



Village of Villa Park

Public Works Department - Permitting

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Villa Park, Illinois 60181

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SIGNS

PERMIT APPLICATION

The Village of Villa Park requires a permit prior to beginning any construction.

To obtain a permit, the following is required:

For Wall Signs:

- 2 sets of plans
 - Must show:
 - Elevation with wall dimensions of all walls that will have signage
 - Sign & lettering dimensions
 - Installation overview
 - Existing signage dimensions

For Freestanding Signs:

- 2 sets of plans
 - Must show:
 - Elevation
 - Sign and lettering dimension
 - Foundation construction
 - Installation overview
 - Landscape Buffer
- Plat of Survey
 - Must show:
 - Signage, drawn to scale
 - Setbacks from property lines and buildings
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Note: For freestanding signs, a licensed electrician must be used even if there is existing conduit.

As of July 14, 2008, all new freestanding signs are required to install and maintain decorative landscaping around the base of the sign, extending a minimum of 3' from the outer edge of the sign base on all sides.

For Temporary Signs:

- 2 sets of plans
 - Must show:
 - Sign and lettering dimension
 - Plat of Survey for cold air inflatable signs, non-flashing portable signs, search lights or beacons, & placard signs
 - Plat of Survey must show:
 - Signage, drawn to scale
 - Setbacks from property lines and buildings

Article 19. SIGNS

19.1. Purpose and definitions.

The regulations set forth herein are established in order to promote and protect general public health, safety, comfort, prosperity and welfare, and in order to accomplish the following specific purposes:

1. To enhance the economy, business and industry of the village by promoting the reasonable, orderly, and effective use and display of signs.
2. To enhance the physical appearance of the village.
3. To protect the general public from damage and injury which might be caused by the faulty and uncontrolled construction and use of signs within the village.
4. To protect the public use of streets and highways by reducing sign or advertising distractions that may increase traffic accidents.
5. To protect the physical and mental well-being of the general public by recognizing and encouraging a sense of aesthetic appreciation for the visual environment.
6. To preserve the value of private property by assuring the compatibility of signs with surrounding land uses.
7. To create a positive image of the community for residents and visitors alike through adequate, well designed signs.
8. To eliminate excessive signage that negatively impacts how the entire community is perceived, detracts from the beauty of the community, and makes the community less attractive to potential new businesses.

For purposes of this Article 19, the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings:

Multitenant building: A building containing two (2) or more distinct tenants.

Shopping center: A group of commercial establishments planned, constructed, and managed as a total entity.

Sign: A sign is a structure consisting of tangible material that includes or contains a display or illustration of any letters, words, numbers, objects or symbols, or any combination thereof, which is affixed to, suspended from, placed upon or otherwise represented directly or indirectly upon a building or other structure, or upon the ground, which is intended to direct attention to an object, product, place, activity, person, institution, organization or business; provided that any such structure that is related directly to a national holiday shall not be deemed to be a sign for the purposes of this Article.

Sign, advertising: A sign that directs attention to a business, product or activity available or conducted, at a location other than the zoning lot upon which such sign is located or that directs attention to a noncommercial message or idea not directly related to an activity conducted on such zoning lot.

Sign area: The entire face of a sign, including the advertising surface and any framing, trim, or molding but not including the supporting structures.

Sign, awning: A sign located on a structure, made of cloth, metal, or other material attached to a building, such structure being erected so as to permit its being raised or retracted to a position against the building when not in use.

Sign, billboard: See freestanding and wall signs.

Sign, business: A sign that directs attention to a business or profession conducted upon, or to a commodity, service or entertainment sold or offered upon, the zoning lot upon which such sign is located.

Sign, canopy: A sign located on a structure, other than an awning, made of cloth, metal or other material with frames attached to a building, and supported by a frame or other device placed upon or affixed to the ground or sidewalk.

