

ARTICLE 8 SIGNS

8.1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

- A. The purpose of this Article is to regulate the number, size and location of signs:
 - i. in order to minimize the distraction to motorists and pedestrians;
 - ii. to minimize traffic hazards;
 - iii. to increase the effectiveness of signs needed to direct the public; and
 - iv. to minimize the impact on the natural rural setting of the Township of those signs which are necessary to efficiently carry out business and other activities within the township.

- B. All signs shall be kept neat, safe, and in good repair, at all times.

- C. No sign, either advertising or otherwise, shall display any obscene, indecent or immoral matter. The determination of what constitutes obscene, indecent or immoral matter shall be made by the Zoning Administrator, subject to appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals in accordance with Article 16.

- D. All signs shall comply with all local, state and federal regulations.

- E. A sign permit shall be required for the erection, or alteration, or placing of all new permanent signs, unless otherwise noted. Repainting or repair of a sign, or the replacement of panels on an existing sign, shall not be considered an alteration.

- F. Two sided and V-type signs shall be regarded as one sign, provided the interior angle of the "V" does not exceed thirty (30) degrees.

- G. Illumination and Lighting
 - 1. Light sources to illuminate signs shall be shielded from all adjacent residential districts, buildings and streets and shall not be of such brightness as to cause glare that is hazardous to pedestrians or drivers.
 - 2. Lighted signs shall not be allowed in any Residential District, except for signs advertising a home occupation to which the public have access. Such home occupation signs shall comply with the lighting standards of subsection 4.a below.
 - 3. Internally lit panel signs are prohibited from having a light reflecting, or light colored background. The lettering and logo only may be light reflecting.
 - 4. If illuminated, signs shall be illuminated only by the following means:
 - a. By a steady stationary light, shielded and directed solely at the sign. Such light shall not exceed 30 foot candles measured 5 feet from the face of the sign.
 - b. By an interior light with no exposed tubing. Illumination shall not exceed 30 foot candles measured 5 feet from the face of the sign.

5. The repair and replacement of broken signs and lighting otherwise prohibited by this section shall be exempt from the standards of this section, provided such repair or replacement does not increase the nonconformity.
- H. Time/temperature signs, digital signs, and signs with manually changeable messages are permitted on any free-standing sign, provided such text is not scrolling in nature. These sign areas shall be included when calculating the total sign area of the sign.
- I. A freestanding structure formerly used as a sign and no longer in use for more than six (6) months after its use for a sign has ceased, shall be removed by the:
 1. Owner of the sign.
 2. Owner of the property.

For the purposes of this subsection, removal shall mean physical removal of the entire sign and supporting structure, the removal of all text and other signage to display a blank sign face, or the reversal of all sign panels to display a blank sign face.

8.2 PERMITTED SIGNS

8.2.1 Exempt Signs

The following signs are allowed without a permit, provided any conditions and standards listed below or elsewhere in this Article are met:

- a. **Identification Signs.** Identification signs designating a house number and/or the name of the resident, or for commercial properties, the street number, are exempt, however, lettering shall not exceed four (4) square feet for non-residential properties.
- b. **Memorial Signs or Tablets.**
- c. **Flags.** Flags are not considered signs and are exempt under this section.
- d. **Traffic, Municipal and Private Traffic Control Signs.** When located within a right-of-way or road easement.
- e. **Political Signs.** Signs indicating a political party or candidate for public office, are not displayed under this exemption more than forty five (45) days prior to the scheduled election, and shall be removed within ten (10) days after the election date.
- f. **Real Estate Signs.** Temporary, non-illuminated, on-premises signs advertising the sale, rent or lease of the premises, not exceeding eight (8) square feet in area on each side, not exceeding one (1) such sign per frontage, and located on the premises. No off-premises real estate signs shall be permitted in the Township, except those directing traffic to an open house on the day of the open house only.

