



Sign Permits

Signs have an impact on the character and quality of the environment. They attract or repel the viewing public and affect the safety of vehicular traffic. As a historic community, Stillwater is quite unique. The proper control of signs is of particular importance because of its historical quality and uniqueness. Signs should be kept within reasonable boundaries consistent with the objectives and goals of the community to retain its special character and economic advantages, which rest in part on the quality of its appearance. With this, all new signs in the City of Stillwater require a sign permit.

The Community Development Department shall review your application. If it meets the requirements of the sign regulations, a permit shall be granted. All proposed signs in the [Downtown Design Review District](#) and the [West Stillwater Business Park](#) require [Design Review Permit](#) approval prior to the approval of a sign permit application. Design Review permits are reviewed, one time monthly, by the Heritage Preservation Commission.

Use the links, below, to find a full version of the City code pertaining to signs, general information about signs in Stillwater as well as all City of Stillwater sign permit applications. If you have questions on sign permits, please contact the Community Development Department at (651)-430-8820 to discuss your signage needs.



216 4th Street North Stillwater MN 55082
651-430-8800
www.ci.stillwater.mn.us

TEMPORARY SIGN PERMIT (30 DAYS)

Permit No. _____
Date Filed: _____
Base Fee: **No Fee**
Receipt No.: _____

Location of Sign			
Address	City Stillwater	State MN	Zip 55082
Dates sign will be displayed (cannot exceed 30 days)			
Starting Date		Ending Date	
Applicant			
Name		Phone #	
Address	City	State	Zip
Property Owner (if different from Applicant)			
Name		Phone #	
Address	City	State	Zip

Describe the reason for the proposed temporary sign:

Attached are the following documents (Required to be submitted with application)

- ☐ Attach a plan showing the sign size, location and type of material used. If the sign is to be mounted on the building, show an elevation of the building and sign. Additionally, if the building is historic the sign mounting shall limit damage to the exterior of the building.

Declaration

I hereby certify that the information provided in this application is true, correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I hereby authorize the City of Stillwater and any agent or employee of it, to inspect the proposed site at any reasonable time before and after any permit is issued related to this request.

Property Owner Signature (required)		Date
Applicant Signature		Date
Review (For office use only)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied	Date	By

Remember to call Gopher State One call at 651-454-0002 before you dig to identify any underground utility locations. This is a FREE service.

Sec. 31-509. - Sign regulations.

Sign regulations are as follows:

Subd. 1. Purpose. Signs have an impact on the character and quality of the environment. They attract or repel the viewing public and affect the safety of vehicular traffic. As a historic community, this city is unique. The proper control of signs is of particular importance because of this historical quality and uniqueness. Signs must be kept within reasonable boundaries consistent with the objectives and goals of the community to retain its special character and economic advantages which rest in part on the quality of its appearance. The standards in this subdivision are therefore adopted to regulate signs.

Subd. 2. Permits required. All signs require a design review permit. An application for design review may be obtained from the community development director. The application must contain the following information:

- (a) A drawing of the proposed sign showing dimensions and describing materials, lettering, colors, illumination and support systems.
- (b) Photographs of the building face and the building faces of any adjacent buildings.
- (c) A drawing of the building face and site plan showing the location of the proposed sign.
- (d) A cross section of the building face showing how the sign will be attached and how far it will extend from the building.
- (e) Any pictorial proof or other information that the sign is of historical significance or is a reproduction of an historic sign.
- (f) A building sign plan for a building with more than one use or business, showing all signs.