Sign, construction: A temporary sign erected on the premises on which construction is taking place, during the period of such construction, indicating the names of the architects, engineers, landscape architects, contractors or similar professionals, and the owners, financial supporters, sponsors, and similar individuals or firms having a role or interest with respect to the structure or project.

Sign, flashing: A flashing sign is one which emits a sudden or transient outburst of bright light; a flood of light briefly appearing and disappearing; as a flash of lighting; or one which repeats an unchanging light pattern of words, numerals or designs of constant brightness. For purposes of this Article, an electronic information display incorporating automatic density control and utilizing solid state switching which produces an almost instantaneous change from one (1) message to the next, so that the light that can be seen by the human eye is continuous, is not considered a flashing sign.

Sign, freestanding: (This term also includes those signs commonly known as ground, pylon, and pole signs.) A sign that is completely or principally self-supported by posts or other supports independent of any building or other structure and anchored in or upon the ground.

Sign, illuminated: A sign lighted by or exposed to artificial lighting either by lights on or in the sign or directed toward the sign.

Sign, nameplate: A sign, of a design other than freestanding, that sets forth only the name or address, or both, of a building, or the practice of an occupation therein.

Sign, political: A temporary sign announcing or supporting political candidates or issues in connection with any national, state, or local election.

Sign, portable: A sign that is not permanent, affixed to a building, structure, or the ground.

Sign, projecting: A sign which is attached to, suspended from, or supported by, a building wall, with the sign faces perpendicular to such wall.

Sign, public hearing notice: A sign posed by the village which is intended to provide notice of a public hearing or meeting concerning a proposed rezoning, planned development or subdivision for the property on which the sign is posted.

Sign, real estate: A temporary sign used or intended for use for purposes of advertising a parcel of land or a building that is or will be available for sale, rental or lease.

Sign, roof: A sign erected, constructed, or maintained in whole or in part upon the roof of a building or structure.

Sign, surface area: The entire area within a single continuous perimeter enclosing the extreme limits of a sign. For all purposes under this ordinance, any determination by the director of community development of the surface area of a sign shall be binding and conclusive upon all parties, unless made arbitrarily or in bad faith.

Sign, temporary: A sign or advertising display constructed of cloth, canvas, fabric, plywood, or other light material and designed or intended to be displayed for a short period of time.

Sign, vehicle: A sign on a vehicle not customarily and regularly used to transport persons or properties.

Sign, wall: A sign attached directly to the front wall, side wall or corner (exterior side) wall of a building with the sign face being effectively parallel to the wall and projecting not more than twelve (12) inches from such wall, and includes front, side and corner (exterior side yard) signs.

Sign, window (permanent): A sign that is visible from the exterior of a building or structure and that is permanently painted on a window, or hung immediately behind a window, or displayed from a window for the specific purpose of identifying the proprietor or name of business to the passerby.

Sign, window (promotional): Temporary window signs placed on the inside of windows indicating special items or events.

Tenant: An occupant of land or premises who occupies, uses, and enjoys real property for a fixed time, usually through a lease arrangement with the property owner and with the owner's consent.
(Ord. No. 2921, § 1, 1-26-98)

19.2. Permits required; performance standards.

No sign shall hereafter be located, erected, moved, reconstructed, extended, enlarged, converted or structurally altered without a sign permit, except those signs excepted in Section 19.3 and without being in conformity with the provisions of this ordinance. The sign shall also meet all structural, electrical and safety requirements of the building code.
(Ord. No. 2921, § 1, 1-26-98)

19.3. Signs excepted.

Except as otherwise provided in this Article, the following types of signs shall be exempt from the permit and permit fee required set forth in this Article. Such signs shall, however, conform to all requirements set forth in the following respective sign descriptions

1. Wall signs over show windows or doors of a nonconforming business establishment announcing without display or elaboration only the name and occupation of the proprietor and not to exceed two (2) feet in height and ten (10) feet in length.

