A Guide to Sign Construction

September 15, 2026



Rochester Hills Building Department
1000 Rochester Hills Dr.
248-656-4615

ROCHESTER HILLS MICHIGAN

IAS ACCREDITED Building Department

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Reference Material

The following forms and handouts for an accessory structure are available at our service counter or on the Building Departments web page at www.rochesterhills.org.

- Permit applications are required only for hard copy or in person applications.
  - Sign
  - Electrical
- Permit Fees Schedules
  - Sign
  - Electrical
- BS&A Online Permit Application and Inspection Scheduling Tutorials
- Standard for Electronic Plan Review Submission
- Codes Currently in Effect
- Contractor Registration

Surveys

We are always striving to improve our service, please use the following forms to give us your feedback, comments and suggestions.

- Electronic Submittal Survey
- Customer Satisfaction Survey

INTRODUCTION

The City of Rochester Hills has prepared this guidebook to assist you in the process of erecting a sign within our City.

This guidebook contains important information that will help you understand the sign permit and construction process from application to completion. We have included details for areas that have generated confusion or delays in the past.

This guidebook is only intended to be a guide and is not all inclusive of the Michigan Building Code or requirements of City Ordinances. The information in this guidebook is subject to change.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

General – The size, height and location of all signs are regulated by the requirements of Chapter 134 of the City's Code of Ordinances.

Signs in Public Rights-of-Way - It shall be unlawful for any person to post or place any sign within any public right-of-way within the City, except signs authorized by the County Road Commission, the State Transportation Commission or the City. The Mayor is authorized to cause the removal of any signs posted or placed in any public right-of-way, provided any such signs are kept available for a period of ten days for pickup by any person who might claim them.

Garage Sale Signs – Garage sale signs under 12 square feet may be displayed without a permit on or off the premise as long as they are located on private property. At no time shall garage sale signs be located in the public right-of-way. Signs are limited to one on-site and one off-site.

Window Signs - Signs displayed inside the window are limited to 25% of the total window area. Upper story tenants are limited to 20% of the total window area. Refer to Chapter 134.8 of the City's Code of Ordinances.

Temporary Signs and Banners - Temporary signs and banners over 12 square feet require a permit. One temporary sign per address may be displayed up to thirty (30) consecutive days with a maximum of four times per year, with a 30-day gap in between. Refer to Chapter 134.9 of the City's Code of Ordinances for size and height limitations along with other requirements.

Flags – Installation of a free standing flag pole over 7 feet in height will require a Building Permit but not a Sign Permit. The location of the flagpole shall not impede vehicle or pedestrian traffic, and flags themselves shall not project beyond a property line or into existing or proposed rights-of-way. Flags shall be kept in good condition. Refer to Chapter 134.4 of the City's Code of Ordinances.

FROM APPLICATION TO COMPLETION
A General Guide through the Entire Process

Step 1 – The Sign Permit

The City's Ordinance requires that a sign permit be obtained for any signage over 12 square feet in area. The permit allows the code official to review the plans for the signage and perform inspections during construction to confirm that the requirements of the City Ordinance and the Michigan Building Code are being followed. By meeting the requirements of the City Ordinance and Michigan Building Code, the completed project will meet minimum standards of life safety, health and welfare as established by the State of Michigan.

Applications for the sign permit shall be submitted by a sign company, sign contractor, sign specialty contractor or sign erector.

When the sign permit application is submitted, it will go the following reviews:

- A zoning ordinance review to verify that the sign will meet the requirements of the City's Ordinance.
- The plan review for monumental signs covers the requirements of the Michigan Building Code.

