

NOTICE OF PROPOSED GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Outdoor Advertising Off-Property Signs (DTSD84)

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. s. 227.112, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation is hereby seeking comment on Outdoor Advertising Off-Property Signs (DTSD84), WI STAT Ch. 84, a proposed guidance document.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Comments may be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for 21 days by:

1. Department's

website: <https://trust.dot.state.wi.us/act369/?id=DTSD84&uri=https://wisconsin.gov/Pages/doing-business/real-estate/outdoor-adv/off-property-signs.aspx&division=DTSD&tags=84.3&tags=Trans201>

2. Mailing written comments to:

Division of Transportation System Development
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
4822 Madison Yards Way
PO Box 7965
Madison, WI 53707-7965

WEBSITE LOCATION OF FINAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

The final version of this guidance document will be posted at wisconsin.gov to allow for ongoing comment.

AGENCY CONTACT

dotdtsdguidancedocs@dot.wi.gov



State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Off-property signs

Highway maintenance

Outdoor advertising
signs

On-property signs

Off-property signs

Official signs

Municipal welcome
signs

Service club and religious
notices

Directional and
informational signs

Specific information
signs

Tourist oriented
directional signs

White arrow boards

Community wayfinding
signs

Supplemental
generator signs

Outdoor advertising
directional signs

Improperly placed signs

Outdoor advertising
signing contacts

Traffic signing contacts

Overview



Off-property (or off-premises) signs advertise for businesses or

services that are *not* conducted on the property. A state permit is required to legally erect an off-property sign on private lands if the sign is adjacent to a state-controlled highway. A non-refundable permit application fee of \$175 is required for most types of signs. The permit stays in effect as long as the sign continues to meet legal requirements.

License to erect signs

An annual license fee of \$250 is required of any person or company that erects more than two signs in Wisconsin in a calendar year. An annual license is also required when a person or company maintains one or more existing signs in a calendar year. Persons erecting on-property (or on-premises) signs that advertise their own business are exempt from the annual license fee.

To obtain a license to erect outdoor advertising signs, download, complete and submit:

- [WI Outdoor Advertising License \(DT1423\)](#)
- \$250 non-refundable license fee

Sign Installation permit

To obtain an outdoor advertising installation permit, download, complete and submit:

- [WI Outdoor sign installation application and permit \(DT1680\)](#)
- \$175 non-refundable application fee, if applicable
- Supporting documentation outlined in applicant instructions

The following checklists can help to prepare the permit application according to the specific category of sign for which you are applying. Regional coordinators also use these checklists as a guide when reviewing the sign installation application.

- [WI Off-property signs checklist \(DT1685\)](#)
- [WI Official signs checklist \(DT1684\)](#)
- [WI Service club and religious notices checklist \(DT1681\)](#)


Annual fee

In addition to the permit application fee, an annual fee applies to most outdoor advertising signs. Annual fee notices are automatically sent to sign owners on record with the department. The annual fee is \$35 for most signs. However, an annual fee of \$50 applies to directional, nonconforming and grandfathered signs. Nonconforming and grandfathered signs are signs that were installed prior to the state's 1972 sign control law or were legally erected after the law was enacted, but no longer meet the requirements for a new sign permit.

Sign categories exempt from the annual fee requirement:

- Farm signs
- Official signs erected by public officers or agencies
- On-property signs
- Real estate signs on the property for sale of 32 square feet or less, except along interstates
- Service club and religious signs of eight square feet or less
- Signs owned by nonprofit organizations

Relevant outdoor advertising laws

- Wisconsin Statute 84.30
- Wisconsin Statute 84.305
- Wisconsin Administrative Code Trans 201
-  Code of Federal Regulations Part 750 (23 C.F.R. 750)
- FHWA History and Overview of the Federal Advertising Control Program

Note on local authorities: Most local authorities (counties and municipalities) also have regulations or ordinances regarding signage in their jurisdiction. It is the sign owner's responsibility to follow local laws. Where state and local regulations differ, the more restrictive requirements govern.