

This information is provided as a guide to assist you in the preparation of your application for a sign permit or comprehensive signage plan. It is also intended to explain the application process.

WHAT IS A SIGN PERMIT?

A sign permit is the review of a proposed sign in order to ensure that it conforms to the provisions of the Unified Development Code (UDC) and building code.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE SIGNAGE PLAN?

A comprehensive signage plan contains specific standards for consistency, size, placement, and design characteristics, specifically for signs within commercial, office, industrial, and civic uses consisting of two or more tenant or occupant spaces on a lot, or on two or more lots subject to a common development permit or plan.

WHEN IS A SIGN PERMIT REQUIRED?

Sign permits are required for all signs, including banners and temporary signs, unless otherwise exempt under the Unified Development Code (UDC).

WHAT TYPES OF SIGNS ARE EXEMPT FROM THE PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS?

The following signs are exempt from regulation under the Bozeman Sign Code:

- Within residential zoning districts, temporary, non-illuminated, real estate sale, and non-commercial speech signs that do not exceed nine square feet in total area and, if freestanding, five feet in height are exempt. No more than one exempt sign is allowed per street frontage.
- Within commercial and manufacturing zoning districts, window signs painted on the window or affixed to the interior of a window are exempt provided that such signs do not occupy more than 25 percent of the area of the window in which it is displayed.
 - For the purpose of this section, a window is defined as a transparent glass opening in a wall separated from other glass openings by mullions or other dividers of four inches or less in width.
- Signs within a structure or building, or other enclosed area of the property, are exempt if the sign is not intended to be viewed from outside the structure or building.
- On-premise directional signs are exempt provided that they do not exceed four square feet in size and do not contain any commercial message.
- Government and public utility signs are exempt, including

but not limited to directional, warning, street, building identification, traffic control, informational or temporary special event signs, public utility signs, and safety signs on construction sites.

- Incidental signs are also exempt. These signs are generally informational, such as “no parking” or “entrance”.

WHAT TYPES OF SIGNS ARE PROHIBITED?

All signs not expressly permitted by the Bozeman Sign Code, or exempt from regulation, are prohibited in the City. Such prohibited signs include, but are not limited to:

- Portable signs
- Roof signs
- Revolving signs
- Beacons
- Flashing signs
- Pennants
- Stringed flags
- Inflatable signs and tethered balloons (unless used temporarily or for a special event)
- Signs located in public rights-of-way

WHAT ABOUT TEMPORARY SIGNS?

Temporary and special event signs, such as banners, tethered balloons, and inflatable signs are only allowed as follows:

- They must be located in a commercial, manufacturing, public land, business, or office zoning district.
- They can be displayed for a consecutive period not to exceed 15 days, for a maximum of 30 days per year.
- Grand opening banners may be displayed for a time period not to exceed 60 days. Only one grand opening banner will be permitted for the life of a business.
- Banners will be consistent with the requirements of the Bozeman Sign Code in terms of location, height, and type.
- A temporary sign permit must be obtained.

WHAT ABOUT NONCONFORMING SIGNS?

All signs that were legally permitted by the City of Bozeman prior to June 22, 1997 are considered legal permitted signs, even if they do not conform to existing permit regulations. Existing, non-conforming signs may not be:

- Replaced, except with a conforming sign.

- Changed in copy (except for signs specifically designed to be changed in copy).
- Structurally altered to extend its useful life.
- Expanded, moved, or relocated.

Any lot with a nonconforming sign may not add additional signage until all signs on the lot are brought into compliance with the Bozeman Sign Code. Any site modification that requires a site plan review will necessitate compliance for all existing and proposed signs.

WHAT INFORMATION IS REQUIRED FOR APPLICATION?

Visit the Department of Community Development to determine if what you are proposing would require a sign permit or a comprehensive signage plan. If required, you will be advised of the necessary application process for your proposal, provided with the necessary application materials, and informed of the application fee. Individual sign permit applications should be submitted to the Building Division of the Department of Community Development for processing. Comprehensive signage plan applications are accepted and reviewed by the Planning Division of the Department of Community Development.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR REVIEWING MY SIGN PROPOSAL?

The City of Bozeman Department of Community Development reviews all sign permit applications and comprehensive signage plans. Sign concepts are initially reviewed as part of the development review process, however, a formal sign application is still required for all signs prior to installation.

Comprehensive signage plans are reviewed and approved by the Director of Community Development at the time of the initial development application. However, an approved sign permit must still be obtained for each individual sign covered by the comprehensive signage plan prior to installation.

For signs within the Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District and the Entryway Corridor Overlay District, there will be an additional level of review to ensure the sign meets the design guidelines set forth for the district.

PROJECT APPROVAL

Once your proposed sign or signage plan has received final approval, copies of approved sign permits will be mailed to the contact person on the permit application form. Additional permits may be required for electrical connections or sign foundations. You will be notified during the review process if other permits are necessary.

QUESTIONS? NEED MORE INFORMATION? CONTACT:

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