

CHAPTER 1280
Signs

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CROSS REFERENCES

Municipal zoning - see Ohio R.C. 713.06 et seq.
 Street name signs in subdivisions - see P. & Z. 1250.05
 Zoning certificates - see P. & Z. 1262.01 et seq.
 Fees for zoning certificates and conditional zoning certificates - see P. & Z. 1262.05(f)(4)
 Nonconforming uses - see P. & Z. Ch. 1274
 Off-street parking and loading - see P. & Z. Ch. 1278
 Fences - see P. & Z. Ch. 1282

1280.01 PURPOSES.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide for the use, location and size of signs and to regulate their installation and maintenance, in order to:

- (a) Coordinate the integrity of Residential Districts and promote attractive public facilities;
 - (b) Provide reasonable, yet appropriate, conditions for advertising goods sold or services rendered in Business Districts, products manufactured in Industrial Districts, and professional services rendered, identifying a home occupation or the name of residents in Residential Districts;
 - (c) Eliminate conflict between advertising signs and traffic control signs which would be hazardous to the safety of the motoring public and/or pedestrians;
 - (d) Control the design of signs so that their appearance will be aesthetically harmonious with an overall urban design for the area; and
 - (e) Promote the most desirable developments and economic activity in accordance with the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan of the Municipality.
- (Ord. 1987-95. Passed 12-30-87.)

1280.02 COMPLIANCE; APPLICATION OF CHAPTER.

(a) Signs shall be designed, erected, altered, reconstructed, moved and maintained, in whole or in part, in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

(b) The construction, erection, safety and maintenance of all signs shall be in accordance with this chapter, but the provisions of this chapter shall not amend or in any way interfere with the codes, rules or regulations governing traffic signs within the Municipality.

(c) The display of official public notices, or the flag, emblem or insignia of an official governmental body, shall not be governed by the provisions of this chapter.
(Ord. 1987-95. Passed 12-30-87.)

1280.03 CLASSIFICATION OF SIGNS.

(a) Sign Defined. As used in this chapter, “sign” means any display, figure, painting, drawing, placard, poster or other device, visible from a public way, which is designed, intended or used to convey a message, advertise, inform or direct attention to a person, institution, organization, activity, place, object or product. It may be a structure or a part thereof or it may be painted on or attached directly or indirectly to a structure. It may be painted on stone or be formed out of shrubbery.

(b) Classification by Use Types.

- (1) “Automobile sign” means any kind of advertising or political sign placed on a motor vehicle.
- (2) “Business sign” means a sign which directs attention to the name of the business or establishment, the goods or commodities sold, or the services rendered, on the lot on which the sign is located.
- (3) “Directional sign” means a sign indicating the direction to which attention is called on the lot on which the sign is located.
- (4) “Garage or yard sale sign” means a sign which depicts the sale of items from a residential garage or yard.
- (5) “Highway safety sign” means a sign authorized by the Ohio Department of Transportation to regulate traffic safety.
- (6) “Identification sign” means a sign indicating the name, owner or manager of an existing project or building on the lot on which the sign is located.
- (7) “Industrial or service sign” means a sign which directs attention to the name, service or industrial establishment, goods produced or sold, or service rendered, on the lot on which the sign is located.

(8) "Informational sign" means a public sign which is designed to give general information concerning a private drive, danger, private security and alarm, the location of places for lodging or eating, vehicle service, natural phenomenon, weather, time, historic sites, announcements and other similar information.

(9) "Nameplate" means a sign indicating the name, address or profession of the person or persons occupying a lot or a part of a building.

(10) "Political sign" means a sign advocating action on a public issue or indicating a candidate for public office.

(11) "Project sign" means a sign which directs attention to the promotion, development and construction of the property on which it is located and which identifies the architects, engineers, contractors and other individuals or firms involved in the construction.

(12) "Real estate sign" means a sign advertising the sale, rental or lease of the premises or part of the premises on which the sign is displayed. It includes a sign announcing that a property has been sold or leased or is no longer available.

(13) "Temporary sign" means a sign of any type to announce special events or sales, to announce the sale, lease or rental of property, to announce the opening of a new business and designed for use for a limited period of time, or to announce restrictions such as no trespassing and no salesmen.

(Ord. 1987-95. Passed 12-30-87.)

(c) Classification by Structural Types.

(1) "Awning sign" means any hood or awning made of cloth or with metal frames attached to a building and supported by the ground or sidewalk.

