

120.320 Signs and Outdoor Advertising Structures:

A. Purpose:

The purpose of this Ordinance is:

1. To encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication.
2. To maintain and enhance the aesthetic environment and the ability to attract sources of economic development and growth.
3. To improve pedestrian and traffic safety.
4. To minimize the possible adverse effect of signs on nearby public and private property.
5. To enable a fair and consistent use of signs.

The intent is not to regulate content or commercial speech but rather to establish consistency based upon type of signs through zoning classification. Toward this end, regulation of the location and size of signs is intended to enhance public safety and maintain a balance between the principal permitted use and the accessory nature of signs in support of such use.

B. Definitions.

1. **Awning:** A retractable or fixed shelter constructed of non-rigid materials on a supporting framework that projects from the exterior wall of a building.
2. **Awning Sign:** A sign affixed flat against the surface of an awning. For calculation purposes, such sign shall be considered a wall sign.
3. **Banner Sign:** A fabric, plastic, or other sign made of non-rigid material without an enclosing structural framework. Banners shall only be utilized for temporary signs.
4. **Billboard:** A sign which advertises an establishment, product, service, or activity not available on the premises on which the sign is located.

5. **Construction Sign:** A sign which identifies the owners, financiers, contractors, architects, and engineers of a project under construction.
6. **Directional Sign:** A sign which gives directions, instructions, or facility information for the use on the lot on which the sign is located, such as parking or exit and entrance signs.
7. **Freestanding Sign:** A sign supported on poles not attached to a building or wall.
8. **Government Sign:** A temporary or permanent sign erected by the Township, the County or the state or federal government.
9. **Ground Sign:** A sign resting directly on the ground or supported by short poles not attached to a building or wall. For calculation purposes, such sign shall be considered a freestanding sign.
10. **Marquee:** A permanent structure constructed of rigid materials that projects from the exterior wall of a building.
11. **Marquee Sign:** A sign affixed flat against the surface of a marquee.
12. **Menu Board:** A sign that is placed along a drive aisle that is specifically utilized for drive-through purposes.
13. **Message Center Sign:** An internally illuminated sign that has a changeable electronic message board.
14. **Multi-Use Sign:** A freestanding sign that includes signage for not less than three businesses.
15. **Mural:** A design or representation painted or drawn on a wall which does not advertise an establishment, product, service, or activity.
16. **Off-Premises[s] Sign:** A sign which relates to or advertises an establishment, product, merchandise, good, service or entertainment which is not located, sold, offered, produced, manufactured or furnished at the property on which the sign is located. Unless otherwise regulated, such signs shall be considered a billboard.

17. **On-Premises[s] Sign:** Any sign which pertains solely to the use of the property on which it is located, sold, offered, produced, manufactured or furnished at the property on which the sign is located.
18. **Placard:** A sign not exceeding two square feet which provides notices of a public nature, such as “No Trespassing” or “No Hunting” signs.
19. **Political Sign:** A temporary sign used in connection with a noncommercial message or an official township, school district, county, state, or federal election or referendum.
20. **Portable Sign:** A sign designed to be moved easily and not permanently attached to the ground, a structure, or a building. For calculation purposes, a portable sign shall only be utilized where no other freestanding sign is in place and shall be considered the freestanding sign.
21. **Projecting Sign:** A double-faced sign attached to a building or wall that extends more than 12 inches but not more than 36 inches from the face of the building or wall. For calculation purposes, a projecting sign shall be considered a wall sign.
22. **Reader Board:** A portion of a sign on which copy is changed manually.
23. **Real Estate Sign:** A sign advertising the real estate upon which the sign is located as being for sale, rent, or lease.
24. **Roof Line:** The top edge of a roof or parapet wall, whichever is higher, but excluding any cupolas, chimneys, or other minor projections.
25. **Roof Sign:** A sign erected above the roof line of a building.
26. **Sign:** A device, structure, fixture, or placard using graphics, symbols, and/or written copy designed specifically for the purpose of advertising or identifying an establishment, products, service, or activity.
27. **Special Event Sign:** Temporary and portable signs containing public messages concerning special events sponsored by governmental agencies or nonprofit organizations.