Submitting a complete set of documents containing all the necessary information will expedite the plan review process. Prior to applying for sign permit the applicants should prepare the following documents. These documents shall be prepared using the guidelines set for in the Building Department's Standard for Electronic Plan Review Submission. Refer to the example plans in the Appendix

1. Monument Signs
    a. A plot plan showing location of monument sign, right-of-way, property lines, corner clearances, utilities, easements, sidewalks, etc.
        i. For sign located at intersections indicate the 25-feet corner clearance.
    b. Construction drawings prepared, signed and sealed by a State of Michigan design professional. Drawings shall be drawn to scale with plans of the sign matching the plot plan and with details containing the following:
        i. Plans, elevation and construction details.
        ii. Scaled sign rendering
        iii. Structural details including foundation.
2. Wall Sign
    a. Construction drawings shall be drawn to scale with plans of the sign matching the plot plan and with details containing the following:
        i. Elevation of the building indicating height and location of sign
        ii. Total height and width of the façade of the tenant space or building.
        iii. Scaled sign construction document, and attachment details designed by a by a State of Michigan licensed design profession with their signature and seal.

* Forms are available online at www.rochesterhills.org or at the Building Department counter.

Registration of Sign Contractor

Prior to applying for a sign permit the sign contractor, sign specialty contractor or sign erector shall register with the City of Rochester Hills' Building Department.

1. Sign contractors can submit their registration form in person or email. A completed Contractor Registration Form may be emailed to the customer service staff at Building@rochesterhills.org. Include "Contractor Registration" on the subject line.
    a. The registration fee can be paid in person or with the permit application fee.
2. When registering the sign contractor shall supply:
    a. A completed Contractor Registration Form with an original signature by the license holder.
    b. The original or a copy of the sign contractor's license.
    c. A copy of the license holder's driver's license, if not presented in person.
3. Sign contractors who are still actively working in the City are required to renew their registration with the City when the sign contractor's license is renewed.

    A Contractor Registration Form is available online at www.rochesterhills.org or at the Building Department service counter.

Applying for the Sign Permit

The Building Department is now accepting applications for all permits online at www.rochesterhills.org.

The BS&A Online Permit Application Tutorial is available to help through the process.

1. **Plans and Approved Process**
    a. The permit application documents are reviewed in the order they are received. When the Building Department's work load allows, sign permit documents will be reviewed and processed within 7 working days.
        i. If the plan examiner determines that due to the complexity of the project, a more in-depth review is required, the applicant will be notified that their project cannot be reviewed within the 7 working day period.
    a. Documents that contain all the necessary information and details will help speed up the review process.
    b. The plot plan is reviewed for compliance with City Ordinances Engineering, while the construction documents are reviewed for compliance to the Michigan Building Code.
    c. The applicant will be notified by email if the information provided does not meet the City's Ordinance, Engineering, or Michigan Building Code requirements, or if any other information is required.
    d. The applicant will need to submit corrected documents for review.

2. **Fees**

    Fees are due at various stages of the permitting process.
    a. An application fee is required before the permit application will be fully processed.
    b. Plan review and permit fees will be determined during the plan review process and shall be paid prior to issuance of the sign permit.
    c. Applicants may pay in person at the City Hall or online by following the link in the email they receive to the online payment portal. Fees can be paid online by credit card or eCheck.

Forms and fee schedules are available at the Building Department service counter or online at www.rochesterhills.org

3. Permit Ready
    a. The permit applicant will receive an email when the sign permit is ready, with a link to the online payment portal.
    b. Sign permit fees are due prior of the issuance of the sign permit. Permit fees can be paid in person or online.
    c. Once all fees are paid the applicant will receive an email with the sign permit.
    d. The sign permit shall be secured within 6 months of the application date or the application may be canceled.
    e. Issued permits that have no activity for more than 6 months may be canceled. A new permit may be required to complete the project.

4. Revisions
    a. Revisions to the plans for the signs after issuance of the sign permit will require re-submittal of revised plans, approval from the Building Department, and the payment of any additional review and permit fees.

5. Electrical Permit
    a. Two separate electrical permits are required for the signage. One for the connection of the sign and one for the sign circuit.

    Forms and fee schedules are available at the Building Department service counter or online at www.rochesterhills.org

Step 2 – Construction

When the sign permit has been obtained, construction may begin. All sign construction shall be inspected for conformance to the approved plans and the Michigan Building Code.

1. Inspection Request and Results
    All request for inspections are to be scheduled online through BS&A Online using the account information that was established when applying for the permit.

