

What kinds of signs are not allowed?

- Pennants, banners, streamers, and all fluttering, spinning or similar types of signs and advertising devices are prohibited, except for national flags, flags of political subdivisions, and flags of bona fide civic, charitable, fraternal, religious, and welfare organizations.
- No sign shall be constructed, erected, used, operated, or maintained which displays intermittent light resembling the flashing light customarily associated with danger, such as those used by police, fire or emergency medical vehicles. No sign may use the word “stop” or “danger” in imitation of any official “stop” or “danger” sign.
- No sign should be so lighted or illuminated as to provide a background of colored lights blending with traffic signal lights. No sign, portable or otherwise, is to be placed or located to conflict with the vision clearance or other requirements of the traffic ordinances of the City of New Orleans.
- No sign may be flashing unless specifically permitted, and no flashing sign shall be located within 100 feet of any residential property.
- No signs shall be attached to trees, utility poles, or any other unapproved supporting structure.
- Signs over public streets, sidewalks or alleys shall not be so located as to extend over any portion of a street used by vehicles. Signs shall not project nearer than 24 inches to the curb not be erected less than 9 feet above the sidewalk. No sign projecting over an alley shall be erected less than 15 feet above the surface of the alley beneath the sign.
- It is unlawful for anyone to post or paint advertisements on any street, sidewalk, public building, utility pole, light standard, street sign, parking meter, traffic signal standard, or tree located within the public right-of-way.

When may I use a temporary sign permit?

A temporary sign permit may be issued for the following signs and displays, for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days, when their use would be in the public interest and would not result in the damage of public or private property:

- Signs advertising a special civic or cultural event.
- Special decorative displays used for holidays, public demonstrations, or promotion of non-partisan civic purposes
- Special sales or promotional displays in a district where such sales are permitted, including displays incidental to the opening of a new business.

The temporary permits for such displays and signs may be issued for a period of thirty (30) days and may be renewable, provided the cumulative period for all temporary permits for a specific property does not exceed the maximum ninety (90) days per year.

Note: No temporary sign permits may be issued in Urban Corridor overlay districts, Interim Zoning Districts or moratoria areas unless specified as permitted.

What are the fees for a sign permit?

For the initial Sign Permit Application, the costs are as follows:

- Building Permit Fee
 - ◇ \$60.00 Base Fee
 - ◇ \$5 per \$1000 of Construction Value
 - ◇ Plan Review Fee - \$1 per \$1000 of Construction Value
- Zoning Review Fee: \$125
- First Year Operating Fee: \$40
- For a reinspection following a violation: \$100
- For a one-year renewable operating permit for accessory signs: \$40
- For a one-year renewable operating permit for general advertising signs:
 - ◇ Junior Billboards (up to 100 square feet), \$50 per sign face
 - ◇ Large Billboards (over 100 square feet), \$100 per sign structure

How do I renew my sign operating permit?

When you receive your permit to install your sign, you also become responsible for the repair and maintenance of that sign. Safety & Permits is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all signs are maintained in a safe and lawful manner. Each year, inspectors from the Department are required by law to inspect each permitted sign. When your sign has been inspected, you will be sent an invoice for your annual renewal permit, which must be paid within 30-days to avoid further action. If the inspection reveals that the sign is not being maintained in safe condition, you will be notified in writing that repairs are necessary. Failure to make these repairs in a timely manner may result in the removal of the sign by Safety & Permits at the owner’s expense.

Who enforces the sign regulations?

The Department of Safety & Permits is designated by the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance as the enforcer of all sign regulations. Any person who commits, takes part in, or who assists in any violation of the sign regulations shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, punishable either by a fine of not less than \$100 and not more than \$300, or not more than five (5) months imprisonment, or both, for each and every day that a violation continues. The correction of a violations shall not restrain imposition of these penalties.

This brochure is intended to generally answer questions about sign regulations. For more information, please call the Department of Safety & Permits at **(504) 658-7100**.

City of New Orleans
Department of
Safety & Permits
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Contact Us:
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Department of Safety & Permits
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(504) 658-7100

Guidelines for:
Permitting and
Maintaining Signs



CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
DEPARTMENT OF
SAFETY & PERMITS

Do I need a permit to put up a sign?

YES! With few exceptions, no sign may be erected, constructed, posted, painted, altered, maintained, or relocated until a permit has been issued by the Department of Safety & Permits.

The City’s sign regulations are designed to:

- Protect the public safety – so that signs do not fall down on pedestrians or customers.
- Prevent signs from becoming projectiles in the event of heavy winds or rains.
- Regulate the aesthetics of an area as to the size and number of signs allowed.

The City’s sign regulations are contained in the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, the City Code and the New Orleans Building Code. The sign regulations vary by zoning district and the type of sign to be installed. This brochure is intended to generally answer questions about the process of obtaining a sign permit. However, before ordering any sign for your business or obtaining a sign permit, you should first consult with a registered sign company or visit the Zoning Division of the Department of Safety & Permits to discuss the relevant sign regulations.

Why should I consult with a registered sign company?

