

---

# COMMERCIAL SIGNS



## City of East Lansing

Planning Building Development  
410 Abbot Road, Second Floor  
East Lansing, MI 48823  
Ph. 517-319-6871 or 517-319-6810  
Website: cityofeastlansing.com

---

This publication provides guidelines for signs in commercial premises. The code requirements herein are not all-inclusive and should not be construed to represent all code requirements for your project and are representative of all conditions that you may encounter. The requirements regarding specific location of the sign be shown on a site plan and approved by the Community Development Analyst at 517-319-6828.

### WALL SIGNS

Wall signs are allowed on all sides of the building that face a road, alley, or parking lot. For each lineal foot of a building, facing those areas, 2 square feet of display area is permitted. No one sign may be larger than 120 square feet, they must be placed a minimum of 1 foot from the edge of the building or based space line and be directly or indirectly illuminated.

### WINDOW SIGNS

All signs that are applied, affixed, attached, painted on or suspended directly behind or in front of a window or glass portion of a door are window signs. Window signs may have a surface display area of 25% of the glass area, and will be counted in the total signage allowed per side.

### GROUND SIGNS

Ground signs are permitted for all businesses with a minimum of 100 feet of major street frontage. Corner lots are permitted 2 ground signs, one per street frontage over 100 ft. Setbacks, overall height and square footage allowances are listed below in Table A.

**Table A:**

Set Back	Height	Square Footage
10'-0"	2'-0"	20 Sq. Ft.
15'-0"	3'-0"	30 Sq. Ft.
20'-0"	4'-0"	40 Sq. Ft.
25'-0"	5'-0"	50 Sq. Ft.
30'-0"	6'-0"	60 Sq. Ft.
35'-0"	7'-0"	70 Sq. Ft.
40'-0"	8'-0"	80 Sq. Ft.
45'-0"	9'-0"	90 Sq. Ft.
50'-0"	10'-0"	100 Sq. Ft.

### POLE SIGNS

Pole signs are permitted for all businesses over 100 feet of major street frontage. Corner lots are permitted 2 pole signs, one per street frontage over 100 feet. All signs shall be no higher than 14'-0". Set backs, clearance between ground and bottom of sign and square footage allowances are listed below in Table B.

**Table B:**

Set Back	Clearance beneath sign	Square Footage
25'-0"	7'-0"	50 Sq. Ft.
30'-0"	6'-7"	55 Sq. Ft.

35'-0"	6'-2"	60 Sq. Ft.
40'-0"	5'-10"	65 Sq. Ft.
45'-0"	5'-5"	70 Sq. Ft.
50'-0"	5'-0"	75 Sq. Ft.

**DIRECTIONAL SIGNS**

Each business is allowed one directional sign located adjacent to each entrance, exit, and change of vehicular or pedestrian travel. These signs can be no higher than 5'-0" and shall be no more than 4 square feet in surface display area.

**AWNING SIGNS**

Signs shall be allowed on awnings that project over a public right-of-way. They must be at least 8'-0" above the ground. The signs shall be placed at least 1'-0" from the edge of the awning/building. These signs will be no more than 2 square feet in surface display area for every foot of building frontage.

**TEMPORARY A-FRAME SIGNS**

Each new business is allowed to use a portable non-illuminated A-Frame sign. This sign may be 6 square feet in surface display area. They may not be placed in the public right-of-way. They shall be allowed for 10 days within the first year of opening the business.

**BANNERS**

All businesses shall be allowed to display a banner no greater than 8 square feet for 10 consecutive days up to 3 times a year. At the end of the 10 day period, the banner must be removed for a minimum of 10 days before applying for another sign. There will be a separate fee for each banner change for DDA and Real Estate.

**ELECTRONIC SIGNS**

All businesses shall be permitted to use electronic text display signs. These signs shall be limited on their illumination both during the day after dark. The rates of change shall be based on the speed limit of the road the sign will face and the message shall change no more than one time per day.

**DDA ALLOWED SIGNS**

**Projecting Alley Signs:** All businesses located within the Downtown Development Authority District, one projecting sign shall be permitted per business fronting an alley. These signs shall be no larger than 6 square feet and must depict and/or list the name of the business and/or type of business. They may not project more than 4'-0" from the building, and no more than 1'-0" over the alley right-of-way. In alleys with only pedestrian traffic, the bottom of the sign shall be 8'-0" above grade. In alleys with vehicular traffic, the bottom of sign shall be 14'-0" above grade.

**Projecting Street Signs:** All businesses located within the Downtown Development Authority District, one projecting sign shall be permitted per business fronting a street. These signs will be no larger than 8 square feet and must depict and/or list the name of the businesses and/or type of business. They may not project more than 4'-0" from the building. In alleys with only pedestrian traffic, the bottom of the sign shall be 8'-0" above grade.

**PERMIT PROCESS**

- You must submit an application and attach supporting documents online at: <https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/1979/21068/Apply-for-a-Permit-Online>. The application will be converted to permit and will then advance to the plan review process. You must indicate each sign and square footage per sign on the application.
- A building permit is issued when all required approvals have been obtained and applicable fees have been paid. Once your permits are issued (email), you must post a copy on the job site until the project has received final inspection.
- A building permit must be issued within 6 months of the application date or the application will be canceled.

**PERMIT FEES FOR NEW SIGNS and ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING SIGNS**

The fee for permits requires pursuant to Section 32-51 shall be based upon the surface display area of the sign to be erected, altered or added as follows:

***New Signs:***

Display Area (Square Feet)	Permit Fee
• 0-10	\$ 30
• 11-50	\$ 60
• 51-75	\$90
• Over 75	\$150
• Banner	\$20

***Alterations to Existing Signs:***

Display Area (Square Feet)	Permit Fee
• 0-10	\$ 15
• 11-50	\$ 30
• 51-75	\$ 45
• Over 75	\$ 80

\*\*Fees may be paid by cash/check, debit or credit card (Discover, Visa or MasterCard), or online (Invoice Cloud).

**SCHEDULING AN INSPECTION**

It is the responsibility of the permit holder or their representative to notify the city when the stages of construction are reached that requires an inspection. Ladders, scaffolds, and testing equipment required to complete an inspection must be provided. Inspection requests may be made by calling our main office number or your inspector directly. \*\*If applicable, Building and Electrical inspectors need to be present at the time of installation.

Administrative Secretary	517-319-6871
Administrative Secretary	517-319-6810
Plan Reviewer	517-319-6803
Building Inspector	517-319-6921
Electrical Inspector	517-319-6807

Revised 12/8/2020