- g. **Home Occupation Signs.** Signs for home occupations are limited to twelve (12) square feet in area per side and a maximum of six (6) feet in height. Such signs shall comply with the lighting standards of 8.1.G.4.a above. If advertising more than one home occupation on the same parcel, the total square footage of all signs shall not exceed twelve (12) square feet. Signs located in a window or on a front façade indicating whether a home occupation is open or closed shall be exempt from this section and section 8.1.G.4.a.
- h. **Directional Signs.** A sign directing traffic to a retail or other commercial business may be allowed on the same property provided that such sign not exceed six (6) feet in height and the sign area not exceed six (6) square feet per side. Such sign may only be externally illuminated and may display the name or logo of more than one business, provided that there not be more than one (1) directional sign per driveway entrance.
- i. **Garage/Yard Sale Signs.** Signs for personal property sales may be located off site, must be removed within 24 hours of the completion of the sale, and may not be posted earlier than 48 hours prior to the sale or for more than three (3) consecutive days and not more than twelve (12) days in any three hundred and sixty-five (365) day period. Such signs shall not be located within the right-of-way and may only be installed with the property owner's consent.
- j. **Informational Signs.** Signs with lettering under three inches (3") in height displaying information such as, but not limited to, hours of operation, door operating information, credit card information, and menus may be displayed on or near a commercial pedestrian entranceway without a permit provided that such signs are not illuminated. A menu board for a drive-through restaurant may be illuminated but must be located behind the front building line.
- k. **Open Lot Sales Signs.** A temporary sign may be granted for temporary open lot sales such as Christmas trees, fruit and/or vegetable stands, art fairs, antique automobile or vehicles. Temporary shall be defined for the purposes of this section as seven (7) days or less in duration.

8.2.2 Signs Allowed with Permit

The following signs are allowed only with a permit granted as provided under Section 6.5 and subject to any applicable conditions listed within this Article.

8.2.2.1 Temporary Signs Allowed with Permit

- a. **Portable Signs.** Portable signs, also called pull-on signs, with or without internal illumination are permitted only as a temporary special event sign for a limited period of time. A portable sign shall not be used as a permanent sign anywhere in the Township.

For the purposes of this standard, temporary shall be defined as not more than two (2) weeks prior to the event and not later than two (2) days after the event.

- b. **Special Event Signs.**
 - i. Special event signs, including portable signs, banners, and sandwich board signs, advertising a grand opening, a sale, a public event, or similar commercial or non-profit event shall be allowed only with a permit on a temporary basis.
 - ii. No single place of business shall display any special event sign(s) in excess of a total of forty-five (45) days in any calendar year.
 - iii. A single place of business may be issued up to three (3) special event sign permits per year, each permit shall allow display of a temporary event sign for no more than fourteen (14) consecutive days.
 - iv. For temporary uses such as carnival, circus, fair, rodeo or special event, sign permits will only be issued upon proof that all needed health department regulations have been met. Such signs shall not be erected more than thirty (30) days in advance of the event, and shall be removed no later than three (3) days after the event. Signs shall be removed by the owner or responsible person(s) of the sponsoring event.
- c. **Construction Signs/Real Estate Development Signs.**
 - i. Any construction sign under five (5) square feet in sign area may be located on the site of construction during active construction without a permit. Such sign shall be removed immediately upon the completion of construction.

- ii. Construction signs greater than five (5) square feet in area but equal to or less than thirty-two (32) square feet in area may be allowed with a permit. Such signs shall be limited to thirty-two (32) square feet in sign area, may not be illuminated, must be removed prior to issuance of an occupancy permit, and may include the names and/or logos of one or several contractors, financiers, designers, engineers, or similar party involved in the construction project. A description of the construction project and/or intended user may also be included on such sign.
- iii. Any real estate development sign advertising the availability of lots or development units for a new subdivision or site condominium may be installed with a permit provided that such sign be limited to thirty-two (32) square feet in area and is not illuminated. For a development with more than one entranceway, one (1) sign up to thirty-two (32) square feet in sign area per entrance may be permitted. Such signs shall be permitted upon the condition that the sign is removed when 75% of the lots or units are sold, or within two (2) years from installation, whichever comes first. An extension of this two (2) year deadline may be authorized upon written request from the applicant.

8.2.2.2 Permanent Signs Allowed with Permit

See Table 8.2.2.2 below. Permits are subject to any applicable standards within this Section or elsewhere in this Article.

- a. **Free-Standing Signs.**
 - i. Free-standing signs include pole signs and monument style signs. A monument style sign is one that is permanently installed directly on the ground or mounted on a low base.
 - ii. Free-standing signs shall not be located in any right-of-way.
- b. **Wall Signs.**

For the purposes of this Article, wall signs are any building mounted permanent sign, even those located on a window.
- c. **Billboards.**
 - i. One (1) billboard shall be permitted as the principal use on a vacant parcel of land in the Commercial District (C) fronting on M-134 or M-129, subject to the standards and regulations of the State of Michigan.
 - ii. Such billboard shall be setback fifty (50) feet or the height of the sign, whichever is greater, from any property line, five hundred (500) feet from any residential district, park, school, church, hospital, retirement home, cemetery, or government building, and shall be non-illuminated.

