



## Directional Signs in Ridgefield

Pioneer Street is a state highway and thus signs are prohibited in the right-of-way. Signs visible from the highway system, even on private property, may have regulations governing them, so please review the Highway Advertising Control Booklet (see link below) for compliance requirements.

Temporary signs are governed by RMC 18.710.270 and some important things to know:

- A. No Permit required. No sign permit is required for temporary signs.
  
- B. Removal. Temporary signs shall be removed if the sign is in need of repair, is worn, dilapidated or creates a public nuisance, or within sixty days, whichever occurs first.
  
- E. City Right-of-Way outside of the Roadway. Temporary signs are prohibited in the Roadway. Temporary signs on city right-of-way placed outside of the roadway, must comply with the following requirements:
  - 1. Location. Allowed only between the property line and the back of the nearest curb, or where no curb exists, between the property line and the nearest edge of the roadway pavement. Signs may not be placed on sidewalks, driveways or other paved areas designed for pedestrian or vehicular use, or as conditioned in a right-of-way use permit. Approval of the abutting owner is recommended.
  
  - 2. Type. Signs on stakes that can be manually pushed or hammered into the ground are allowed. All other signs are prohibited, unless specifically allowed by a right-of-way use permit.
  
  - 3. Size and height. Limited to four square feet, and three feet in height.
  
  - 4. Dilapidated or Nuisance signs. Any temporary sign in the right-of-way that is dilapidated or a nuisance, shall be removed by the person responsible for placement of the sign.



## Nuisance Signs

It is appropriate to deem some signs “nuisance signs” on a case-by-case determination, but there is not a legal justification for a general prohibition of directional signs. Public nuisance has a specific definition in code and signs aren’t “public nuisance” unless they are a hazardous to public safety. Community complaints, without a specific “hazardous sign” violation occurring, are not cause for a sign to be determined to be a “public nuisance.”

However, the determination of a “hazardous sign” is a subjective. I would suggest that caution be used when placing signs with a deference to a liberal interpretation the law RMC 19.710.040 (see below). Without prescriptive descriptions of hazards or traffic safety issues, the power goes to the enforcement official.

City Manager Stuart said that these violations, as matter of enforcement, will generally only affect signs creating line of sight issues, but this, ultimately, is up to the enforcement official’s discretion.

### 18.710.040 Prohibited Signs

F. Hazardous signs. Any sign that constitutes a traffic hazard or detriment to traffic safety by reason of its size, location, movement or method of illumination, or by obstructing the vision of drivers, or by distracting from the visibility of an official traffic control device by diverting or tending to divert the attention of drivers or moving vehicles from traffic movements on streets, roads, intersections or access facilities. No sign shall be erected so that it obstructs the vision of pedestrians or by glare or method of illumination constitutes a hazard to pedestrians or traffic. No sign may interfere with, mislead or confuse traffic.

### *Important Links*

State Highway Advertising Control Booklet

<https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Publications/Manuals/M22-95.htm>.

RMC 18.710.040 Prohibited Signs

[https://library.municode.com/wa/ridgefield/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=CO\\_TIT1\\_8DECO\\_CH18.710SI\\_18.710.040PRSI](https://library.municode.com/wa/ridgefield/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CO_TIT1_8DECO_CH18.710SI_18.710.040PRSI)

RMC 18.710.270 Temporary Signs

[https://library.municode.com/wa/ridgefield/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=CO\\_TIT1\\_8DECO\\_CH18.710SI\\_18.710.270TESI](https://library.municode.com/wa/ridgefield/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=CO_TIT1_8DECO_CH18.710SI_18.710.270TESI)

*\*This is a general summary of the issues discussed. The statute or ordinance governing these issues is the final arbiter of compliance.*