

Appendix S
CAMPAIGN SIGNS - FAQs

Campaign signs or Political signs are one of the most commonly used medium for candidates and committees to advertise their candidacy and position on the issues. Using signs presents many question by new and experienced committees members alike. Many common questions on signs are addressed in this document.

1. Must all of my political signs have an identifier on them?

Maybe. [Section 47](#) of the MCFA requires that paid political advertisements have an identification statement and, if applicable, a disclaimer statement. Please see [Appendix J](#) of any committee manual for more information.

2. I'm a candidate, what identifier do I need to have on my signs?

For Candidate Committees, the identifier must say "Paid for by" along with the committee's name and address. Example: **Paid for by: Committee to Elect Gloria Smith; 516 Main St., Lansing, MI 48999.**

Please note: The identifier must be clear, legible and separate from the text of the sign.

3. What identifier do [PACs](#), Ballot Questions and Political Parties use on their signs?

The identifier must say "Paid for with regulated funds" along with the committee's name and address. Example: **Paid for with regulated funds by ABC Committee; 123 Main St., Lansing, MI 48999.**

4. Do I have to put the Treasurer's name on the identifier?

No, the MCFA does not require that the treasurer's name be present in the identification statement.

5. My signs don't have the identifier on them; how do I fix this?

The signs must have the identifier to be in compliance with the MCFA. A common remedy is to create labels with the disclaimer and place them on the signs or manually add the information. If this is not possible, the committee should take other measures to bring the signs into compliance. The committee should correct the error as soon as possible once discovered. It is important that the committee ensure that all future signs contain the proper identification statement prior to displaying them.

6. Can I use my signs from a previous campaign?

Yes. If you are running for reelection for the same office nothing needs to be done as the committee owns the signs. If you are running for office that has the same or higher contribution limit you would record the transfer of the sign materials as an In-Kind contribution to the committee receiving the signs. See the transfer of funds section of the Candidate Committee Manual for more information. If the signs can not be transferred, the new committee can purchase the signs from the old committee at the fair market value of the signs.

7. Do I have to report signs that I made myself or were made for me with scrap materials?

Yes. You may use your own materials or materials donated to you to make your own signs. However, you must place a fair market value on the items and report them as In-Kind contributions on your campaign statements. The value of the materials count towards the contribution limit of the donor.

8. What if my committee's address has changed?

Use the new address on all future printed material. Creating labels to put over the old address is a good way to fix this issue and avoid a potential complaint. However, if the committee's address is on record with the filing official on the committee's Statement of Organization no violation has occurred. See [ruling](#) dated 10/19/1988 for more information.

9. When can I put up signs? When do I need to take my signs down?

When signs can be put up and when they must be taken down is not covered under the MCFA. Rather, the placement of signs is governed by the local jurisdiction ordinances or zoning rules and the owner of the property where the signs are to be placed. In all cases, committees must ensure that the owner of the property will allow the placement of the signs. Judicial Committees may have additional considerations and should check with the [State Bar of Michigan](#). The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) dictates placement and removal of political signs on public Michigan State owned property. [Click here](#) for MDOT's FAQ on this subject. For private property rules, check with the local jurisdiction: county, city or township offices.

10. Where can I put up signs? Can I put them up on public property?

The MCFA does not dictate where signs can be placed. This is governed by the local jurisdiction ordinances or zoning rules and the owner of the property where the signs are to be placed. In all cases, committees must ensure that the owner of the property will allow the placement of the signs. The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) dictates placement and removal of political signs on

public State owned property. [Click here](#) for MDOT's FAQ on this subject. For private property rules, check with the local jurisdiction: county, city or township offices.

11. Someone took my signs down, what should I do?

If your signs are stolen, contact your local police department or other law enforcement agency to file a report. They will address the situation according to their standard procedures. As this is a criminal matter, it is not covered under the MCFA and the Bureau of Elections or the Department of State has no jurisdiction in this type of matter.

12. My opponent's sign suggests that he/she is an incumbent, but they are not. What should I do?

[Section 944](#) of Michigan Election Law prohibits a person using the words re-elect, re-election or any words that give the impression that the candidate is an incumbent when they're not and incumbent. Violation of this section is a misdemeanor offense punishable as provided in [Section 934](#). Contact your local prosecuting attorney for information on filing a complaint under Michigan's Election Law. This is not a violation of the MCFA.

13. My opponent's signs have false information or false advertisement on them. What should I do?

The MCFA does not regulate the content of political signs except to the extent that the identification requirement of [Section 47](#) is met. You may wish to seek advise from legal council concerning options you have for moving forward.

14. Can I put up signs in an establishment that serves alcohol?

The MCFA does not regulate the placement of signs in establishments that serve alcohol. Questions concerning this possible prohibition should be directed to the Liquor Control Commission at: 866-813-0011.

15. Can 2 or more candidate committees pay for a joint or shared sign?

Yes. However, care must be taken to ensure that one candidate committee is not inadvertently making an in-kind contribution to another candidate committee by paying for more than its share of the cost of the sign. So, the amount of space dedicated to each candidate determines their share of the cost. So if 2 candidates pay for one sign and 75% of the space is dedicated to one candidate and the other has 25% of the space, then this is the share that each should pay of the total cost of the sign. The sign must also have the full identification of each committee paying for the sign. Payment for the signs can be handled in 1 of 2 ways.

- If each participant pays its share of the expenditures as they arise, the committee must report its respective share the expenditure.

- If one of the participating committees has been designated to make the expenditure, the designated committee must itemize the expenditure. When reporting these expenditures, the committee must specify, under the “Purpose” column/field on the Itemized Expenditures Schedule/data entry screen, that the expenditures were related to a joint expenditure. When the other participating committees reimburse the committee that reports the expenditures, the reimbursements are reported as “Other Receipts” on the Itemized Other Receipts Schedule/data entry screen. The committee must select the “miscellaneous” type and indicate that the “other receipt” was a reimbursement received in connection with a joint expenditure. The committee(s) that provide reimbursement for the expenditures must report the purpose of the expenditure as reimbursement for joint fund raiser expenses. The reimbursement for the expenditure must be separately itemized on the Itemized Expenditures Schedule/data entry screen with the following information entered in the “Purpose” column/field: (1) an explanation that the amount expended was reimbursement for a joint fund raiser expense, and (2) the name and address of the person originally paid by the committee being reimbursed.