

How to apply for a Permanent Sign Permit

Updated 5/5/26

Contents

- [Apply](#)
 - [Building Permits for Signs](#)
 - [Architectural Review for Signs](#)
- [Dimensional Information Required by Sign Type](#)
 - [Wall-mounted](#)
 - [Window](#)
 - [Projecting](#)
 - [Hanging](#)
 - [Monument/Ground-Mounted](#)
 - [Awning/Canopy](#)
- [Example Sign Plan](#)

See the accompanying [process flowchart](#).

Apply

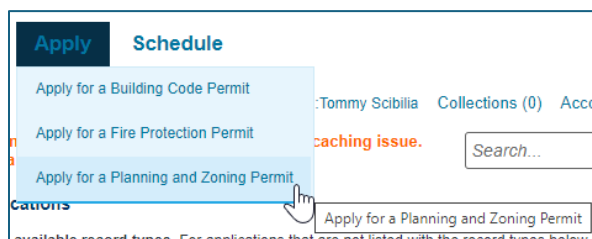
Follow the instructions below to apply for a **Permanent Sign Permit** (“PLN...”).

Note: In order for a sign permit to be issued, a business must already have an approved Commercial Use and Occupancy Permit (CU&O), or at least an application for a CU&O submitted for review. See guide on previous page for **Commercial Use & Occupancy Permits**.

- 1) If the person applying does not already have a free account in our [Permit Portal](#), create one by clicking the Register Now link on the portal home screen.
- 2) Log into the [permit portal](#).

Note: Be sure to “Allow Pop-ups” on this website for it to function properly.

- 3) Hover over “Apply” and select “Apply for a Planning and Zoning Permit”.



[Return to beginning](#)

- 4) Read and accept the terms of the disclaimer.
- 5) Under “Signs” select “Permanent Sign” and click “Continue Application” to proceed.



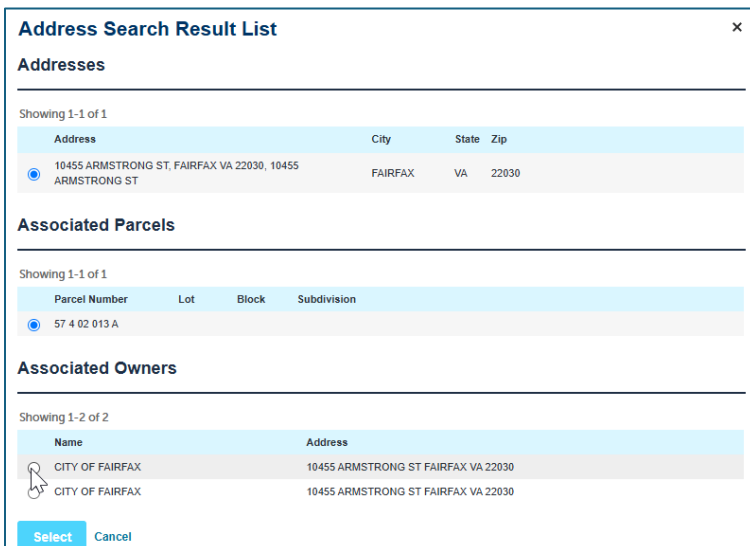
- 6) Read the information about exemptions from the requirement to use a state-licensed contractor to install the sign. Select “Yes” or “No” and click “Continue Application” at the bottom of the screen to start filling out the application.
- 7) Click “Continue Application” at the bottom of the screen to start filling out the application. To enter an address, enter only the street number and the street name. For street name, **do not** include words or abbreviations such as “Drive,” “Dr,” “Street,” “St,” etc. **Leave all other fields blank.** Click “Search”.

A screenshot of an address search form. The form contains the following fields:

- *Street No.: 10455
- Start Fraction: (empty)
- *Street Name: Armstrong
- Street Type: --Select--
- City: (empty)
- State: --Select--
- *Zip: (empty)

 At the bottom of the form are two buttons: 'Search' and 'Clear'.

- 8) The pop-up window will display the street address and parcel number, which should already be selected. At the bottom of the window, select a property owner, and click “Select” to continue. All other fields on this page will automatically populate. Click “Continue Application”.



