Wall	


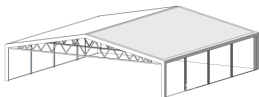
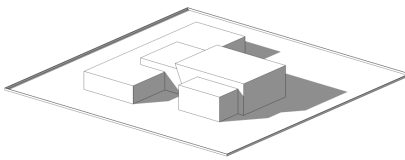
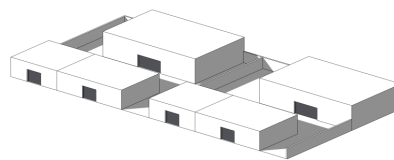
5. Industrial Signage

5.1 Signage Regulations on Industrial Buildings

This section defines the type, size and position of commercial signs on industrial buildings. Industrial buildings are classified as follows:

- Warehouse: typically a clearspan single level building.
- Industrial complex: a group of industrial buildings, predominantly warehouses, on a single plot.

Table 14: Industrial Building Typology

Building Type	Warehouse		Industrial Complex	
	Enclosed Clearspan	Open Clearspan	Industrial Complex with a Single Business	Industrial Complex with Multiple Businesses
Description	Clearspan single level structure enclosed by walls	Clearspan single level structure not fully enclosed by walls	Multiple buildings occupied by one business on a single plot	Multiple buildings occupied by several businesses on a single plot
Illustration				
Sign Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontage Zone - Section 5.2.1 Page 24 • Building Wall Zone - Section 5.2.3 Page 26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frontage Zone - Section 5.2.2 Page 25 • Building Wall Zone - Section 5.2.3 Page 26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Top - Section 5.3.1 Page 27 • Boundary Wall Zone - Section 5.3.1 Page 27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Zone - Section 5.3.2 Page 28

5.2 Signage Regulation on Warehouses

5.2.1 Frontage Signage Zone - Enclosed Clearspan Warehouse

Warehouse with one business:

- Sign shall not extend beyond the wall or roofline.

Warehouse with multiple businesses:

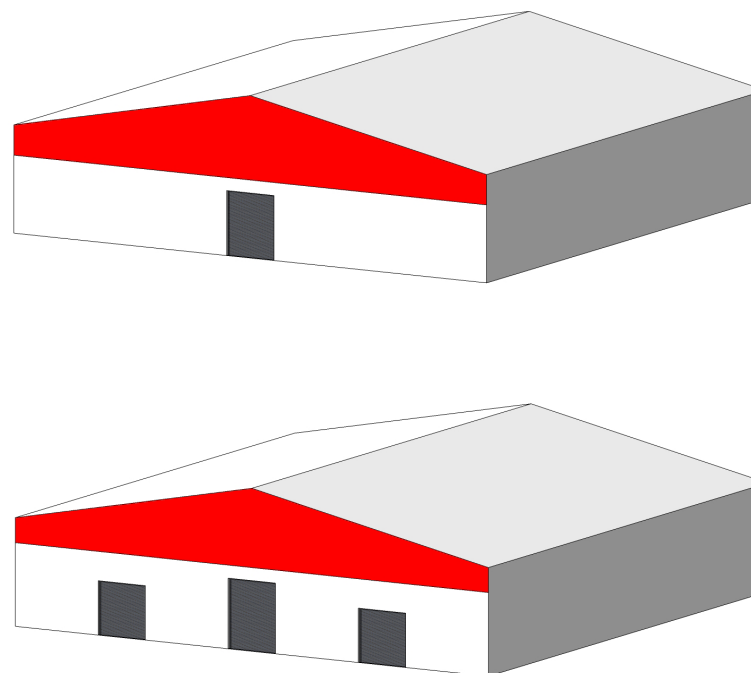
- Sign height shall not exceed 1.0 meter;
- Sign width shall not exceed width of business frontage; and
- Sign shall not extend beyond the wall or roofline.
- The bottom of the sign shall be 20 cm above the highest doorway.

If more than one business is located inside the warehouse and the business entrances are within the warehouse, the commercial signs must also be within the warehouse.

Exception:

If the warehouse is not the primary address of a business, a painted sign containing the business name may be located within the frontage zone according to the regulations above.

Figure 16: Frontage Signage Zone - Enclosed Clearspan Warehouse



Frontage Signage Zone: is the area of the wall above the main entrance extending 20 cm from the top of the highest doorway to the roof and across the width of the wall.

