

SUBTITLE 3. SIGNAGE

§ 18-3-301. General provisions.

- (a) **Materials; maintenance.** A sign shall be made of durable material and be properly maintained.
- (b) **Obstruction prohibited.** A sign and its supporting structures may not impair the clear sight triangle; obstruct a road, sidewalk, or driveway; obstruct the view of traffic signs, traffic signals, oncoming traffic, or pedestrians; or in any way interfere with the placement or function of a traffic control device.
- (c) **Projection from facade.** An identification sign may not project more than two feet from the facade, except that a canopy or awning attached to a principal structure may be used as an identification sign.
- (d) **Lighting limitations.** The light from any illuminated sign shall be shaded, shielded, or directed so that the light intensity or brightness does not adversely affect surrounding or facing premises nor adversely affect the safe vision of operators of vehicles moving on public or private roads or parking areas. Light may not shine or reflect on or into residential structures. A sign in a residentially zoned district may be lighted only during the sign user's hours of operation.
- (e) **Electronic message boards.** Electronic message boards may be used in conjunction with allowed signs if the message is on a cycle of not less than five seconds.
- (f) **Color of freestanding signs.** The parts of a freestanding sign that do not contain sign area, such as the back, braces, and supports, shall be of a single color.
- (g) **Display windows.** For a commercial operation, an advertising sign commonly used in a retail business may be in a display window if the sign does not occupy more than 30% of the window area.
- (h) **Responsible party.** The person or organization that is the subject of a sign shall be presumed to be the party that erected the sign.

(Bill No. 4-05; Bill No. 78-05)

§ 18-3-302. Permit requirements.

- (a) **Permit generally required.** Except as provided in subsection (b), a permit shall be obtained from the Department of Inspections and Permits before posting a sign.
- (b) **When permit not required.** The following signs do not require a permit:
 - (1) a temporary sign;
 - (2) a directional sign that is less than four square feet in area;
 - (3) a permanent directional sign in a County right-of-way, but pre-approval is required as provided in § 18-3-305;
 - (4) a sign forming an integral part of a transportation shelter, fuel-dispensing pump, vending machine, or service appliance; or
 - (5) a sign posted at a parking lot as required by § 12-3-107 of this Code.

(Bill No. 4-05; Bill No. 18-09)

§ 18-3-303. Prohibited signs; location; removal from County rights-of-way.

(a) **Definition.** For purposes of this section, a "changeable copy sign" means a sign designed so that characters, letters, or illustrations on the sign can be changed or rearranged without altering the face or surface of the sign.

(b) **Prohibition.** The following types of signs are prohibited:

(1) a portable sign, including a portable changeable copy sign, with or without wheels;

(2) a sandwich sign;

(3) wind signs, revolving signs, whirling signs, and animated signs; and

(4) a sign that projects above the roof of a structure, a sign painted on the roof of a structure, and a sign supported by poles, uprights, or braces extending from or attached to the roof of a structure.

(c) **Location.** A sign shall be located within the lot lines of the use to which it refers, except that a directional sign may be located within a County right-of-way to the extent permitted by § 18-3-305 and § 18-3-306.

(d) **Removal from County rights-of-way.** The County may remove and dispose of a sign posted in a County right-of-way that does not comply with § 18-3-305 or § 18-3-306 and may impose the costs of removal and disposition on the person or entity responsible for the sign.

(Bill No. 4-05; Bill No. 78-05)

§ 18-3-304. Measurement of area and height.

(a) **How area is measured.** Sign area is measured as the smallest rectangular area enclosing all elements of the sign, including the extreme limits of the writing, representation, emblem, logo, or other display, any material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display, and all ornamental attachments and inner connecting links. Only one face of a freestanding sign is measured if the faces are placed back to back no more than three feet apart, are of the same dimensions, and have identical copy except for minor differences necessary for directional purposes. Supporting framework, bracing, or decorative fences or walls are not included.

(b) **How height is measured.** The height of a sign is measured as the distance from the base of the sign at grade level to the top of the highest attached component of the sign.

(Bill No. 4-05)

§ 18-3-305. Permanent offsite directional signs in County rights-of-way.

(a) **Generally.** A permanent offsite directional sign stating the name of a cultural or historical site; a club, lodge, or fraternal or service organization; community business areas; a hotel or motel; a marina; a religious facility; a restaurant; or a waterfront event is allowed in a County right-of-way if the use to which the sign relates is located on a local or collector road and at least 1,000 feet, measured by road distance, from an arterial or higher classification road.

(b) **Airport parking.** A permanent offsite directional sign stating the name of a private parking facility is allowed in a County right-of-way if the use to which the sign relates is located in the area shown on the official map adopted by the County Council entitled "Airport Permanent Offsite Directional Signs, 2005".

(c) **Restrictions.** No more than four signs are allowed on a single sign pole, and no more than one sign is allowed for a single business or business area in one direction on an arterial road. No more than two sign poles are allowed in any one direction at an arterial road intersection.

