

## CHAPTER 18 SIGNS

**Section 18.01. Description and Purpose.** This chapter is intended to regulate the size, number, location and manner of display of signs in the Township in a manner consistent with the following purposes.

- (a) To protect and further the health, safety and welfare of the township residents, property owners and visitors.
- (b) To prevent traffic hazards and pedestrian accidents caused by signs which obstruct vision, distract or confuse drivers, or are improperly secured or constructed.
- (c) To conserve and enhance community character.
- (d) To promote uniformity in the size, number or placement of signs within districts.
- (e) To promote the economic viability of commercial areas by minimizing visual clutter, and allowing for proper placement of signs to safely direct motorists to their destination.
- (f) To balance the public's right to be informed and its desire to avoid visual pollution and hazardous conditions with the desires of businesses and non-business uses to communicate by means of signs.

**Section 18.02. Definitions.**

- (a) Balloon Sign. A sign composed of a non-porous bag filled with air or gas.
- (b) Banner Sign. A portable sign of fabric, plastic, or other non-rigid material without an enclosing structural framework.
- (c) Billboard. A sign which advertises an establishment, service or activity not conducted on the land on which the sign is located, or which advertises any goods or products that are not sold, manufactured, processed or fabricated on the land on which the sign is located.
- (d) Construction Sign. A sign which identifies the owners, lenders, contractors, architects, and engineers of a project under construction.
- (e) Directional Sign. A sign which gives directions, instructions, or facility information for the movement of vehicles or pedestrians on the lot on which the sign is located, such as parking or exit and entrance signs, but not including commercial signs.
- (f) Freestanding Sign. A sign not attached to a building or wall which is supported by one or more poles or braces or which rests on the ground or on a foundation resting on the ground.
- (g) Governmental Sign. A sign erected or required to be erected by the Township, or the state or federal government, but not including a school district.
- (h) Memorial Sign. A sign, tablet, or plaque memorializing a person, event, structure or site.
- (i) Portable Sign. A sign that is not permanent or affixed to a building or structure and by its nature may be or is intended to be moved from one location to another.

- (j) Real Estate Sign. A sign advertising the real estate upon which the sign is located as being for sale, rent, or lease.
- (k) Roof Line. The top of a roof or parapet wall, whichever is higher, but excluding any cupolas, chimneys, or other minor projections.
- (l) Roof Sign. A sign erected above the roof line of a building.
- (m) Sign. A device, structure, fixture, or placard which may or may not use graphics, symbols, and/or written copy designed specifically for the purpose of advertising or identifying an establishment, product, service, or activity.
- (n) Wall Sign. A sign painted or attached directly to and parallel to the exterior wall of a building extending no greater than 12 inches from the exterior face of a wall to which it is attached.

**Section 18.03. Prohibited Signs.** A sign not expressly permitted by this Ordinance is prohibited. The following types of signs are expressly prohibited:

- (a) Strings of light bulbs, pennants, streamers, banners, or flags except for those flags of a non-commercial nature not used for the purpose of commercial advertisement.
- (b) Portable signs except as may be permitted herein.
- (c) Balloon signs.
- (d) Any sign, including window signs, which have flashing, moving, oscillating or blinking lights, excluding time and temperature signs and barber pole signs, which are permitted.

**Section 18.04. Exempt Signs.** The following signs shall be exempt from the provisions of this Ordinance, except for the design, construction and location standards of Section 18.07.

- (a) Governmental signs, but not including school signs.
- (b) Memorial signs.
- (c) Signs for essential services which are four square feet in area or less.
- (d) Nameplates.
- (e) Farm identification signs.
- (f) Political signs, but signs for political candidates or ballot propositions shall be removed not later than 30 days after the date of the election or other vote to which they refer.

**Section 18.05. Signs Not Requiring a Permit.** The following signs shall not require a permit, but shall be subject to all other applicable provisions of this Ordinance.

