

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
'A - BOARD' POLICY
APPLICATION PROCESS AND CONDITIONS
(UPDATED MARCH 2023)**

INTRODUCTION:

Reading Borough Council as the Local Highway Authority has a duty to ensure that pedestrians have a clear, safe route along pavements and walkways.

'A-Boards' displayed on the public highway can be considered unsightly, make an area look cluttered and less attractive and have a negative impact on the street scene. 'A - Boards' also create problems for users of the public highway who are visually impaired, especially for visually impaired pedestrians, those with mobility difficulties, wheelchair/mobility scooter users and for pushchairs/prams.

The Council appreciates and understands that businesses need to promote their services and custom, but this cannot be done without careful consideration being given to passing pedestrians and the effect on the street scene and local economy.

By Licencing 'A - Boards' a uniformed approach can be taken to minimise the risk to users of the public highway by ensuring that they are considerably placed where there is reduced danger to pedestrians or where they could cause an obstruction.

Our aim is to assist in enhancing the economic sustainability of the Town Centre and the Borough while not causing a negative impact on the street scene.

Under the Highways Act 1980 sections 143 & 149 it is an offence to obstruct the highway. Legislation allows Local Highway Authorities to implement and adopt licensing schemes on the public highway.

POLICY:

The 'A - Board' policy relates to advertising and similar boards that will be placed on the public highway, both with or without permission. An 'A - Board' includes any type of free-standing adverts/directional signs/information signs and inanimate characters.

The "Highway" includes footways, footpaths, paved areas and pedestrianised areas within the public highway domain. This policy does not include 'A - Boards' sited on privately owned land.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

Applications for an 'A - Board' Licence can be made on-line by visiting [Advertising \('A'\) Boards - Reading Borough Council](#) . Please create an account and then make your application via the on-line application form.

You must obtain permission from Reading Borough Council prior to placing any 'A - Board' on the public highway.

Please Note: Licences are only valid for 1 year and are not transferable. (Section 115E of the Highways Act 1980, section 224 of the Town and Country Planning (control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992)

Year 1 - A fee of £100 is charged for each new application and this includes the first-year Licence fee of £80.

Year 2 (and subsequent years) - An annual renewal fee of £80 will be charged per Licence.

Annual Licences are valid for 1 year from the date of issue.

The applicant should follow the fully automated on-line application process by completing and submitting the required details as requested. The following link will take you to the Reading Borough Council Website / 'A - Boards': [Advertising \('A'\) Boards - Reading Borough Council](#)

The applicant should note that they must have Public Liability Insurance for £5 Million (minimum cover) in the event of a third-party claim.

The Licence must be renewed annually before the expiry date. The cost of renewing the Licence is currently £80.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL IN ITS CAPACITY AS THE LOCAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE CONSENT TO ANY 'A - BOARD' APPLICATION. THIS DECISION WILL BE FINAL.

CONDITIONS:

1. The 'A - Board' must be positioned outside the premises applying for the Licence, on the same side of the road and on land adjacent to the property frontage. A clear, unobstructed footway width of 2 metres shall be maintained between the building line / property frontage and the positioning of the A-Board. Where 2.0 metres cannot be achieved a site meeting will be arranged with the Highways Inspector to assess and agree the positioning of an 'A-Board'.
2. Advertising must relate to the business that holds the Licence.
3. 'A - Boards' shall not be attached to any street furniture.

4. Only one (1 No.) 'A - Board' will be allowed per premise frontage and shall relate to the normal business carried out by the applicant.
5. Where a business property fronts onto different roads, in this instance they can have more than one (1 No.) 'A - Board' but would need to make separate applications for each location.
6. No rotating signs or signs on wheels or trailer type devices will be licenced.
7. 'A - Boards' must not lean on or be placed against a wall, be attached to trees, street furniture or other items / assets on the public highway.
8. 'A - Boards' will not be permitted on central reservations, roundabouts, pedestrian safety refuges, pedestrian dropped crossings with or without tactile paving and other areas of the public highway where it could create a road traffic and/or pedestrian hazard, obstruct sightlines/visibility splays, or affect the maintenance of the area.
9. Where a business has a private forecourt adjacent to the public highway, an 'A - Board' must fully remain on this private forecourt area and will not require a licence, as it will not be placed on the public highway.
10. The Council will, in the first instance, consult with the owner if an 'A - Board' is located inappropriately and/or in an unacceptable condition. Failure to comply with the Council's reasonable instruction will result in the removal of the 'A - Board' by the Council and a fee of £80 (the annual renewal fee) will be payable by the owner to recover their property. An 'A - Board' will be stored at the Council Depot for 12 weeks after which it will be scrapped / recycled if it has not been claimed by the owner.
11. 'A - Boards' shall be fit for purpose, stable, robust and well maintained. It should appear to be professionally made and sign written. Offensive content will not be permitted.
12. 'A - Boards' should not exceed 0.6 square metres with a maximum base width of 0.6 metres and no higher than 1.0 metres above ground level.
13. The 'A - Board' must be 2 sided of the 'feet' type where the base is the widest part of the board so that it has a solid element just above ground level which is detectable by a visually impaired person using a cane. The frame and base/'feet' shall have a contrasting colour to the highway surface to ensure maximum visibility.
14. The 'A - Board' Licence shall be made available for inspection by a Council Officer as and when requested.

15. Any liability arising from an incident or damage involving an 'A - Board' remains with the owner of the 'A - Board'.
16. 'A - Boards' shall not be displayed without prior permission from Reading Borough Council.
17. Failure to comply with the Licence conditions will result in the removal of the 'A - Board' by the Council, where it will be stored at the Council Depot. A fee of £80 (the annual renewal fee) will be payable by the owner of the 'A - Board' to the Council on its collection from the Council's Depot. An 'A - Board' will be stored at the Council Depot for 12 weeks after which it will be scrapped / recycled if it has not been claimed by the owner.
18. In situations where a Reading Borough Council (RBC) Department is holding an event or when a Member of Parliament and /or Local Ward Councillor is holding a periodic surgery and uses an 'A - Board' on the public highway, the Council may waive the cost of the application fee for Council Departments and Political Organisations. Each Council Department will still need to apply for the 'A' Board licence and Councillor Services will apply on behalf of the Political Parties.
19. Community, Church & Charity Organisations will still need to apply for the licence for any individual event and the Council will waive the application fee, and the terms of the licence will apply.

THE CONDITIONS ABOVE MAY BE PERIODICALLY REVIEWED AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE FOLLOWING CONSULTATION AND COMMITTEE APPROVAL. ANY BREACH OF THE CONDITIONS MAY RESULT IN FORMAL ACTION BEING TAKEN AND THE LICENCE REVOKED.