2. Real estate signs.

(a) Real estate signs for the sale of residential property not to exceed eight (8) square feet in surface area per side which advertise the sale, rental or lease of the premises upon which said signs are temporarily located. Double faced signs of eight (8) square feet in surface area per side (total surface area not to exceed sixteen (16) square feet) are permitted. Said signs shall be non-illuminated and permitted only for such period of time as the property is marketed for sale, rental or lease and shall be removed when the property is no longer available for sale, rental or lease. Only one (1) such sign shall be permitted per parcel.

(b) Real estate signs for the sale, rental or lease of a commercial, office, or industrial premises upon which said signs are temporarily located shall be in accord with the following regulations:

(1) For commercial properties on which the front lot line is fifty (50) feet or less, real estate signs shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet in surface area per side. Double-faced signs of sixteen (16) square feet of surface area per side (total surface area of thirty-two (32) square feet) shall be permitted. Only one (1) such sign shall be permitted per parcel.

(2) For commercial properties the front lot line of which is in excess of fifty (50) linear feet, there shall be permitted in addition to the maximum square footage allowed in subparagraph (b) (1) above, one (1) additional square foot of surface area per face for each linear foot that the front lot line exceeds fifty (50) feet. Maximum surface area per face of the sign shall not exceed the sum of sixteen (16) square feet plus the additional surface area permitted in the preceding sentence. Double-faced signs shall be permitted. In no event shall the surface area per face exceed one

hundred (100) square feet in surface area and for double-faced signs, two hundred (200) square feet total for both faces.

Only one (1) such sign shall be permitted per parcel. These signs shall be temporary and shall be removed when the premises upon which the signs are temporarily located are no longer offered for sale, rental or lease.

3. Nameplate signs and warning signs not to exceed two (2) square feet located on the premises.

4. Signs or bulletin boards for public, charitable or religious institutions, each not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area, located on the property, for each street upon which the said institution fronts.

5. Memorial signs, tablets, names of buildings and date of erection when cut into any masonry surface or when constructed of metal and affixed flat against a structure.

6. Official signs, such as traffic control, parking restrictions, information and notices. Exit and entry signs to business premises bearing a product, business, logo, trademark, or similar symbol identifying the business enterprise ("business mark") are permitted, provided however, that the total surface of the business mark contained in each sign does not exceed four (4) square feet and are for the principal purpose of traffic direction or control.

[7.] Public hearing notice signs not to exceed sixteen (16) square feet in area located on the premises that is subject to any public hearing.

8. Temporary or portable signs further subject to the provisions contained in Section 19.6 of this Article.

(Ord. No. 2921, § 1, 1-26-98)

19.4. Signs permitted.

The following types of permanent business signs are permitted when located on the premises where the goods or services are offered for sale in all office/research, commercial and industrial districts, subject to the following restrictions:

A. Freestanding signs:

1. Unless otherwise indicated in this ordinance, one (1) freestanding sign is permitted per zoning lot less than three hundred fifty (350) feet wide.

2. The height of freestanding sign shall not exceed thirty (30) feet. For freestanding signs located on property along St. Charles Road, the height shall not exceed twenty-five (25) feet.

3. Sign area shall be calculated on the lot width of the premises for which the sign will be constructed and shall not exceed the following:

Lot Frontage (Width) Square Feet

0--50 feet, square feet maximum . . . 50

51--100 feet, square feet maximum . . . 100

101--200 feet, square feet maximum . . . 150

Over 200 feet, square feet maximum . . . 200

4. Any lot frontage over three hundred fifty (350) feet in width or, for corner lots, the average of both frontage's over three hundred fifty (350) feet in average width, shall be permitted one (1) additional freestanding sign not exceeding two hundred (200) square feet per face adequately spaced apart to avoid congestion.
 5. Freestanding signs may be placed in front of exterior side yards (corners) however, no sign shall be located within ten (10) feet of the public right-of-way.
 - a) Freestanding signs located between ten and twenty feet of the right-of-way placed on a single or double pole structure, the bottom of the sign shall not be less than nine (9) feet above the grade line of the street. For freestanding signs on a single or double pole structure along St. Charles Road, the sign may extend three (3) feet over the public right-of-way.
 - b) Freestanding monument signs shall be mounted on a decorative masonry, metal or natural stone base. Alternative materials may be approved where they correspond with the appearance of one or more materials used on the exterior of the building. The width of the base of any monument sign, as measured parallel to the sign face, shall be a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the width of the sign face. Decorative landscaping shall be required around the base of the sign, extending a minimum of three (3) feet from the outer edge of the sign base on all sides. Where the area around the base of a sign is insufficient in size to accommodate landscaping, the Director of Community Development or his/her designee may permit installation of a portion of the required landscaping at an alternate location on the site.
 6. An additional freestanding sign is permitted for auto dealers if they sell both new and used vehicles or if they sell more than one (1) new auto product line.
 7. For gas stations, an additional fifteen (15) square feet of sign area is permitted for those service stations listing gasoline prices directly on the freestanding sign, but not to exceed two hundred (200) square feet for any one (1) sign. Also, for canopies located at gas stations, one (1) sign shall be permitted on each canopy face with the sign area for each sign not to exceed ten (10) per cent of the size of each canopy face.
 8. No freestanding sign shall be placed upon any premises, other than the front of the premises, if the premise faces a residential district.
- B. *Wall signs:*
1. Front wall. The sign area for front wall signs shall not exceed one and one-half (1.5) square feet per lineal footage of building or tenant frontage. Two (2) square feet of front wall signage per lineal footage of building or tenant frontage is permitted if the wall sign facing a public street is greater than two hundred (200) feet from the street right-of-way.
 2. Corner wall. For buildings or tenant spaces on corner lots (exterior side yards), signage is permitted on the corner wall not to exceed seventy-five one-hundredths (0.75) square feet per lineal footage of the corner wall.
 3. Side wall. For buildings on interior lots, side wall signs may be placed on other than the front wall of the building, provided, however, the total square footage of side wall signs shall be counted in combination with front wall signage permitted.

4. Color, material, lighting, and content. Signs in multitenant buildings, such as shopping centers, shall generally conform to one another as part of an overall sign plan. The plan should include placement, sign area, materials, lighting and content so as to present a uniform appearance.

5. No wall signs shall be placed on the premises, other than the front of the building or tenant space, if the premise faces a residential district.

C. *Projecting signs:*

1. One (1) projecting sign is permitted per building or tenant space and the sign area shall be counted in combination with front wall signage permitted. A maximum of fifty (50) square feet is permitted for any projecting sign.

2. The projecting sign shall be no higher than twenty (20) feet above mean center line street grade and no lower than nine (9) feet above a sidewalk or pedestrian walkway, or fifteen (15) feet above a driveway or alley.

3. No projecting sign shall be placed on the premises, other than the front of the building or tenant space, if the premise faces a residential district.

D. *Roof signs:*

1. Roof signs are permitted on single-user buildings only and shall not exceed two (2) signs in number for any one (1) building.

2. The sign area of roof signs shall be counted in combination with wall signage permitted for the building, but not exceeding fifty (50) square feet for each roof sign.

3. Roof signs shall meet the yard and height requirements for the district in which it is located, but not to exceed ten (10) feet above the building.

4. No roof sign shall be placed on the premises, other than the front of the building or tenant space, if the premise faces a residential district.

E. *Window signs:*

1. Permanent window signs shall be counted as wall signage in total allowable size and shall not exceed twenty-five (25) per cent of the glass area upon which or behind which the sign is displayed.

2. Promotional window signs may be placed without permits provided they do not exceed (75) seventy-five per cent of the glass area and are removed at the conclusion of their useful life.

F. *Awning and canopy signs:*

1. The lowest portion of awning or canopy upon which signage is placed shall be a minimum of eight (8) feet above ground level or be no higher than the first floor of the building to which it is attached.

