

My business needs a free-standing sign. What should I know?

Each property is allowed one free-standing sign. If located in a building with other businesses, one sign is allowed for all of the businesses. The property owner will determine usage.

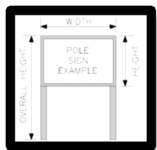
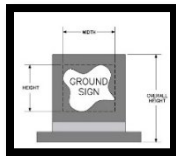
The total square footage allowed is based on the width of the property:

- Less than 50' wide – 25 sf sign
- More than 50' wide – 50 sf sign

All signs must be 2'6" from the lot line.

There are 2 types of free-standing signs.

Ground signs are allowed in the CO Commercial Office, C Commercial Business, D Downtown, I Industrial or W Water Recreation Zoning Districts with a maximum height of 8 feet.



Pole signs are allowed in the C Commercial Business and, D Downtown Districts with a maximum height of 15 feet with a minimum space of 8 feet between the ground and bottom of the sign. Landscaping is required for this type of sign.

My sign is irregularly shaped. How is it measured?

Irregularly shaped signs are measured by the smallest square or rectangle that includes the extreme limits of the writing, logo or other elements.

My business needs an electronic message board. Are they allowed?

Electronic message boards require Planning Commission approval. They cannot exceed 50% of the total sign face and must be turned off when the business is closed. See Section 25-18 of the Sign Ordinance for all of the regulations.

Do all signs get reviewed before a permit is issued?

Yes. City staff can approve most signs that comply with the regulations; however, all electronic message boards or signs greater than 32 sf require Planning Commission approval.

What if I am located in a residential district?

Special regulations apply to commercial businesses, nonprofit organizations, and religious institutions located in residential districts. Please review the Sign Ordinance or contact city staff to learn more about the applicable regulations.

Where can I go to learn more information about the Sign Ordinance?

It can be found on the city's website www.sjcity.com under the "Public Hub" – "Charter, Ordinance, Codes & Policies" – "Charter/Code of Ordinances" - Chapter 25.

It is important to review the entire Sign Ordinance to obtain all relevant information. The information provided in this handout is general and calls attention to only the basic regulations.



INFORMATIONAL GUIDE TO PERMANENT NON-RESIDENTIAL (COMMERCIAL, OFFICE, INDUSTRIAL) SIGN REGULATIONS

City of St. Joseph, Michigan
Community Development Department
and
Inspection Department
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Phone (269)983-1212
www.sjcity.com
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Why regulate signs?

The purpose statement of the Sign Ordinance lists nine objectives, which includes protecting the public right to display and receive messages and information protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. In addition, there is a need to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents, business community and visitors by ensuring that signs are installed and maintained while eliminating potential hazards to motorists and pedestrians resulting from sign clutter and visual distraction.

When and why did the sign regulations change?

The Sign Ordinance (Chapter 25 of the Code of Ordinances) became effective February 6, 2020. Changes were needed to the 1980 regulations to comply with a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling; to address many technology changes to the sign industry; and to address goals of the 2016 Master Plan, which included improving the visual character of main thoroughfares to foster business retention and attract new businesses.

When do I need a sign permit?

In most cases, all new permanent signs and changes to existing signs require a sign permit to be issued before the change is made. Section 25-11 of the Sign Ordinance references 12 types of signs that do not require a permit.



Are there any types of signs that cannot be displayed?

Section 25-12 of the Sign Ordinance has a list of 18 prohibited signs and include: feather flags; inflatable devices (except when non-commercial); pennant signs, portable changeable message boards; reflective, flashing or mirrored signs; and signs resembling official traffic or governmental signs.

Are there rules for temporary signs?

Yes. Chapter 25 Signs of the Code of Ordinances regulates temporary signs.



An Informational Guide to Temporary Sign Regulations has been created to answer general questions.

What types of permanent signs do not require a permit under Section 25-11?

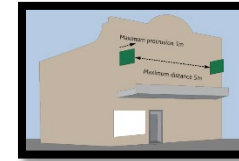
Examples include: address numbers; donor, historical marker or nameplate signs up to 2 square feet; menu-boards; official notices; and on-site informational signs that do not include any logo or advertising.

Are there rules for window signage?

Yes. Window signs covering 50% or less of the total window surface do not require a sign permit. Many businesses utilize paint, decals or clings on the interior of the window. The placement of an electronic message board requires approval.

Can I advertise my business from another location?

Typically the answer is no unless the advertising is on a billboard.



My business needs a new wall sign. What is allowed?

Businesses located in the CO Commercial Office, C Commercial Business, D Downtown, I Industrial or W Water Recreation Zoning Districts are allowed two wall signs. This also includes projecting, hanging or awning signs. Allowable square footage is based on 2 times the length of the tenant space or building, not to exceed 150 square feet. An example:

Tenant space is 30 feet wide facing the street. $30 \text{ wide} \times 2 = 60$. The tenant can have 1 sign at 60 sq. ft. (signs greater than 32 sf require Planning Commission approval) or 2 signs at any combination of size, so long as the total does not exceed 60 square feet.

The maximum height of the sign is 20 feet, and below the bottom of the second-floor window.

Is a permit needed for signs that hang down from a covered walkway or project from the wall of the building?

Yes. Permits are needed for projecting or hanging signs. This type of sign counts toward the maximum allowed and cannot be more than 8 sf and must be a minimum of 6'8" from the ground. A license agreement may be need.