Clark-Cowlitz FIRE RESCUE	Fire Code Standard Premise Identification and Addressing	
	Date: 4/01/2026	Number: 5-1

Purpose

This Information Bulletin is a summary of Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue interpretations of City and State Codes. Information contained herein applies to typical instances and may not address all individual circumstances. This Information Bulletin is being provided in order to establish clear policy with respect to the identification of premises.

This Information Bulletin is intended to provide direction for a means of displaying approved address numbers on buildings in a consistent location, size, style, contrasting colors and means of illumination, so as to ensure rapid identification of a particular location in the event of an emergency. Address number and all other signs must also meet the requirements of the appropriate Community Development Department.

Code References

Washington Fire Code as adopted and amended by the Clark-Cowlitz Fire Rescue

REQUIREMENT SUMMARY – FREQUENTLY REFERENCED REQUIREMENTS ALL ADDRESSES:

The format and location must be approved by the Fire Department.

LOCATION: Address numbers shall be located on the high point corner of the building facing the address side of the building and be visible from the street. See diagram below.

ILLUMINATION: Address numbers shall be illuminated, internally or externally, during nighttime hours.

COLOR: Address numbers shall contrast the background color.

COMPLEX DIRECTORY: Where two or more buildings are set back off the street in excess of 150-feet, an illuminated complex directory shall be provided at the main entrance to the site.

COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES: 8-24 inch building numbers as determined by Table #1 (or as determined and shall be proportional to the height of the building). 6-inch suite numbers, with a minimum ½ inch stroke, shall be located on the front and back doors.

MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL: 8-18 inch building numbers as determined by Table #1. 8-inch directional numbers shall be visible from the walkway. Individual unit numbers shall be a minimum of 6-inch numbers.

SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL: 6-inch building numbers.

1. ADDRESS NUMBER ASSIGNMENT:

Only address numbers assigned and approved by the Community Development Department may be displayed on buildings; property and/or building owners are not allowed to display address numbers which have not met the requirements of the appropriate Community Development Department.

2. ADDRESS LOCATION AND SIZE REQUIREMENTS:

Address numbers shall be displayed in locations on buildings as approved by the Fire Department. All required address signs shall be of the minimum size as required by the Fire Department. Address numbers are required to be displayed in such a manner as to be continuously displayed, non-moving, and readily visible and legible at all times to emergency vehicles approaching from either direction along the public street on which the address is assigned. Non-continuous display signs, such as changing electronic or video displays are not permitted to be used as required address signs. Moving or nonfixed signs, such as flags are not permitted to be used as required address signs. In situations where there is a public entrance to a property, building, or complex in addition to the entrance from the public street on which the address is assigned, additional address number signs may be required to be displayed at those additional entrances. Buildings located on the property so that the required address displayed on the building is not visible from the public street fronting the property, additional address number signs will be required at the public street entrance to the property, driveway or private road, and at any intersecting points along the driveway or private road leading to the building. Required address signs on buildings shall be placed at a height and location on the building so as to be readily visible from the public street fronting the building at all times.

Required address signs shall not be placed at a height or location on the building where the address sign is visually obstructed, confused or camouflaged by other structures or buildings, building structural or decorative features, windows, glazing, or by expected locations of parked or stopped vehicles (especially high-profile vehicles, such as commercial trucks and busses), other signs, trees or other existing or potential obstructions. Obstructions which are installed or occur after a required address sign is approved and installed, the Fire Department may require the relocation of the required address sign, or the removal of the obstruction.

Residential single-family dwellings: The address numbers shall be displayed so as to be visible from the street fronting the main dwelling unit on the property; shops, detached garages, shops and other non-residential buildings on the same property, with the same assigned address need not have an address displayed. The required address numbers shall be 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke.

Residential duplex and triplex dwellings where each dwelling unit has an individual address, the address numbers of each duplex or triplex dwelling shall be displayed so as to be visible from the public street fronting the duplex or triplex. The required address numbers shall be 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke.

Residential multi-family dwellings, hotels, motels, including buildings with four or more individual residential units, such as an apartment building or apartment complex, and all hotels or motels, the address numbers of each building must be displayed so as to be visible from the street fronting the building. If a complex consists of multiple buildings sharing one common address number, the address number need not be displayed on each building; however, the unit numbers within that building must be displayed on the building exterior. The address numbers shall be displayed in the following sizes:

One address for multiple buildings: Primary address of the property shall be sized as determined in Table #1. Each individual unit shall have the unit identification, numbers or letters, 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke located at or near the primary entrance to the unit. The identification of individual units within each building shall also be displayed on the building, 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke. A number range of units may be displayed in lieu of each individual number (such as 1 - 20, 21 – 40).

Different address for each building: The address for each building shall be sized as determined in Table #1. Each individual unit shall have the unit identification, numbers or letters, 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke located at or near the primary entrance to the unit. The identification of individual units within each building shall also be displayed on the building, 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke. A number range of units may be displayed in lieu of each individual number (such as 1 - 20, 21 – 40).

Multiple addresses within one building: Each address assigned to the building shall be sized as determined in Table #1. Each individual unit shall have the unit identification, numbers or letters, 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke located at or near the primary entrance to the unit. The identification of individual units within each building shall also be displayed on the building, 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke. A number range of units may be displayed in lieu of each individual number (such as 1 - 20, 21 – 40).