    Inspections that have been requested and verified before 3:00 p.m. will be scheduled for the next business day between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The inspection may be done earlier or later in the day depending on the inspector's work load. Inspections may be available outside normal business hours by special arrangement. Additional fees for any after-hours inspection will need to be paid in advance.

    Please ensure your project is ready for inspection when scheduled. Requests to cancel an inspection should be made by calling the Building Department at 248-656-4615 prior to 9:00 a.m. on the day of the requested inspection. If an inspector arrives at the project and it is not ready for inspection, an inspection will not be performed and a re-inspection fee may be charged.

    The following item shall be completed, in place, or available at the time of each inspection:
    - Safe access to the job site and throughout the area to be inspected shall be provided.
    - Approved plans shall be on site and available for all inspections

Once an inspection has been performed the permit holder will receive an email stating either the inspection was approved or not approved with a list of items that require correction. A re-inspection fee may be charged for any items not corrected at the time of the second inspection. Inspections shall be approved before proceeding with the next phase of construction. If there are any questions regarding the inspection you can call the Building Department between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. and ask to speak with the inspector who performed the inspection?

2. Inspections

During construction the signs will require field inspections. The type and number of inspections vary depending on the type of sign. The type of inspections required for your project will be indicated in the permit stipulations on the sign permit.

The following list of inspections is intended to help you understand the standard inspections and some of the common items the inspector looks for during the inspection. This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list. Additional inspections may be required depending on the type and complexity of your project:

Permanent Wall Signs

a. Final electrical inspection (if applicable)
b. After installation and connection of sign
c. Verify proper wiring and electrical connection
b. Final electrical inspection shall be approved prior to final sign inspection
c. Final sign inspection
    i. After sign is installed and final electrical inspection is approved
    ii. Verify size, height and message per approved plan
    iii. Verify construction attachment per approved plans

Permanent Monument Signs

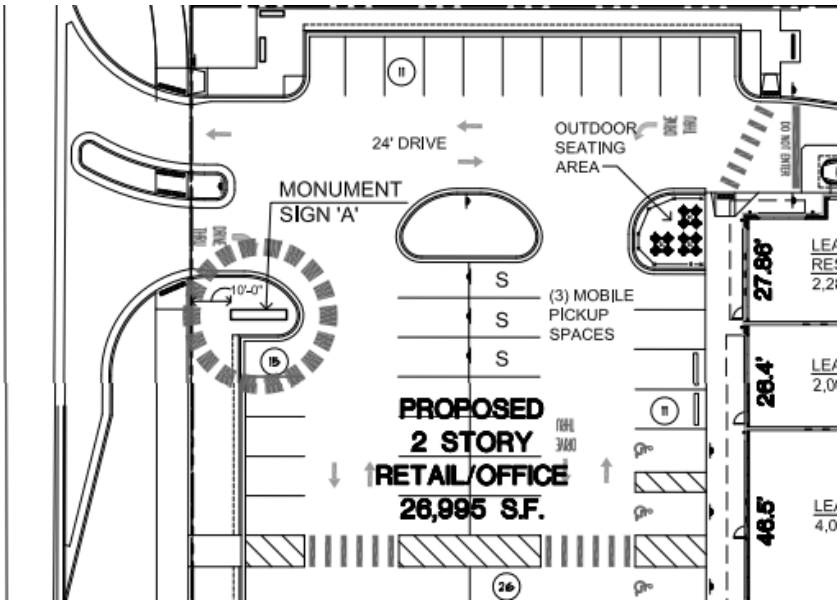
a. Footing inspection prior to pouring concrete
    i. Verify proper footing size and depth
    ii. Verify footing location, setbacks and corner clearance
b. Final Electrical Inspection (if applicable)
    i. After installation and connection of sign
    ii. Verify proper wiring and electrical connection
    iii. Final electrical inspection shall be approved prior to final sign inspection
c. Final Sign Inspection
    i. After sign is installed and final electrical inspection is approved
    ii. Verify size, height and message per approved plan
    iii. Verify construction attachment per approved plans

