



Billings
PLANNING
& COMMUNITY
SERVICES



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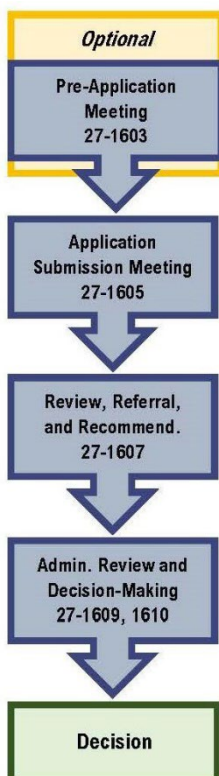
Email: plnonline@billingsmt.gov

Hours: 8 am to 5 pm Mon--Fri

SIGN PERMIT USER'S GUIDE

Sign Permits are required in the City of Billings and in the County zoned areas around the city limits. This Guide is intended to provide information on the permit review process and comprehensive instructions on how to prepare and submit a sign permit for review and eventual approval.

Sign Permit process flow chart ([City Code Section 27-1622](#)) ([County Zoning Code Sec 27-1621](#))



Designers, installers, contractors, owners may request to meet in person or on-line with Planning staff to receive preliminary feedback on a future permit application. The pre-app meeting is not intended to be a pre-approval of the intended sign(s). This meeting would cover sign permit regulations that apply and any special considerations for the location.

This is not required and is included in the Planner's "Completeness" review of the on-line application (first 10 calendar days after submission). If the submission is incomplete, the review will be come back as "Sent Out for Corrections". You **MUST** include an email address with your application for this process to work. Within the city limits, a sign permit will also include a Building code review to ensure the sign is properly constructed or attached to a structure. Response to the notice of corrections is required for the permit process to move forward.

After the permit submittal is complete, the Planning sign permit review will begin. The Building code review may be completed even before the Planning review begins. This process may also require corrections to the application to ensure conformance with the regulations. The Planner should complete the initial review within 20 calendar days.

If a sign permit application is complete at the time it is submitted, and the Planning or Building review does not require corrections, a permit may be issued within 30 calendar days of submission.

Some sign types or modifications are exempt from permitting but still require compliance with other parts of the Sign Code. ([City Code Section 27-1402](#)) ([County Zoning Code Sec 27-1402](#))

All sign permits must be submitted on line through the Citizen Access Portal. This ensures the timely and accurate processing of your permit request. Our permit process has been updated. Here are items you will need to prepare in advance of submitting an application on line.

- **Confirm the location, address, & zoning district of the project site.** Please use the [County Interactive Zoning Map](#) to find this information. This site is maintained for the Planning Division and has the most up-to-date and accurate information. The County maintains several other maps that may also be useful, but for zoning and permitting the linked Zoning map above is the one to use for permitting purposes. Want to confirm zoning? call (406) 657-8247 or send an email to plnonline@billingsmt.gov .
- **Prepare a site plan accurately showing where each sign will be placed on the ground or attached to a building.** This is a two-dimensional plan, with signs labels (A, B etc.) that will correspond to the sign graphic label. Freestanding signs must also show setbacks from property lines (from the leading edge of the sign for pole signs) and any clear vision areas that apply to driveways, alleys and streets. Please consult [Section 27-1404](#) on how to measure signs. Clear Vision areas are covered in City Code [Section 27-1802.H](#). Insert this site plan on the provided application template for later uploading to the on line permit. Clear vision and sign measurements are the same in the city and county sign codes.
- **Prepare a sign graphic showing the sign placement on the building façade or an elevation of the freestanding sign.** This graphic should also include dimensions of the proposed sign(s), the type of sign (monument, pole, wall, projecting, roof, awning, canopy etc.), the sign label (A, B etc.) that corresponds to the site plan, and for freestanding signs whether it has one or two sign faces. Place the sign graphic on the provided template for later uploading to the on line permit.
- **For City sign permit applications, prepare a graphic showing the Building code compliant attachment to a structure for all attached signs, or a foundation and construction drawing for all freestanding signs.** Please contact the city Building Division at permits@billingsmt.gov for details on requirements for sign permits.
- **For any EMD sign, city or county, download and have the owner/operator of the EMD complete the acknowledgement paperwork.** Save this document as a digital file for later uploading to the on line permit. The EMD sign regulations are found in the City Code at [27-1405.C](#) and in the [County Zoning Code](#) at 27-1405.C.