- (a) Home occupation signs; roadside stand signs; exempt signs under Section 18.04.
- (b) Directional signs not exceeding two square feet.
- (c) Construction signs.
- (d) Signs for residential yard and garage sales.
- (e) Real estate signs advertising the premises (on which the sign is located) for sale, rent or lease, if such signs are not more than 12 square feet in area for residential property or 32 square feet in area for non-residential property.

- (f) Help wanted signs of a temporary nature not to exceed 12 square feet.

**Section 18.06. Sign Permits and Application.**

- (a) A sign permit shall be required for the erection, use, construction or alteration of all signs except those exempted herein. For purposes of this section alteration shall mean any change to an existing sign including changing the copy to promote, advertise, or identify another use. Alteration shall not mean normal maintenance of a sign.
- (b) A sign permit shall be required for a portable sign, except those that will be displayed less than 30 days.
- (c) An application for a sign permit shall be made to the Township Zoning Administrator along with a fee as required by Township Board resolution. The application, at a minimum, shall include the following:
  - (1) Name, address, and telephone number of applicant and the person, firm or corporation erecting the sign.
  - (2) Address or permanent parcel number of the property where the sign will be located.
  - (3) A sketch showing the location of the building, structure, or lot upon which the sign is to be attached or erected, and showing the proposed sign in relation to buildings and structures along with setback from lot lines.
  - (4) A drawing of the plans and specifications for the sign, including a drawing of how the sign will be attached to structures or the ground.
  - (5) Any required electrical permit shall be attached to the application.
  - (6) Any other information which the Zoning Administrator may require in order to demonstrate compliance with this Ordinance.
- (d) All signs requiring electrical service shall be reviewed for compliance with the Township's electrical code. Approval of electrical signs shall be noted on or attached to the sign permit.
- (e) The Zoning Administrator shall issue a sign permit if all provisions of this Ordinance and other applicable Township ordinances are met. A sign authorized by a permit shall be installed or be under construction within six months of the date of issuance of the sign permit or the permit shall expire.

**Section 18.07. Design, Construction and Location Standards.**

- (a) All signs shall be properly maintained and shall not be allowed to become unsightly through disrepair or as a result of the effects of the weather.
- (b) Sign supports, braces, guys and anchors shall be maintained in such a manner as not to cause a hazard.
- (c) Signs shall be constructed to withstand all wind and vibration forces which can normally be expected to occur.
- (d) Signs may be internally or externally illuminated, unless illumination is prohibited under other provisions in this Ordinance.
- (e) Signs shall not be placed in, upon or over any public right-of-way.

- (f) A sign shall not be erected in any place where it may, by reason of its position, shape, color, or other characteristics, interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device, or constitute a nuisance per se.
- (g) A wall sign shall not extend past the edge of the wall to which it is affixed, and no wall sign shall extend above the roof line of a building.
- (h) A sign and its supporting mechanism shall not extend beyond any lot lines of the property on which it is located.

**Section 18.08. Sign Regulations Applicable to All Districts.** The following sign regulations are applicable to all zoning districts.

- (a) All signs shall be stationary and shall pertain only to the business or activity conducted on the premises, except for permitted billboards.
- (b) Real estate signs are permitted in any district but shall be removed within 30 days after completion of the sale or lease of the property.
- (c) Construction signs are permitted within any district, subject to the following restrictions:
  - (1) Construction signs shall be no larger than 32 square feet and not exceed six feet in height.
  - (2) Construction signs shall not be erected until a building permit has been issued for the project which is the subject of proposed sign and construction activity has begun.
  - (3) Construction signs shall be removed immediately upon the issuance of any Occupancy Permit for the building or structure which is the subject of the construction sign.
- (d) Directional signs are permitted in any district subject to the following restrictions:
  - (1) A directional sign may not contain advertising copy or the logo of the business or use.
  - (2) Such sign shall not exceed two square feet in area or three feet in height, and shall be set back at least five feet from any lot line and edge of any driving lane.
  - (3) Directional signs shall be limited to traffic control functions only.
- (e) Portable signs shall be subject to the sign requirements of the district in which they are located, except for portable signs that are displayed for 30 days or less, and are not re-displayed for at least 90 days thereafter.