Temporary Signs

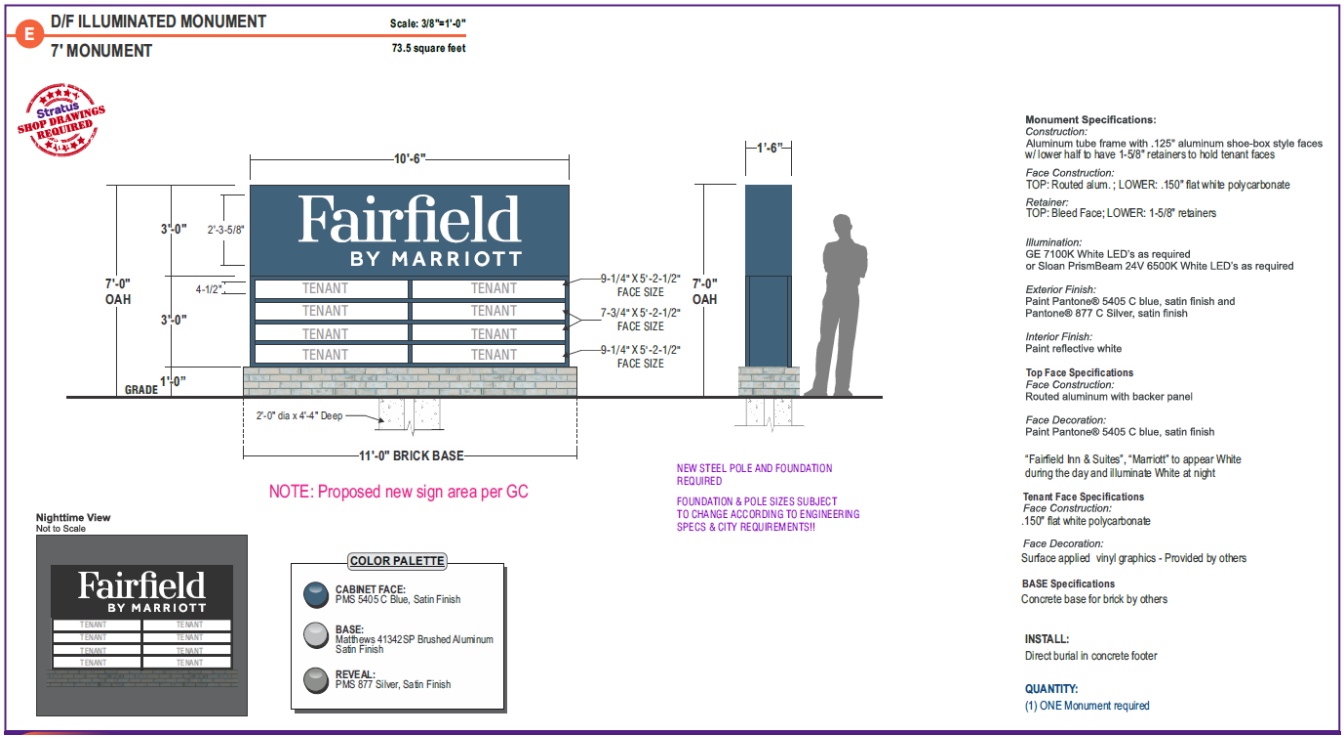
a. Sign Inspection after temporary sign is installed
    i. Verify proper setback, corner clearance, height and message according to approved plan
b. Final Inspection to verify sign removed