2. Awning or canopy signage shall not be counted in the wall signage calculations for the premises if only the name, address, or business pursuit conducted on the premises is placed on the awning or canopy in letters not exceeding ten (10) inches. Any awning or canopy sign exceeding the requirements of this section shall be treated as a wall sign for all purposes.

G. *Advertising signs:* Advertising signs shall be freestanding signs and shall meet all the requirements of this Article which are applicable to freestanding signs.

H. *Temporary or portable signs:* Subject to the provisions contained in Section 19.6 of this Article.

(Ord. No. 2921, § 1, 1-26-98)

19.5. Other requirements.

A. *Location.* Unless otherwise specified in this Article, the location of signs shall be limited to the zoning lot for which the sign directs attention to a business or profession conducted upon, or to a commodity, service or entertainment sold or offered at that zoning lot.

B. *Sign construction.* Any signs that are applied with paint or similar substance on a face of a wall is prohibited. Any sign made of plywood or similar material shall contain a trim border along the entire perimeter of the sign. Painted signs on plywood or similar material shall utilize stenciling or other method to achieve a uniform appearance.

C. *Lighting and motion.* Except where indicated otherwise, signs may be directly or indirectly illuminated. However, flashing, sequential, running, or chasing, or any indication of motion through lighting, wind or mechanical means, except for time and temperature signs, is prohibited. An electronic message board, incorporating automatic density control and utilizing solid state switching which produces an almost instantaneous change from one (1) message to the next, so that the light that can be seen by the human eye is continuous, is not considered a flashing sign.

D. *Placement.* New signs shall be placed in a manner as to create a minimum of interference with the visibility of existing signage.

E. *Signs on vacant lots.* No commercial advertising signs shall be permitted to be placed on vacant lots, with the exception of real estate signs.

F. *Traffic and safety.* Signs shall not resemble, imitate or approximate the shape, size, form or color of railroad or traffic signs, signals and devices. Signs shall not obstruct or interfere with the effectiveness of railroad or traffic signs, signals or devices.

G. *Right-of-way signs.* Signs shall not be located on the public right-of-way, or affixed to or upon public property or the right-of-way, including, but not limited to any sidewalk, crosswalk, curb, street lamp post, hydrant, tree, shrub or utility pole. Exceptions: signs promoting special community activities; signs promoting extraordinary activities of nonprofit organizations, and directional signs for public buildings, schools or religious institutions, all upon approval of the village manager or manager's designee.

H. *Contractors signs.* No more than one (1) contractor sign shall be allowed for each street frontage of the property for which such contractor is performing work. Signs shall be removed at the completion of job or at time of issuance of certificate of occupancy, and shall be no larger than those contained under the provisions of real estate signs for the district in which the premises is located.

I. *Obsolete/abandoned signs and sign structures.* Except as otherwise provided in this Code, any sign which is located on property which becomes vacant and unoccupied for a period of thirty (30) days or more, or any sign which pertains to a time, event, or

purpose which no longer applies, shall be deemed to have been abandoned. An abandoned sign is prohibited and shall be removed by the owner of the sign or owner of the premises, and all existing sign faces on changeable copy signs shall be removed and replaced with clear or blank panels. Any and all structures supporting an abandoned or obsolete sign shall also be removed.

J. *Nonconforming signs.* Signs existing at the time of enactment of this ordinance and not conforming to the provisions herein, but were constructed in compliance with previous regulations and ordinances, may continue to be regarded as nonconforming signs. Nonconforming signs shall not be added to or altered so as to prolong the life of the sign, provided further, however, that sign faces on changeable copy signs may continue. Normal maintenance shall not be considered an alteration.