- 9) On the next page, after you enter basic information about the business, add signs to the “Signs List” by clicking “Add a Sign”. In the pop-up window, enter the sign type, and fill in all information prompted. **All measurements must be entered in decimal feet** (for example, if the length is 5’-4”, enter 5.67). Failure to complete this step accurately will result in the need for application corrections, reissuance of fees, and an overall delay in the review of your application.

SIGNS LIST
 All dimensions should be entered in Feet (decimals are accepted for non-whole numbers). Multiple signs of the same type should be entered separately.

Showing 0-0 of 0

Sign Type	Special Sign Type	Sign Length	Sign Height	Sign Area	Building Frontage of Business	Setback from property line	Street Frontage of building	Vertical clearance over sidewalk	Window Width	Window Height	Window Area	Reface	Footings	Illun
No records found.														

SIGNS LIST ×

All dimensions should be entered in Feet (decimals are accepted for non-whole numbers). Multiple signs of the same type should be entered separately.

* Sign Type:

* Sign Length:

* Sign Height:

Sign Area:

* Building Frontage of Business:

* Reface: Yes No

* Illumination: Yes No

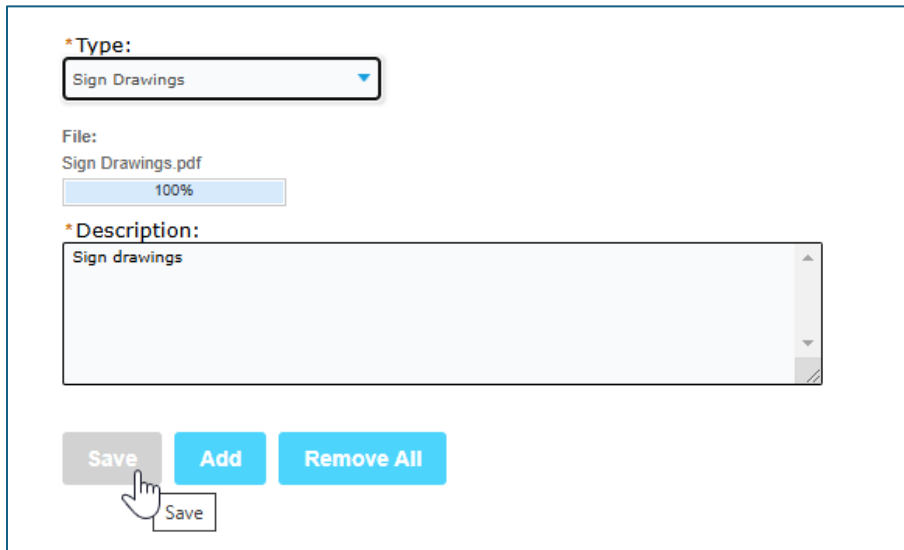
* Distance from residential:

- 10) Once all signs are added, add information for the sign installer at the bottom of the page by clicking “Add New” and completing fields in the pop-up window. When this is complete, click “Continue Application” to advance to the Attachments page.

11) You will need to submit the following items with this application type. Note this list is not exhaustive, and more or fewer items may be needed based on the proposed scope of work for staff to complete their review:

- [Owner Authorization Form](#), which must be signed by the applicant and property owner or owner's agent.
- [Expedited Sign Permit form](#), filled out and signed by applicant. There is also a link to this in the portal when you get to the Attachments section of the application.
- [Sign drawings](#) prepared by sign manufacturer detailing the materials, dimensions, mounting detail, and other details as required. See [section at the end](#) of this guide identifying what minimum dimensional information is needed based on sign type, as well as an [example sign plan](#).
- [City of Fairfax Business License](#)
 - Contractors doing work in the city must have a valid City of Fairfax Business License. If you do not already have one, you can apply for one in the [Business License Portal](#). If you have questions, you can contact Revenue staff at 703-385-7884.

12) To upload Attachments, click “Add” at the bottom of the screen, click “Add” again in the pop-up window, select the documents for upload, and click “Continue”. Select the document type from the dropdown menu (note that certain document types are required to be selected in order to submit the application), enter a short description, and click “Save”. Click “Continue Application” to move to the next step.