(2) "Bulletin board" means an announcement sign which directs attention to and is located on the lot of a public or semipublic institution.

(3) "Canopy sign" means a sign attached to the soffit or fascia of a canopy, covered entrance or walkway, or to a permanent awning or marquee.

(4) "Free-standing ground sign" means a stationary sign which is not affixed to a building or supported by a pole or poles.

(5) "Marquee sign" means a sign attached to the soffit or fascia of a marquee, to a roof over an entrance or to a permanent awning.

(6) "Menu sign" means a sign relating to a fast food restaurant depicting a food menu for the convenience of customers ordering food at a drive-in take-out window.

(7) "Pole sign" means a stationary two-face sign erected on a metal pole or poles and wholly independent of any building for support. The faces shall be back-to-back and shall not be more than a foot apart.

- (8) "Wall or panel sign" means a sign integral with the exterior face of an exterior wall of a building, or attached to the wall or parallel with the wall and projecting not more than twelve inches therefrom.
- (9) "Window sign" means a sign painted, attached or affixed to the interior or exterior surface of a window or door of a building.
(Ord. 1995-51. Passed 9-27-95.)

1280.04 PERMITTED SIGNS; ZONING CERTIFICATE REQUIRED.

Unless otherwise provided herein, a zoning certificate shall be required for all signs. No signs except highway safety signs shall extend into any street right-of-way.

- (a) The following signs are permitted in any zoning district:
 - (1) Permanent signs requiring a zoning certificate, without a sign fee, unless otherwise designated:
 - A. Signs incident to legal process and necessary to the public safety and welfare.
 - B. Memorial signs or tablets, names of buildings and/or signs indicating the date of erection of a building. Such signs or tablets shall have an area not to exceed six square feet facing each street and shall be affixed to the building. A sign fee is required.
 - C. Awnings and canopies for public convenience. No advertising shall be placed on any awning or canopy, except that the name of the owner and the business industry or pursuit conducted within the premises may be permanently placed in a space not exceeding eight inches in height on the front and side portions thereof. A sign fee is required.
 - D. Nameplates, not exceeding one square foot in area, containing only the name of the resident and/or the title of the person practicing a profession and/or the name of a building and/or the name of the agent and/or the identification of a home occupation.
 - E. Signs appropriate to a public or semi-public building for the purpose of displaying the name and activities or services therein, provided such sign is not larger than a total of twenty square feet and restricted to the premises. A sign fee is required.
 - F. One permanent sign not more than twenty square feet in area identifying a subdivision or neighborhood at each entrance to such subdivision or neighborhood. Such signs, exclusive of decorative walls, fences or a base, shall not exceed six feet in height, shall not be located closer than twenty-five feet from any street right-of-way line and shall not obstruct visibility at street corners. A sign fee is required.

- (2) Temporary signs requiring a zoning certificate, without a sign fee, unless otherwise designated.
- A. Real estate and development signs. No zoning permit or certificate is required in connection with the erection of real estate or development signs. One unlighted real estate sign, not exceeding six square feet in area, or not exceeding twelve square feet in area in C-2 Districts, pertaining only to the sale, lease or rent of the particular building, property or premises upon which such sign is displayed, shall be permitted. The sign shall be removed no later than five days after the sale, lease or rental of the building or property.
 - B. Special events signs. The Building and Zoning Inspector may permit the placement of temporary signs within the Municipality for a period not to exceed thirty days, which signs shall be limited to advertising public activities and activities of organizations within the Municipality. No sign fee shall be required. Such signs shall be removed within five days after such activities terminate or within five days subsequent to such thirty-day period, whichever comes first.
 - C. Political signs. No zoning permit or certificate is required in connection with the erection of political signs. Political signs, whether they endorse or oppose candidates, causes and/or issues at any general, regular, primary or special election on all levels of government, shall be permitted, subject to the following regulations:
 - 1. Such signs shall not be located closer than ten feet from the street right-of-way, nor closer than ten feet from an adjoining property line.
 - 2. Such signs shall not be illuminated in any manner.
 - 3. Such signs are prohibited from being placed within public rights of way or on utility poles, traffic signs, other government owned signs, or trees.
 - 4. Such signs shall not obstruct the sight lines of vehicular traffic.
 - D. Construction signs. One sign denoting the architect, engineer and/or contractor, when placed upon work under construction, and not exceeding twelve square feet in area, shall be permitted.
 - E. Signs for roadside stands. One unlighted sign, not more than twenty square feet in area, in conjunction with a roadside stand, which shall be used only to advertise agricultural products produced on the premises, shall be permitted. Such signs are only permitted during hours in which the roadside stand is open for business.

