About the Sign Ordinance

Cape Girardeau has an ordinance about how signs can be used and displayed within city limits. Chapter 25, Articles IV and V, of the City's Municipal Code of Ordinances covers the sign ordinance in greater detail.

Why regulate signs?

The Sign Ordinance was designed to give citizens, businesses, and organizations specific ways in which to display signs to keep Cape Girardeau visually appealing and maintain a higher quality of life.

Do I need a sign permit, or do I need to register?

Register all signs online at ***cityofcape.org/signregistration***.
If you'd like to place a new permanent sign, then you'll need a permit from Development Services. Permit fees range from $20-$50, depending on the type of sign and duration of use. Most temporary signs for garage sales, political races, or real estate promotions are regulated and do not require a sign permit or fee, but will still need to be registered.

What Signs are OK & Not OK?

OK With Registration & Per Regulation

- Commercial and non-commercial signs
- Marquee signs
- Yard/garage sale signs
- Banners and special event signs
- Political and election signs
- Portable and A-frame signs
- Billboards

Prohibited Signs and Uses

- Signs not specifically authorized by the ordinance;
- signs obstructing or interfering with a driver's line of sight;
- signs attached to utility poles, traffic devices, trees, or facilities in public right-of-way;
- animated signs that rapidly flash or that have the appearance of traffic or emergency vehicle lights;
- banner signs attached to a parked vehicle or trailer are restricted (see ordinance text for details);
- and signs that have been abandoned or left blank for more than one year.

More Information

cityofcape.org/signs

cityofcape.org/signregistration

cityofcape.org/inspections

CITY of CAPE GIRARDEAU
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Inspection Services Division
573.339.6327 Phone | 573.339.6303 Fax
inspections@cityofcape.org

Sign Ordinance: The Basics

Everything you need to know about Cape Girardeau's Sign Ordinance

Types of signs

Sign locations

When to get permits

Applicable fees

Types of Signs Included in the Ordinance

Nearly every type of common sign is defined and affected by the City's Sign Ordinance, including:

- Temporary signs, including real estate, development and construction, special promotions and events, garage sales, and portable signs;
- storefront signs;
- billboards (covered under Article IV);
- banners, awnings, canopies;
- directional signs;
- pole and projecting signs;
- and development complex and monument-style signs.

Signs not specifically authorized by the ordinance are prohibited.

Size and Type of Signs: Zoning Matters

The size and type of sign allowed for a business varies by the location's zoning. For example, businesses on major streets or roads like Kingshighway or Interstate 55 can have larger and taller signs. For specific details, please contact Development Services Department staff or visit ***cityofcape.org/signs*** online.

How does Right-of-Way (ROW) affect sign placement?

No signs, except City or other government signs, may be placed in the City's right-of-way along any public street. Right-of-way may vary per street. Check with Development Services or Cape Girardeau County Mapping for location of the right-of-way on your street.

Before Installing Signs

Contact the Missouri One Call System (also known as Dig Rite, 1-800-344-7483) at least 3 working days before digging to install signs to confirm locations of underground utilities in the area. If utilities are damaged during sign installation, then you are responsible for repair costs.

Abandoned Signs

Signs must be maintained and kept in good condition. Signs with obsolete or outdated text must be removed or covered. Abandoned signs must be removed within one year.

Temporary Signs: Types and Requirements

Most temporary signs for garage sales, political races, portable use, or real estate promotion are regulated but do not require a sign permit or fee. You are responsible for removing your temporary signs in a timely matter. The City Council has currently exempted garage sale, real estate, and banner-style special promotion, and event signs from the registration requirement. Register all other temporary and portable signs at ***cityofcape.org/signregistration***.

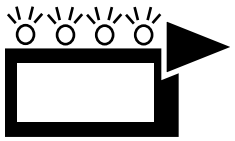
Garage and Yard Sale Signs

You can put out as many garage sale signs as you wish, as long as the signs are not on the City right-of-way, the signs are on private property, and you have permission from the property owner to post the sign. Include the sale address and date on your signs. You may post signs one day before the sale date, and you must remove all your signs by the end of the sale date.

Special Event Signs and Banners

Special event signs and banners are allowed on property owned or leased by the event's sponsor, with size and time restrictions. Event signs should be posted no more than 30 days in advance of the event, and taken down within one day after the event. Contact Development Services for specifics regarding allowable sizes for special event signs and banners.

Portable Signs

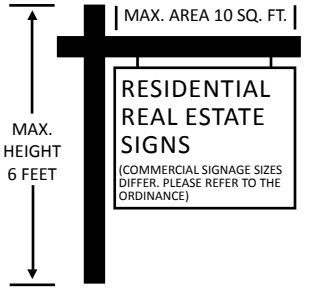


Portable signs are any sign not stuck in the ground or attached to a pole or building that can be moved from location to location for temporary use. Portable signs are only permitted in commercial, planned development, and manufacturing districts. Only one portable sign is allowed on a property. The sign may not exceed 5 feet tall, have an area of 32 square feet, and cannot be animated or flashing. Electric portable signs must comply with the National Electrical Code (NEC). Portable signs may not be displayed more than 30 days in a calendar year, and you must get a sign permit before placing the sign.

Political Signs

Political signs for all local, state, and federal elections are permitted in all zoning districts, provided they are placed with the property owner's permission on private property. Political signs may not be placed in public right-of-way.

Real Estate Signs



Real estate signs are permitted in all zoning districts and are subject to limitations. Directional signs notifying the public of a property for sale are allowed on private property only, with permission from the property owner. Signs must be removed 30 days after the property's sale is closed or lease agreement is finished.

Residential Properties

Open house banners and other "for sale" signs are allowed on a residential lot without size or number limitation. Open house signs can be posted up to 48 hours before the event, and they must be removed by the end of the event day. Open house signs may not be posted for more than three consecutive days.

Non-Temporary Signs

Commercial / Non-Residential Properties

Commercial signs are limited to one per street front. Advertising signs for vacant land and space for lease in commercial or manufacturing buildings must be no more than 32 square feet in area, and no taller than 6 feet. Additional commercial sign information and specifications are available by calling 573-339-6327.

Billboards

Billboards are signs with a maximum of 300 square feet in area. Billboards are only permitted on certain streets and in certain zoning districts. Other restrictions apply, such as distances between billboards and lighting. There is a separate City Ordinance regulating billboards.