

Regulations for Political Signs

Montana Department of Transportation Sign Regulations:

Right -Of-Way-Bureau

Noncommercial signs, regardless of the message, are prohibited along controlled routes unless meeting the requirements of this rule.

Administrative Rules of Montana 18.6.246 Political Signs:

- (1) Signs promoting candidates or issues shall be placed on private property only and cannot be placed without the permission of the property owner.
- (2) Political signs shall not:
 - a. Be placed on or allow any portion to intrude in the public right-of-way or on public property;
 - b. Be attached on public right-of way fences;
 - c. Obstruct the view of motor vehicle operators or create a traffic hazard;
 - d. Be placed within 500 feet of an intersection intersecting roadway, junction, property driveway, or connecting roadways with approaching or merging traffic at grade along a primary highway, or within 500 feet of an interchange or rest area on the interstate highway as measured from the beginning of the pavement widening for the interchange;
 - e. Attempt or appear to attempt to direct the movement of traffic or which interfere with, imitate, or resemble any official traffic sign, signal, or device;
 - f. Prevent the driver of a vehicle from having a clear and unobstructed view of at-grade intersections, approaches, official traffic control signs, other traffic control devices, or merging traffic;
 - g. Be placed within 100 feet of any entrance to the building in which a polling place is located;
 - h. Use lighting in any way unless it is so effectively shielded as to prevent beams or rays of light from being directed at any portion of the traveled way of the highway, or is of such low intensity or brilliance as to not cause glare or to impair the vision of the driver of any motor vehicle, or to otherwise interfere with any driver's operation of a motor vehicle.
- (3) Political signs must be removed within 14 days following the applicable election. The department shall notify the landowner of illegal signs which are not removed within 14 days. The signs shall be removed by the department 24 hours after notification to the landowner. The department shall retain removed political signs for five working days after notification of removal before their destruction. The sign owner may retrieve the signs during this period.

- (4) Signs that pose a traffic hazard may be removed by the department without prior notification to the sign owner.
- (5) It is the responsibility of the candidate or political committee to ensure all signs are in compliance with this rule.
- (6) Political signs do not require permits and are not subject to permit fees.

City of Helena Political Sign Regulations:

While recognizing the desire for limited use of signs in residential areas, especially political campaign signs, the Helena City Commission has balanced the beauty and aesthetic quality of these residential neighborhoods with the right of citizens to exercise free speech under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Therefore, in residential zoning districts, each lot may have the following signs:

1. one (1) unlighted sign that is no more than six feet (6') in height and six (6) square feet or less in sign area; and
2. an unlimited number of noncommercial signs, such as political campaign signs or signs for civic events, that not more than five (5) square feet in sign area, not more than thirty inches (30") in height, and removed within five (5) days after conclusion of the event to which they relate.

In commercial and industrial zoning districts, a lot may have an unlimited number of noncommercial temporary signs that are less than five (5) square feet in sign area. Larger signs are restricted to the size and type applicable to each zoning district. For information on larger signs, please call either the Community Development Department (447-8438) or the City Attorney's Office (457-8595) for the particular regulations for each zoning district.

In addition, the Helena City Code provides other limitations on sign placement, including but not limited to:

- signs may not be located on City right-of-way, including boulevards or other City property (Section 11-23-9-B(4) of the Helena City Code);
- signs may not exceed thirty inches (30") in height if located within the sight distance triangle, which is the area formed by an imaginary diagonal line drawn from curb to curb from a point fifty feet (50') back along each curb from a street corner (Section 11-2-8-E and Section 11-23-9-B(3) of the Helena City Code); and
- signs may not be placed on trees, power poles, or on any other pole or post within the right-of-way (Section 11-23-9-B(4) of the Helena City Code).