28. **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 the wall to which it is attached.
29. **Window Sign:** A sign installed inside a window and intended to be viewed from the outside. If considered permanent, such as for electronic signs, it shall be calculated with allowable wall signage. If for temporary advertising, there shall be a designed area that does not exceed 25% of the window area, and this shall be exempt from wall sign calculation.

C. General Sign Provisions/Permit Process.

No person shall erect, alter, place or permit to be placed, or replace any sign without first obtaining a sign permit, unless otherwise listed as not requiring a permit based upon size, exempt or subject to a temporary sign permit as provided in this section.

1. **Application.** A sign permit application shall be obtained from the Township and submitted with a fee, as established by the Township Board. The Zoning Administrator shall have responsibility for review and approval of all sign permits. The Zoning Administrator and/or Code Enforcement Officer shall have responsibility for determining compliance once a sign has been installed with permit or where a violation has been determined without a required permit.
2. The following signs shall not require a permit:
 - a. Directional signs (6 square feet or less).
 - b. Placards (6 square feet or less).
 - c. Political signs.
 - d. Window signs (utilizing no more than 25% of the interior glass surface).

NOTE: Any sign greater than 6 square feet requires a sign permit, unless such sign is exempt or subject to temporary sign provisions.

3. Signs shall be maintained free of peeling paint or paper, fading, straining, rust, or other condition which impairs legibility or intelligibility.

4. Any freestanding sign with a permanent foundation shall also require a building permit. Sign supports, braces, guys and anchors shall be maintained in such a manner as not to cause a hazard.
5. Signs may be internally illuminated or externally illuminated, except for home occupation signs which shall not be illuminated. For externally illuminated signs, the source of the light shall be enclosed and directed to prevent the source of light from shining directly onto traffic or residential property.
6. No sign shall be placed in, upon, or over any public right-of-way, alley, or other public place, except as may be otherwise permitted by this section.
7. No light pole, utility pole, fences or other similar structures shall be used for the placement of any sign unless specifically designed and approved for such use.
8. No sign shall be erected in any place where it may, by reason of its position, shape, color, or other characteristic, interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device, or constitute a nuisance per se.
9. No commercial vehicle or trailer, which in the opinion of the Zoning Administrator has the intended function of acting as a sign, shall be parked in any area abutting the street, unless no other parking area is available.
10. No sign shall employ any flashing, moving, oscillating, blinking, or variable intensity light. (See Message Center sign provisions for any exceptions)
11. No sign shall contain any moving or animated parts nor have the appearance of having any moving or animated parts. Human sandwich board signs may be permitted provided such movement does not create a traffic hazard.
12. No wall sign shall extend beyond the edge of the wall to which it is affixed, unless approved as a projecting sign or attached to a marquee, and no wall sign shall extend above the roof line of a building.

D. Exempt Signs. The Following Signs shall be Exempt from These Provisions:

1. Government signs.
2. Historical markers.
3. Memorial signs or tablets.
4. Murals.
5. Signs not visible from any streets.
6. Signs for essential services.
7. Signs with address, owner, or occupant name, of up to two square feet in area attached to a mailbox, light fixture or exterior wall.
8. Flags or insignia of any nation, state, township, community organization, or educational institution.

E. Nonconforming Signs, Illegal Signs, and Signs Accessory to Nonconforming Uses.

1. Every permanent sign which does not conform to the height, size, area, or location requirements of this section as of the date of the adoption of this Ordinance, is hereby deemed to be nonconforming unless such sign has been approved subject to a variance request.
2. 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.
3. For purposes of this article, a nonconforming sign may be diminished in size or dimension or the copy of the sign amended or changed without jeopardizing the privilege of its nonconforming status. If a sign is nonconforming in its setback, this section shall not apply, and the sign may not be replaced.
4. Any nonconforming sign destroyed by fire or other casualty loss shall not be restored or rebuilt if reconstruction will constitute more than 50% of the value of the sign on the date of loss.

5. Any sign which for a period of six months or more no longer advertises a bona fide business conducted or product sold shall be removed by the owner of the building, structure, or property upon which such sign is located, within 30 days of receipt of written notice by the Zoning Administrator. Notice shall also be given for removal of such sign structure, if nonconforming, within six months of the date of such written notice, unless a new business owner or tenant has occupied such business location.
6. A sign accessory to a nonconforming use may be erected in the Township in accordance with the sign regulations for the subject zoning district. Should the nonconforming use cease to exist, such sign shall also be removed as indicated above.