**Section 18.09. Billboards.** Billboards shall be constructed, installed, maintained and used only in accordance with special land use approval granted by the Planning Commission under Section 15.44 and other applicable special land use provisions.

**Section 18.10. Nonconforming Signs, Illegal Signs, and Signs Accessory to Nonconforming Uses.**

- (a) Every legal permanent sign which does not conform to the height, size, area or location requirements of this chapter as of the date of the adoption of this Ordinance, is hereby deemed to be nonconforming.
- (b) Nonconforming signs may not be altered, expanded, enlarged, or extended; however, nonconforming signs may be maintained and repaired so as to continue the useful life of the sign.
- (c) For the purposes of this chapter, a nonconforming sign may be diminished in size or dimension or the copy of the sign amended or changed without jeopardizing the privilege of nonconforming use.
- (d) A sign accessory to a nonconforming use may be erected in the Township in accordance with the sign regulations for the district in which the property is located.

**Section 18.11. Measurement of Signs.**

- (a) The area of a sign shall be measured as the area within a single, continuous perimeter which encloses the most outward limits of writing, representation, emblem, or any other figure of similar character, together with any frame or other material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate the sign from its background, excluding the structure necessary to support the sign.
- (b) The area of a freestanding or projecting sign that has two or more faces shall be measured by including the area of all sign faces, except if two such faces are placed back-to-back and are of equal size, the area of the two back-to-back faces shall be counted as one face. If the two back-to-back faces are of unequal size, the larger of the two sign faces shall be counted as the one face.
- (c) The height of a sign shall be measured as the vertical distance from the highest point of the sign to the grade of the adjacent street or the average grade of the ground immediately beneath the sign, whichever is less.

**Section 18.12. Signs in the Ag and R-R Districts.** The following signs are permitted in the AG Agricultural District and the R-R Rural Residential District.

- (a) Signs as permitted and regulated by Sections 18.04, 18.05, 18.07 and 18.08.
- (b) One non-illuminated subdivision identification sign per entrance road for each subdivision or comparable development, except that no two such signs per subdivision shall be located closer to each other than 1,320 feet. A subdivision identification sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and shall not be higher than six feet.
- (c) One freestanding sign for permitted non-residential uses, not to exceed 16 square feet in sign area and of a height not greater than six feet. Any such sign shall be located not closer than ten feet from a side lot line and the sign shall not be illuminated.
- (d) Real estate signs shall be permitted as follows:
  - (1) For single family dwelling and farms, one sign per parcel. Such signs shall not exceed 12 square feet in area and six feet in height. They shall be set back at least five feet from all lot lines.

- (2) For non-residential uses, one sign per parcel. Such signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and shall not exceed eight feet in height. they shall be set back at least five feet from all lot lines.
- (e) Signs for special land uses shall be as permitted by the Planning Commission and Township Board, or by the Planning Commission alone, whichever has the authority under this Ordinance to approve the special land use.

**Section 18.13. Signs in the R-1 District, LR District, R-2 District, R-3 District and Residential PUD District.** The following signs are permitted in the R-1, LR, R-2, R-3 and Residential PUD Districts:

- (a) Signs as permitted and regulated by Sections 18.04, 18.05, 18.07 and 18.08.
- (b) One non-illuminated subdivision identification sign per entrance road for each subdivision or comparable development, except that no two such signs per subdivision shall be located closer to each other than 1,320 feet. A subdivision identification sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and shall not be higher than eight feet.
- (c) One freestanding sign for permitted non-residential uses, not to exceed 16 square feet in sign area and of a height not greater than six feet. Any such sign shall be located not closer than ten feet from a side lot line and the sign shall not be illuminated.
- (d) Real estate signs shall be permitted as follows:
  - (1) For single family dwelling and farms, one sign per parcel. Such signs shall not exceed 12 square feet in area and six feet in height. They shall be set back at least five feet from all lot lines.
  - (2) For non-residential uses, one sign per parcel. Such signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and shall not exceed eight feet in height. They shall be set back at least five feet from all lot lines.