NEW PROCESS REQUIREMENT (Dec 11,2023): ALL signs on a single property or for a single tenant in a multi-tenant building will be submitting on ONE permit application. The system has been updated to no longer limit the number of signs per permit application. Each sign or group of signs will be submitted using the template provided and uploaded as attachments. MULTIPLE sign permit applications submitted by the same applicant, for the same property or for the same project or tenant will be rejected. ALL SIGNS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED AS ONE APPLICATION.

Visit the Citizen Access to begin the permit application process: <https://services.billingsmt.gov/citizenaccess/>

At the login screen, enter your credentials in the boxes provided and click the “Log In” button:

The screenshot shows the login page for the City of Billings Citizen Access. The browser address bar shows services.billingsmt.gov/citizenaccess/. The page features a header with the City of Billings logo and a navigation bar with links to various city services. On the left, a sidebar contains links for Public Access, Log In, New User, and Forget Password. The main content area is titled "Citizen Access" and includes an update notice about new payment features for water and landfill bills, with a link to <https://ci.billings.mt.us/1905/Online-Payments>. Below this, a login form prompts users to enter their Email Address (example: customer@gmail.com) and Password (masked with dots). There are "Log In" and "New User" buttons. A link for "Click here to view site's browser compatibility" is also present.

After successfully logging in, click on the “Apply for a Permit...” button to proceed:

The screenshot shows the dashboard after a successful login. The browser address bar shows services.billingsmt.gov/citizenaccess/. The page features a header with the City of Billings logo and a navigation bar. Below the header, a status bar indicates the user is logged in as deinest@ci.billings.mt.us. On the left, a sidebar contains links for comdev, Apply for Permit..., Apply for Project..., My Applications, Pay Fees, Parcels, FAQ's, User Profile, Home, and Log Out. The main content area is titled "Welcome" and includes a message: "Please select an option from the menu on the left." Below this, a notice states: "Water Bill and Landfill payments are now handled by Invoice Cloud!" with a link to <https://ci.billings.mt.us/1905/Online-Payments> and a note to "Cut & Paste link to new browser window".

Start entering your permit details. When finished, Click Next.

The screenshot shows the City of Billings Citizen Access portal. The user is logged in as 'deinest@ci.billings.mt.us'. The left sidebar contains navigation links: 'comdev', 'Apply for Permit...', 'Apply for Project...', 'My Applications', 'Pay Fees', 'Parcels', 'FAQ's', 'User Profile', 'Home', and 'Log Out'. The main content area is titled 'Permit Application -> Summary'. It contains a 'Details' section with fields for 'Project Name' (containing 'x'), 'Short Description of activity:', 'Permit Type:' (dropdown menu), 'Applicant Type:' (dropdown menu), and 'Primary Party:' (containing 'Tammy Deines'). Below this is a 'Dates' section with 'Submit Date:' set to '09/27/2021'. At the bottom, there is a 'Message' section with the text 'Enter Permit Details' and a row of buttons: 'Back', 'Cancel', 'Help', 'Next' (highlighted in yellow), and 'Finish'.

Project Name-Enter the permit address and business name if it applies.

Short Description of Activity: Enter your permit request : Sign for xx business, front yard fencing, etc.

Permit Type: Use the drop down and choose the permit type

Applicant Type: Use the drop down and choose the applicant type.

