

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Why is there a sign ordinance in the first place?**

The intent of the sign ordinance is to regulate signs and outdoor advertising in order to minimize their harmful effects on the public health, safety and welfare. The regulations have been developed to prevent sign clutter, conflicts between adjacent land uses, and safety hazards to pedestrians and motorists. As a side benefit, the regulations also improve the community's appearance.

### **Do I need a permit to install a sign?**

Yes, you must obtain a sign permit from the City to install most outdoor signs. The City needs to confirm that your sign is consistent with the sign ordinance. The application fee is \$100.

A City permit is also required for most temporary signs. The application fee is \$50.

### **Are any other approvals needed?**

No.

### **How long does the review take?**

The City Sign Review Committee meets once a week. Depending on when you submit your application, the process will take approximately one to two weeks.

### **How do I report a sign that I believe is in violation of the sign ordinance?**

Contact the City Building Inspector at (810) 735-7980 to report the violation.

### **How do I find out the Zoning District in which my property is located?**

You will need to review the City's Zoning Map, which is available on the "downloads" page of the City's website at: [www.lindenmi.us/downloads.asp](http://www.lindenmi.us/downloads.asp)

### **What can I do if my proposed or existing sign does not meet the ordinance requirements?**

Variance requests for non-conforming signs may be heard by the Board of Appeals. Requests are subject to specific standards as defined in the variance application.

### **What should I do if I have an illegal sign at my business?**

If no permits exist, you may either remove the sign, or apply for a permit. The permit will be granted if the size and other factors are allowed by the ordinance. If the existing sign does not meet the ordinance, you'll be required to remove it or alter it to meet the law. If you fail to take action to correct or remove illegal signs, you will receive a citation from the City Building Inspector.

### **How can I find out if any of my existing signs are illegal?**

The existing signs on your business may remain if they were installed with permits. If you cannot find permits in your files, you can check the files at City Hall.

# BUSINESS OWNER'S GUIDE TO THE CITY OF LINDEN SIGN ORDINANCE

## OUTSIDE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT EDITION

Exterior signage within the City of Linden is regulated by the City's sign ordinance, a section of the City's zoning ordinance.

The complete sign ordinance is long and technical. This publication summarizes the key regulations and answers some of the most frequently asked questions about signs in non-technical terms. Please note that this edition applies to all properties located outside of the Central Business District.

This publication should only be used as a general guide and is not a substitute for a careful review of the sign ordinance itself. The complete text of Linden's sign ordinance is available on the "downloads" page of the City's website at:

[www.lindenmi.us/downloads.asp](http://www.lindenmi.us/downloads.asp)

We recommend that you always talk to a City staff member before designing, purchasing or installing any signs at your property. For more information, contact City Hall at (810) 735-7980.



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# SIGN REGULATIONS FOR PROPERTIES OUTSIDE OF THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

## BUSINESS ADVERTISING SIGNS (PERMITS REQUIRED, UNLESS SPECIFIED)



### Ground Signs

- One ground sign is allowed per lot.
- A second ground sign may be permitted for lots fronting two public roads.
- The height and size allowed is dependent upon the Zoning District in which your lot is located.



### Wall Signs

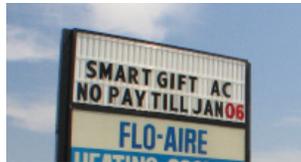
- One wall sign is permitted per lot.
- Additional wall signs are allowed in certain circumstances -- for example, if the lot has frontage on two public roads or if it is a shopping center with multiple businesses.
- The size allowed is dependent upon the size of the building and the Zoning District in which your lot is located.

### Window Signs

- Permits are not required for window signs.
- The size of window signs can't exceed 30% of the area of all ground floor windows. Window signs can't

cover more than 50% of any single window.

- One "open" sign is allowed, but can't be larger than 2 square feet.
- The "open" sign may be illuminated if: your property is located in a non-residential district; the sign is limited to two colors; and the sign does not include blinking, flashing or other movement.



### Changeable Copy Signs

- Changeable sign copy is allowed on a ground or wall sign, as long as the changeable copy area does not exceed 50% of the ground or wall sign area.
- Electronic changeable copy (LED) is allowed if: your property is located in a non-residential district; the sign is no closer than 50 feet from a residential district; and, the copy does not change more than 8 times per day or involve movement.

### Sandwich Signs

- One sandwich sign is allowed per business.
- The sign can have two faces, each no more than 10 square feet in area.



## TEMPORARY SIGNS (PERMITS REQUIRED, UNLESS SPECIFIED)

### New Business Start-Up Signs

- For new businesses, a temporary sign advertising the business may be allowed for up to 45 days.

### Banner Signs

- Within the General Commercial District and Local Service District, one temporary banner sign is allowed per business for up to 30 days and no more than 4 times per calendar year.
- The sign can't exceed 20 square feet in area and neither the height nor the width can exceed 10 feet.

### Weekend or Holiday Banner Signs

- A weekend or holiday banner sign may be allowed and does not require a permit.
- The sign can only be erected after the opening of business on the weekend or holiday and must be removed prior to the end of business on the weekend or holiday.
- The sign can't exceed 20 square feet in area and neither the height nor the width can exceed 10 feet.

## PROHIBITED SIGNS

- Balloons, pennants, streamers, ribbons, pinwheels and searchlights
- Signs mounted to roofs
- Signs featuring animation or movement (moving parts, flashing lights, etc.)
- Signs which advertise a business or activity which is not conducted on the property
- Signs attached to a marquee
- Signs which are broken or structurally unsafe
- Signs attached to or printed on a canopy
- Signs attached to and projecting more than 12 inches from the wall

## EXEMPT SIGNS (NO PERMITS REQUIRED)

The signs listed below are exempt from the regulations of the sign ordinance and do not require permits.

- Nameplates, not exceeding 2 square feet
- Political signs, erected no more than 36 days prior to an election
- Directional signs, not exceeding 2 square feet in size and containing no advertising
- Real estate signs, not exceeding a height of 6 feet and 32 square feet of display area
- Incidental signs, such as credit card decals and business hours of operation.