

# Sign Violation Self-Audit Worksheet

Find and fix permit issues before code enforcement finds them for you

<b>Who needs this?</b>	Any business owner who isn't 100% certain every sign at their location is properly permitted. New tenants inheriting signs, owners who've been operating for years without issues, and anyone preparing to sell their business.
<b>How to use it:</b>	Walk every sign at your location. Answer each question for each sign. Any "No" answer = potential violation that should be resolved before code enforcement finds it first.

## STEP 1 — INVENTORY ALL SIGNS AT YOUR LOCATION

Walk the property. List every sign. Include signs you inherited from the previous tenant.

#	Sign Description	Location	Approx. Size	Illuminated?	Who Installed?
1				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Me <input type="checkbox"/> Prev. tenant <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
2				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Me <input type="checkbox"/> Prev. tenant <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
3				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Me <input type="checkbox"/> Prev. tenant <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
4				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Me <input type="checkbox"/> Prev. tenant <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
5				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Me <input type="checkbox"/> Prev. tenant <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
6				<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Me <input type="checkbox"/> Prev. tenant <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown

## STEP 2 — FOR EACH SIGN, ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

Sign	Audit Question	✓ If Yes	■ If No — Action Required
<b>All permanent signs</b>	Do you have a permit or permit record for this sign?	✓ <b>OK if yes:</b> No action needed. File permit copy in your records.	■ <b>If no:</b> Apply for a retroactive permit immediately. Contact planning dept. before enforcement finds it.
<b>Illuminated signs</b>	Do you have both a sign permit AND an electrical permit?	✓ <b>OK if yes:</b> No action needed. Confirm both are finalized, not just applied for.	■ <b>If no:</b> Apply for whichever permit is missing. An illuminated sign without electrical permit is doubly non-compliant.

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<b>Any sign</b>	Is the sign within the size limits for your current zoning district?	✓ <b>OK if yes:</b> No action needed.	■ <b>If no:</b> If oversized: apply for variance, reduce sign size, or contact planning dept about options. Remove if necessary.
<b>Freestanding signs</b>	Is the sign within the setback requirements from property lines and ROW?	✓ <b>OK if yes:</b> No action needed.	■ <b>If no:</b> Setback violations may require relocation. Get a survey if unsure of property line location.
<b>Inherited signs (from prior tenant)</b>	Can you obtain the permit record from the landlord or city permit portal?	✓ <b>OK if yes:</b> File copy. No action needed.	■ <b>If no:</b> Treat as unpermitted. Apply for retroactive permit. Notify landlord in writing of the issue.
<b>Temporary banners/flags</b>	Was the banner up for more than 30 days without a permit?	✓ <b>OK if yes:</b> No action if permitted.	■ <b>If no:</b> Apply for temporary sign permit immediately or remove. Check how many permits you've used this year.
<b>Digital/LED signs</b>	Does the sign comply with your city's brightness and dwell-time rules?	✓ <b>OK if yes:</b> No action needed.	■ <b>If no:</b> Check city ordinance for brightness cap (often 0.3 fc above ambient). Adjust display settings. Permits often require compliance certification.
<b>Window vinyl</b>	Is window coverage under your city's threshold (usually 25–30%)?	✓ <b>OK if yes:</b> No action if non-illuminated.	■ <b>If no:</b> Measure coverage. If over threshold, either apply for a permit or reduce coverage.
<b>All signs</b>	Is the sign in good physical repair? (No missing letters, cracked cabinets)	✓ <b>OK if yes:</b> No action needed.	■ <b>If no:</b> Damaged signs attract code enforcement attention and can create liability. Repair or replace.
<b>All permits</b>	Are permit expiration dates current? (Most permits require install within 180 days)	✓ <b>OK if yes:</b> No action needed.	■ <b>If no:</b> An expired permit means you're unprotected. Apply for renewal or new permit before installing.

### STEP 3 — VIOLATIONS FOUND

For each violation identified above, complete one row below:

Sign #	Issue	Action Needed	By Date	Status
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1				<input type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Resolved
2				<input type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Resolved
3				<input type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Resolved
4				<input type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Resolved
5				<input type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Resolved

**VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE TIP**

**Coming forward proactively is almost always treated better than being cited.** Most cities have a voluntary compliance path that reduces or waives fines when business owners self-report violations. Call your planning department's code enforcement division, explain the situation, and ask about voluntary compliance options before they find you first. Document the call.

*INFORMATIONAL USE ONLY. This worksheet is a general guide and does not constitute legal advice. Sign regulations vary by city, county, and zoning district. If you receive a notice of violation, consult your local planning department and consider consulting a local attorney if significant fines are involved.*  
 — SignPermitGuide.com