



SIGN BYLAW

Bylaw 3479

CONSOLIDATION

This consolidation is a copy of a bylaw consolidated under the authority of section 139 of the *Community Charter* and in accordance with section 1 of Consolidation and Revision Authority Bylaw 3514, 2013.

Current to November 21, 2024

Last amended on November 20, 2024

This Bylaw has been consolidated and printed under and by authority of the Corporate Officer for the Corporation of the District of North Cowichan.

LIST OF AMENDMENTS

Bylaw Number	Description of Amendment	Effective Date (YYYY-MM-DD)
3527	Repealing section 2(1), and substituting same	2013-12-18
3548	Amending section 9(1)(a) title change	2014-07-16
3624	Adding (f) to Section 5	2016-12-07
3836	Adding Section 8.2 (a) and (b)	2022-04-05
3980	Amend Section 1 definitions "political sign"; delete and replace sections 8, 8.1 and 8.2	2024-11-20



The Corporation of the District of North Cowichan

Sign Bylaw

Bylaw 3479

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The council of The Corporation of the District of North Cowichan enacts as follows:

Definitions

1 In this bylaw:

"accommodation" means a business listed in the most current British Columbia Approved Accommodation Guide;

"attraction" means a location within North Cowichan that belongs to 1 or more of the following categories:

- (a) artisans;
- (b) breweries, distilleries and cideries;
- (c) bridges, buildings and structures;
- (d) forestry;
- (e) gardens and parks;
- (f) historic and heritage sites;
- (g) markets;

- (h) murals;
- (i) museums;
- (j) orchards and farms;
- (k) view points;
- (l) wineries and vineyards.

"attraction directional sign" means a sign designed, installed and maintained by North Cowichan regarding a permit for an accommodation or attraction;

"canopy" means a fixed, unenclosed structure projecting from a building wall to protect the public from the weather;

"clearance curb" means the distance between a sign or canopy and the elevation of the nearest curb line vertically coinciding with the horizontal axis of the lowest part of the sign or canopy;

"clearance height" means the distance between the lowest part of a sign or canopy and the grade below it;

"fascia sign" means a sign that projects no more than 0.3 m from the face or wall of a building or structure to which it is attached;

"freestanding sign" means a sign supported by a structure rather than attached to a building;

"political sign" means a temporary freestanding sign(s) related to a municipal, provincial or federal election, by-election, assent voting, plebiscite, or other statutory voting process that addresses an issue in the public interest, advertises a candidate seeking public office or advertises a political party. [BL3980]

"sign" means a structure, natural object, thing, painting or representation

- (a) used as, or in the nature of, an announcement, direction, or advertisement, and
- (b) intended to attract attention to an object, product, place, activity, person; institution, organization, or business.

Permit requirements and exemptions

- 2** (1) A person must not erect a sign without first obtaining a permit. [BL3527]
- (2) Despite subsection (1), a permit is not required to erect or place the following:
 - (a) a temporary sign announcing the date of a charitable event or function, if the sign is erected or placed no sooner than 2 weeks before, and removed no later than 3 days after, the date of the event or function;
 - (b) a sign promoting a community health, safety, or welfare campaign;
 - (c) an unlighted sign, smaller than 0.75 m² in area, selling, leasing or renting real or personal property on which the sign is displayed;

- (d) a sign erected or placed by North Cowichan, other than an attraction directional sign;
- (e) a political sign for a candidate or issue in connection with an election or other voting opportunity;
- (f) a parking entrance or exit sign, smaller than 0.57 m² in area;
- (g) a sign smaller than 1 m² in area displaying the name of a contractor, engineer, or architect during construction, alteration, or demolition of a building or structure;
- (h) a window sign whose area does not exceed 25% of the area of the window to which it is attached;
- (i) a sign smaller than 0.57 m² in area, displayed to prevent trespassing;
- (j) a sign smaller than 0.57 m² in area, attached to a dwelling house, and displaying only the name and occupation of the dwelling house=s occupant;
- (k) a bulletin board, smaller than 1.2 m² in area, on a public building, school, or church property;
- (l) a sign smaller than 2.3 m² in area, in a subdivision, displayed for no more than 6 months, advertising lots for sale. [BL3527]

Applications

3 An application for a permit to erect or place a sign must include plans and specifications showing the following:

- (a) the boundaries of the lot on which the sign is proposed to be erected or placed;
- (b) the sign=s proposed location relative to any building wall;
- (c) the sign=s proposed height and the proposed clearance under the sign, measured from grade;
- (d) the materials, construction method, illumination, and colours proposed to be used for the sign.

