

Article XII Signs

Section 1. Intent

It is the intent of this article to authorize the use of signs whose types, sizes, and arrangements are compatible with their surroundings; appropriate to the type and intensity of activity to which they pertain, expressive of the identity of individual properties or occupants or of the community as a whole, legible in the circumstances in which they are seen, and appropriate to traffic safety.

Wherever a maximum sign area is referred to, the area shall be deemed to include the copy area devoted to conveying a message, including trim or framing device but excluding the supporting structure.

Section 2. Classification and Structural Type

Signs are regulated by district according to classification and by structural type:

2.1 Classification.

Outdoor Advertising Sign: An off-premises outdoor structure or display, either freestanding or attached to a wall which advertises or attracts attention to a business, commodity, service or other activity, conducted, sold or offered elsewhere than on the premises on which the structure or display is located.

Principal Use Identification Sign: A sign used to identify a residence, business, service, or entertainment located at the same location as the sign.

2.2 Structural Type

Ground sign: A sign resting directly on the ground and supported by means of wheels, upright pillars, braces or posts placed on or in the ground and not attached to any part of a building. This definition includes temporary rental signs usually attached to wheels.

Marquee sign: A sign affixed to the top of any hood or canopy over the entrance to a store, building, or place of public assembly.

Projecting sign: A sign projecting out from, and attached to, the exterior wall of a building, and forming an angle of thirty (30) degrees or more with said wall.

Roof sign: A sign erected, constructed, or maintained upon the roof of any building.

Suspended sign: A sign, which is suspended from the underside of a horizontal lane surface, such as a canopy or marquee, and is supported by such surface.

Wall Sign: A sign affixed to the surface of, and whose plane is parallel to the plane of, the exterior wall of a building, or which forms an angle of less than thirty (30) degrees with said wall.

Section 3. General Regulations

The regulations contained in this section shall apply to all districts.

- a) No sign of any type shall be erected, painted, repainted, posted, reposted, placed, replaced, or hung in any district except in compliance with these regulations.
- b) No sign other than a sign placed by a governmental agency (e.g. traffic control signs, historical markers) shall be located in a street right-of-way or within 4 feet from the edge of the pavement, sidewalks or shoulder of the road.
- c) No sign shall project more than thirty (30) feet above the grade level or the centerline / crown of the road, nor hang lower than eight feet from the sidewalk or grade level. Billboard / Advertising signs will be an exception, the bottom of which shall not project less than thirty (30) feet above grade level with a maximum height of fifty (50) feet. (10/02)
- d) No sign shall be erected or continued that obstructs the site distance along a public right-of-way or at intersections.
- e) Illuminated signs and other sources of illumination shall be subject to the provisions of G.S. 136-32.2 related to placement of blinding, deceptive or distracting lights.
- f) Except as used to display time and temperature, no sign shall contain flashing lights. (Traffic safety signs erected by a governmental agency to regulate, control or direct traffic are an exception to the prohibition against signs with flashing lights.)
- g) No sign shall be permitted which duplicates or simulates, whether by design, shape, color or otherwise, any traffic regulatory sign or other sign placed by a governmental agency in the interest of public health, safety, or welfare.
- h) For the purposes of this ordinance, the square footage area of any sign shall be measured to include the entire sign, including lattice work, frame, border molding, fencing, display area or wall work incidental to its decoration. Sign area shall be computed by the smallest square, triangle, rectangle, circle or combination thereof which will encompass the entire sign, including wall work, frame or supports incidental to its decoration. In computing the area, only one (1) side of the structure shall be considered.
- i) Structural requirements for signs shall be those required in the NC State Building Code.
- j) All signs, together with all supports and braces, shall be kept in good repair and in a neat and clean condition. No sign shall be continued which becomes, in the opinion of the Building Inspector, structurally unsafe and endangers the safety of the public or property. The Building Inspector may order the removal of any sign that is not maintained in accordance with the provisions of this section. Such removal shall be at the expense of the owner or lessee and shall occur within ten (10) days after written notification has been issued. If the order is not complied with within thirty (30) days, the Building Inspector shall remove the sign at the expense of the owner or lessee.

- k) No sign shall be erected, repaired, or repainted by any person until a permit has been issued by the Town, provided, however, that no permit shall be required for the type of signs listed in Section 4, as follows:

Section 4. Signs Permitted In All Districts

The following signs are allowed in all districts, and no permit is required before installation.

