City of Carmel-by-the-Sea Guidelines
Posting Address Identification Numbers
Planning and Building Department

1. Purpose

These guidelines explain the requirements for the display of address numbers on all buildings and structures within the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea.

The intent of the guidelines is to promote the proper display, or posting, of address numbers that:

- Comply with the California Fire Code, California Residential Code, and California Building Code, which require approved and visible address identification.
- Contribute to the implementation of an addressing system that promotes public safety and findability in emergency situations.
- Harmonize with the City's existing sign, lighting, and design standards under the Carmel Municipal Code (CMC) (Title 15 Building and Construction; Title 17 Zoning). Relevant CMC language available for reference on page 16.
- Preserve the City's traditions and character while ensuring public safety and compliance with the adopted standard addressing system that requires assigned address numbers to be posted and visible from the street.

2. Application

These standards apply to:

- All existing and new buildings, commercial buildings, multi-unit buildings, and public buildings
- All address identification required under the adopted addressing ordinance in the Carmel Municipal Code (CMC Title 15)
- These guidelines apply to all parcels within City boundaries that were not previously assigned address numbers by the County of Monterey

3. Address Numbers Specifications

Based on California Fire Code §505.1 and California Building Code

Character Format

- Must be Arabic numerals or alphabetical letters
- Numbers must not be spelled out

Updated: August 2026

- Minimum height: 4 inches
- Minimum stroke width: 1/2 inch
- Color/contrast: Characters must contrast with their background for day and night legibility

4. Location and Placement Requirements

Primary Location

Numbers must be:

- Visible from the street or road that fronts the property
- Mounted on the front facade, entry gate, or a street-facing wall that provides the clearest visibility

Buildings Not Visible From the Public Way

If a building cannot be seen from the street:

- Install a monument sign, post, or other approved sign at the property frontage per CFC §505.1
- Placement must not obstruct pedestrian access or violate residential sidewalk standards under the CMC

Multi-Unit and Multi-Building Lots

Properties with Multiple Buildings:

- The lot or complex shall post its assigned primary address number visible from the street, each building shall have its own number, and individual Unit Identifier, or Secondary Address number posted

Multi-Unit Buildings:

- Multi-Family Dwelling Units and Mixed-Use Building shall have a primary address number and an individual unit identifier posted
- Property owners are responsible for notifying their tenants and posting Unit Identifiers

Commercial Buildings

Numbers must be visible to pedestrians and emergency responders

5. Illumination and Lighting Guidelines - Application of CMC Lighting and Sign Standards

The California Fire Code requires address numbers to be visible; it does not mandate illumination. The Carmel Municipal Code restricts exterior lighting to protect village character.

- Residential buildings within the Wildland Urban Interface areas must display **reflectorized** numbers (*see page 18 to review the WUI map*) (California Wildland Urban Interface Code, *403.2.4 Addresses for Buildings)*

Lighting Aligned with the CMC

Under CMC lighting and sign standards (CMC § 15.36.070, CMC § 17.40)

- Down-directed, shielded lighting is permitted
- Light must not cause glare onto neighboring properties or the public right or the public-right-of way
- Warm, low-luminosity fixtures consistent with the City's dark-sky restrictions are required

Prohibited Lighting

- Internal illumination of address signs is prohibited
- Flashing, neon, LED color-changing, or backlit panels are prohibited under residential sign rules

Posting and Display

Numbers may be posted in a vertical or horizontal orientation, a diagonal pattern

Numbers may be posted as individual numbers or grouped in within a sign or plaque

6. Materials and Design Standards

Materials used should be consistent with Carmel's Design Guidelines and CMC Title 17.

- Use natural, subdued materials compatible with Carmel's architectural character
- Avoid glossy plastics, neon colors, or materials that violate CMC Title 17
- Fasteners must be concealed where possible
- Colors must complement building materials per City design review requirements

Commercial Buildings and Directory Signs

Installation of building identifiers and address numbers or changes to existing commercial directory signs are subject to the established process for review and approval under CMC § 17.58.

