



# COUNTY OF MANITOWOC

## COUNTY CLERK

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Manitowoc, WI 54220

*Lois M. Kiel*  
Manitowoc County Clerk

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To: Candidates for Elected Office  
From: Lois Kiel, County Clerk  
Re: Guidelines for disclaimers and political signage

The following information is provided as a guide for complying with election laws regarding disclaimers and political signage.

1. **Disclaimers:** Everything communicated on behalf of a campaign must have a disclaimer. **Disclaimers must be on the communication before it is displayed or given out.**
  - a. Wis. Stat. 11.30 states that, “The source of every printed advertisement, billboard, handbill, sample ballot, television or radio advertisement or other communication shall clearly appear thereon.” This also includes t-shirts, bumper stickers, and yard signs.
    - i. Format:
      1. Candidate without a campaign committee – “Paid for by Mary Smith.”
      2. Candidate with a campaign committee – “Paid for by Friends of Mary Smith for Mayor, John James, Treasurer.”
      3. In-Kind contribution to campaign committee – “Paid for by John Doe as an in-kind contribution to Friends of Mary Smith for Mayor, John James, Treasurer.”
  - b. Disclaimers must be included on each separate page of a political communication, including letterhead and enclosures.
  - c. Abbreviations may not be used for the name of a candidate or campaign committee.
  - d. Exceptions - disclaimers are not required on:
    - i. Personal correspondence not reproduced by machine for distribution.
    - ii. A single personal item which is not reproduced or manufactured by machine or other equipment.
    - iii. Nomination papers even if the papers contain biographical information.
    - iv. Pins, buttons, pens, balloons, nail files, and similar small items on which a disclaimer cannot be conveniently printed.
    - v. Envelopes which have campaign committee identification printed on them.

2. Signs:

- a. Signs must have a disclaimer before being displayed.
- b. Signs are prohibited from being located in the transportation right-of-way. A right-of-way consists, but is not entirely inclusive of the following areas: The area between the sidewalk and a street, certain distances off of roads, certain distances off of county/state/federal highways, and bridges.
- c. No signs may be placed on government-owned buildings, grounds, or structures.
- d. Signs must be removed within 15 days following the applicable election.
- e. Size Limitations:
  - i. Manitowoc County, excluding the City of Manitowoc and the City of Two Rivers:
    1. No size regulations.
  - ii. City of Manitowoc and City of Two Rivers:
    1. Signs shall not exceed 11 square feet unless affixed to a permanent structure (e.g. a house, garage, billboard – NOT a fence). It shall not extend beyond the perimeter of the structure, nor obstruct a window, door, fire escape, ventilation shaft, or other area which is required by building codes to remain unobstructed.
    2. No sign shall obstruct, impede, or in any other form interfere with traffic or pedestrian safety.
    3. Any sign with electrical, mechanical, or audio auxiliary must comply with the provisions located in applicable city ordinances.
    4. City of Manitowoc only – a sign cannot exceed 16 square feet in a non-residential zoning district, but the 11 square-foot rule applies in a residential zoning district.