

Sign Permitting Frequently Asked Questions

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I am trying to sell my house. Do I need a permit for the real estate signs?

Temporary real estate signs advertising the sale, rental, or lease of a property are exempt from permit requirements. However, they must be placed on the property being advertised, cannot be illuminated, and are limited to 2 signs per lot. The signs may not be more than 4 feet in height and 4 square feet in size for properties zoned residential. They may not exceed 8 feet in height and 32 square feet for properties zoned other than residential. All real estate signs must be removed within 7 days after the closing of the sale, rental, or lease of the property.

Do I have to get a permit for changing the text on an existing sign or for maintenance and repair?

No permit will be required for copy changes made to a changeable copy sign, menu board, marquee sign, or billboard or for copy changes on existing sign structures. No permit shall be required for maintenance when no structural changes are made. If the structure is illuminated, enlarged, or moved, a permit will be required.

An election is coming up, and I would like to put out some political signs. What do I need to know?

If you would like to place signs on your own property, that is considered free speech protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. They are allowed in any zoning district but should not be larger than 6 square feet in area per sign.

If you would like to place signs around town to support a particular candidate, you are allowed to place political signs in the public right-of-way of state maintained roads, primarily Highways 53 and 117. Make sure they are in the right-of-way, though, which usually includes utility poles, sidewalks, and drainage ditches. If you are unsure whether a road is state maintained or where the right-of-way is, please contact the planning department for clarification by calling 663-3450 or emailing planning@townofburgaw.com. All such signs may not be erected prior to 60 days before any scheduled primary, general, or run-off election or referendum. Any sign illegally placed may be removed by the property owner if on private property or the town if in a town maintained right-of-way.

Can I advertise for my yard sale?

Signs announcing yard or garage sales are only permitted on the property where the sale will take place. In general, signs are not allowed in the public right-of-way because they can distract drivers, impede efforts to maintain the right-of-way, and compete with businesses who place their signs legally. Yard sale signs are limited to 1 per lot, a maximum of 4 square feet in size, and must be removed within 7 days of erection. As a note, yard sales are required to get a permit and are only allowed on residential properties. We will not charge you for a permit but like to keep them on file for public safety notification.

I own a business and am holding a sale. Can I put up a banner to advertise this?

Temporary signs, including banners, used to advertise special sales, products, events, and grand openings are allowed in all non-residential zoning districts twice a year. They cannot be up for longer than 15 days and may not exceed 32 square feet in size. They must also be located on the lot where the sale is taking place. You do not have to get a permit for this.

My organization is holding a special event. Can we put up signs to advertise this?

Signs posted by governmental or non-profit organizations relating to fundraising events, fund drives, special events, or activities of interest to the general public are allowed without a sign permit. If you are posting the sign on-site, you are limited to one sign no larger than 32 square feet in area. If off-premises, you are limited to 10 signs within Burgaw's planning jurisdiction, they must no larger than 4 square feet in size, and they cannot be placed within the public right-of-way, which usually includes utility poles, sidewalks, and drainage ditches.

I am interested in putting up an LED or LCD sign for my business. Are there any restrictions?

Signs using LED and LCD technology are not allowed within Burgaw's planning jurisdiction, except for incidental window signs (i.e. "open," restrooms), meant for customers already on the premises. Even these lights are not allowed to including changing or moving displays, including flashing. Because they are so much brighter than other signs, and since the level of brightness depends on the colors displayed, these types of signs can be difficult to regulate, and unregulated signs can distract or impede the vision of passers-by, causing safety issues.

I put out a sign along the highway, and now it is gone. Did you take it?

Both the town and the NC Department of Transportation sometimes pull signs illegally placed in the right-of-way or posted on utility poles. If your sign has been removed by the planning

department, we usually hold on to it for a period of time before disposing of it. If you would like to retrieve your sign, call 663-3450 or email planning@townofburgaw.com. However, if Public Works or NCDOT removed the sign, their policies may allow immediate disposal, so the sign may no longer be available. In general, signs are not allowed in the public right-of-way because they can distract drivers, impede efforts to maintain the right-of-way, and compete with businesses who place their signs legally.

I would like to place a sign at my business. What are the regulations for business identification signs?

The standards for business identification signs are based on the zoning district where your property is located. See *Sign Standards by Zoning District* for help in determining the appropriate regulations. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact the planning department by calling 663-3450 or emailing planning@townofburgaw.com

Can I put up a sign to direct travelers to my business along one of the major highways?

Such signs are considered off-premises advertising signs or signs that direct attention to or advertise a business, commodity, service, product, or property not located, sold, or conducted on the same property or site as that on which the sign is located. They are only allowed on undeveloped properties in the R-20 zoning district with a conditional use permit issued by the Board of Commissioners.

Depending on your business and signage needs, you may qualify for an NC Department of Transportation program. If you would like information on Tourism Oriented Signs, go to <https://connect.ncdot.gov/resources/safety/Pages/Signing-and-Delineation.aspx> for more information.