7. House Name Signs

Traditional house name signs remain acceptable but do not replace assigned address numbers.

House name signs may continue to be displayed in accordance with existing sign code limits (CMC Title 17).

8. Installation, Maintenance, and Enforcement of Address Numbers

Installation

- Required before issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for new construction
- Numbers shall be posted on existing buildings and structures after the Ordinance goes into effect

Maintenance

- Numbers must remain legible and unobstructed by vegetation, decor, or architectural elements (CBC §502.1; CFC §505.1)

Enforcement

- Violations may result in notices of correction and administrative penalties consistent with CMC Title 1
- The Building Official or Fire Official may require supplemental signage if visibility is insufficient

9. Special Cases - Historic Properties (referenced in CMC §17.32)

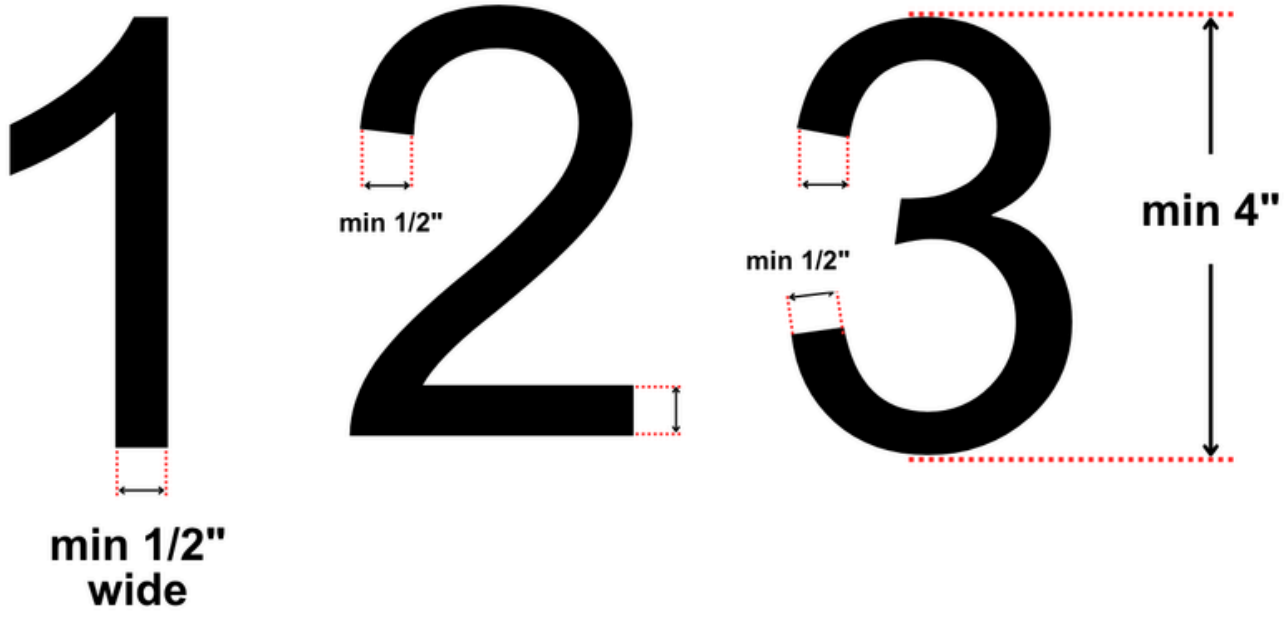
Number design must follow:

- CMC historic preservation standards
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards
- Use of minimally visible mounting hardware and reversible installation methods

10. Summary of Mandatory Requirements

- Arabic numerals or letters (not spelled out)
- 4 -inch minimum height; 1/2-inch minimum stroke
- Contrast with background
- Visible from the public way
- Supplemental signs required if building is not visible
- Numbers must be maintained and legible
- Residential buildings within the WUI areas must dispay reflectorized numbers (*see page 18*)

Size Requirements – Not to Scale



Example 1.1 Appropriate Contrast to Background

















Example 1.2 Insufficient contrast with the background







Example 1.3 Numbers must contrast with the background



Contrast between the numbers and their background make the address number clear and visible for identification



