



**Marion County Public Works  
Building Inspection Division**

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**Building Inspection Policy  
& Procedure  
No. 101**

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P&P 101

Adopted: October 14, 1994  
Revised: April 12, 2018

**PERMITS FOR SIGNS**

**Question:**

When is a structural permit required for a sign?

**Background:**

The Oregon Structural Specialty Code exempts fences less than seven feet in height (other than pool barriers), regardless of the material they are constructed of, from a structural permit. Free standing signs from a design standpoint are very similar to a section of fencing. In addition, the State of Oregon Building Division has issued a formal interpretation exempting most retaining walls from a permit. The interpretation states in part:

“Per ORS 455.010, the “State Building Code” consists of the various specialty codes adopted by the Department of Consumer and Business Services. The stated purpose of the state building code as provided in ORS 455.020 is to; “...*establish uniform performance standards providing reasonable safeguards for health, safety, welfare, comfort and security of the residents of this state who are occupants and users of buildings.*” (emphasis added) (et al)

The regulation of retaining walls in both the *Oregon Structural Specialty Code* and the *Oregon Residential Specialty Code* is limited to applications where the installation of the retaining wall has a direct impact on the structural integrity of regulated buildings or the usability of the means of egress and/or a required exterior accessible route.”

Signs attached flush to the building, posted on fence posts, or political signs placed in the yard do not require permits and do not impact the structural integrity of regulated buildings.

Flush, as defined by the Building Official means: A sign that is directly attached to the face of the structure and does not project more than 12 inches from the face of the building.

**Ruling:**

A structural permit is not required for signs that are attached directly to the face of a structure when the sign does not project more than 12 inches from the face of the building.

A structural permit is not required for free-standing signs that do not exceed seven feet in height.

Any land-use or zoning requirements must still be met.

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