(d) **Pre-approval required.** An application for approval of a permanent directional offsite sign shall be filed with the Office of Planning and Zoning and shall contain the location of the business or business area, the intersections requested for the location of the sign, and the name of the business or business area that will appear on the sign.

(e) **Installation.** The Department of Public Works shall be responsible for the installation of an offsite directional sign in a location determined by the Department.

(Bill No. 4-05; Bill No. 78-05)

Editor's note – A small-scale representation of the official map adopted by Bill No. 78-05 is included as an appendix to this article.

§ 18-3-306. Temporary signs.

(a) **Generally.** A temporary sign is allowed in all zoning districts. A temporary real estate or construction sign for more than one lot shall have a maximum area of 48 square feet or, if the property has 500 feet or more of road frontage, 64 square feet. Otherwise, a temporary sign shall have a maximum area of nine square feet in residential districts and 24 square feet in all other districts. The height of a temporary sign may not exceed 12 feet above grade level.

(b) **Temporary directional signs.** A maximum of six temporary directional signs of no more than three square feet in area or three feet in height are allowed per event or destination, with a double-faced sign counting as one sign. A temporary directional sign shall be self-supporting and may be posted only on weekends between 8:00 a.m. on Friday and 9:00 a.m. on the following Monday or between 9:00 a.m. on County, State, or federal holidays and 9:00 a.m. on the following day. Temporary directional signs may be placed within a County right-of-way if the signs are located at least three feet from any curbed or paved area.

(Bill No. 4-05; Bill No. 78-05; Bill No. 9-09)

§ 18-3-307. Signs in residential districts and for certain dwellings in commercial districts.

(a) **Scope.** This section applies to signs in residential districts and to signs for adult independent dwelling units, multifamily dwellings, and townhouse dwellings located in commercial districts.

(b) **Freestanding signs.**

(1) A residential development without a community facility or multifamily dwelling may have two freestanding signs at the main roadway entry point. If one sign is used, it may not exceed 40 square feet in area. If two signs are used, each sign may not exceed 20 square feet in area. The signs may not exceed a height of six feet.

(2) A residential development with a community facility or multifamily dwelling may have the freestanding signs allowed by subsection (b)(1). The development also may have one freestanding sign for each community facility or multifamily dwelling within the development, and each sign may not exceed two square feet in area or a height of four feet.

(c) **Identification signs.** A residential development may have one identification sign on each main entrance facade of a community facility or multifamily dwelling. Each sign may not exceed two square feet in area.

(d) **Directional signs.** A residential development may have directional signs as necessary. Each sign may not exceed six square feet in area or a height of five feet.

(e) **Nonresidential and institutional use signs.** Except as otherwise provided in this section, each nonresidential or institutional use located in a residential district may have one freestanding sign, one identification sign on not more than two facades, and directional signs as necessary. A freestanding sign may not exceed an area of 64 square feet or a height of 10 feet. The total square footage of all identification signs may not exceed 400 square feet. Each directional sign may not exceed 20 square feet in area or a height of seven feet.

(f) **Home occupation signs.** One freestanding sign that does not exceed two square feet in area or a height of five feet is allowed to identify a home occupation.

(g) **Bed and breakfast homes and inns signs.** One freestanding sign that does not exceed four square feet in area or a height of five feet is allowed to identify a bed and breakfast home or bed and breakfast inn.

(h) **Waterman's home commercial use sign.** One freestanding sign that does not exceed two square feet in area or a height of five feet is allowed to identify a waterman's home commercial use.

(i) **Roadside stand signs.** Two freestanding signs are allowed for the sale of agricultural produce at a roadside stand. Each sign may not exceed 20 square feet in area or a height of eight feet.

(Bill No. 4-05; Bill No. 78-05)

§ 18-3-308. Signs for business complexes.

(a) **Freestanding signs.** A business complex may have one freestanding sign at each road frontage. The area of the sign may not exceed the lesser of 400 square feet or one square foot for each one foot of road frontage, except that the area of the sign for a movie theater may not exceed 450 square feet. The height of the sign may not exceed 40 feet. An automobile gasoline station may have one additional freestanding sign at each road frontage, and the area of the sign may not exceed 60 square feet or a height of 10 feet.

(b) **Identification signs.** A business complex may have:

(1) identification signs for the name of the business complex on not more than three facades, so long as the area of the signs does not exceed 12% of the area of each facade and the area of all signs does not exceed 400 square feet;

(2) identification signs for the name of a tenant on not more than two facades in a one or two story structure, so long as the area of the signs does not exceed, for each tenant facade, the lesser of 10% of the area of the facade or 200 square feet;

(3) one identification sign at each service entry, so long as the area of each sign does not exceed four square feet;

(4) one identification sign on each entry facade if the business complex is a mall or otherwise enclosed, so long as the area of each sign does not exceed 10% of the area of the facade and the area of all signs does not exceed 200 square feet;

(5) one identification sign for each secondary business in a structure that contains one principal use, so long as the area of all identification signs on the structure does not exceed 400 square feet; and

(6) one identification sign on a canopy over a group of gas pumps at an automobile gasoline station, so long as the area of the sign does not exceed 12 square feet.