Any sign not specifically listed in this Article is prohibited.
(Ord. No. 2921, § 1, 1-26-98)

19.6. Temporary signs.

A. *Grand opening signs:* Grand opening signs shall be permitted in any commercial or industrial district, subject to the following conditions and limitations:

1. A "grand opening" shall mean the opening of a new business, not previously located on the premises, the reopening of an established business which has been closed for at least sixty (60) consecutive days for renovation or in the event of a name change or business ownership change.
2. The grand opening period shall mean the six-month period immediately after the opening of the new business or the reopening of an established business.
3. Grand opening signs shall be permitted for a maximum of thirty (30) consecutive days during the grand opening period.
4. A grand opening permit shall be obtained prior to the grand opening.
5. No more than three (3) of the following types of signs shall be permitted for grand openings:
 - a. One (1) cold air inflatable device no higher than twenty (20) feet measured from grade level. The device shall be set back according to the zoning district where property is located. Any advertising attached to the device shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area.
 - b. One (1) nonflashing portable sign not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area. Location shall be in accordance with zoning regulations for the district.
 - c. One (1) banner sign affixed flush to the building, not exceeding ten (10) feet in length or four (4) feet in height.
 - d. Banners or streamers projecting out from the building with a setback in accordance with the setback requirements of the district where located.
 - e. Searchlights or beacons provided that such light may only be operated between dusk and ten o'clock p.m. or closing, whichever is earlier.
6. All grand opening signs and lights shall be removed by the permittee within twenty-four (24) hours after the expiration of the grand opening permit.

B. *Temporary advertising signs:* Temporary advertising signs may be permitted in any commercial or industrial districts, subject to the following conditions and limitations.

1. Temporary business signs are those signs identifying a special sale, promotional activity, service, product or sale of a limited duration where such activity is located on the premises.
2. Except where expressly exempted in this section, a temporary sign permit is required prior to placing any temporary business signs on the premises.
3. The following types of temporary business signs shall be permitted:
 - a. *Banner signs*: One (1) banner sign affixed flush with the building wall and secured at all four (4) corners, not exceeding ten (10) feet in length or four (4) feet in height, shall be permitted per zoning lot. Said banner shall be displayed for not more than four (4) times in any calendar year, for not more than fifteen (15) consecutive days for each permit. For multitenant buildings consisting of three or more tenants, two banner signs shall be permitted (one (1) per business) at any one (1) time on a first come first served basis.
 - b. *Pole banners*: Pole banners are permitted to be secured to permanently mounted standards such as light poles. Banners shall be no larger than eight (8) feet high by two (2) foot six (6) inches in width and shall provide a minimum vertical clearance of nine (9) feet. No more than two (2) banners are permitted per pole. Ornamental banners, carrying no information on merchandise or price, shall be allowed without permit when meeting the requirements as stated above.
 - c. *Placard signs*: Businesses in commercial districts may display placard signs, provided that the sign placard is no larger than six (6) square feet and stands no higher than four (4) feet. Placard signs shall be located adjacent to the principal structure and shall be placed inside the principal structure before the close of the business day. A permit is not required for placard signs meeting regulations in this section.
 - d. For business establishments with greater than three hundred fifty (350) feet of street frontage: For business establishments with street frontages [less] than three hundred fifty (350) feet, one (1) additional sign other than for grand openings shall be permitted. Such devices may be displayed for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days and shall not exceed two (2) display periods in any calendar year. Inflatable devices and searchlights are not permitted as additional signage. Additional signs shall meet the requirements contained in this section. No additional temporary signs shall be permitted during these display periods.
4. All temporary advertising signs shall be removed by the permittee within twenty-four (24) hours after the expiration of the temporary business sign permit.
5. Temporary signs shall not interfere with fire hydrants, emergency facilities, intersecting driveways, alleys or streets, pedestrian passageways, fire escapes, doorways or other safety concerns.
6. Temporary advertising signs prohibited. Except for those signs permitted in this section, the following temporary advertising signs are prohibited: trailer signs, A-frame sign, sandwich board signs, banners, pennants, streamers, temporary vehicle signs, beacons or searchlights or any other sign not permitted in this Code.

(Ord. No. 2921, § 1, 1-26-98)