Permit fee

4 The fee for a permit to erect a sign is prescribed in the Fees Bylaw.

Freestanding sign

5 A freestanding sign must not

- (a) exceed 8 m in height,
- (b) exceed the smaller of
 - (i) 18 m² in area, or

- (ii) 0.63 m² in area per lineal metre of street frontage,
- (c) be located closer than 1.5 m to an adjoining parcel,
- (d) project over a public right-of-way,
- (e) have a clearance height lower than 4.3 m where there is vehicle traffic, or
- (f) be located within 2 m of irrigation lines on public property, including traffic circles, roundabouts and boulevards. [BL3624]

Fascia sign

6 A fascia sign or canopy sign must not

- (a) have a clearance height lower than 2.7 m,
- (b) have a clearance curb less than 0.6 m, or
- (c) exceed 0.3 m² in area per lineal metre of building frontage.

Projecting sign

7 A projecting sign must not

- (a) have a clearance height lower than 2.7 m,
- (b) have a clearance curb less than 0.6 m, or
- (c) exceed the smaller of
 - (i) 18 m² in area, or,
 - (ii) 0.63 m² in area per lineal metre of street frontage.

Political signs

8 No person shall place a political sign on municipally owned properties including:

- (a) on a highway meridian, traffic circle, roundabout, or in a park;
- (b) recreation facilities, municipal hall, fire stations, or similar facilities; and
- (c) on any tree, planter, utility pole, waste receptacle, newspaper box, or mailbox located on municipally owned land.

8.1 No person shall place a political sign in a location that:

- (a) obstructs or detracts from any traffic control device or signage;
- (b) obstructs a line of vision at an intersection;
- (c) creates a safety hazard for pedestrians, cyclists, or vehicles; or
- (d) is within one metre of a fire hydrant.

- 8.2** No person shall place a political sign within 100 metres of a voting place on general voting day or on an advance voting day.
- 8.3** No person shall place a political sign that:
- (a) contains any logo, mark, or symbol owned by the Municipality, or resembling that of the Municipality; or
 - (b) contains any profanity or defamatory language.
- 8.4** No person shall post a political sign related to a general local election or by-election, a general school election or by-election, or assent voting or other statutory voting process earlier than 36 days before general voting day.
- 8.5** A person who is authorized to place a political sign by this bylaw shall remove or cause to be removed the political sign within seven (7) days after general voting day.
- 8.6** A bylaw enforcement officer may remove, and the Chief Election Officer may order the removal of, any political sign that the Bylaw Enforcement Officer has reasonable grounds to believe is placed or installed in contravention of this bylaw.
- 8.7** Political signs removed pursuant to section 8.6:
- (a) will be stored at the Municipal Hall and may be claimed by a candidate or candidate representative, or a person authorized by a candidate or candidate representative.
 - (b) not claimed within seven (7) days after the period set out in section 8.5 of this bylaw become the property of the Municipality and may be destroyed or otherwise disposed of without notice to any person. [BL3980]

Accommodation and attraction

- 9** (1) A person may apply for an annual permit for an attraction directional sign, by
- (a) submitting a completed application in the form prescribed by the Director of Engineering and Operations,
 - (b) paying the fee prescribed in the Fees Bylaw, and
 - (c) posting a maintenance and repair cash bond of \$175 for each sign approved. [BL3548; BL3624]
- (2) Approval for more than 1 attraction directional sign will only be granted for a single route from a main highway to the attraction or accommodation.
- (3) After a permit for an attraction directional sign is issued, North Cowichan must acquire, install, repair and maintain the sign.
- (4) Despite subsection (3), North Cowichan will only replace an attraction directional

sign 3 times before requiring that the permit holder obtain a new permit.

- (5) A permit holder must notify North Cowichan as soon as possible if their attraction directional sign is missing, damaged, or no longer required.
- (6) North Cowichan may remove an attraction directional sign if
 - (a) repairs, maintenance, or alterations are required to the sign,
 - (b) the sign poses a health or safety risk to the public,
 - (c) the permit for the sign has not been renewed,
 - (d) the accommodation or attraction no longer meets the qualifications for an attraction directional sign permit, or
 - (e) non-approved signage is added.

Prohibitions

- 10** (1) Subject to section 908(3) of the *Local Government Act*, no sign may be erected or placed on, against, or above a building or structure=s roof, roof eave, or parapet.
- (2) No person may drop or scatter an advertisement.
- (3) No more than 1 flashing sign is permitted on a lot.
- (4) No flashing signs are permitted on land zoned Commercial Local Zone (C1) under North Cowichan’s Zoning Bylaw.

Sign owners duty

- 11** The owner of each sign erected in North Cowichan must keep the sign and its supports, braces, guys, and anchors in good repair in terms of safety and appearance.

Prosecutions

- 12** (1) A person who violates a provision of this bylaw is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$1,000 plus the cost of prosecution.
- (2) A separate offence is considered to be committed on each day during which a violation continues.

Severability

- 13** If any provision of this bylaw is, for any reason, found invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the provision must be severed and the remainder of the bylaw left enforceable and in effect.

Repeal

- 14** [Repealed; BL3624]

Read a first, second and third time on July 4, 2012
Adopted on July 18, 2012