Philadelphia’s Window Sign Law

What businesses need to know.
The Philadelphia Code (Section 14-904)

• This new law limits the amount of window or transparent door space that can be covered with signs

• The law promotes good design and supports small businesses

• The City no longer requires permits for window signs

• Businesses can use their windows to advertise hours, goods or services, and “this week’s specials”
The new sign law will...

• Improve neighborhoods by removing excessive signage, and
• Enhance safety by allowing people to see in and out of stores
The Sign Law

- Helps to promote public health
- It is content neutral, but a large % of advertising is for unhealthy products
To Whom Does This Law Apply?

• All businesses located in a fixed structure.
  (It does not apply to mobile vehicles or newsstands.)
What does the law require?

• Only 20% of window and transparent doors facing a street can be covered with signs.
What is considered a window sign?

Any sign that is:
• Attached or affixed to,
• Etched into,
• Leaning against, or
• Otherwise placed within 18 inches of a street-facing window or transparent door visible from the outside of the building.
Window signs include:

- Posters
- Ads
- Flyers
- Stickers
- Banners
- Digital signs
- Open/close signs
- Product signs
- Store name signs
- All temporary & permanent signs
How can I comply with the sign law?

• Calculate the total area of all transparent, street-facing sides of your business. (windows & doors)

• Calculate the total area of signs on windows & transparent doors space.

• Make sure sign area does not exceed 20% of total transparent area.
Example #1

Window signs exceed maximum 20%
Total transparent area = 160'
Window sign area = 114'
Window sign area as % of total transparent glazed area = 71%
Example #2

Window signs do not exceed 20%
Total transparent area = 160’
Window sign area = 31’
Window sign area as % of total transparent glazed area = 19%
What happens if a business has more signs than allowed by the new law?

- A violation results in a fine of up to $300
- Each day is considered a separate offense
For more information:

- Flyers are available in the following languages:
  Spanish, Traditional & Simplified Chinese, and Korean
- Visit www.phila.gov/li
- Call 215-685-5683