This screenshot shows the same City of Billings Citizen Access portal, but with test data entered. The user is logged in as 'husmank@billingsmt.gov'. The left sidebar is identical. The main content area shows the 'Permit Application -> Summary' form. The 'Details' section now contains: 'Project Name' (Testing the sign permit system), 'Short Description of activity:' (Signs), 'Permit Type:' (PLNX-SIGN PERMIT - CITY), 'Applicant Type:' (I am the owner and won't be using any contractors.), and 'Primary Party:' (Karen Husman). The 'Dates' section shows 'Submit Date:' as '01/25/2023'. The 'Message' section still says 'Enter Permit Details', and the buttons at the bottom are 'Back', 'Cancel', 'Help', 'Next' (highlighted in yellow), and 'Finish'.

This is the screen where the permit will be tied to an actual piece of property. When entering information on this screen to search for properties, remember that “less is more”. We used the City Hall building and the address can be found by entering the address number (210) and the street (27) Notice there is no extra information entered before clicking on the “Search” button.

Search results are displayed below. We’ll click on the first result returned to pick the City Hall building. Clicking on the search result listed in the previous screen will insert that information into the permit application. **CLICK NEXT TO PROCEED.**

The screenshot shows the City of Billings permit application interface. The top navigation bar includes the City of Billings logo and a user login status: "About Logged in as: deineest@ci.billings.mt.us Citizen Access". The left sidebar contains a menu with options: "comdev", "Apply for Permit...", "Apply for Project...", "My Applications", "Pay Fees", "Parcels", "FAQ's", "User Profile", "Home", and "Log Out".

The main content area is titled "Permit Application -> Parcel" and contains a "Parcels" section. Under "Add Parcel/Address", there is a "Location by:" section with radio buttons for "Parcel" and "Address". The "Address" option is selected. Below this, there are input fields for "Street Number:" (210), "Dir:" (a dropdown menu), "Street Name:" (27), "Suffix (St,Ave,etc):", "City:" (BILLINGS), "State Code:" (MT), and "Zip:". A "Search" button is located below these fields.

Below the search fields, there is a "Message" section with the text: "Add primary location. You can add secondary locations if need be (not common)". At the bottom right of the form, there are buttons for "Back", "Cancel", "Help", "Next", and "Finish".

The bottom part of the screenshot shows a "Select Address" dialog box. It contains a table with the following data:

Owner	Address Line1	Address Line2	City	State	Zip
CITY OF BILLINGS THE	210 N 27TH ST		BILLINGS	MT	59101
NORTHERN PLAINS RESOURCE CNCIL	210 S 27TH ST		BILLINGS	MT	59101

A "Cancel" button is located at the bottom left of the dialog box.

On the next screen, enter the permit application specifics.

City Of BILLINGS MONTANA

Logout Logged in as: cromwelln@billingsmt.gov Citizen Access

comdev

Permit Application -> Specifics

Attributes	Value
Prompt	
Clear Vision Area	Driveway and Alley
Is this a Marijuana related business?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is this a Sexually Oriented business?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Related CE Case Number (if exists)	
Total Square Feet (ALL SIGNS)	
Additional Comments (if needed)	
City Zoning	CBD - Central Business District
VALUATION	

Message
Enter values for all fields

Back Cancel Help Next Finish

The permit specifics has changed. Please note you will need to enter just one number for all sign area, and no information on the sign types. Each sign or group of signs will have specifics and detailed entered into a template and be uploaded as an attachment.

Permit Application -> Specifics

Attributes

Prompt

Clear Vision Area

Is this a Marijuana related business?

Is this a Sexually Oriented business?

Related CE Case Number (if exists)

Total Square Feet (ALL SIGNS)

Additional Comments (if needed)

City Zoning

VALUATION

Message

Enter values for all fields

Click NEXT to transition to the next screen.

