

Sign Permit Information

The City of Portage regulates the construction, reconstruction, placement, use and dimensions of various signs in order to protect the public health and safety. These regulations balance the need to identify industries or businesses and residential uses with the community goals to reduce street clutter, minimize motorist distractions and to enhance the livability and appearance of the community.

The Zoning Code establishes sign size, height, number and location regulations based on industrial, business and residential zoning districts. Any new, altered, reconstructed or replacement sign requires a permit unless otherwise specified. Several types of signs that are regulated do not require a permit, and examples of these signs are real estate, garage/yard sale, political/election campaign and construction information signs, and holiday decorations. Chapter 42, Land Division Regulations, Article 4, Zoning in the Portage Code of Ordinances explains the regulations (refer to Sections 42-540 through 42-553). For your convenience, the Code of Ordinances is available online at www.portagemi.gov. Please use the following path – **Quick Links > Code of Ordinances > Chapter 42, Land Development Regulations > Article 4, Zoning, > Division 6 > Signs and Section 42-540** – to view the City of Portage Zoning Code regulations for signs.

The attached Sign Permit Application must be submitted with required sign, property and building drawing attachments. The application must be reviewed and a permit(s) issued by the city prior to starting work.

Information That Must Be Submitted

To ensure prompt review, please be sure to complete the application information on the accompanying Sign Permit Application form and include the following:

- Scaled drawing showing the new freestanding sign(s) and/or new wall sign(s) with dimensions;
- Scaled plot plan for all freestanding signs (permanent or temporary) with dimensions;
- Scaled drawing showing the height in relation to the elevation of the street curb for freestanding signs, or location on the building wall and relation to building roofline for wall signs; and
- Dimensions of the building wall (wall height x wall length) that the wall sign(s) will be attached.

Note that all of the above drawings are also required for changes to an existing sign.

Sign Permit Fees

The fees for signs have been established by City Council by the type of sign as follows:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| • Permanent freestanding sign, wall sign or changeable copy board sign* | \$ 50.00 application fee |
| • Temporary freestanding sign, wall sign, directional sign or sign panel change** | \$121.00 per application |
| | \$ 60.00 per application |

Notes: * No additional fee is charged for a copy board sign if installed with new or replacement freestanding sign.

** Applies if the sign panel change results in no structural changes to the freestanding or wall sign structure.

SIGN PERMIT APPLICATION

Property address where sign will be located: _____

Owner Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Description of Work: _____

Completion date or display date(s): _____ Zoning District: _____

Contractor Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Applicant or Contractor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Required Sign Information

Permanent Freestanding Sign(s) or Temporary Freestanding Sign(s)

- A scaled plot plan showing locations of existing and proposed sign(s). Please include location, setback from property lines, distance between signs and sign height. NOTE: Setback is measured from the leading edge of the sign. **NOTE: Property lines must be staked for verification when the site inspection is performed by the city.**

Plot Plan complete: **Y** **N**

- A scaled drawing/picture showing new sign(s) face, type, dimension of sign and support/anchoring structure (i.e. footing details), and total sign height. NOTE: Sign height is measured from adjacent street grade or top of curb to highest point of sign(s).

Sign Drawing/Picture complete: **Y** **N**

- Number of signs: _____ Area (per sign side) _____
- Type of Construction _____ Illumination: internal _____ external _____
- Changeable copy board: **Y** **N** Area (per sign side) _____

Permanent Wall Sign(s) or Temporary Wall Sign(s):

- A scaled drawing showing locations of existing and proposed sign(s) including building wall area dimensions, location(s), height(s), and support/anchoring structure. Also, submit a scaled drawing/picture of the wall sign with dimensions.

Location Drawing/Sign Picture complete: **Y** **N**

- Number of signs: _____ Area (per sign side) _____
- Type of Construction _____ Illumination: internal _____ external _____

Required Permit Fees

<u>Sign Type</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Permanent Freestanding	_____	\$121.00 per application
Permanent Wall	_____	\$121.00 per application
Permanent Copy Board*	_____	\$121.00 per application
Sign Panel Change Only**	_____	\$60.00 per application
Temporary	_____	\$60.00 per application

Note: * No additional fee if installed with new or replacement freestanding sign.

** Applies when no structural changes to freestanding or wall sign structure are proposed.

TOTAL CHARGES: _____ Plus the application fee of \$50

Sign Permit, Construction and Inspection Reminders

1. The applicant or owner must call the Department of Community Development at 269-329-4477 or 269-329-4466 to request a final inspection once sign is installed. At this time, the property line and leading edge of the sign should also be staked for setback verification.
2. Electrical permits are required for all new wall signs (including interior signs) with new circuits, and new freestanding signs with new circuits (does not include change of sign panels). For other signs, electrical inspector will determine electrical permit requirements per applicable code provisions.
3. Michigan Law requires that you must contact **MISS DIG at 1-800-482-7171** three working days before you break ground.
4. The sign permit will expire if the work authorized is not commenced within 180 days from the date of issuance of the permit, or if the work authorized is suspended or abandoned for a period of 180 days.
5. Please review the Sign Permit after it is issued for important information. In addition, please refer to the following sections of City Code for applicable sign regulations: Sections 42-540–42-553 and Sections 42-1271–42-1285 for applicable sign regulations.

ELECTRONIC MESSAGE BOARD SIGNS – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Congratulations on considering the use of an electronic message display (EMD) sign. Advances in technology have made these signs with the display of words, symbols or images that can be electronically or mechanically changed popular for business purposes. New EMD sign regulations (Section 42-542 of the Zoning Code) were approved by the City of Portage as of October 1, 2007. In an effort to ensure that businesses and others can take advantage of this newer sign technology, and ensure EMD signs are consistent with the sign regulations that reflect community standards, the following is provided for you.

❖ EMD Signs, generally:

- An EMD sign may use static messages that do not move or have the appearance of movement;
- EMD messages may be changed not less than every four seconds;
- The transition between EMD messages may be changed through dissolve or fade transitions;
- An EMD sign can be used as a freestanding sign or wall sign, subject to the requirements for freestanding sign or wall sign number and area that are specified for the property;
- An EMD sign must be equipped with a dimming mechanism to adjust lighting intensity;
- An EMD sign may be incorporated into a freestanding sign or wall sign. If so, a “copy board” element to the sign would not be permitted.

❖ EMD signs in non-residential zoning districts:

For an EMD sign located within 200 feet of a residential zoning district and where the EMD sign is visible from a residential dwelling, the following applies:

- Between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. the EMD is limited to the display of only one message frame. A frame is a complete, static display screen that does not change.

❖ EMD signs in residential zoning districts:

For an EMD sign located in a residential zoning district, the following applies:

- One property line must be abut a major thoroughfare and the EMD sign must be located along such property line.
- If the EMD is visible from a one-family residential dwelling located within a residential zoning district, the following also applies:
 - Between 9:00 p.m. and 12:00 midnight, the EMD is limited to the display of only one frame. A frame is a complete, static display screen that does not change.
 - Between 12:00 midnight and 7:00 am, the EMD sign must be turned off.

❖ EMD signs that incorporate a conforming “copy board” element and were in existence before the new EMD sign regulations took effect on October 1, 2007 are considered conforming signs.

For an existing EMD sign that also has a conforming “copy board,” the City of Portage sign regulations clarify that the EMD sign is in conformance with the regulations and can continue to be used.

For further assistance, please feel free to contact the Department of Community Development at 269-329-4477. Thank you for your interest in the City of Portage.