The screenshot shows a web form for adding attachments. At the top, there is a dropdown menu labeled "*Type:" with "Sign Drawings" selected. Below this is a "File:" section showing "Sign Drawings.pdf" with a progress bar at 100%. Underneath is a text area labeled "*Description:" containing the text "Sign drawings". At the bottom of the form are three buttons: "Save" (grey), "Add" (blue), and "Remove All" (blue). A mouse cursor is hovering over the "Save" button, and a small "Save" tooltip is visible below it.

- 13) Review the summary page, agree to the certification, and click “Continue Application” to proceed.

I hereby certify that I have authority of the owner to make application that the information is complete, and that if a permit is issued, the construction and/or use will conform to the building code, the zoning ordinance and other applicable laws and regulations. He/She and the company organization named and represented herein is duly registered or exempt from registration in accord with the provisions of Chapter 7 of the Code of Virginia. I further certify that if I am acting as an agent for a properly licensed contractor, or contractor exempt from registration, I have his/her authority to apply for this application.

By checking this box, I agree to the above certification. Date: 05/23/2025

Save and resume later
Continue Application »

- 14) Next you will be prompted to pay the review fee. Click “Continue to Payment” to pay with either a credit card or bank information.

Application Fees

Fees	Qty.	Amount
Permanent Signs < 100sf	2	\$230.00

TOTAL FEES: \$230.00
Note: This does not include additional fees which may be assessed later.

Continue to Payment »

- 15) Once payment is complete, a record number will be provided (“PLN...”).

Note: If the initial submission did not contain enough information for staff to assess what permits are needed, you will receive an email stating that the submission is incomplete, prompting you to resubmit with additional information or attachments (see separate guide: [How to Resubmit Applications](#)).

- 16) You will get emails from the portal throughout the review process letting you know if there is any action that needs to be taken.

- 17) Sign Permit applications are typically reviewed by Zoning staff within 1-2 weeks of application acceptance.

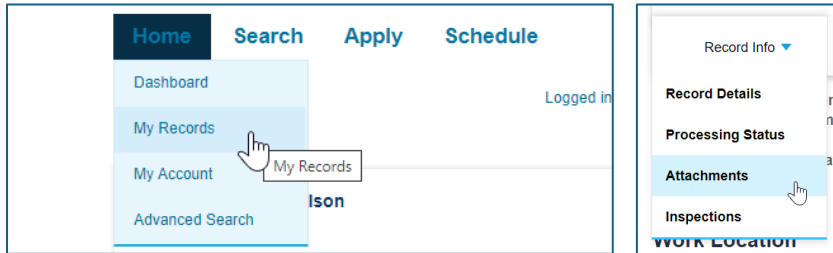
Building Permits for Signs

- 18) After approval of the Sign Permit, you will receive an email informing you that a Building Permit record was created automatically (“BLD...”) and will shortly be issued.

[Return to beginning](#)

19) If your sign is illuminated or has other electrical features, you will need to apply for and receive an **Electrical Permit**. See separate guide for [Commercial Trade Permits](#).

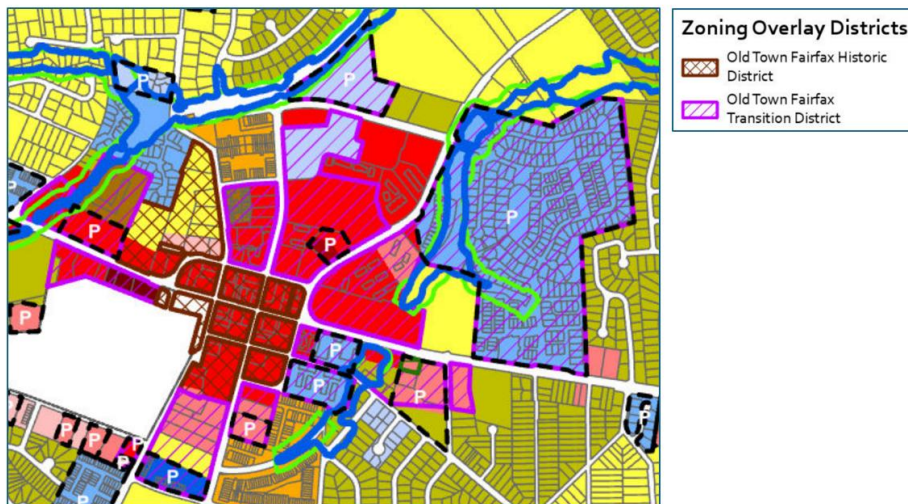
20) Once the Building Permit is issued, you will receive an email with the permit attached. You can also download it from the portal by Navigating to it in “My Records”, clicking on the record number (“BLD...”), and navigating to “Attachments” under “Record Info”.



