




Christchurch City Council  


# Billboard Best Practice Guidance

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## Introduction

1. Background
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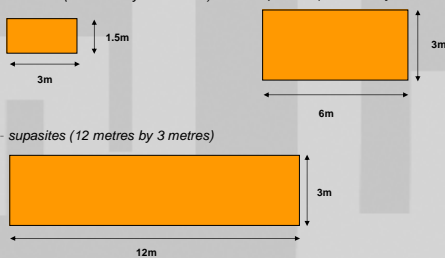



## 1. Background

### Billboard Definitions

•A sign, often freestanding, consisting of a number of standard-sized poster panels (LTNZ, 1993).

- bulletins (3 metres by 1.5 metres)
- posters (6 metres by 3 metres)
- supasites (12 metres by 3 metres)







## 1. Background

### Billboard Definitions

- spectaculars (vary in size but greater than 12 metres by 3 metres)






## 1. Background

### Billboard Definitions

•The advertising industry has adopted a standard size of 6 x 3 metres (18m<sup>2</sup>) for their adverts (CCC, 2004)

For consistency, we have considered all billboard sizes and their relationship to road safety rather than just the standard size 6m x 3m.



## 2. Existing Practice

### Cucumber billboard ruled too offensive

A billboard advertisement picturing two tomatoes at the base of a cucumber next to the words "thank God for serious steak" has been ruled too offensive.

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) agreed with a complaint that the billboard picture, on Christchurch's Durham Street, had an "obvious sexual link". The complainant, H. Stephens, said she appreciated clean and humorous billboard advertising, but the billboard promoting the *Meat-Steak-House* and *Bar* was "completely inappropriate and offensive".

The agency that created the ad, Urwin, McDonald and Clients Ltd, said in response it was disappointed the complainant failed to see the point of it. It was not intended to shock or offend, but to relate to the steak house's target market — meat eaters — in a "humorous and effective" way.

The majority of the ASA's complaints board agreed the billboard had not been prepared with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and society. A minority disagreed.

—ASA

Source: The Press – 6 August 2007

## 2. Existing Practice



Saucy billboard stops traffic in Christchurch

**Why report?**  
The saucy image of Call Girl's cover is a prime example of a billboard that has caused controversy. It has been reported that the billboard has caused traffic to stop and people to take photos. The billboard is located on a busy street in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Source: The Press – 13 May 2008

## 3. Literature Review Findings

Billboards may influence motorists' driving ability depending on several factors:

- **The condition of the road environment** (Wallace, 2003)
- **The location of billboards** (Wallace, 2003).
- **The types of the billboards** (Smiley et al., 2005).
- **Driver age** (The Finnish Road Administration, 2004).

## 4. Assessment Methodology

### Scoring System

|      |       |   |
|------|-------|---|
| Pass | ★★★★★ | Very good example with no expected road safety risk         |
|      | ★★★★☆ | Good example with less than minor expected road safety risk |
|      | ★★★☆☆ | Satisfactory example with minor expected road safety risk   |
| Fail | ★★☆☆☆ | Bad example with several expected road safety risks         |
|      | ★☆☆☆☆ | Very bad example with major expected road safety risks      |

## 4. Assessment Methodology

- Font Size  
- Colour  
- Contrast  
- Message

Rating ★★★★★  
Good element or bad element

Icon

## Examples – Barbadoes St



Rating ★★★★★

- Good orientation relative to the road, at right angles to and clear of the road.
- The font is large and simple
- The billboard is located mid block
- The company logo is large and clear
- The message is easily understood
- The icon is simple
- The billboard is placed in isolation
- Contrasting colours

## Examples – Barbados/Tuam St



Rating ★★★★★

- Good orientation relative to the road, at right angles to and clear of the road.
- Contrasting colours
- The billboard is located mid block
- The company logo is large and clear
- The billboard's content is very sexually-oriented
- Very small font with suggestive meanings

## Examples – Barbadoes St



Rating ★★★

- Good orientation relative to the road, within drivers' line of vision when they turn right into Tuam St
- The font is large and simple
- The icon is simple
- The message is easily understood

- Contrasting colours
- Placement is too close to the intersection – excess demand
- May be a distraction if drivers' focus on it rather than on the lane marking when making right turns

## Examples – Lincoln Rd



Rating ★

- Too much visual clutter at the railway crossings – example of a complex intersection
- The directional sign displaying "Entrance Here" imitates a traffic sign – bad practice
- The directional sign is pointing in the wrong direction

- The billboard located on the right hand side has too much red colour, conflicting with railway traffic lights
- The billboards are situated closely to the railway crossing with very short headways

## 5. Discussion

**Q:** Do Billboards Affect Road Safety?  
**A:** Probably.

Three major factors may increase crash risks:

1. Location
2. Surrounding
3. Design

## Useful Documents

CCC (2004) A Guide to Outdoor Advertising and Signage



## Useful Documents

LTNZ (1993) Advertising signs and road safety: design and location guidelines



## Useful Documents

Transit (2001) Can I put up an advertising sign alongside a state highway?



## 6. Recommendations



- **Specific conditions from RTS 7** be given to all advertising resource consents given the content of billboards often change
- Council should monitor the success of the recommended conditions of consent



Questions or comments