- d. **Residential Development Sign.**
 - i. A residential development sign is a sign marking the entranceway of a single family or multiple family residential development.
 - ii. Residential development signs may only be monument style signs.
 - iii. Residential development signs may include only the name of the development and/or a street address.
 - iv. Such signs may be illuminated only by a spotlight and may not include an internally illuminated translucent panel.

- e. **Commercial Development Sign.**
 - i. At each driveway entrance one (1) group sign may be placed to identify the commercial establishment(s) located close to that driveway.
 - ii. Commercial development signs may only be monument style signs.
 - iii. Information included on the individual business signs shall be limited to business name, business address, and/or business logo. The commercial development sign may also include the name of the commercial development.
 - iv. Each business sign shall be limited to not more than two (2) feet by four (4) feet in size.
 - v. Any one (1) commercial establishment shall be limited to being included on not more than two (2) group signs.

- f. **Institutional Identification/Informational Signs.**
 - i. Such signs include bulletin boards or message boards for churches, schools, libraries, hospitals, museums, chamber of commerce and other public/semi-public buildings.
 - ii. Such signs may be only a monument-style or other ground sign (not a pole sign).

Table 8.2.2.2 – Table of Sign Regulations

Sign Type	Zoning District			
	AG	R-1, R-2, R-3	C, Q	RS
Free-standing sign	(a) 1 per premises. (b) NTE 12 ft in height (c) NTE 32 sf in sign area	Not permitted except pursuant to 8.2.1g	(a) 1 per premises (b) NTE 100 sf in sign area	(a) 1 per frontage (b) NTE 12 feet in height (c) NTE 32 sf in sign area
Wall sign See Notes 1 & 2	Not permitted	Not permitted except pursuant to 8.2.1g	(a) 2 per premises (b) NTE 100 sf	(a) 1 per premises (b) NTE 32 sf
Development Sign	See 8.2.2.1.c and 8.2.2.2.e	See 8.2.2.1.c and 8.2.2.2.e	See 8.2.2.1.c and 8.2.2.2.e & f	See 8.2.2.1.c and 8.2.2.2.e & f
Projecting Sign See Note 3	Not permitted	Not permitted	(a) 2 per premises (b) NTE 40 sf	(a) 2 per premises (b) NTE 25 sf
Window Sign	Not permitted except pursuant to 8.2.1g	Not permitted except pursuant to 8.2.1g	NTE 25% of total window area in which sign is placed	NTE 25% of total window area in which sign is placed

Footnotes to the Table.

1. Where several distinct businesses, as evidenced by separate entrances or store fronts, are located on one common site or under one roof, each of said businesses may, on that portion of the building or site occupied by it, construct a wall sign of no more than twenty-four (24) square feet.
2. A marquee, canopy or awning sign, or a projected sign is a type of wall sign for purposes of this ordinance. All regulations applicable to a wall sign shall apply.
3. Projecting Signs. Every projecting or overhanging sign shall be placed to provide a clearance of ten (10) feet above the public sidewalk or other area over which it is erected, and shall not extend a distance greater than ten (10) feet from the permanent structure to which it is attached.

8.3 PROHIBITED SIGNS

- A. No sign shall be erected, relocated, or maintained so as to prevent free ingress or egress from any door, window, or fire escape. No sign of any kind shall be attached to a standpipe or fire escape.
- B. No sign or other advertising structure as regulated by this Ordinance shall be erected at the intersection of any streets in such a manner as to obstruct free and clear vision of motorists.
- C. No sign, which by reason of its position, shape, or color, may interfere with, obstruct the view of, or imitate, any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device.
- D. Signs which make use of the words “stop”, “look”, “drive-in”, “danger”, or any other words, phrases, symbols, or characters which may interfere with, mislead, or confuse traffic, are prohibited.
- E. Signs, either advertising or otherwise, which include a sequence of flashing lights, or create a flashing effect.
- F. Signs, either advertising or otherwise, which are animated or project an animated picture.
- G. Moving or scrolling messages or images. Steady electronic message signs (using LED or similar technology) may be permitted with the approval of the planning commission upon determination that the design will not pose a nuisance or traffic hazard. Although such message shall not be permitted to scroll, it may be changed intermittently. Signs displaying time and/or temperature shall be exempt from this restriction.
- H. Pennant flags, streamers, balloons, over-the-street banners, or other such material used for advertising purposes, unless otherwise permitted by this Article.
- I. Portable or other easily movable signs, except as specifically permitted herein.
- J. No pediment, parasite or accessory signs shall be secured to any other sign.
- K. Off-premise advertising signs, other than billboards as permitted by this Article.
- L. Fluttering ribbons, pennants and other similar devices, and lighted signs that blink off and on, rotate, flash or otherwise draw attention to the sign by means of the movement of light