21) After the Building Permit is issued, you may pick up your **sign sticker decal** from the Department of Community Development and Planning (10455 Armstrong Street, Fairfax, VA 22030, Room 207) which needs to be either affixed to the sign or retained on the premises. This can also be mailed at the request of the applicant. To request it be mailed, email Zoning@fairfaxva.gov and include the permit number (“PLN...”) in the body of the email.

Architectural Review for Signs

22) Note that in certain parts of the City, you are required to receive architectural approval of new permanent signage. These districts include the **Old Town Fairfax Historic Overlay District** and the **Transition Overlay District**. See the extents of the Overlay Districts in the [City’s Zoning map](#), screenshot included below. See guide on previous page for **BAR Minor Certificate of Appropriateness**.



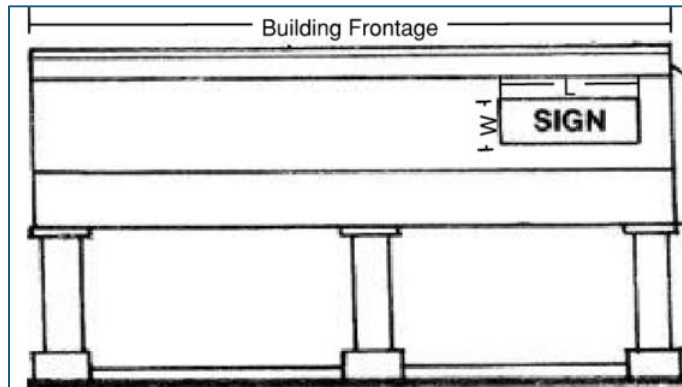
End of section

[Return to beginning](#)

Dimensional Information Required by Sign Type

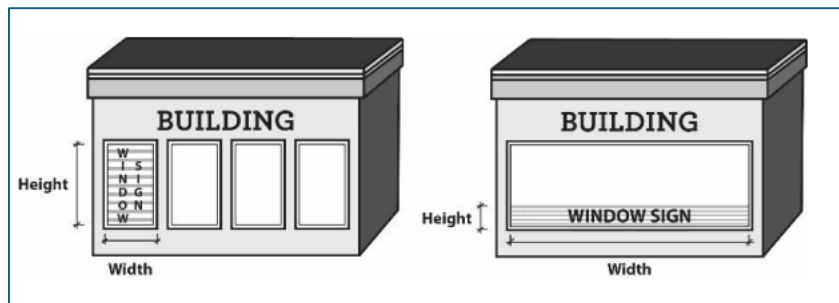
The following diagrams illustrate what dimensional information must be indicated on sign drawings submitted for a permanent sign permit, broken out by sign type. This is not all-inclusive. For information on requirements for sign types not listed here, please reference the sign section of the [Zoning Ordinance](#).