Permit Application Documents: Use this screen to upload the required documents listed. Each sign or group of signs needs to be entered into the required template and then uploaded to the permit application. You may give these documents a name, e.g. “attached signs” or “monument and access point signs” etc. Extraneous documents such as screenshots of the zoning map, Google photos, etc. will not be considered part of the permit submission. Sign graphics or site plans not inserted to the template, or non-use of the template will result in a finding of an “incomplete” application and will be returned to you.

Click NEXT to transition to the next screen.

Permit Application -> Documents

Documents

Title	Filename	Uploaded	Upload
Sign Permit Submittal			<div>upload</div>

Message

Upload documents if available (5 MB max size)

Back

Cancel

Help

Next

Finish

Requirements: This is an acknowledgement screen that you have all of the required items for this permit. Check those that apply

Click **NEXT** to transition to the next screen.

The screenshot shows the 'Permit Application -> Acknowledgements' screen. On the left is a sidebar with a 'comdev' header and buttons: 'Apply for Permit...', 'Apply for Project...', 'My Applications', 'DO NOT USE', 'Parcels', 'FAQ's', 'User Profile', 'Home', and 'Log Out'. The main content area has a title 'Permit Application -> Acknowledgements' and a sub-header 'Acknowledgements'. Below this is a table with three rows of acknowledgements, each with a checked checkbox and an 'Accept' button. The first row states agreement to pay application fees. The second row states the permit becomes null and void if installation is not commenced within 120 days. The third row states no animated signs or flashing lights are allowed. Below the table is a 'Message' box that says 'Please check the Acknowledgments'. At the bottom right are buttons: 'Back', 'Cancel', 'Help', 'Next', and 'Finish'.

In the screen below, there are no requirements

Click **NEXT** to transition to the next screen

The screenshot shows the 'Permit Application -> Requirements' screen. The sidebar is identical to the previous screen. The main content area has a title 'Permit Application -> Requirements' and a sub-header 'Requirements'. Below this is a table with two columns: 'Prompt' and 'Value'. The table is currently empty. Below the table is a 'Message' box that says 'Enter values for all fields'. At the bottom right are buttons: 'Back', 'Cancel', 'Help', 'Next', and 'Finish'.

At this point, the process is ready to click the “Finish” button and submit the permit. The permit will be assigned a permit number which will be used for reference to all work authorized by the permit. For example, PLN-21-00001.

The specific type of sign permit we went through for this demonstration is available immediately and you can click on the “Pay Fees” button on the left hand border to pay fees and complete the process. After the fees are paid, click on “My Applications”, then “Permits” to view the permit and print a copy.

Most permits are not “pay-and-go”. Payment of the review fees puts the permit into the reviewers “in Box”. Clicking the “Finish” button will show this information on the screen:

SummaryPartiesAttributesFeesReviewsInspectionsAttachmentsPrintables

Details

Application #:

PLNX-23-00004

Classification:

PLNX-SIGN PERMIT - CITY

Address1:

2825 3RD AVE N

Address2:

Parcel ID:

BLG-045-013-24-&

Project Name:

Nicole test 2

Work Description:

sign test

Water Meter No:

Status:

Plan Check

Dates

Submit Date:

12/06/2023

Issue Date:

none

Expiration Date:

04/04/2024

Final Inspection Date:

none

Certificate of Completion Date:

none

Certificate of Occupancy Date:

none

Click the “Fees” tab and pay the Fees as shown:

SummaryPartiesAttributesFeesReviewsInspectionsAttachmentsPrintables

☐

Description

☐

PLN-CITY SIGN APPLICATION FEE:

☐

BP - PLAN REVIEW - SIGN PERMITS:

Total:

Print Fees

Amount	Balance
\$600.00	\$600.00
\$45.00	\$45.00
\$645.00	\$645.00

Pay Balance

You will received regular email updates as plan review steps are completed. Once all reviews are complete and approved you will receive an email stating the reviews are complete with a request for payment of the final permit fees. Once all fees are paid, the permit can be issued and printed by the applicant.