- a) Occupant and house number signs not exceeding four (4) square feet in area & bearing only property numbers, post office box numbers, names of occupants or other identification not having commercial connotation.
- b) Signs erected by a governmental agency to regulate, control, or direct vehicular or pedestrian traffic. Such signs may be illuminated, flashing, or moving as required for the public safety.
- c) Signs required by law.
- d) Signs which warn of hazards to life and limb, such as high voltage electrical equipment, explosives, and the like. Such signs may be illuminated.
- e) "No Trespassing" signs, not exceeding four (4) square feet in area and not illuminated.
- f) Signs erected by a governmental agency which convey information regarding a public service or the location of a public facility. Such signs may be illuminated.
- g) Temporary real estate signs advertising a specific property for sale, lease, rent or development, located on said property, provided that in residential districts such signs shall not exceed four (4) square feet in area, nor be illuminated. When property fronts on more than one street one sign shall be allowed on each street frontage.
- h) Permanent subdivision identification signs, not exceeding sixteen (16) square feet in area.
- i) Church or non-profit organization bulletin boards & identification signs, not exceeding twelve (12) square feet in area. One (1) per each street front plus one (1) per each building on premises. Such signs may be indirectly illuminated. All signs must be motionless.
- j) Temporary construction & repair/renovation project signs which denote the builder, other participants, or occupant to be in a construction or repair project. Such signs may be placed within required yard setbacks as freestanding, wall or roof signs. The total area of such signs shall not exceed four (4) square feet in residential districts & fifty (50) square feet in all other districts. (This exception does not cover on-going or regular property maintenance.)
- k) Yard signs erected temporarily such as political signs or those advertising yard sales shall be removed within 2 days after the event promoted has taken place.
- l) Signs (not to exceed 2 per lot) advertising agricultural products produced on the premises not exceeding sixteen (16) square feet in area & provided such are not illuminated.
- m) Signs erected by the city or by local non-profit agencies related to community festivals and/or fundraising. Such signs must be removed 5 days after the end of the event and shall be no more than 32 square ft. in area.
- n) Signs identifying home occupations or offices located in the residence of the practitioner. One (1) per lot not exceeding one (1) square foot in area which must be

mounted flat against a wall or door or hung from a mailbox or lamp post. No such sign may be illuminated in a residential district.

Section 5. Sign Permits Required

Reserved.

Section 6. Sign Regulations Applicable to Residential Districts

Signs as described and limited in Section 4 are permitted in residential districts.

In addition, identification signs are permitted for non-residential uses permitted in residential districts (e.g. day care for 5 or fewer children or adults). An identification sign for such a permitted use shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area.

Outdoor advertising signs are specifically prohibited in residential districts.

Section 7. Sign Regulations Applicable to All Other Districts.

There shall be only one ground sign (either a business identification sign or outdoor advertising sign, where permitted) per 200 feet or less of lot frontage. For each additional 200 feet in lot frontage, another sign is permitted.

There shall be only one (1) outdoor advertising sign per 3000 feet or more. (10/02) Outdoor advertising signs are specifically prohibited in the Institutional & Community (I&C) and Neighborhood Business (NB) districts. Outdoor advertising signs in the Business (B) and Industrial (I) districts shall not exceed 300 square feet in area.

In order to advertise a sale or special event, a lot is allowed one temporary transportable sign provided however that the temporary sign may remain only for the duration of the sale or special event but not more than thirty (30) days, that the sign may not be used to advertise consecutive sales or events except on authorization of the Board of Adjustment & that the sale or event takes place on the lot on which the sign is located.

Section 8. Nonconforming Signs.

Nonconforming signs shall be allowed to remain in good repair for an indefinite period. However, under the following conditions, non-conforming signs shall comply with the regulations of this ordinance:

- a) any nonconforming sign on a lot where the principle structure is vacant for a period of 180 days shall be altered to conform to the regulations of this section;
- b) any alteration of a nonconforming sign shall make that sign conform to the regulations of this section;

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- c) any nonconforming sign damaged over 60% of its value by accident or act of nature shall be removed or repaired in a manner to conform with the regulations of this section;
- d) nonconforming signs, when removed for other than normal maintenance, may not be erected again, nor may such signs be replaced with another nonconforming sign.