Subd. 3. General provisions. The following provisions apply to signs located in all zoning districts:

- (a) All signs and sign structures must be properly maintained and constructed of sufficiently permanent materials so they will resist weathering. Any existing sign that is rotted, unsafe, deteriorated, defaced or altered must be repaired or replaced.
- (b) Electrical signs must be installed according to the state electrical code.
- (c) No signs other than governmental signs may be erected or temporarily placed within any street right-of-way or upon public lands or easements or right-of-ways without city council approval.
- (d) No sign or sign structure may be erected or maintained if it prevents free ingress or egress from any door, window or fire escape. No sign may be attached to a standpipe or fire escape.
- (e) A 30-day temporary sign permit may be granted by the community development director for special business events.
- (f) Signs or supporting structures not used for signs for 12 consecutive months must be removed.
- (g) The city may grant a permit to locate signs or decorations on, over or within the right-of-way for a specified period of time.
- (h) All signs must be compatible with the building and neighborhood where located.
- (i) No more than three flags may be displayed outside of a building.
- (j) A sign must not obscure architectural features of a building.
- (k) A building address is not a sign.
- (l) The terms of this subdivision may be waived if the sign is an historic resource or if the sign is a reproduction of an historic sign.
- (m) Graphic design signs require a special use permit.

Subd. 4. Permitted signs. The following signs are allowed without a permit in all zoning districts but must comply with this [Section 31-509](#):

- (a) Public signs, integral signs, political signs and safety signs.
- (b) Size. The size of a political sign is regulated as follows:
 - (1) *Residential and CA districts:* The maximum sign size is six square feet in area with a maximum height of four feet.
 - (2) *IP districts:* The maximum size is 35 square feet in area. Notwithstanding this provision, all noncommercial signs of any size may be posted from August 1 in a state general election year until ten days following the state election.
- (c) Holiday signs for a period not to exceed 60 days.
- (d) Construction signs. The signs must be confined to the site and must be removed within two years of the date of issuance of the first building permit or upon completion of the project, whichever occurs first. One sign is permitted for each street the project abuts. No sign may exceed [32](#) square feet in multifamily residential, commercial and industrial districts and 12 square feet in single-family residential districts.
- (e) Real estate signs are limited to six square feet in residential districts and [32](#) square feet in commercial districts. Signs must be removed within ten days after sale or rental of property.
- (f) Rummage sale signs not exceeding four square feet located on private property that conform to the applicable provisions of this ordinance and are removed at the termination of the sale.
- (g) One nameplate sign, placed on a wall of the structure, for each dwelling not exceeding two square feet in area per structure. No signs shall be so constructed as to have more than two surfaces.
- (h) One nameplate for each dwelling group of six or more units. The sign may not exceed six square feet in area per surface. No sign may be constructed to have more than two surfaces.
- (i) Real estate development project signs. For a development project of three to 25 acres, one sign not to exceed 100 square feet of advertising surface may be erected on the project site. For projects of [26](#) through 50 acres, one or two signs not to exceed 200 aggregated square feet of advertising surface may be erected. For projects over 50 acres, one, two or three signs not to exceed 300 aggregate square feet of advertising surface may be erected. No dimension shall exceed 25 feet exclusive of supporting structures. The sign may not remain after 95 percent of the project is developed. The permit for the sign must be renewed annually by the city council, and must be bordered with a decorative material compatible with the surrounding area. If the signs are lighted, it must be illuminated only during those hours when business is in operation or when the model homes or other development are open for conducting business.
- (j) No sign permit is required for window signage that does not cover more than one-third of the total area of the window in which the sign is displayed.
- (k) Temporary signs advertising garage sales are permitted, provided that:
 - (1) the signs not exceed four (4) square feet; and
 - (2) may not be more than three (3) feet in height above grade; and
 - (3) are removed the same day when the sale closes for each day; and
 - (4) are permitted by the owner of the property on which they are placed; and
 - (5) no more than two garage sales per year are held by any address in any calendar year; and each sale may not last longer than three days; and
 - (6) no sign may be placed upon the right-of-way nor in parks or on public property in a manner that creates a nuisance to adjacent owners, creates a safety hazard or blocks the view of entrances to streets or intersections.
- (l) Temporary real estate "open house" signs may be placed in the right of way provided that:
 - (1)

The sign not be placed in a manner that creates a nuisance to adjacent owners, does not create a safety hazard or block the view of entrances to streets or intersections.