The lack of contrast results in numbers blending in with their background making them difficult to read

Example 2.1 Examples of Prohibited illumination

Address Number may not be backlit







Example 2.2 Examples of Prohibited Illumination





Address Number may not be backlit



Example 2.3 Examples of Acceptable Lighting





The light is facing downward onto the address numbers





Example 2.4 Examples of Acceptable Lighting



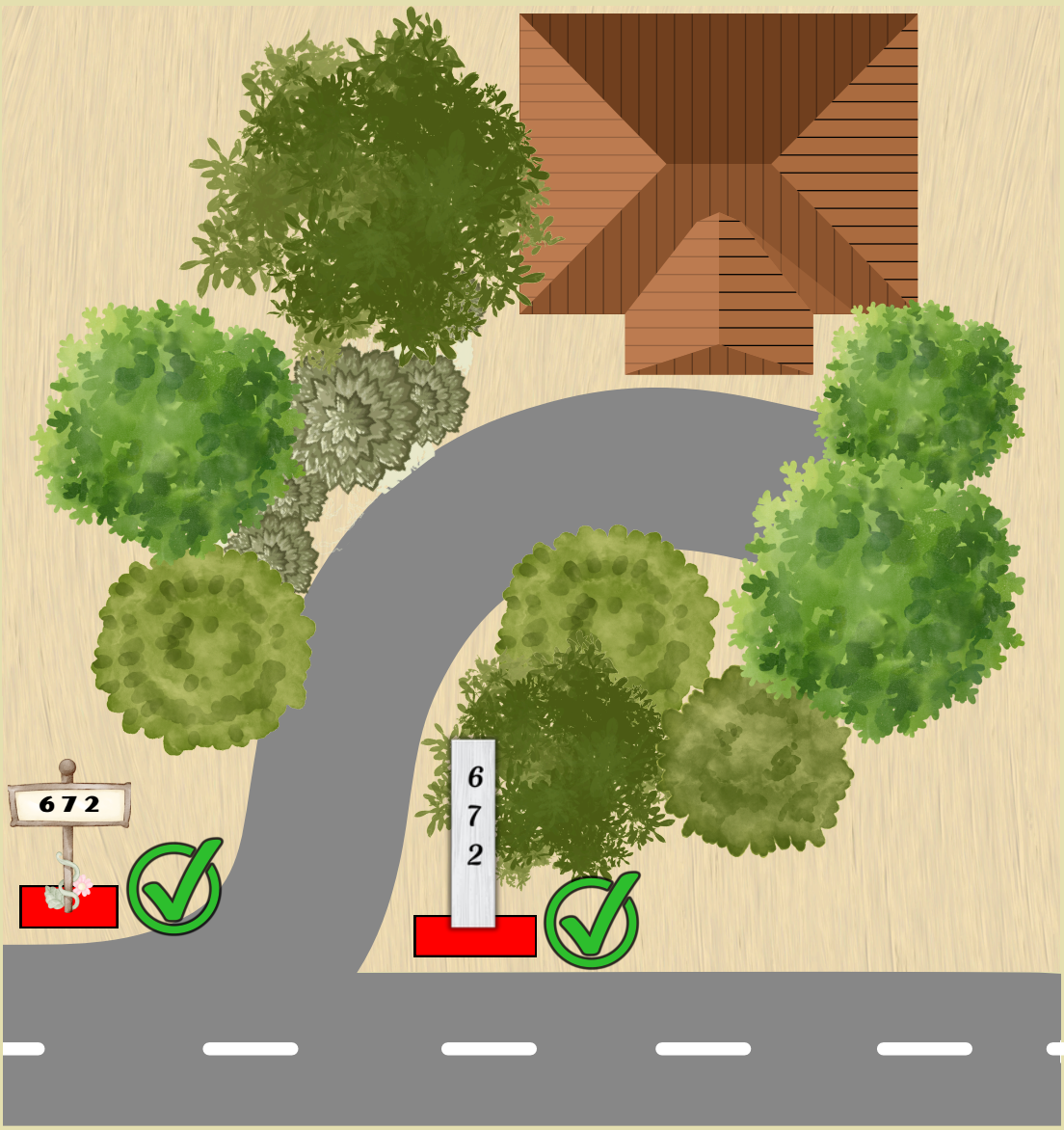


The light is facing downward
onto the address numbers





Example 3.1 Examples of Address Placement for Obstructed View from the Road



Proper placement is shown at the end of the driveway, highlighted in red

Obstructed View from the Road

If your property has an obstructed view from the road or if it is not visible from the road, post your address number at the end of the driveway or in a location where it visible from the public road.

Example 3.2

Examples of Acceptable Placement for Obstructed Views









Numbers should be placed in a location easily visible from the road

If the front of you property is not visible from the road, place your address number in a location easily visible from the road.

Example 4.1 Local Examples from Unincorporated Carmel









Carmel-by-the-Sea Municipal Code Language

In accordance with the Carmel-By-The-Sea Municipal Code (CMC), buildings and parcels shall be identified by the address identification requirements of the California Building Standards Code.

§ 15.55.100 of the CMC was amended to state:

505.1 Address identification. *Buildings and parcels shall be identified by the address identification requirements of the California Building Standards Code.*

California Building Code Standards explain the requirements for the display of address identification characters:

502.1 Address identification.

- New and existing buildings shall be provided with approved address identification.
- The address identification shall be legible and placed in a position that is visible from the street or road fronting the property.
- Address identification characters shall contrast with their background.
- Address numbers shall be Arabic numbers or alphabetical letters.
- Numbers shall not be spelled out.
- Each character shall be not less than 4 inches (102 mm) high with a minimum stroke width of 1/2 inch (12.7mm).
- Where required by the fire code official, address identification shall be provided in additional approved locations to facilitate emergency response.