- F. Business signs. Temporary business signs shall not be permitted.
 - G. Garage or yard sale signs. Such signs shall not exceed six square feet in area and shall be posted no more than one day before the sale and shall be removed no later than two days after the sale. No sign shall be posted upon any utility pole, traffic sign, other government owned sign, or tree, or upon any public right-of-way.
 - H. Automobile signs. The motor vehicle upon which such a sign is located shall be parked at least twenty-five feet from any street and in a manner not to obstruct vehicular traffic approaching street intersections.
(Ord. 1987-95. Passed 12-30-87; Ord. 2012-73. Passed 11-28-12.)
- (b) The following signs are permitted in B-1, B-2, B-3, C-1 and C-2 Districts:
- (1) Wall signs. One exterior wall sign on a store front may be erected which displays a logo or advertises a business or service conducted upon the premises and/or advertises, without duplication, products, merchandise or commodities stocked and sold on the premises. The sign shall be limited to one side of the building. The wall sign shall be affixed flat against the wall of the building and shall not project therefrom more than one foot. No such sign shall extend beyond the width or height of the wall to which it is attached.
 - A. The maximum sign area for a wall sign shall be two square feet per one linear foot of store frontage.
 - B. Buildings or building units with lot frontage on two public streets shall be permitted signs and sign area in addition to that otherwise permitted, only if such building or unit has either (1) direct vehicular access from the secondary street or (2) a customer entrance on the secondary facade. One additional sign shall be placed only on the secondary facade or in relation to the secondary lot frontage. Such additional sign shall not exceed twenty-five percent of the area of the sign permitted for the principal facade and street.
 - C. In addition to signs and sign face area otherwise permitted, each building or building unit shall be entitled to one wall, window or canopy identification sign not exceeding six square feet in area and located at a rear entrance, as designated by the business owner or proprietor.

(2) Window signs. Only displays or signs pertaining directly to the business on the premises shall be allowed to be displayed in a window for exterior viewing, provided that such signs do not cover more than twenty-five percent of the area of the window, do not remain on display in excess of ten days and do not face contiguous properties.

(3) Pole signs. One pole sign may be erected on a business or industrial property. The sign edge shall be located in front of the setback building line and shall not hang over the sidewalk. Such sign shall not exceed thirty-five feet in height from ground level. The lowest horizontal projecting feature of such sign shall be not less than ten feet above the established grade. The face of the sign shall be at right angles to the major thoroughfare abutting the front property line.

A. The maximum area for all faces of such a sign shall be one and one-half square feet per linear foot of store (or business) frontage, but shall not exceed a total of seventy-two square feet.

B. A planter may be constructed around the base of the sign pole to provide for shrubbery or flowers, but in no event shall any one side of the base exceed thirty inches in height.

C. For a multi-tenant parcel, where more than one business establishment is located on a single tract of land having an entrance or entrances or parking area or areas in common for the customers of such establishments, only one free-standing pole sign shall be authorized for the entire tract. The intent of this provision is to limit each shopping center, office building or similar joint operation to one free-standing pole sign to promote uniformity and to prevent visual pollution caused by a clutter of disharmonious signs. In the case of a multi-tenant pole sign, the area may be increased twenty percent for all additional tenants after the first up to a maximum of sixty square feet. The area of such signs shall be divided equally among the tenants of the parcel.

(4) Directional signs. Directional signs shall be permitted but shall not exceed two square feet per sign.

(5) Reader board signs. One reader board sign shall be allowed for each restaurant fast food drive-in and carry-out service, which sign shall not exceed twelve square feet.

(6) Theater, shopping center and race track signs. The size, area and design of a sign for a theater, shopping center exceeding 50,000 square feet and race track shall be determined separately for each establishment and regulated by conditional use permits.

(7) Free-standing ground-type signs.

A. Height. The maximum height of a free-standing ground sign shall be eight feet.

B. Supplemental regulations and requirements.

1. Free-standing signs are only permitted when the principal building is set back from the street right-of-way a minimum of twenty-five feet and the site has a minimum lot frontage of 100 feet.

2. One free-standing identification sign, with a maximum area of forty square feet per sign face, is permitted per project or development.

3. No portion of any free-standing sign shall be closer to the street right-of-way than a distance equal to the height of the sign or five feet, whichever is greater. A free-standing sign shall also be a minimum of ten feet from any side property line.