(c) **Directional signs.** A business complex may have directional signs as necessary. Each sign may not exceed six square feet in area or a height of five feet.

(d) **Service windows.** An establishment in a business complex with a ticket, drive-through, or ordering window may have no more than two signs, freestanding or identification, that relate to the business operation or services provided at the window. The area of each sign may not exceed 32 square feet. The height of a freestanding sign may not exceed six feet.

(Bill No. 78-05)

§ 18-3-309. Signs in commercial and industrial districts for uses other than dwellings and business complexes.

(a) **Scope.** This section applies to signs in commercial and industrial districts for uses other than dwelling and business complexes.

(b) **Freestanding signs.** An establishment may have one freestanding sign at each road frontage. The area of the sign may not exceed the lesser of 250 square feet or one square foot for each one foot of road frontage, except that the area of the sign for a movie theater may not exceed 450 square feet. The height of the sign may not exceed 30 feet. An automobile gasoline station may have one additional freestanding sign at each road frontage, and the area of the sign may not exceed 60 square feet or a height of 10 feet.

(c) **Identification signs.** An establishment may have:

(1) identification signs on not more than three facades, so long as the combined area of the signs does not exceed 12% of the area of each facade and the area of all signs does not exceed 400 square feet;

(2) one identification sign at each service entry, so long as the area of each sign does not exceed four square feet;

(3) one identification sign for each secondary business in a structure that contains one principal use, so long as the area of all identification signs on the structure does not exceed 400 square feet; and

(4) one identification sign on a canopy over a group of gas pumps at an automobile gasoline station, so long as the area of the sign does not exceed 12 square feet.

(d) **Directional signs.** An establishment may have directional signs as necessary. Each sign may not exceed six square feet in area or a height of five feet.

(e) **Service windows.** An establishment with a ticket, drive-through, or ordering window may have no more than two signs, freestanding or identification, that relate to the business operation or services provided at the window. The area of each sign may not exceed 32 square feet. The height of a freestanding sign may not exceed six feet.

(Bill No. 78-05)

§ 18-3-310. Signs for marinas; signs in maritime districts.

(a) **Community marinas.** A community marina may have one freestanding sign that does not exceed 36 square feet in area or a height of eight feet.

(b) **Commercial marinas.** A commercial marina may have one freestanding sign at the entrance that does not exceed 200 square feet in area or a height of 25 feet and a freestanding sign on the shoreline or a pier that does not exceed 48 square feet in area or a height of 10 feet.

(c) **Independent uses in a marina.** Each independent use in a marina may have two identification signs on a structure to which the use relates. The total square footage of the signs may not exceed 200 square feet.

(d) **Directional signs.** Directional signs are allowed in a maritime district as necessary. Each sign may not exceed six square feet in area or a height of five feet.

(e) **Bed and breakfast homes and inns signs.** One freestanding sign that does not exceed four square feet in area or a height of five feet is allowed to identify a bed and breakfast home or bed and breakfast inn.

(Bill No. 4-05; Bill No. 78-05)

§ 18-3-311. Signs in open space districts.

(a) **Freestanding or identification signs.** An establishment or use in an open space district that relates to conservation, farming or nurseries, nature study, or recreation may have one sign, freestanding or identification, that does not exceed 20 square feet in area. The height of a freestanding sign may not exceed six feet.

(b) **Directional signs.** An establishment or use in an open space district may have directional signs as necessary. Each sign may not exceed four square feet in area or a height of four feet.

(c) **Home occupations.** One freestanding sign that does not exceed two square feet in area or a height of five feet is allowed to identify a home occupation in a dwelling located in an open space district.

(Bill No. 4-05; Bill No. 78-05)

§ 18-3-312. Signs in small business districts.

(a) **Freestanding or identification signs.** An establishment or use in a small business district may have one sign, freestanding or identification, that does not exceed 10 square feet in area. The height of a freestanding sign may not exceed six feet.

(b) **Illumination of signs.** A sign in a small business district may be illuminated only by lighting exterior to the sign.

(c) **Signs prohibited on accessory structures.** An accessory structure in a small business district may not have a sign.

(Bill No. 4-05; Bill No. 78-05)

§ 18-3-313. Signage programs.

(a) **Signage program.** The developer of a project located in a mixed use or town center district or of a PUD shall submit a signage program to the Office of Planning and Zoning. If approved, the program shall supersede the standards described in this subtitle to the extent of any conflict.

(b) **Purpose.** A signage program shall contribute to the efficient utilization of the development, minimize visual clutter, make use of directional signs in the parking areas and pedestrian circulation system, be in harmony with the architecture, landscaping, and other design elements of the development, be compatible with existing or potential development in the neighboring communities if the signage is along the periphery of the site or visible from public streets or roads, and address the location, size, height, number, color, and material of all proposed signs and state whether the proposed signs will be illuminated.

(c) **Special uses.** The signage program for a government reuse facility is governed by § 18-12-105.

(Bill No. 4-05; Bill No. 78-05)

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