Appendix

Monument Sign Example

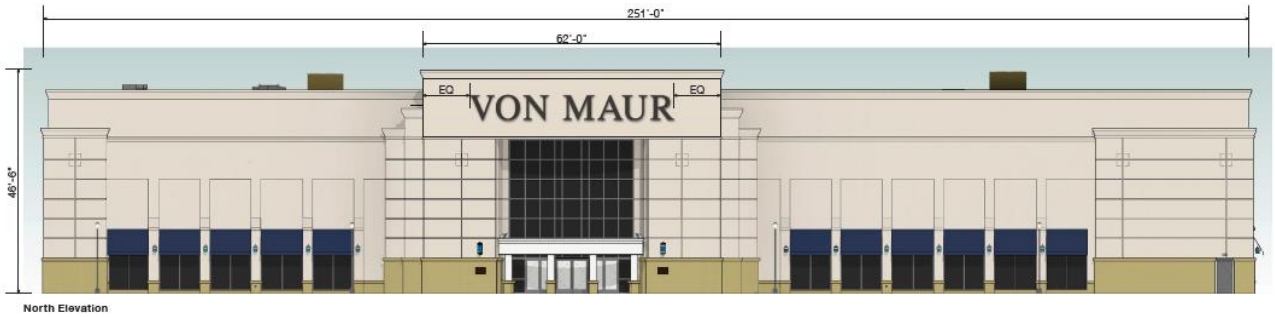


Location Plan

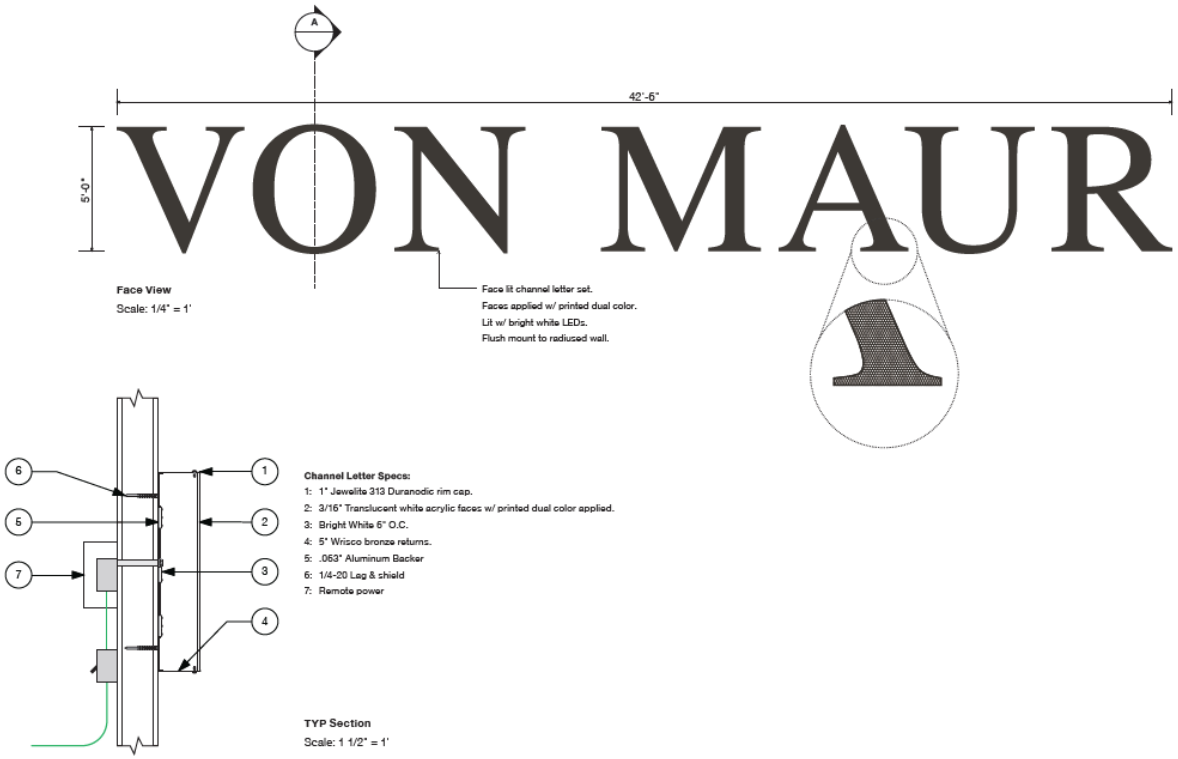


Sign Details

Wall Sign Example



Building Elevation with sign location



Sign and mounting details