- Where access is by means of a private road and the building cannot be viewed from the public way, a monument, pole or other sign or means shall be used to identify the structure. Address identification shall be maintained.

STANDARDS

§ 17.40.060 Residential Zones.

Permanent signs in residential zones shall be permitted; provided, that signage does not exceed one sign per parcel and total sign area does not exceed two square feet.

(Ord. 2004-01 § 1, 2004; Ord. 2004-02 § 1, 2004; Ord. 2021-04 § 2, 2021)

§ 17.40.070 Prohibited Signage.

The following signage shall be prohibited in all zones:

A. Signs visible from exterior areas of a building that are flashing, self-illuminated, neon, phosphorescent, glossy, incorporate internal lights or movement, and

televisions or monitors which are used to attract attention to, advertise, announce, or communicate information of any kind to the public.

B. Signs which include strings of small lights around doors or windows.

C. Signs, displays or other installations that include balloons, streamers, or other similar notice-attracting features.

D. Inflatable signs.

E. Projecting signs.

F. Signs located in such a manner to constitute a potential traffic hazard or obstruct the view of any authorized traffic sign or signal device, or designed to resemble or conflict with any authorized traffic control sign.

G. Signs emitting audible sounds.

H. Signs in the public right-of-way, except for signs posted by a Federal, State, or local governmental entity with permission of the City and application notices posted in accordance with CMC § 17.46.070(A)(1).

(Ord. 2004-01 § 1, 2004; Ord. 2004-02 § 1, 2004; Ord. 2021-04 § 2, 2021; Ord. 202306 § 3, 2023)

California Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Code

403.2.4 Addresses for Buildings

All Buildings shall be issued an address by the Local Jurisdiction which conforms to that jurisdiction's overall address system. Utility and miscellaneous Group U Buildings are not required to have a separate address; however, each Residential Unit within a Building shall be separately identified.

The size of letters, numbers and symbols for addresses shall conform to the standards in the California Fire Code, California Code of Regulations Title 24, Part 9.

Addresses for residential Buildings shall be reflectorized.

[CCR, Title 14 §1274.03]

The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Zone is the **purple** overlay