**Section 18.14. Signs in the C-1 and C-2 District.** The following signs are permitted in the C-1 Neighborhood Commercial District and the C-2 General Commercial District:

- (a) Signs as permitted and regulated by Sections 18.04, 18.05, 18.07 and 18.08.
- (b) In the C-1 District, there may be one freestanding sign for each lot or parcel of land, not to exceed 64 square feet in sign area and not to exceed 20 feet in height.
- (c) In the C-2 District, there may be one freestanding sign for each lot or parcel of land, not to exceed 72 square feet in sign area and not to exceed 25 feet in height.
- (d) Each commercial establishment shall be permitted to have one wall sign. For a commercial establishment on a comer lot, one wall sign for each public or private street frontage is permitted.
  - (1) A commercial establishment consisting of a business located in a freestanding building shall be permitted to have a wall sign not to exceed one square foot of sign area for each lineal foot of street frontage of such freestanding building, except that commercial establishments with more than 100 feet of freestanding building frontage shall be permitted a wall sign area not to

exceed one square foot of sign area for each of the first 100 lineal feet of freestanding building frontage plus one and one-half square feet of sign area for each three lineal feet of freestanding building frontage in excess of 100 lineal feet thereof.

- (2) A commercial establishment consisting of a business located in a building, but separated from other businesses in the building by walls from the ground up and with a door for use by the public for exclusive ingress to and egress from the business, shall be permitted to have a wall sign area not to exceed one square foot of sign area for each lineal foot of building frontage of such commercial establishment, except that commercial establishments with more than 100 feet of building frontage of the establishment shall be permitted to have a wall sign area not to exceed one square foot of sign area for each of the first 100 feet of building frontage of the establishment and one and one-half square feet of sign area for each three lineal feet of building frontage of the establishment in excess of 100 lineal feet thereof.
- (3) A freestanding building in which more than one commercial establishment is located may have a sign on or next to the front door thereof stating the names of the commercial establishments located in the building, but not for the purpose of advertising any goods, products or services. Such sign shall not exceed an area of eight square feet.
- (e) A wall sign shall be attached to the same wall which is used to determine its area.
- (f) In the C-1 and C-2 Districts, there may be one real estate sign per lot or parcel of land, not to exceed 32 square feet in sign area and not to exceed eight feet in height. Such signs shall be set back a minimum of five feet from the front lot line.
- (g) Signs for special land uses shall be as permitted by the Planning Commission and Township Board, or by the Planning Commission alone, whichever has the authority under this Ordinance to approve the special land use.

**Section 18.15. Signs in the I Industrial District.** The following signs are permitted in the I Industrial District:

- (a) Signs as permitted and regulated by Sections 18.04, 18.05, 18.07 and 18.08.
- (b) Each industrial establishment shall be permitted to have one freestanding sign for each lot or parcel of land, not to exceed 72 square feet in sign area and not to exceed 25 feet in height.
- (c) Each industrial establishment shall be permitted to have one wall sign. For an industrial establishment on a corner lot, there may be one wall sign for each public or private street frontage. An industrial establishment shall not have more than one wall sign per wall. The size of the wall sign shall comply with the following requirements:
  - (1) Industrial establishments with up to and including 128 lineal feet of wall fronting upon a street are permitted to have a sign area not to exceed 32 square feet.

- (2) An industrial establishment with more than 128 lineal feet of wall fronting upon a street is permitted to have a sign area of 32 square feet plus one additional square foot of sign area for each four lineal feet of wall exceeding 128 lineal feet thereof.
- (3) A wall sign shall be attached to the same wall which is used to determine its area.
- (d) In the I Industrial District, there may be one real estate sign per lot or parcel of land, not to exceed 32 square feet in sign area and not to exceed eight feet in height. Such signs shall be set back a minimum of five feet from the front lot line.

**Section 18.16. Special Land Use Signs.** Signs for special land uses shall be as permitted by the Planning Commission and Township Board, or by the Planning Commission alone, whichever has the authority under this Ordinance to approve the special land use.