- (2) A sign may be placed one-half hour before the open house and must be removed each day immediately after the open house closes.
- (3) A maximum of four signs in residential zoning district for each open house.
- (4) A sign must not exceed six square feet.
- (5) Signs are limited to a four block radius of the open house.

Subd. 5. Prohibited signs. The following signs are prohibited in all zoning districts:

- (a) Any sign that obstructs the vision of drivers or pedestrians or detracts from the visibility of any official traffic control device.
- (b) Any sign that contains or imitates an official traffic sign or signal, except for private, on-premises directional signs.
- (c) Off-premises advertising signs except as regulated by this [Section 31-509](#)
- (d) Any sign that moves or rotates including electronic reader board signs, except approved time and temperature information signs and barber poles.
- (e) No sign may display any moving parts, be illuminated with any flashing or intermittent lights or may be animated, except time and temperature information. All displays must be shielded to prevent any light from impairing the vision of any driver. No device may be illuminated to obscure an official traffic sign or signal. This includes indoor signs which are visible from public streets.
- (f) Roof signs.
- (g) Any sign with banners, pennants, ribbons, streamers, string of light bulbs, spinners or similar devices, except where used for noncommercial purposes or as part of an approved sign plan.
- (h) Portable signs including signs with wheels removed, attached temporarily or permanently to the ground. Signs mounted on a vehicle for advertising purposes, parked and visible from the public right-of-way, except signs identifying the related business when the vehicle is being used on the normal day-to-day operations of that business. Hot air or gas filled balloons or semitruck umbrellas used for advertising.
- (i) Signs painted directly on building walls unless approved by sign permit.
- (j) Illuminated signs or spotlights giving off an intermittent or rotating beam.
- (k) Revolving beacons, beamed lights or similar devices.
- (l) Signs supported by a guy wire.
- (m) No sign may be erected, placed or maintained by any person on rocks, fences or trees.
- (n) No sign may be erected that will interfere with any electric light, power, telephone or telegraph wires or the supports thereof.
- (o) Graphic design signs unless approved by sign permit.
- (p) Billboards.

Subd. 6. Permitted signs in residential districts. Signs permitted in residential districts are as follows:

- (a) Professional nameplate wall signs not exceeding two square feet in area.
- (b) Integral signs.
- (c) Political signs. Real
- (d) estate signs.
- (e) Construction signs.
- (f) Bulletin boards or public information signs not over [32](#) square feet located only on the premises of public, charitable or religious institutions.

Subd. 7. Permitted signs by a sign permit in the central business or general commercial district. The following signs are permitted in the CBD-central business or CA-general commercial districts with a sign

permit:

- (a) *General requirements.* All signs in the CA-general commercial or CBD-central business districts are regulated by the following requirements:
 - (1) *Number.* One wall, monument, awning and canopy or three dimensional sign is allowed per business. When a building or business abuts two or more public streets, an additional sign located on each street building face is allowed.
 - (2) *Sign plan.* When there is more than one business or use in a building with more than one sign, a building sign plan must be provided with the sign permit application.
 - (3) *Permit review.* All signs in the central business district require a design permit and meet the approved downtown design guidelines for signage.
 - (4) *Other requirements.* All signs must meet area, location and height requirements.
- (b) *Wall signs.* Wall signs in the CBD or CA districts shall meet the following requirements:
 - (1) *Area.* The total building signage may have an aggregate area not exceeding one square foot for each foot of building face parallel or substantially parallel to a street lot line.
 - (2) *Location.* A wall sign may not project more than 16 inches from the wall to which the sign is affixed.
 - (3) *Height.* A wall sign may not project higher than the parapet line of the wall to which the sign is affixed or 15 feet as measured from the base of the building wall to which the sign is affixed, whichever is lower.
 - (4) *Lighting.* Externally illuminated or back lit letters are allowed, but no internally illuminated signs are allowed.
 - (5) *Special conditions.* Where a principal building is devoted to two or more permitted uses, the operator or each use may install a wall sign for their use. A sign plan must be submitted for the entire building. The total gross signage for the entire building may not exceed one square foot for each foot of the building face parallel, or substantially parallel, to a street lot line with a maximum of 25 square feet per business.
- (c) *Freestanding signs.* Freestanding signs in the CBD or CA districts shall meet the following requirements:
 - (1) *Area.* The area of a monument type freestanding sign may not exceed 30 square feet.
 - (2) *Location.* A monument sign may be located in any required yard but must have a setback of 15 feet from any point of vehicular access, public roadway or property line.
 - (3) *Height.* A monument sign may not project higher than six feet, as measured from the base of sign or grade of the nearest roadway, whichever is lower.
 - (4) *Landscaping.* The area around a monument sign must be landscaped.
 - (5) *Lighting.* Externally illuminated or back lit letters are allowed, but no internally illuminated signs are allowed.
- (d) *Awning and canopy signs.* Awning and canopy signs in the CBD or CA districts shall meet the following requirements:
 - (1) *Area.* The gross surface of an awning or canopy sign may not exceed 50 percent of the gross surface area of the smallest face of the awning or canopy to which the sign is affixed.
 - (2) *Location.* An awning or canopy sign may not project higher than the top of the awning or canopy or below the awning or canopy.
- (e) *Three-dimensional sign.* The total area of a three-dimensional sign in the CBD or CA districts is determined by enclosing the largest cross section of the sign in an easily recognized geometric shape and computing its area. The area may not exceed nine square feet.
- (f) *Projecting sign.* A projecting sign in the CBD or CA districts shall meet the following

requirements:

- (1) *Area.* The total area of a projecting sign may not exceed six square feet.
- (2) *Special conditions.* A projecting sign must be easily visible from the sidewalk and not be a hazard to pedestrians.
- (3) *Lighting.* If lighted, projecting signs must be externally illuminated.

Subd. 8. Permitted signs by a sign permit in BP-business park districts. All commercial, office and industrial signs in all BP districts are subject to the following conditions:

- (a) *Number of signs.* A property may have one freestanding sign, one wall sign per building face, and as many awning, canopy, marquee, or multitenant master signs as permitted in this Subdivision 8.
- (b) *Wall signs.* Wall signs in the BP district shall meet the following requirements:
 - (1) *Area.* The gross surface area of a wall sign may not exceed one square foot for each foot of building, parallel or substantially parallel to the front lot line.
 - (2) *Location.* A wall sign must be located on the outermost wall of any principal building but may not project more than 16 inches from the wall to which the sign is affixed. The location and arrangement of all wall signs is subject to the review and approval of the community development director.
 - (3) *Height.* A wall sign may not project higher than the parapet line of the wall to which the sign is affixed or 20 feet as measured from the base of the building wall to which the sign is affixed, whichever is lower.
 - (4) *Special conditions.* Where a principal building is devoted to two or more uses, the operator of each use may install a wall sign upon each share of the building. A sign plan must be submitted for the entire building that shows the location, sizes, types and elevations of all signs. Upon submittal of a sign permit request for an operator within a multiple-use or multiple-tenant building, proof must also be provided by the applicant that a sign plan has been approved for the entire building. If no such sign plan has been approved by the heritage preservation commission, then a sign plan shall be submitted and approved by the heritage preservation before a sign permit may be approved for the single operation or use in question. The signs are subject to the following restrictions:
 - i. All signs must be visually consistent in location, design and scale.
 - ii. The total gross signage for the entire building shall not exceed one square foot for each foot of building face parallel, or substantially parallel, to a street lot line or a minimum of 25 square feet per business, whichever is more.
 - (5) *Number.* There may be one wall sign per building face.
- (c) *Freestanding signs.* Freestanding signs in the BP district shall meet the following requirements:
 - (1) *Area.* The gross surface area of a freestanding sign may not exceed 100 square feet for each exposed face nor exceed an aggregate gross surface area of 200 square feet.
 - (2) *Location.* A freestanding sign must be set back 15 feet from the front or side property line.
 - (3) *Height.* Along State Highway 36 freestanding signs may not project higher than 25 feet. Along County Road Five from Highway 36 to Croixwood Boulevard and South Greeley from Orleans to Highway 36 freestanding signs may not project higher than 20 feet. In all other locations, a freestanding sign may not project higher than six feet. Signs shall be measured from base of sign or grade of the nearest adjacent roadway, whichever is lower.
 - (4) *Number.* There may be one freestanding sign per development site.
- (d) *Awning, canopy or marquee signs.* Awning, canopy or marquee signs in the BP district shall