C. Content of free-standing signs in multiple tenant facilities. When a free-standing sign is permitted on a site with more than one tenant, it is the property owner's responsibility to determine if the allowable area shall be devoted to the identification of the building or project, be a directory for a select group of tenants or all the tenants in the project or be for project identification and a tenant directory in combination.

D. Additional allowances for free-standing signs in Business and Industrial Districts. The allowable area for any free-standing monument-type sign may be increased by ten square feet of area for every 100 linear feet of lot frontage, or fraction thereof, greater than 300 linear feet.

(Ord. 1995-51. Passed 9-27-95.)

1280.05 CONSTRUCTION.

(a) All signs shall be constructed in conformance with the Building and Housing Code and other applicable requirements of the Municipality.

(b) All signs shall be rigidly secured and no sign shall swing from a bar, crane or awning, nor shall all or part of any sign be revolving, oscillating or otherwise designed to move to attract attention.

(c) No sign shall be so erected as to obstruct any window, door, fire escape, balcony, platform, stairway, ladder, vent or other means of ingress to or egress from any building.

(d) Signs shall be erected so as not to obstruct traffic sight lines or traffic control devices.

(e) Signs visible from a street shall not contain an arrow or words such as “stop”, “go”, “slow”, etc., or otherwise resemble highway traffic or directional signals.

(f) No sign shall be erected upon the roof of any building.

(g) Any sign which is illuminated must be internally illuminated; no spotlights shall be allowed thereon. Such an illuminated sign shall not have a light source of excessive brightness which might be hazardous to pedestrians or motorists and shall be shielded and directed away from adjacent Residential Districts and streets. Flashing, moving or intermittent illumination signs shall be prohibited, except those that provide a changing message.

(h) When the sign copy is fastened directly to the building, straight horizontal and vertical lines drawn closest to the copy extremities encompassing individual letters or words shall be used to compute the rectangular area of the sign.

(i) No sign shall be located closer than twenty-five feet from any lot located in any R-1 or R-2 District.

(j) No light-reflecting paint shall be used on any sign.

(k) Outdoor signs shall be constructed of rigid plastic or acrylic material capable of being internally illuminated.

(l) The facing of all signs shall be permanent and shall not be changeable or removable. Nothing in this section shall preclude permanent signs from having the facility for changing copy, should they be designed for that purpose.

(m) No advertising sign shall be permitted except on the premises on which the business that is being advertised is located.

(n) No advertising signs, messages or informational or directional signs shall be painted directly on the wall of any structure.

(o) No sign shall be erected, converted, enlarged, reconstructed, structurally altered or arranged for any purpose other than in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. A sign which was erected before the adoption of this chapter shall not be rebuilt or relocated without conforming to the provisions of this chapter.

(p) Anchored advertising balloons and searchlights shall be prohibited within the Municipality.

(q) Free-standing signs shall only be erected on the property at the location of the place of business which is identified by the copy or reading matter appearing on the sign face.

(r) Office buildings occupied by a single occupant who carries on more than one activity within the building, or which contain two or more activities carried on by different occupants, shall be limited to only one sign displayed in accordance with Section 1280.02 and all other pertinent sections of this chapter.

(Ord. 1987-95. Passed 12-30-87.)

1280.06 APPLICATION AND APPROVAL.

Application for the construction or alteration of signs coming within the purview of this chapter shall be submitted to the Building and Zoning Inspector for approval and a sign permit. All sign permit applications for permanent signs shall be accompanied by a drawing showing the dimensions, layout and design, and the color of the letters, lines and symbols, of the sign, together with the horizontal frontage of the store or building. No temporary or permanent sign shall be mounted upon utility poles or trees, except those placed for traffic control purposes or for identification purposes by utility companies. Signs placed for traffic control purposes and authorized by the Building and Zoning Inspector shall be exempted from this chapter.

(Ord. 1987-95. Passed 12-30-87; Ord. 2005-66. Passed 12-14-05.)

1280.07 MAINTENANCE.

The Building and Zoning Inspector may order any sign to be painted or fixed at least once each year. All supports, guy wires, braces and anchors for such sign shall be maintained and kept in a safe condition, and it shall be unlawful for the owner or person having charge of such sign not to remove the same after receiving notice to do so from the Building and Zoning Inspector.

(Ord. 1987-95. Passed 12-30-87.)