Table 15: Permitted Signs for Frontage Signage Zone - Enclosed Clearspan Warehouses

	Stencil cut	3D with background	3D without background
Frontage			

5.2.2 Frontage Signage Zone - Open Clearspan Warehouse

Warehouse with one business:

- Sign shall be securely attached to the structure;
- Sign shall be minimum of 4 meters from the ground to allow sufficient clearance for vehicles;
- Sign height shall not exceed 1.0 meter; and
- Sign shall not extend beyond the side of the warehouse or the roofline.

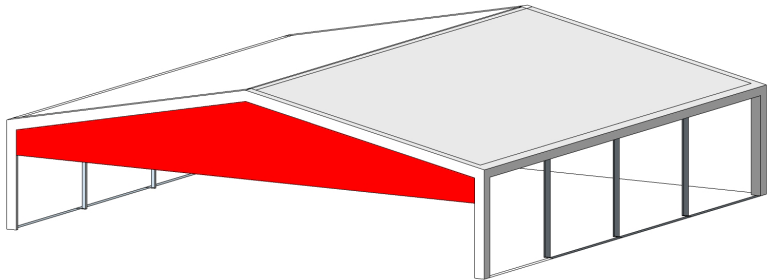
Warehouse with multiple businesses:

- Each sign shall be on the same height and the same distance from the ground (minimum 4 meters).
- Signs shall not extend beyond the side of the warehouse or roofline.

Exception:

If the warehouse is not the primary address of a business, a painted sign containing the business name may be located within the frontage zone according to the regulations above.

Figure 17: Frontage Signage Zone - Open Clearspan Warehouse



Frontage Zone: is the area of the wall above the main entrance extending from the building truss to the roof and across the width of the wall.

Table 16: Permitted Signs for Frontage Signage Zone - Open Clearspan Warehouses

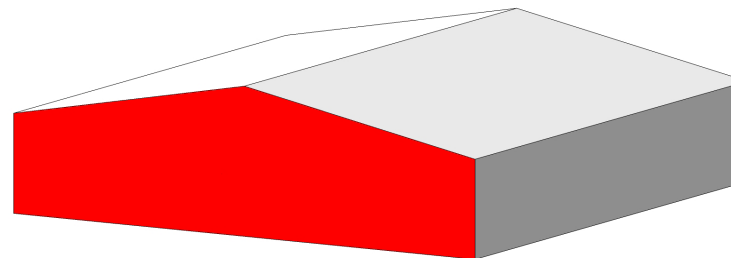
	Stencil cut	3D with background	3D without background
Frontage			

5.2.3 Building Wall Signage Zone - Industrial Warehouse

In addition to a required sign in the entrance zone, a sign may be added or the name of the business may be painted on any wall zone that has street frontage as follows:




- Sign shall not exceed 30% of the wall area; and
- Sign shall not extend beyond the wall or roof line.

Figure 18: Building Wall Signage Zone



Building Wall Signage Zone: is the area of the wall extending from the ground to the roofline and from wall to wall.

Table 17: Permitted Signs for Building Wall Signage Zone - Clearspan Warehouses

	Stencil cut	3D with background	3D without background
Building Wall			

5.3 Signage Regulation for an Industrial Complex

5.3.1 Industrial Complex with a Single Business

A sign shall be placed in the entrance zone (refer to section 5.2.1)

One sign may be along each street frontage in one of the following locations:

Building Top:

A sign may be located on the building top as follows:

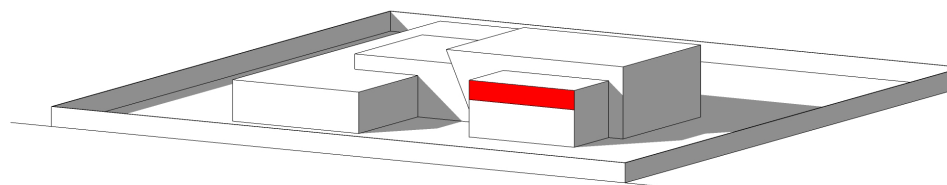
- Sign height shall not exceed 2 meters;
- Sign shall not exceed 75% of the width of the building wall.

