



GREENSBORO
NORTH CAROLINA

PLANNING

Development Services Sign Permits

Sign Permits

Introduction

The City's Land Development Ordinance (LDO) sets out the zoning-based standards by which signage throughout Greensboro is regulated, to ensure signs are constructed, erected and maintained in a safe manner and do not create visual distractions or hazardous conditions. To view the full Sign Regulations in Article 14, visit <http://online.encodeplus.com/regs/greensboro-nc/index.aspx>.

The North Carolina State Building Code and the North Carolina Electrical Code also require permits for much signage. See the exceptions under "When is a Building or Electrical Permit Required?" on page 2.

- In the limited instances where a sign permit is required by the LDO but neither a building permit nor an electrical permit is required, a Zoning-Only Sign Permit will be issued for proposed signs that are compliant with LDO standards.
- Where a building and/or electrical permit is necessary, the zoning review is required before the permit application(s) can be made, and the sign permit is issued only once the required building/electrical permit(s) can be issued.

What is a Sign? (as defined in the LDO)

"Any object, device, display or structure, or part thereof, that is used to advertise, identify, display, direct or attract attention to an object, person, institution, organization, business, product, service, event or location by any means, including but not limited to words, letters, pennants, banners, emblems, trademarks, trade names, insignias, numerals, figures, design, symbols, fixtures, colors, illumination or projected images or any other attention directing device."

Prohibited Signs (Section 30-14-4 of the LDO)

Windblown devices, moving signs, portable signs legible from the public right of way, signs attached to or painted on a vehicle in view of the public right of way, roof signs and signs that cause a sight obstruction at any street or driveway. [See also City of Greensboro Municipal Code 16-8](#). This is not an all-inclusive list, but it includes the most common prohibited signs.

Sign Maintenance

The cleaning, painting or replacing of a sign face does not require a permit as long as the size, shape, framework for and location of the sign are not altered. Electrical work requires a permit.

Signs that do not require a sign permit under the LDO (Section 30-14-6 of the LDO)

Various sorts of signage do not require permits under the LDO, so long as they meet the Standards set out in Section 30-14-6.2. These include (but are not limited to) Construction signs; Real Estate signs; Directional signs; Yard Sale signs; Home Occupation signs; Instructional signs; Campaign signs; and



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Window signs. Signs not visible from a public right of way and certain other types of signage are also exempt from sign regulations. An electrical permit is required if a sign will be illuminated.

To Start the Sign Permitting Process

Bring your completed sign review application to Planning staff in the Development Services office on the UG level of the Melvin Municipal Office Building (MMOB), 300 W. Washington Street, immediately to the left after entering the building from Washington Street.

A complete application includes: completed application form; fully-dimensioned sign drawings; fully-dimensioned plot plan showing all required information; fully-dimensioned wall elevation (where an attached sign is proposed); and payment. The cost for each sign is \$120.00. Only complete application packages will be accepted for review.

If you would rather mail the application package, address it to:

City of Greensboro, Planning Department – Sign Review
PO Box 3136
Greensboro NC 27402-3136

Or for FedEx/UPS - physical address:

300 W. Washington Street, UG Level
Greensboro, NC 27401

Interested in on-line payment? Provide us with the business name, mailing address, phone number and email address you want tied to the account. It takes 1 to 3 days to set up the account.

Application Submittal

The package will be reviewed to see if the application meets the standards set forth in the LDO. A field verification visit will also be made. Be aware that the field check will identify any signs on the site that have not been identified in the application package, and if any nonconformities exist that require correction before a permit for new signage can be issued. If the field check and the sign package review show the proposed sign is approvable from a zoning standpoint, and building/electrical permit(s) are not required, a Zoning-Only Sign Permit will be issued. If building/electrical permit(s) are required for the proposed sign, the applicant will be advised that submittal for these permits can be made.

If the installation is not completed within 180 days, a Zoning-Only Sign Permit shall expire.

Illegal and Non-Conforming Signs (Section 30-14-13.1 of the LDO)

Any illegal or non-conforming signs must be removed or brought into compliance with current ordinance requirements prior to approval of the application.



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When is a Building or Electrical Permit Required?

North Carolina General Statutes and City of Greensboro Ordinances require that you obtain a building permit before installing your sign, unless signs are exempt as follows:

1. Non-illuminated wall signs.
2. Signs erected by transportation authorities.
3. Projecting signs not exceeding 6 square feet (0.56m²)
4. The changing of moveable parts of an approved sign that is designed for such changes, or the repainting or repositioning of display matter shall not be deemed an alteration.