meet the following requirements:

- (1) *Area.* The gross surface area of an awning, canopy or marquee sign may not exceed 50 percent of the gross surface area of the awning, canopy or marquee to which the sign is affixed.
 - (2) *Location.* A sign may be affixed to or located upon any awning, canopy or marquee.
 - (3) *Height.* An awning, canopy or marquee sign may not project higher than the top of the awning, canopy or marquee to which the sign is affixed.
- (e) *Multitenant master sign.* Each multitenant or multi-use building is permitted one building master identification sign according to the following requirements:
- (1) Building master identification signs may not contain the names of any tenants or occupants of the center.
 - (2) If the multitenant commercial building has a floor area of 40,000 square feet or less, the building may have a freestanding sign with a maximum of one square foot of sign for each five feet of building frontage or 40 square feet maximum with a maximum height of eight feet.
 - (3) If the multitenant commercial building has a floor area greater than 40,000 square feet, but less than the 100,000 square feet, the entry may have a master identification sign with a maximum of 75 square feet on each side and with a maximum height of 20 feet.
 - (4) If the multitenant commercial building has a floor area of greater than 100,000 square feet, the center may have a master identification sign with a maximum area of 120 square feet on each side and a maximum height of 25 feet.
- (f) *Total allowable sign area.* The total aggregate sign area allowed on a property for all signs permitted in subparts (a) through (e) above shall be as follows: a minimum of 100 square feet; and at a rate of 15 percent of the building wall area facing a public street, up to a maximum of 300 square feet. When a building faces two or more public streets, the building wall area shall be determined by adding the wall area of each building wall that faces a public street and dividing by the number of public streets the building faces.

Subd. 9. Directory signs. Directory signs are used to guide pedestrians to individual businesses within a multitenant commercial area and are permitted in BP business park districts, subject to design review. The sign area used in directory signs shall not be calculated against the total allowable sign area in Subdivision 8.

- (a) *Placement.* Directory signs must be placed on the site of the development and may be erected only in internal pedestrian access areas and not in vehicle access areas.
- (b) *Area.* A directory sign may have maximum area of one square foot for each business listed on the sign and four square feet for the name of the building or complex.
- (c) *Size.* Directory signs may be freestanding but may not exceed six and one-half feet in height.
- (d) *Use.* A directory sign may only be used for directions and identification.

Subd. 10. Reserved.

Subd. 11. Reserved.

Subd. 12. Nonconforming signs. Nonconforming signs that are unlawful on December 20, 1988, have rights outlined in [Section 31-216](#) of this chapter with respect to their alteration, extension, restoration and abandonment. Any person violating or failing to comply with any provision of this subdivision will, upon conviction, be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Subd. 13. Violations. If violations of this subdivision are unabated 30 days after written notice to the record owner of the property on which the sign is located, the city may proceed to abate and remove the violation and, if deemed necessary, to have cost thereof specially assessed against the lot or parcel where the violation was located.

(Ord. No. 1002, § 1, 12-16-08)