

The purpose of this guide is to assist businesses, property owners, and sign installers with requirements for temporary and portable signs in Bismarck and its extraterritorial area. All requirements for temporary signs are within Chapter 14-03.1 Signs.

Requirements for All Temporary Signs

Certain requirements apply to all temporary signs:

- Signs may not be placed in sight triangles near intersections, either street or driveways. See info guide on sight triangles for more details.
- Signs may not be placed in a public right-of-way. Please verify that the sign is on your property before placing.
- Signs must be properly maintained, including missing or faded lettering, wind damage, etc.
- Signs may not create a public safety hazard or result in confusion with a traffic control device. For example, words “stop” or “caution.”

Types of Temporary Signs

Temporary signs are classified into different types:



Yard Sign

Small freestanding sign in the ground or attached to fence/deck/garage. Yard signs may not be illuminated and may only be used for on-premise commercial activity, such as real estate, garage sales, etc.

- Location:** Any zoning district
Max Size: 8 Square Feet, except non-commercial sign 24 hours or less
Max Height: No Limit
Quantity: No Limit

- Duration:** No Limit, unless commercial then 30 days after activity ceases
Permit: Not required



Site Sign – For Sale or Rent

A freestanding sign constructed of temporary materials and installed on a parcel that is currently

for sale or rent. Site signs may only be used for on-premise signs and may not be illuminated.

- Location:** Any zoning district except lighter residential (R5, R10, RR, RMH)
Max Size: 64 Square Feet
Max Height: 10 Feet
Quantity: 1 per street frontage per parcel, with a 2nd allowed frontages >200'
Duration: Until 30 days after sale, lease, or occupancy
Permit: Not required

Site Sign – Under Development

A non-illuminated freestanding sign constructed of temporary materials and installed in an area that is currently under development or construction.

- Location:** Any zoning district
Max Size: 144 Square Feet (total on parcel)
Max Height: 10 Feet
Quantity: 3 per development or site entrance
Duration: Until 30 days after sale of lots or certificate of occupancy on commercial
Permit: Not required



Portable Sign

A freestanding sign designed to be moveable and not considered a site sign, or other temporary sign. Off-premise

content is not allowed, unless for a community-wide event. Identification of sign owner must be displayed. May not be illuminated or powered.

- Location:** Commercial/Industrial districts, only in Residential with Special Use Permit, not Downtown/Ag districts.
- Max Size:** 60 Square Feet
- Max Height:** 8 Feet
- Quantity:** 1 per 100 feet of street frontage
- Duration:** 240 days per calendar year
- Permit:** Licensed installer must keep records. Permit required for individual business.



Temporary Banner

A display sign banner, or other advertising device constructed of, cloth, canvas, fabric or other light temporary material, with or without

a structural frame intended for a limited period of display. Must be affixed to a wall or solid surface. May only be on-premise signs.

- Location:** Any district, except on residential properties of 4 units or less
- Max Size:** No limit, except 32 square feet in Downtown or Residential districts
- Max Height:** No limit
- Quantity:** No limit
- Duration:** 300 days per calendar year
- Permit:** Not required



Air-Blown Sign

A sign or attention-getting device that is designed to be moved or filled with air or gas, such as balloons and products marketed as "air puppet" or "tube man."

- Location:** Any district except Downtown
- Max Size/Max Height/Quantity:** No limit
- Duration:** 7-day display, up to 2 times per year separated by 30 days
- Permit:** Not required



Feather Flag Sign

A freestanding sign with a single plastic or metal shaft driven in the ground or fixed to a weighted base and with an attached pennant that is vertically elongated and attached to the shaft.

- Location:** Any district except downtown
- Size/Height/Number:** No limit
- Duration:** 60-day display, up to 2 times/year after 30 days
- Permit:** Not required

Other Types

- Signs are allowed on construction fences for the duration of construction activity on a site.
- Sidewalk signs (e.g. A-frame) are allowed with restrictions. See Downtown Signs info guide.
- Signs carried by people are allowed without permit or any special restrictions.
- Temporary lighting displays, such as holiday lights, are broadly allowed.

How to Apply

Most temporary signs require no permit except:

- Portable signs placed by individual businesses require a sign permit from the Building Inspections Division.
- Portable signs placed in Residential zoning districts require a Special Use Permit from the Planning Division. Allow 45 days for a public hearing with Planning & Zoning Commission.

For additional information, contact the City of Bismarck Planning Division at 355-1840 or visit the City-County Office Building 221 N. 5th Street during standard office hours.