

Frequently Asked Questions- Billboards

How can the State control what people do on private property?

The Federal Highway Beautification Act of 1965 requires the Missouri Department of Transportation to enforce outdoor advertising rules and regulations adjacent to [controlled routes](#). Failure to enforce these rules and regulations could cause the State of Missouri to lose up to 10% of its annual share of Federal highway construction money, amounting to millions of dollars each year.

Click [here](#) to view a complete list of state rules and regulations regarding billboard application, permitting, and renewal.

I only want a little sign, not a billboard; do I still need a permit?

Yes, the issue is not the size of the sign, rather what is being advertised on the sign and where the product or service is located.

Billboards can be many sizes. The maximum total display area for each side of a multiple face structure is eight hundred (800) square feet.

Why can't I have a sign on my own property?

You can, as long as the sign only advertises products or services available on the property the sign is located.

How do I know if a sign needs a permit or not?

Any sign located adjacent to a controlled route in Missouri that advertises products or services not available on the property where the sign is located requires a permit.

I only need a sign for a short period of time; do I still need a permit?

Yes, any sign located adjacent to a controlled route in Missouri that advertises products or services not available on the property the sign is located requires a permit regardless of the length of time it will be up.

What are the controlled routes for Outdoor Advertising?

Click [here](#) to view a list of the controlled routes in Missouri.

What is the fee to permit a Billboard?

\$200 application fee; and \$100 biennial renewal fee.

How long is a permit valid?

In the case of a new permit, the permit holder will have two (2) years to erect the sign. Thereafter, permits are renewed every two (2) years.

How do I apply for a Billboard?

Click [here](#) to print an application.

Please type or print in blue or black ink LEGIBLY. Make sure the application is completed in its entirety and the back of the application is signed and notarized. To avoid having your application returned, please make sure you submit all requested documentation listed at the bottom of the application and follow all instructions.

What are the requirements for a billboard permit?

- The maximum size for outdoor advertising signs is eight hundred (800) square feet, with a maximum length of seventy-two (72) feet and maximum height of thirty (30) feet. Two (2) displays are allowed side by side, but not stacked one above the other. There are no height restrictions above grade.
- Minimum spacing between permitted signs on controlled routes is one thousand, four hundred (1,400) feet on the same side of the roadway.
- The proposed sign located must be in an area zoned commercial or industrial, or in an unzoned area, and must be within seven hundred and fifty (750) feet of a qualifying commercial or industrial activity on the same side of the roadway.

What are the requirements for a qualifying commercial or industrial activity?

A qualifying commercial or industrial facility must:

- be affixed to a foundation with an enclosed area of two hundred (200) square feet or more;
- have approved access;
- have normal utilities;
- have identification, such as an on-premise sign;
- have all necessary business licenses; and
- have sufficient inventory.

The business cannot be located in a residence and must be in active operation a minimum of one hundred and eighty (180) days.

The owner or an employee must be present at the business a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week during posted business hours.

Is there an appeal process should my application be denied?

Should your application for an outdoor advertising permit be denied, you have the right to appeal the decision by requesting a hearing in writing within twenty (20) business days of receiving your denial letter.

Once a permit is issued, what are the responsibilities of the permit holder?

Should your application for an outdoor advertising permit be approved, you accept all legal and financial responsibility.

It is your responsibility to contact your Outdoor Advertising Permit Specialist with any ownership and address changes.

It is also your responsibility to stay informed and maintain the sign in accordance to the rules and regulations.

Click [here](#) to view a complete list of state rules and regulations regarding billboard maintenance.

When I am ready to erect my sign, how do I locate the right-of-way line?

It is the permit holder's responsibility to locate the right-of-way and ensure the sign is placed on private property. Highway plan sheets are available at any MoDOT District office.

How often will the sign be inspected and billed for renewal fees?

All signs are inspected every two years and will be billed for renewal fees at that time. The invoice will be mailed to the billing address on file.

What will happen if I fail to pay my renewal fees?

If you fail to pay the renewal fee in a timely fashion, the permit will be set to an illegal status and a Notice to Remove/Terminate will be issued, allowing you sixty (60) days to remit the outstanding fee or remove the structure.

If the outstanding fee is not paid within the sixty (60) day timeframe, MoDOT has the right to have the structure removed at the permit holder's expense.

Do I need to have an ad/message posted on the sign at all times?

Yes, the sign should have an ad posted on it at all times. If you are unable to secure an advertiser, you may post "For Rent" along with a phone number on the sign.

The permit states that the sign is in "non-conforming" status. What does that mean?

Non-conforming status means that the sign no longer meets one or more of the current statutory requirements as far as sizing, lighting, spacing or location; and changes that can be made to the sign are limited. Reasonable maintenance and repair of nonconforming signs is permissible; however, permit holders should contact the [Outdoor Advertising Permit Specialist](#) prior to making any changes to the structure.

If 50% or more of the sign structure is damaged, can it be rebuilt?

No, if 50% or more of the sign structure is damaged, the structure must be removed and the permit will be void.

What recourse do I have if I have a discrepancy with the landowner?

MoDOT is not responsible for any written or verbal agreements between the permit holder and the landowner.

What if I want to sell my sign structure?

It is the responsibility of the permit holder to notify MoDOT of the sale of the sign. A transfer form should be obtained from an Outdoor Advertising Permit Specialist, completed by you and then provided to the buyer. The buyer should then submit the completed form to MoDOT along with the \$10.00 transfer fee.

Why do I see signs that don't appear to meet the current spacing requirements?

As the law has changed over a period of years, the spacing requirements have also changed. Structures that no longer meet requirements but did before the law changed are grandfathered and allowed to remain with a status of non-conforming.

All new structures have to meet current requirements.