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INFORMATION ABOUT POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SIGNS

The purpose of the Sign Ordinance, Article 59-F of the Montgomery County Code, is to regulate the size, location, height, and construction of all signs placed for public view.

This fact sheet provides information about the size, placement and permits required for political campaign signs.

HOW ARE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SIGNS REGULATED IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY?

A political campaign sign generally can be classified as either a temporary sign (to be located only on private property) or a limited duration sign (to be located either on private property or in the public right-of-way).

WHAT IS A TEMPORARY SIGN?

A temporary sign does not require a permit provided the sign is displayed for no more than 30 days. The date of installation must be written on the sign.

- A temporary sign must be displayed only on private property with the permission of the property owner.
- The size, height and location of the sign is determined by the general zoning category in which the sign is placed (i.e., residential, commercial/industrial, agricultural).

Temporary Sign in a Residential Zone

- The number of signs is not limited, however the total sign area must not exceed 10 square feet. (Example: 3' x 3' sign = 9 square feet)
- A temporary sign must not exceed 5 feet in height (measured from ground to top edge of the sign) for a freestanding or wall sign.
- A temporary sign must be set back at least 5 feet from the property line.
- No illumination is allowed.

Temporary Sign in a Commercial Zone

- The number of signs is not limited, however the total sign area must not exceed 100 square feet.
- The maximum sign area of each sign must not exceed 50 square feet.
- The sign must not exceed 26 feet in height for a freestanding or wall sign. A freestanding or wall sign. A freestanding sign must not exceed the height of the tallest building on the property.
- The sign must be set back at least ¼ of the distance required for the building restriction setback. Generally, the setback for a sign in a commercial zone is a minimum 2 ½ feet from the property line.
- No illumination is allowed.

CAN A SIGN BE DISPLAYED ON PRIVATE PROPERTY FOR MORE THAN 30 DAYS?

Yes, but it will be classified as a limited duration sign. The size, height, and location standards are the same as those for a temporary sign.

IS A PERMIT REQUIRED TO PLACE A SIGN IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY?

Yes, each sign to be placed in the public right-of-way requires a limited duration sign permit. A maximum of four signs are allowed per candidate. Note: State law does not allow signs in the state right-of-way. A state road is identified by a number (Example: Route 355).

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A LIMITED DURATION SIGN IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY?

- The sign must be displayed only on weekends or for 14 consecutive days.
- The sign area for each sign must not exceed 5 square feet. (Example: 2 ½' x 2' sign = 5 square feet)
- The sign must not exceed 30 inches in height.
- The sign must be placed at least 100 feet from any intersection, and 50 feet from any driveway.
- The sign must be set back at least 2 feet from a curb or if no curb exists, then at least 6 feet from edge of the roadway.
- No signs are allowed in a highway median.

WHERE CAN I OBTAIN A LIMITED DURATION SIGN PERMIT?

Sign permits are issued by the Department of Permitting Services, 255 Rockville Pike, Second Floor, Rockville, Maryland 20850, 240-777-6240.

WHAT IS THE FEE FOR A LIMITED DURATION SIGN PERMIT?

The cost of a limited duration sign permit is \$31.90 which includes a fee of \$29.00 and a 10% automation Enhancement Fee of \$2.90.

WHAT IS A LIMITED DURATON SIGN INSTALLER?

A business or person who installs limited duration signs for others. A limited duration sign installer will be trained by the Department of Permitting Services and must pass an examination. A training class normally lasts about 4 hours and is held upon request. The cost of a limited duration sign installer license is \$214.50 which includes a fee of \$195.00 and a 10% automation fee of \$19.50. Once licensed, the installer can direct others in the installation of limited duration signs in accordance with the sign regulations, but the installer is responsible for any signs installed under his license. There is no charge for a limited duration sign permit erected by a licensed sign installer.

HOW DO I REGISTER FOR THE TRAINING CLASS OR OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT TEMPORARY OR LIMITED DURATION SIGNS?

Call the Department of Permitting Services at 240-777-6240.

WHAT ARE THE PENALTIES FOR NOT COMPLYING WITH THE SIGN REGULATIONS?

Non-compliance can result in the issuance of a \$500 civil citation for each sign in violation and removal of illegal signs in the public right-of-way. A political candidate and the sign installer can be held jointly responsible for compliance with the sign regulations. Sign regulations will be strictly enforced.

ARE THERE SIGNS, WHICH ARE NOT PERMITTED AND CANNOT BE ERECTED OR RETAINED?

Yes, they include the following:

- Signs in the public right-of-way unless placed in accordance with limited duration sign requirements.
- Signs which move in the wind including banners, pennants, balloons, etc.
- Signs attached to utility poles, traffic signs, traffic signal devices, and trees in the public right-of-way.
- Roof signs.

DO I HAVE TO REMOVE MY SIGNS?

Yes, candidates must remove their signs from polling sites immediately upon closure of the sites. Political campaign signs at all other locations must be removed in compliance with the sign regulations.