1280.08 REMOVAL.

(a) Any sign which no longer advertises a bona fide business that is conducted within a building or structure shall be taken down and removed by the owner, agent or person having the beneficial use of the building or structure upon which such sign is found, within ten days after written notification from the Building and Zoning Inspector to remove same. If such sign is not taken down and removed within such time, the Building and Zoning Inspector may cause the same to be removed at the expense of the owner, agent or person having the beneficial use of the building or structure upon which such sign is found.

(b) If the Building and Zoning Inspector finds that any sign or other advertising structure regulated herein is unsafe or insecure, is a menace to the public, has been constructed or erected in violation of the provisions of this chapter, is in need of repair, or is being maintained in violation of the provisions of this chapter, notice shall be given in writing by the Building and Zoning Inspector to the permittee thereof to remove or repair the sign or structure so as to make it comply with the provisions of this chapter. If the permittee fails to remove or repair such sign or other advertising structure, within ten days after receiving such notice, such sign or other advertising structure may be removed by the Building and Zoning Inspector at the expense of the permittee or owner of the property upon which it is located. The Building and Zoning Inspector shall refuse to issue a permit to any permittee or owner who refuses to pay the costs so assessed for the removal of such sign or other advertising structure.

The Building and Zoning Inspector may cause any sign or other advertising structure which is an immediate peril to any person or property to be removed summarily and without notice, at the expense of the permittee or owner of the property upon which it is located.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, every sign or other advertising structure in existence on the date of adoption of this chapter, which violates or does not conform to the provisions of this chapter, shall be removed, altered or replaced so as to conform to the provisions of this chapter within five years after the passage of this chapter.

(Ord. 1987-95. Passed 12-30-87.)

1280.09 NONCONFORMING SIGNS.

(a) A permanent sign existing lawfully at the time this section becomes effective, but which does not conform to the sign regulations of the district in which it is located, may be maintained, and the structural or electrical parts thereof may be repaired or restored to a safe condition; otherwise a nonconforming sign shall not be altered or moved or a substitution made therefor unless it is made to conform to this chapter. If any sign or part thereof is damaged or destroyed to an extent of more than fifty percent of its reproduction value or taken down, it shall not be rebuilt or relocated unless it shall be made to comply with the regulations of the district in which it is located.

(b) However, all such nonconforming signs shall be registered with the Municipality within ninety days of the effective date of this chapter. Being informed of such requirement by the Building and Zoning Inspector, each property owner shall apply for and receive a five-year temporary permit at no charge for continuation of the nonconforming use. Upon expiration of the five-year temporary permit, the sign shall be brought into compliance or removed.

(c) Failure of an owner to maintain a nonconforming sign in a safe and attractive condition shall be just cause to void any temporary permit and give the Municipality the right to demand immediate removal of such nonconforming sign.
(Ord. 1987-95. Passed 12-30-87.)

1280.10 CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP.

Upon change of ownership of any business, all nonconforming signs shall be made to conform to all provisions of this chapter notwithstanding other provisions of this chapter.
(Ord. 1987-95. Passed 12-30-87.)

1280.11 SIGN PERMIT REQUIREMENTS.

No display sign, whether permanent or temporary, shall hereafter be erected, constructed or maintained within the Municipality by any person, firm or corporation until a permit for the same has been issued by the Building and Zoning Inspector. The application for such permit shall include the following information:

- (a) The name, address and telephone number of the applicant;
- (b) The location of the building, structure or lot to which or upon which the sign or other advertising structure is to be attached or erected;
- (c) The position of the sign or the advertising structure in relation to nearby buildings or structures, side lot lines and streets, shown by means of a plat map;
- (d) Two scale drawings of the plans and specifications, the color and the method of construction and attachment of the sign to the building or in the ground;
- (e) The name of the person, firm, corporation or association erecting such sign and evidence that the sign erector is qualified, licensed, bonded and insured;
- (f) Written consent of the owner of the building, structure or land to which or on which the sign is to be erected if the applicant for such sign is a tenant and not the owner;
- (g) Evidence that any required electrical permit has been issued for such sign;
- (h) Such other information as the Building and Zoning Inspector may require to show full compliance with this and all other laws of the Municipality.

(Ord. 1987-95. Passed 12-30-87.)

1280.12 FEES.

For appropriate sign fees, see Section 1262.05(f)(4).
(Ord. 1987-95. Passed 12-30-87.)

1280.99 PENALTY.

Whoever violates any of the provisions of this chapter, or fails to comply therewith, shall be fined not more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for each offense. A separate offense shall be deemed committed each day during or on which a violation occurs or continues. (Ord. 1987-95. Passed 12-30-87.)