

**City of Worcester - Quick Guide to Temporary, Accessory, Commercial Signs:**

The following table provides a summary of temporary sign regulations in Worcester. Temporary signs that advertise, direct attention to or identify products or activities located or offered on the same property as the sign are permitted in all zoning districts as shown in the table below. Only temporary roof signs require a permit from Inspectional Services. Please note that temporary signs are not permitted in certain locations; please see list on the back for details. Note also that existing temporary signs are not grandfathered.

In all zoning districts, the allowances for temporary, commercial freestanding and wall signs shown below are in addition to the allowances for temporary, noncommercial signs e.g. political signs. See *Quick Guide to Political Signs* located on the City's website under the Special Interests tab: <http://www.worcesterma.gov/uploads/bc/eb/bceb31f8c9cb83e62d991d1de7ed1b0d/political-signs.pdf>

For more detail, the City's complete sign ordinance can be found at: <http://www.worcesterma.gov/city-clerk/ordinances-regulations/>

Sign Type	Maximum		Other Limitations
	Number	Area	
<b>Residential Uses in Residential Zones (single, two and three-family, duplex &amp; townhouse uses)</b>			
Wall	One (1) per lot	6 SF	Cannot extend over the roofline.
Freestanding (anchored to the ground e.g. Lawn Sign)	One (1) per lot	12 SF	6 ft maximum height. Cannot extend over the sidewalk or street.
Window	Any number	50% of window & glass door area may be covered by temporary & permanent signs.	Must be located on the interior of the window.
Roof & Portable / Sidewalk	Not Permitted		
<b>Non-Residential Uses &amp; Multi-Family Uses in Residential Zones</b>			
Wall	One (1) per lot	Maximum 24 SF or 2% of the building face area whichever is greater.	Cannot extend over the roofline.
Freestanding (anchored to ground) / Portable	One (1) per lot. Lot may contain one freestanding or portable sign but not both.	12 SF	6 ft maximum height and 5' setback and cannot extend over sidewalk or street.
Sidewalk			4 ft maximum height. Permitted when the business is open and must maintain a 4 ft clearance on the sidewalk.
Window	Any number	50% of window & glass door area may be covered by temporary & permanent signs.	Must be located on the interior of the window.
Roof	Not permitted		
<b>All Uses in Non-Residential Zones</b>			
Wall	Two (2) per building unit length.	Forty (40) SF total or 2% of building face area whichever is greater.	Cannot extend over the roofline.
Freestanding (anchored to the ground)	One (1) per each side of a lot viewable from a different public street. Lot may contain one freestanding or portable sign but not both.	24 SF	6 ft maximum height. Cannot extend over sidewalk or street. See Table 4.3.2 and notes 1-7 for other limitations including regulations on motion.
Portable			6 ft maximum height. 5 ft minimum setback from lot lines.
Sidewalk			4 ft maximum height. Permitted when the business is open and must maintain 4 ft clearance on the sidewalk.
Window	Any number	50% of window & glass door area may be covered by temporary & permanent signs.	Must be located on the interior of the window.
Roof	One (1) per lot. Not permitted in BO or sign overlay zoning districts.	Permitted 1-2 SF per linear foot of building length depending on type and location, same as permanent roof signs. See Table 4.3.1.	Maximum height: 33% of building height. No lot shall contain both a permanent and temporary roof sign. Limited to no more than 90 days of display within a 365 day period. Requires a permit from Inspectional Services.

## Prohibited Locations / Characteristics for Temporary Signs

All signs, including temporary signs, cannot be located on or attached to:

- Trees, shrubs, other natural features.
- Dumpsters and dumpster enclosures.
- Publicly owned and maintained street furniture, surface of public sidewalks, utility poles, utility boxes, or bollards.
- Over right-of-ways (e.g. banners over a street).
- No sign can be placed in such a way as to fully cover or prevent access to windows, doors or fire escapes.

In addition, temporary signs specifically cannot:

- Be attached to permanent signs (e.g. on the pole of a freestanding permanent sign).
- Contain flashing or digital display.
- Be located on fences (note: permanent signs can be placed on fences provided they meet certain criteria).

## *Purpose & Intent of the City's Sign Regulations*

1. Promote safety along City sidewalks, streets and highways with respect to signs and effectively control signs in complex driving environments.
2. Effectively regulate the proper maintenance of signs.
3. Provide for the appropriate number, placement, scale, illumination, type and use of signage that:
  - Allows for innovative design, recognizes changing technology and promotes effective communication of products, services and ideas.
  - Provides adequate identification, direction, and information to vehicles and pedestrians while minimizing clutter, unsightliness, and confusion.
  - Is compatible with the City's built environment including its significant cultural, architectural, and historical resources.
  - Is proportional to the building and site upon which it is located.
  - Recognizes the intrinsic economic value of aesthetics for a community and protects against excessive signage.
  - Recognizes business needs, in particular, those of small local businesses, while balancing the interaction between commercial districts and residential neighborhoods and protecting quality of life.
  - Protects public investment in public spaces, including, but not limited to: streetscapes, public buildings and open space.
  - Protects important view corridors.
  - Recognizes non-accessory signs as a legitimate means of advertising that should respect quality of life, civic pride, economic prosperity and general welfare of the people who reside, visit, work or conduct business in the City.



*City of Worcester  
Quick Guide Series - Sign Ordinance*

## *Temporary Commercial Signs*