F. Units of Measurement.

1. The area of a sign shall be measured as the area within a single, continuous perimeter composed of any straight line geometric figure which encloses the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, logo, or any other figure of similar character, together with any frame of other material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the background against which it is placed, excluding only the structure necessary to support the sign. In no instance shall the area of the sign face exceed 50% of the permitted sign area.
2. The area of a freestanding, ground, 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.
3. 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.
4. For buildings with multiple tenants, the sign areas for wall signs, projecting signs and awning signs shall be determined by taking that portion of the front wall of the building applicable to each tenant and computing sign requirements for that portion of the total wall.

G. Sign Regulations, Including Temporary Sign Provisions, Applicable to All Zoning Districts.

1. All ground, wall and freestanding signs may include reader boards, provided the entire area utilized complies with the overall sign area calculation. Message center signs may be allowed subject to the following provisions:

Only variable date, time, temperature or gasoline pricing reference is permitted. The message may only change every 60 seconds (time) or for accuracy (date, temperature or pricing), whichever is the greater time duration. Such signs are only permitted in commercial and industrial districts, and for church use within any district, and shall be no greater than six square feet of the overall sign allowance. No more than ten characters (either numbers, letters or some combination) are permitted. Illumination levels shall not exceed one footcandle at any property line. No graphics may be utilized.

2. Any sign, including awnings to which signs are affixed or displayed, not resting directly on the ground shall maintain a minimum clear space of eight feet from the bottom of the sign to the ground.
3. Real estate signs shall be removed within 30 days after completion of the sale or lease of the property. Any real estate sign greater than six square feet shall only be allowed for nonresidential uses. (Such signs shall not require a permit.)
4. Construction signs are permitted within any zone district, subject to the following restrictions:
 - a. One sign is permitted to be placed on the lot where the construction is taking place to identify contractors, design professionals, lending institutions, etc. (Such signs shall not require a permit.)
 - b. The sign shall be no larger than 16 square feet in area, and not exceed five feet in height. In a case where two or more firms utilize a sign, the sign shall be no larger than 32 square feet in area, and not exceed five feet in height.
 - c. Construction signs shall not be erected until a building permit has been issued for the project which the subject of the proposed sign, and construction activity has begun.

- d. Construction signs shall be removed within 15 days of the issuance of any occupancy permit for the building or structure which is the subject of the construction sign.
5. Special event signs, including banner signs, are permitted in conjunction with any permitted nonresidential use, or agricultural use in a residential zoning district, subject to the following restrictions:
 - a. No more than four such signs shall be displayed for each special event. Such signs shall be located on the lot on which the special event is held. Such signs shall require a temporary sign permit.
 - b. The display of such signs shall be limited to the 21 days immediately preceding the special event which is being advertised.
 - c. Such signs shall have a maximum size of 24 square feet in area, and a maximum height of five feet and shall be set back from any side or rear property line a minimum of 15 feet.
 - d. Such signs shall be removed within 48 hours of the conclusion of the special event which is being advertised.
 - e. Such signs shall not cause a vision hazard at any road intersection or driveway.
6. Directional signs are permitted subject to the following restrictions:
 - a. A directional sign may contain a logo of an on-premise[s] establishment, but no advertising copy. (Such signs shall not require a building permit.)
 - b. No such sign shall exceed six square feet in area or three feet in height.
 - c. Directional signs shall be limited to traffic control functions only (Enter, exit, etc.).
 - d. Such signs shall not cause a vision hazard at any road intersection or driveway.