Wall-Mounted



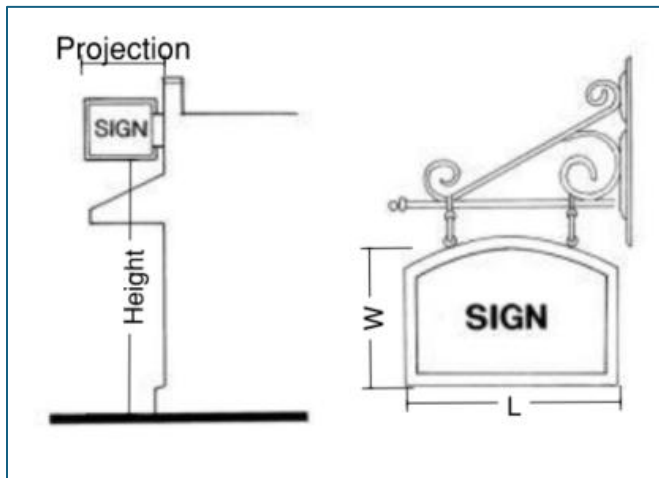
- **Building frontage** in decimal linear feet
- **Length and width** of the sign in decimal feet

Window



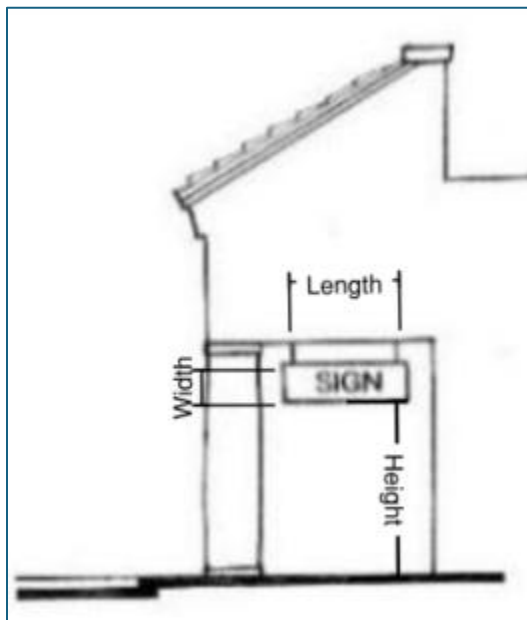
- **Window width and height** in decimal feet (cumulative of all transparent glass on the ground floor of the same face of the building)
- **Sign width and height** in decimal feet (cannot exceed 25% of transparent glass area)

Projecting



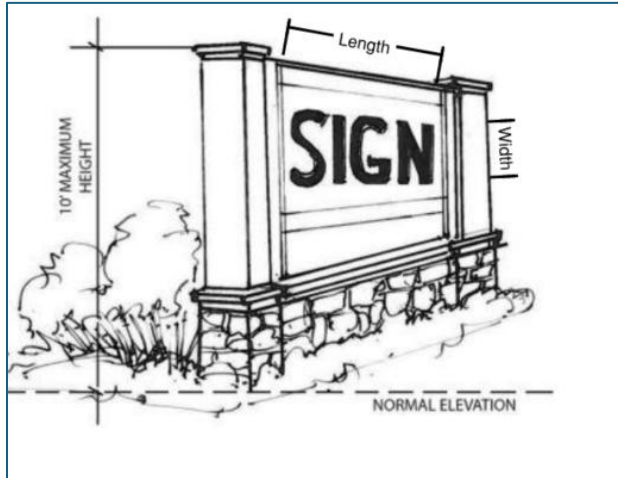
- **Height to underside of sign** in decimal feet
- **Length and width** of sign in decimal feet

Hanging



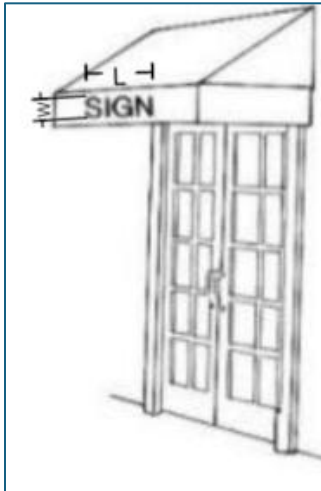
- **Height to underside of sign** in decimal feet
- **Length and width** of sign in decimal feet

Monument/Ground-Mounted



- **Total height** of the sign in decimal feet, including the base
- **Length and width** of the sign face in decimal feet
- **Setback** from property line shown in plan view in decimal feet

Awning/Canopy



- **Length and width** of the sign in decimal feet (smallest rectangle that can be drawn around all elements of the sign)

End of section

[Return to beginning](#)

