Do I need a Sign Permit?

Signs that require a sign permit:
Certain signs in Larimer County require a sign permit from the Building Department before installation. Examples are:
- Non-residential or commercial signs
  - Freestanding signs
  - Monument signs
  - Wall signs
  - Canopy signs
  - Awnings
  - Projecting signs
  - Oddly shaped signs
- Temporary project & construction marketing signs
- Temporary commercial signs

Signs that do not require a permit:
(Land Use Code Section 10.6)
The most common types of signs that do not require a permit are:
- Agricultural product signs
- Election signs
- Flags and governmental signs
- Home occupation signs
- On-site traffic directional signs
- Real estate signs
- Rural property identification signs
- Window signs
- Daily special (A-Frame type) signs

Real Estate Signs
Real estate signs are generally considered ‘signs that do not require a permit’, listed in Land Use Code Section 10.6. Although most real estate signs don’t require a permit, there are regulations that need to be considered.

Number of Signs per Property

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of property</th>
<th># per property</th>
<th>Size &amp; Height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single family or two family dwelling</td>
<td>1 sign per street frontage</td>
<td>8 sq ft per face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant land (unplatted &amp; undeveloped)</td>
<td>1 sign per street frontage</td>
<td>48 sq ft per face</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A sign permit is NOT required for these types of signs.

Please Note – Signs cannot be posted at a turn off, corner, intersection, or location that directs people to an area where a property is for sale.

Temporary Project Marketing Sign
- A sign permit is required for this type of real estate sign
- On site for no more than 2 years following issuance of permit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zoning District</th>
<th># per property</th>
<th>Size &amp; Height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential &amp; rural zoning</td>
<td>1 sign per entrance 2 signs per project</td>
<td>50 sq ft per face 8 ft in height</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-residential zoning</td>
<td>1 sign per entrance 2 signs per project</td>
<td>64 sq ft per face 8 ft in height</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sign Limitations

**Off Premises Signs** *(Section 10.5.E)*

Off premises signs are **not allowed** in unincorporated areas of Larimer County (even with a property owner’s permission). Off premises signs generally include signs directing people to a property or business offered or existing elsewhere. Advertisements and signs on a property must be related to an event or activity occurring on the same property.

**Prohibited Signs** *(Section 10.5)*

- Billboards (an off premises sign)
- Inflatable signs.
- Moving signs (with flashing, rotating, animated or otherwise moving features).
- Electronic or changeable message signs cannot change more frequently than once every minute.
- Signs mounted to trees, landscaping, traffic signage, utility and light poles, fences or similar structures.
- Pennants and wind-driven signs
- Roof-top signs
- ‘Searchlights’
- Strings of light bulbs

**Nonconforming Signs** *(Section 10.14)*

Signs that have existed prior to current regulations may be considered nonconforming. The sign content may be changed, but a nonconforming sign cannot be:

- Structurally or physically changed to another sign
- Maintained to prolong the life of the sign
- Altered so as to increase the degree of nonconformity

**Signs in the Public Right-of-Way** *(Section 10.2.B)*

Signs may not be placed on or over public roads, rights–of–way, or in road or access easements. The right–of–way is generally wider than the width of the pavement. Signs cannot be posted at a turnoff, corner, intersection, or location that directs people to an area where a property is for sale.

---

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q** How do I apply for a Sign Permit?

**A** Sign permits are processed like building permits. Sign applications are available at the Larimer County Planning/Building Department - 200 W. Oak Street, 3rd floor, Fort Collins, CO 80521.

Sign permit applications are also available online: [www.larimer.org/building/sign_application.pdf](http://www.larimer.org/building/sign_application.pdf)

**Q** Who can apply for a sign permit?

**A** A **licensed sign contractor** must apply for a sign permit for any sign other than a temporary commercial sign. Read Contractor Licensing information online at: [www.larimer.org/building/contractor_license_handout.pdf](http://www.larimer.org/building/contractor_license_handout.pdf)

**Q** What documentation needs to be included with a Sign Permit application?

**A** A sign permit application needs to include 3 copies of an accurately scaled and detailed drawing showing:

- The property dimensions & location of the sign(s)
- Dimensions of buildings and signs
- If the sign is freestanding, show setbacks from property lines to sign structure
- Sign text and type of construction
- Mounting details, including foundation, size of any posts and sign height

**Q** Which signs need to be ‘engineered’?

**A** Some sign permit applications require drawings stamped and certified by an engineer.

- Canopy and canopy signs
- Freestanding signs that exceed 40 ft in height or have more than 2 posts or columns for support
- Freestanding signs with cabinets that have more than 3 cabinets on a pole or set of poles
- Monument signs, especially those that support a large amount of weight
- Signs of unusual dimension or unique shape.
- Foundation plans are required for Monument, Freestanding, and single & double pole signs

**Q** When is a Sign Inventory form required?

**A** Sign Inventory forms are required for commercial businesses in non-residential districts.

**Q** Can I change a sign face without a permit?

**A** Yes- the location size, shape, or any other feature of the sign needs to remain the same. Only the face can change.

**Q** Who can I call if I have questions about sign permits?

**A** The sign code is administered by the Planning Department. Please call 970-498-7683 and ask to speak to the ‘planner-on-call’.

---

January 10, 2013