7. Residential yard sale signs are permitted subject to the following restrictions:
 - a. One sign per lot or parcel is permitted, located on the lot or parcel on which such sale is being conducted, and set back a minimum of 15 feet from any side or rear property line. (Such signs shall not require a permit.)
 - b. Such sign shall not exceed six square feet in area.
 - c. Such sign shall be erected no more than seven days prior to the day(s) of the sale and shall be removed within one day after the completion of the sale.
8. Political signs shall not be subject to these restrictions.
9. Billboards shall be located so as to be visible to persons traveling on state primary highways or trunk-lines and shall conform to the regulations and provisions under Act 106 of the Public Acts of 1972, MCL 252.301 et seq., as amended, unless such billboard is prohibited by the provisions of this Code. Billboards are prohibited in all districts except the commercial and industrial districts. All billboards located in these districts shall conform to the following requirements:
 - a. Billboards are required to have the same setback as other principal structures or buildings in the zone in which they are situated. No billboard shall be located within 300 feet of any residence or residential zone.
 - b. Where two or more billboards are along the frontage of a single street or highway, they shall not be less than 1,000 feet apart. A double face (back-to-back) structure shall be considered a single sign. No V-type signs shall be allowed unless the open end of the V does not exceed five feet in distance. Billboards shall not be located less than 500 feet from any on-premises freestanding sign approved or installed in order to minimize conflict between signs.
 - c. The total surface area of any billboard, facing in one direction, shall not exceed 300 square feet, and the maximum height shall not exceed 30 feet above the grade of the ground providing support for the sign.

- d. No billboard shall be erected on the roof of any building, nor have one sign above another sign.
- e. Billboards may be illuminated by reflected light only and provided the source of light is not directly visible and is so arranged to reflect away from the adjoining premises, and provided that such illumination shall not be so placed as to cause confusion or a hazard to traffic or conflict with traffic control signs or lights. No illumination involving movement by reason of the lighting arrangement or other devices shall be permitted.
- f. Billboards shall be designed, constructed, operated, maintained and managed so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity, and so their use will not change the essential character of the same area.

H. Signs in Each Zoning District shall be Subject to the Following Regulations:

“A,” “R-1,” “R-2,” “R-3,” “R-4,” “R-5,” “R-6” and “RD” Zoning Districts – Permitted Signs

Ground signs for residential subdivisions,
Manufactured home parks, schools, or
Other nonresidential uses allowed in the district

Number	1 per entrance (Not more than two)
Size	No greater than 16 square feet
Location	Minimum of 15 feet from any front, side or rear property line
Height	No higher than 5 feet

Signs for home occupations

Number	1 per lot or parcel
Size	No greater than 2 square feet unless otherwise provided; 8 square feet in the “A” District
Location	On wall of principal building facing street or in front yard (15-foot setback)

Signs for nonresidential uses

Number	1 freestanding per street frontage and no more than 2 wall signs
Size	Wall: No greater than 5% of the wall area to which the sign is affixed per sign. Freestanding: No more than 32 square feet.
Location	On wall of building facing street or in front yard (15-foot setback)

Real estate signs

Number	1 per lot or parcel, per 300 feet of road frontage
Size	No greater than 6 square feet for developed properties or lots; 32 square feet for vacant lots or parcels
Location	Minimum of 5 feet from any front, side or rear property line
Height	No higher than 5 feet

**“CBD,” “C-1,” “C-2,” “C-3” and
“I-1,” “I-2” and “I-3” Zoning Districts – Permitted Signs**

Ground signs (Required for a single business)

Number	1 per lot or parcel, except that only 1 ground sign or 1 freestanding sign shall be permitted per lot or parcel
Size	No greater than 32 square feet
Location	Minimum of 15 feet from any property line, and outside the public right-of-way
Height	No higher than 5 feet

Freestanding signs (Permitted only for
multi-use business locations)

Number	1 per lot or parcel, except that only 1 ground sign or 1 freestanding sign shall be permitted per lot or parcel
Size	No greater than 60 square feet
Location	Minimum of 15 feet from any property line, and outside the public right-of-way
Height	No higher than 20 feet, with a minimum of 8 feet between the ground and the bottom of the sign

Wall signs

Number	1 per each 50 feet of street frontage
Size	No greater than 10% of the wall area to which the sign is affixed, not to exceed a maximum sign area of 200 square feet
Location	On wall of building facing street

Real estate signs

Number	1 per lot or parcel
Size	No greater than 16 square feet for developed properties or lots; 32 square feet for vacant lots or parcels
Location	Minimum of 15 feet from any property line, and outside the public right-of-way
Height	No higher than 5 feet