Your sign permit application is actually a one year permit to install and operate the approved sign. Therefore, all permit applications for signs must be accompanied by drawings and specifications as to location, construction, materials, manner of illumination, manner of fastening, the number of signs applied for, and the text or graphics to be carried on the signs. All persons authorized to install signs in the City of New Orleans must first register with the Department of Safety & Permits. These companies are familiar with the requirements of the building code and the zoning regulations and can prepare the necessary drawings for you. Any Louisiana licensed architect or civil engineer may prepare and stamp your drawings; but, you must hire a registered sign company to erect or install your sign. The only exception to this is in the construction of new buildings where the installation of signage is included in the construction contract.

How do I find a registered sign company?

Sign companies can be found in the telephone book under the listing “Signs”. If you are requesting that they install your sign, be certain that they are registered with the Department of Safety & Permits. If you have any concerns that the company you have contacted is not registered, you may call the Zoning Division at (504) 658-7125 to confirm whether or not the company is registered.

Where do I obtain a sign permit?

Applications for sign permits are made in the Department of Safety & Permits, located on the 7th floor of City Hall, 1300 Perdido St., Room 7E05. Application forms may be picked up at this location or downloaded from the Safety & Permits page of the City’s website: www.nola.gov.

Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

What information do I need to apply for a sign permit?

- ✓ Municipal address of the proposed sign
- ✓ Valuation of the proposed work
- ✓ Existing text and graphics (if existing)
- ✓ Proposed text and graphics
- ✓ Plot plan indicating the location and setbacks of the proposed signage
- ✓ Measurements of the frontage of tenant space and the square footage of the wall on which the business has its main entrance.
- ✓ Two (2) sets of plans stamped by a Louisiana registered architect or civil engineer.
- ✓ HDLC of VCC approval (if applicable)

Do I need a permit to change the message on my sign?

No sign permit is necessary for a change of any ornamental features or the advertising display (copy) of a previously permitted sign. However, if the sign must be removed to have the message changed, you will need a sign permit to re-install the sign if any or all of the mounting fastenings or brackets have been changed or moved. Also, an electrical permit may be required is you change any of the electrical wiring of the device.

What kind of sign can I have, how big can it be, and how many can I have?

The answers to these questions are found in the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (Ord. No. 4,264, MCS). Signs are first classified by type: flat, detached, projecting, canopy, marquee, roof signs, or special purpose signs specifically listed in the zoning district regulations. Generally speaking, you will be permitted one sign of each type for each street frontage, for each permitted use on the premises. Except as otherwise provided, any sign may be flat, detached or projecting, and no detached sign may exceed a height of fifteen (15) feet.

Signs may be placed on walls of buildings other than the front, except on side or rear walls facing and within 100 feet, on the same side of the street, as any residential zoning district. All signs shall comply with the yard requirements of the district in which they are located.

One detached sign may occupy required yards in a district where said sign is permitted, provided that the sign meets the sign area requirements of the district in which it is located. In no instance shall it exceed 30 square feet in area, nor contain flashing, moving, or intermittent illumination. Any sign may be indirectly illuminated if not otherwise limited by sign regulations. Neon lighting or other tubular lighting, when used on the exterior of a building to outline any portions of a building or structure other than a sign, shall not be considered in calculating the number of permitted signs; however, this shall be considered as a general advertising sign and is permitted only in districts where such signs are permitted. These lights shall be included in the computation of sign area by multiplying the length of the tubing by a width of six (6) inches.

In all cases, the size and number of signs allowed for your business is specified in the regulations of the zoning district in which your business is located. Each zoning district has a section entitled “Permitted Signs.” If a sign is not listed as permitted, it is therefore prohibited. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance may be found online at www.municode.com. You should speak to someone in the Zoning Administration Division if you have any questions about what is allowed.

What is the process once I apply?

- Once your application is submitted your plans will be reviewed by a Safety & Permits plans reviewer. Once your plans are approved the architect or engineer who prepared your plans will be notified that the sign permit may be picked-up.
- All signs which are to be electrically illuminated by neon or other means shall require a separate electrical permit and inspection. Only a New Orleans licensed electrical contractor, hired by you or your sign company, may apply for this permit.
- The sign must be installed by a registered sign company. When the installation is complete, Safety & Permits will inspect the sign to verify that it has been installed safely and in accordance with your approved plans.
- Upon passing the inspection by Safety & Permits, you will be issued a Certificate of Use and Occupancy which includes the initial one-year operating permit.

All signs must be erected on or before the expiration of six (6) months from the date of issuance of the permit; otherwise, the sign permit will be considered void and a new permit will be required. No fees will be refunded for the failure to erect the sign in a timely manner. A new fee will be charged for the new permit.

What are the regulations for political signs?

- Political signs are limited in size to six (6) square feet in residential zoning districts.
- Each location is allowed one sign per street frontage, except that a total of five (5) signs may be posted during the seven (7) days preceding the election date.
- No signs may be placed upon a public street, public rights-of-way, or sidewalks, or upon any utility pole, traffic sign, public building or any other public property within the City.
- Signs illegally posted in the public rights-of-way shall be subject to removal.
- All political signs shall be removed within ten (10) days following the election date.