

Guide to Storefront Signs

Do's and Don'ts

How large can my permanent signs be? How many can I have?

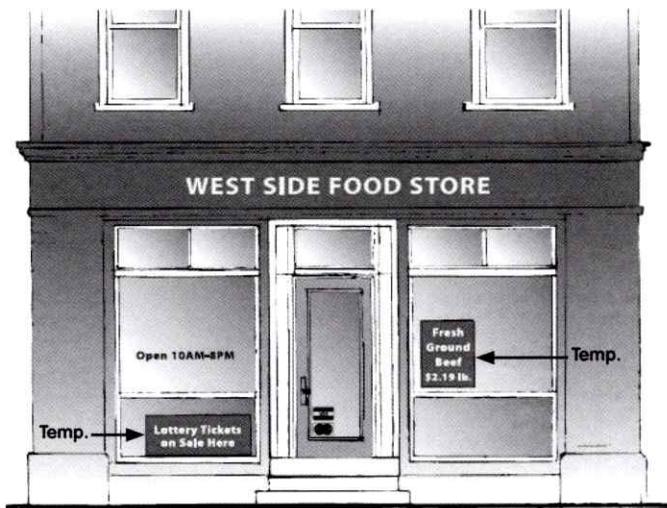
The amount of signage you may display depends on the zoning district in which the property is located.

In commercial zoning districts, each business is allowed to have one wall sign which must be erected on the storefront of the business. The maximum size of the sign is determined by the width of the storefront; one square foot of sign area per front foot of store width, i.e., a 20 foot wide store may have a wall sign not to exceed 20 square feet of sign area, a 40 foot wide store may have a wall sign not to exceed 40 square feet of sign area, and so on.

An awning may have lettering or signage on it, but if it's backlit, only the area occupied by the lettering or signage may be illuminated.

Some businesses in commercial zoning districts are allowed additional signage specific to the type of the business; other zoning districts have different sign regulations altogether.

Call the Livonia Inspection Department at (734) 466-2580 to determine the amount and types of signs your business is permitted to have.

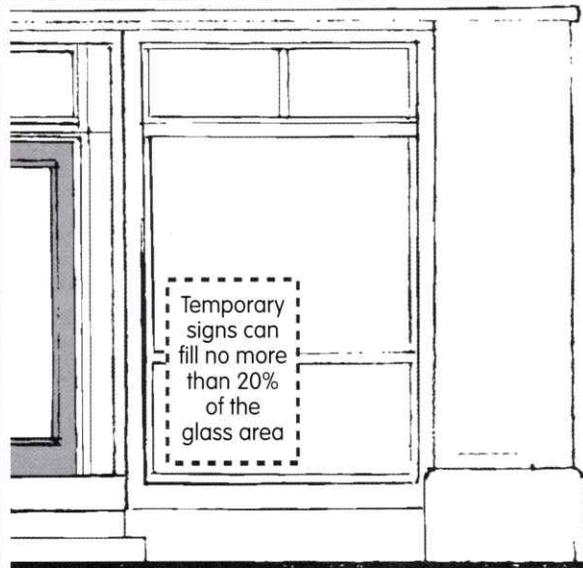


Conforming storefront signage

What is an illegal sign?

Portable signs of every kind, including "A" frame signs, color changing signs, sandwich signs, trailer signs, signs on vehicles, flashing signs, strobe lights in the window, a person or other device holding a sign out by the street or anywhere outside the building, signs on the public right-of-way, and any sign that requires a permit for which a permit has not been obtained.

If you're not sure, call us before you do it.



Special rules for store windows

There are two categories of signs that may be displayed inside the windows of your business...

1. Permanent window signs are the signs visible from the exterior of the window or door and are displayed for more than 30 days. These include the credit card stickers, the store hours of operation, emergency contact information, brand affiliation, and neon "Open" signs. Every place of business can have permanent window signs as long as the total area of these signs does not exceed 10 square feet.
2. Temporary window signs are only allowed on the ground floor of businesses located on commercially zoned property, may NOT be illuminated, and may not be displayed for longer than 30 days. **The total of all window signage, permanent and temporary, may not cover more than 20% of the glass area of the business.**

Neon tubing is no longer allowed to outline a window, or building or to be used on signage.

How can I advertise my Grand Opening or Sale?

Promotional material and temporary signs are allowed on the exterior of businesses located on commercially zoned property and require permits before they can be displayed. The types of temporary signs that are permitted include banners, flags, pennants, streamers, balloons and inflatable figures, that advertise special sales or promotions. You can have a 7 day temporary sign permit up to 4 times annually.

If you're planning an upcoming promotion or just want more information about signs at your place of business, please call us at 734-466-2580 to speak to a Plan Examiner.



A cluttered appearance gives customers a bad impression of your business

How do you make sure customers know your business exists? Most businesses answer that question with one word: signs. They know signs promote awareness of their business name, products, hours, and special features that attract an impulse shopper.

But when it comes to signs, “more” isn’t “better.” Research shows signs like those in the picture above don’t attract shoppers. As shoppers search for information among so many competing signs, the message of each one is lost. Based on the impression they receive from the signs, shoppers may conclude the store is disorganized and cluttered.

There’s another reason “more” isn’t “better.” Livonia’s zoning ordinance restricts the amount and type of signs that businesses may display. Businesses are subject to citations from a code enforcement officer if they have more signs than the ordinance allows, types of signs not allowed by the ordinance, signs installed without permits, and damaged or abandoned signs.

This information sheet describes the kinds of signs you may display and will help you in developing a positive image for your business. Sign permits for permanent signs are issued to licensed sign contractors only. Temporary sign permits can be easily obtained by the business owner with no red tape or extended waiting period.

What kind of permanent signs can I have for my business?

Permanent signs contain information like the business name, type of services or products available, hours of operation, and so on. Businesses are allowed to display this information on permanent wall signs or awnings, and to a limited extent on the inside of clear glass windows.

Several types of wall signs are permitted: a professionally made cabinet-type box sign with a Lexan or plastic panel insert, or individual letters mounted on a raceway or directly on the building. All permanent signs on building exteriors require a sign permit from the Livonia Inspection Department and they are only issued to licensed sign contractors. If your business is located within one of Livonia’s special control zones, the Planning Commission and City Council may also have to approve the sign.

What kind of permanent signs are not allowed?

Exterior signs made of paper, cardboard, flexible plastic, wood, and signs painted on the building are not allowed.