The installer is required to obtain all permits and inspections pertinent to the installation. This includes a footing and final inspections upon completion of the installation. Please note that free standing signs over 32 square feet must be engineered. For the Commercial Building Permit form, see the Development Services link on below.

If there will be any electrical work involved with installation or operation of the sign, an electrical contractor is required to perform that work, under an electrical permit. Appropriate inspections are also required. An electrical contractor with a contractor code number and a PIN number with the City of Greensboro can go to <http://bisched.greensboro-nc.gov/frmHome.aspx> and fill in the electrical permit form on-line. A contractor without a contractor code number and PIN should call the Development Services number and ask the Permit Technician to help set this up.

Useful Links:

Development Services – Permit applications, fee schedules, submittal requirements, etc.

<https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/business/development-services>

Link to Electrical fee schedule: <https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/home/showdocument?id=5111>

Link to Building fee schedule: <https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/home/showdocument?id=5112>

Building fee worksheet: <https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/home/showdocument?id=5113>

Building Inspections Automated Phone Attendant: 336-373-2400

Permits: 336-373-2155

Land Development Ordinance – Article 14 for signage regulations:

<http://online.encodeplus.com/regs/greensboro-nc/index.aspx>

Planner dealing with Sign Permit Reviews –

- Nicholas Harrell: 336-433-7258, Nicholas.Harrell@greensboro-nc.gov



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Information to be provided with the zoning sign application:

- **Property address:** Street Name and Number where sign will be installed.
- **Current zoning:** Applicant may obtain current zoning from the city's interactive map; go to <https://gis.greensboro-nc.gov/gsomapgallery/>, select either Development Services or Zoning Districts, and enter Address
- **Common Sign Plan:** Some projects, like most multi-building office or retail centers, develop as an Integrated Multiple Use Development. Common sign plans are required for these. Check with your client for a copy of the common sign plan, which will provide information on the location, maximum height and maximum size of allowed signage under the Common Sign Plan. This may be different than what is otherwise allowed.
- **Name of business for which sign is requested:** Typically the name on the sign.
- **Contact information:** Business owner, sign contractor building and/or installing the sign, and the electrician if known.

PROPOSED SIGNS

- **Type:** Indicate whether proposed sign(s) will be freestanding, see section [30-14-7.3](#) of the LDO for standards or attached to a wall, see section [30-14-7.3](#) of the LDO for standards. Please note that the zoning of the property determines the applicable standards. If the zoning is conditional (has CD at front), or is in an overlay district, there may be further requirements. Signs for properties in local Historic districts must get a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA);
- **Location:** Specific location for the sign on the lot or face of the building;
- **Size:** The dimensions of the sign, i.e. sign height and width, total square feet, total height;
- **Materials:** What the sign will be made of, (i.e. steel, wood, etc.); will an electrical connection be involved?
- **Fee:** Each sign has a **\$120.00 review fee (as of July 1, 2019)** Payment (to City of Greensboro) is to be made at the time of application

EXISTING SIGNS

- **Type:** List any existing freestanding or attached wall signs on the property. (Photos can be helpful.)
- **Location:** General vicinity on the lot or face of the building, i.e. front of building, East side of lot, etc.
- **Size:** The dimensions of the existing sign(s) (i.e. height, square feet)
- **To Be Removed or Remain:** State whether the existing sign(s) will remain or be removed

PLOT PLAN

A drawn-to-scale plot plan showing existing and proposed signage is required as part of the application. For proposed freestanding signs, use of an approved site plan as a base for this



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application is recommended; a site survey is also a good base. However, so long as all required information is shown accurately and to scale, this does not have to be drawn by a design professional. Use of an aerial photograph or a copy of the zoning map as a plot plan is not sufficient.

Required information on the plot plan includes:

- existing and proposed signage (including dimensions of the signs, height, locations, distances from lot lines and right of way),
- length of lot line along the street,
- street right-of-way width,
- any existing sidewalks, utility or storm drainage easements,
- driveway(s) – width, location, associated sight triangles*, and
- approximate location of freestanding signs on adjacent properties where spacing requirements are involved.

Resource: <https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/transportation/gdot-divisions/engineering/sight-obstructions>

Required information on a to-scale elevation drawing for location of a wall sign includes:

- length and height of wall on which the attached sign will be placed;
- if the sign is for a tenant in a multi-tenant building, how much of that length is associated with the tenant;
- any windows and doors on that wall