Boundary Wall:

If a sign is not located in the building top zone, a sign may be located on a boundary wall as follows:

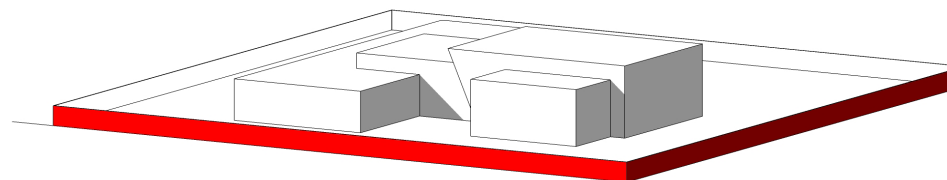
- sign height shall not exceed 1 meter.

Figure 19: Building Top Signage Zone



Building Top Signage Zone: is the top of the building wall extending 2 meters below the roof line and extending across the width of the building wall.

Figure 20: Boundary Wall Signage Zone



Boundary Wall Signage Zone: is the wall around the perimeter of a plot of an industrial complex.

Table 18: Permitted Signs - Industrial Complex with a Single Business

5.3.2 Industrial Complex with a Multiple Businesses

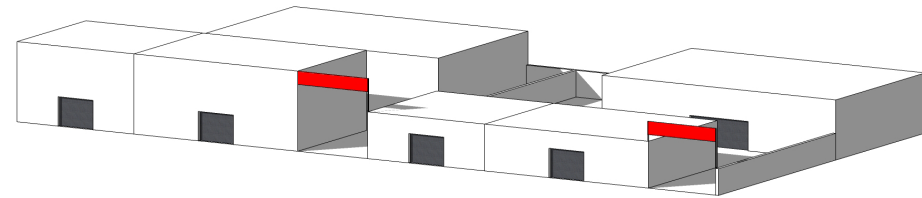
Where a warehouse located at the back of a plot, a sign may be located in the access signage zone as follows:

- Sign shall be located above the driveway between two buildings or between the building and the plot boundary;
- Sign shall be a minimum of 4.0 meters from the ground to provide sufficient clearance for vehicles;
- Width of the sign shall not exceed width of the driveway;
- Height of the sign shall not exceed 0.5 meters; and
- Where possible the top of the sign shall be aligned with the roof of an adjacent building.

Exception:

if more than one sign is located at the access zone, the signs shall be above each other and each sign shall be the same width.

Figure 21: Access Signage Zone



Access Signage Zone: is the area that spans the entrance of a driveway to a business (or businesses) located at the back of a plot.

Table 19: Permitted Signs for Access Signage Zone - Industrial Complex with Multiple Businesses

	Stencil cut	3D with background
Access Zone		

6. Other Signage

6.1 Other Signage

This section covers commercial signs that may not comply with the regulations.

Table 20: Other Signs

Sign Type	Description	Size
Artistic Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These signs are unique in design with artistic merit. They may not meet the requirements of this policy, however they present a positive image and are designed to complement the building. 	Subject to approval by the relevant municipality and the Department of Economic Development.
Heritage Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are existing signs that are of historic value. They may not meet the requirements of this policy, however they represent specific era of sign making in Abu Dhabi, are designed to complement the building and are well maintained. 	Subject to approval by relevant municipality and the Department of Economic Development.
Signs for Baqala Grocery Stores under the Abu Dhabi Government Retail Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs must comply with the signage regulation in Section 2.2 Store Signage of the document Licensing & Operational Requirements For Retail Stores (Grocery) In Abu Dhabi Metropolitan Area. 	As per Commercial Signage Regulations
Signs for Bank ATMs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A bank ATM may have a projecting sign above the ATM or the entrance leading to the ATM. 	<p>The minimum height of the sign from the ground should be equal to the height of the ATM or entrance door.</p> <p>Maximum surface area is 0.56 m² (eg. 75cm x 75cm, 85cm x 65cm, 1m x 50cm).</p>

6.2 Stand Alone Signage

This section covers commercial signs within a plot that are not located on a building.

Table 21: Stand Alone Signs

Sign Type	Description	Size
Monument Signs within a Plot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These signs may be used when a building is set back from the plot line by a minimum of 10 metres. These signs may be erected at an entry to a mall, hotel, resort or commercial centre on the same plot. The sign shall be located within the plot and must not interfere with pedestrian and vehicular traffic. 	Maximum 10 m ²





Commercial Signage Regulations