Mobile or modular home dwellings: Each assigned address must be displayed on or in front of each individual unit. In situations where each dwelling unit shares a common address number, such as within a mobile home park or other similar complex, the address number must be displayed at each entrance to the park or complex and sized per Table #1. The individual address or space number or each mobile or modular home shall be displayed on or near the front of each mobile or modular home within the park or complex, 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke. Where individual roads or driveways exist within the park or complex, the identification of individual units served by each road or driveway shall also be displayed at each end of each

road or driveway, 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke. A number range of units may be displayed in lieu of each individual unit numbers (such as spaces 1 - 20, 21 – 40).

Occupied recreational vehicle parking and camping spaces: Each assigned address must be displayed at each entrance to the park or camp and sized as determined by Table #1. The individual address or space number of each parking space intended for use by occupied recreational vehicles, and each camping space shall be displayed at the entrance of each space, 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke. Where individual roads or driveways exist within the park or campground, the identification of individual spaces served by each road or driveway shall also be displayed at each end of each roads or driveways, 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke. A number range of spaces may be displayed in lieu of each individual unit numbers (such as spaces 1 - 20, 21 – 40).

Commercial, industrial, retail and institutional buildings and all other properties with nonresidential buildings: The assigned address shall be displayed so as to be visible from the street fronting the building and be sized as determined by Table #1 and be proportional to the size of the building. Individual tenant spaces or suites entering directly from the exterior of the building shall have the space or suite number (or letter) shall be 6- inches in height and a ½ inch stroke. The designator for individual tenant spaces having access from interior portions of the building shall be 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke. For tenant spaces or suites having non-public direct access from the rear exterior of the building and space or suite number shall be 6-inches in height and a ½ inch stroke. Interior tenant space or suite numbers, and addresses required at the non-public rear exterior access of buildings need not be illuminated.

Undeveloped property, property under development and construction sites: Where an address has been assigned but no completed structure exists, the assigned address shall be displayed at each entrance to the property. Special temporary site address signs are required to be displayed at all entrances to construction sites and undeveloped properties where an address has been assigned. The special temporary address sign shall have address numbers 12-inches in height with a 2-inch stroke. These signs need not be illuminated.

Table #1 Minimum Height/Width

Address Number distance from Street	Height of Number	Width of Number	Stroke Width
0-40 Feet**	8 inch	4 inch	1 inch
41-60 Feet**	10 inch	5 inch	1.5 inch
61-80 feet**	12 inch	6 inch	2 inch
81+ feet*,**	18 inch	10 inch	3 inch

* Depending on the situation, the Fire Marshal may require larger than 18-inch address numbers.

** The addressing numbers shall also be proportional to the building.

3. **ADDRESS ILLUMINATION REQUIREMENTS:**

All addresses required to be displayed on a building or other permanent structure shall be illuminated during all hours of darkness. The source of illumination shall be controlled by a photoelectric device which causes the Standard Building Addressing address to be illuminated automatically during all hours of darkness. Timer based control devices are not allowed to be used for the purposes of controlling address illumination. The address numbers may be illuminated by a light source placed behind, within or near the address numbers. Examples of acceptable light sources include self-contained illuminated signs, landscape lighting, decorative exterior building lighting and advertising lighting.

The power source for the illumination of the address numbers must be under the control of the building or property owner. Illumination from other ambient or nearby sources, such as streetlights, advertising signs on nearby buildings, or other sources not controlled by the building or property owner are not considered sufficient for the purpose of required address illumination.

Addressing used to identify individual tenant spaces or suites at the interior entrance within, or rear exterior non-public access to a commercial building need not be illuminated. Special temporary address signs at construction sites and undeveloped properties need not be illuminated.

4. **ADDRESS NUMBER COLOR:**

All required address signs shall be of a color combination where the numbers contrast with the background at all times. Address numbers placed on windows or other glazing may appear to have an acceptable contrasting background during daylight hours but may have an unacceptable non-contrasting background during hours of darkness. Reflective signs are acceptable, provided that when illuminated by a light source the reflected light from the sign produces contrasting colors which distinguish the address numbers from any other reflective material. The contrast between address numbers and building color will be approved by the Fire Marshal during final fire inspection.

5. **ADDRESS NUMBER STYLE:**

All required addressing shall be of the minimum size as required by the Fire Department based on the primary type of occupancy within the building where the address sign is required. All sizes listed are the minimum size which is required to be displayed. When numbers are used as part of the address, the numbers shall be displayed by using numerical characters and not by using letters to spell the number(s). The style or font of the characters used shall be of a style or font which provides characters which are clear and easily recognizable.

6. **COMPLEX OR FACILITY DIRECTORY AND MAP:**

For all properties where more than two buildings exist, (such as apartment complexes, industrial parks and commercial/retail developments), or otherwise required by the Fire Department, a map of the complex or facility shall be displayed at or near each entrance from the public street or roadway to serve as a directory to assist in the rapid and safe response of emergency vehicles to locations within the complex or facility. The complex or facility map shall clearly show and identify all buildings on the property, including all roadways, all access points to the facility from the public streets or roadways, all emergency vehicle access points, addresses, unit numbers, fire hydrant locations and all other specific details as may be required by the Fire Department. This requirement does not apply to properties which are primarily used for residential single family, duplex or triplex dwellings. The sign shall be a minimum 3-foot by 2-foot in size and installed so as to be readily readable from a vehicle at the entrance to the complex.

Examples of a Complex Map:

Example: Commercial/Industrial Buildings

Example: Residential Multi-Family Buildings