8.4 NONCONFORMING SIGNS

- A. Any nonconforming sign now or hereafter existing which no longer advertises a bona fide business conducted, or a product sold, for a period of six (6) months or longer, shall be considered conclusive evidence of an intention to legally abandon the nonconforming sign. This shall not apply to seasonal businesses routinely closed for a portion of the year.
- B. Any abandoned nonconforming sign, or other sign that has lost its legal nonconforming status under this Article, shall be removed or made conforming by the owner, agent, or person having the beneficial use of the lot, building or structure upon which such sign may be found, within thirty (30) days after written notification from the Zoning Administrator.
- C. The Zoning Administrator is hereby authorized to cause removal of any nonconforming sign that has lost legal nonconforming status under this Article and any expense incident thereto shall be paid by the owner of the lot, building or structure to which such sign is attached.
- D. Nothing herein shall prohibit the repair, reinforcement, alteration, improvement, or modernizing of a lawful nonconforming sign, provided that such repair does not exceed a cost of thirty percent (30%) of the appraised replacement costs for a comparable sign.
- E. The repainting, refinishing or resurfacing of a legal nonconforming sign shall not cause the sign to lose legal nonconforming status.

8.5 PERMITS

8.5.1 Required

A sign permit shall be obtained from the Zoning Administrator for all signs except those specified under subsection 8.2.1.

8.5.2 Approval

- A. Application forms for sign permits are provided by the Zoning Administrator, and shall contain or have attached thereto the following information at a minimum:
 - 1. Name, address and telephone number of applicant.
 - 2. Written consent of the owner of the building, structure, or lot to which or on which the sign is to be erected.
 - 3. Name of person, firm, corporation, or association erecting the structure.
 - 4. Location of building, structure, or lot to which or upon which the sign or other advertising structure is to be attached or erected.
 - 5. If proposed to be attached to a building, proposed location on a building.

6. Position of the sign or other advertising structure in relation to nearby buildings, structures, signs or other advertising structures.
 7. Two (2) prints, sketches or scale drawings with dimensions of the plans and specifications and method of construction and attachment to the building, or in the ground.
 8. Any electrical permit required and issued for said sign.
 9. For temporary signs, the specific period of time that the sign is proposed to be displayed.
 10. Such other information as the Zoning Administrator shall require to establish conformance with this section.
- B. Except as provided for in section 8.5.2.E below, it shall be the duty of the Zoning Administrator, upon the filing of an application for a sign permit, to examine such plans and specifications and other data and the premises upon which it is proposed to erect the sign, and if it shall appear that the proposed structure meets all Ordinance and zoning requirements, she/he shall then issue the sign permit.
- C. The Zoning Administrator shall act on the request within fifteen (15) business days of receipt of a fully completed application.
- D. Administrative decisions on a sign permit may be appealed to the Zoning Board of Appeals per the procedures of Article 16.
- E. Any sign that includes internal illumination shall be submitted to and reviewed by the Planning Commission prior to the issuance of a sign permit. It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate the need for internal illumination. Approval of the planning commission shall only be granted when the applicant has adequately demonstrated that external lighting is either not adequate or not appropriate for the proposed use and location of the sign.

8.5.3 REVOCATION

- A. The Zoning Administrator is hereby authorized and empowered to revoke any sign permit issued upon failure of the holder thereof to comply with any provision of this Ordinance or upon finding that the permit was issued based on false information.
- B. If the Zoning Administrator shall find that any sign or other advertising structure regulated herein is unsafe or insecure, or is a menace to the public, or has been constructed or erected, or is being maintained in violation of the provisions of this Ordinance, the permittee shall be given written notice thereof. If the permittee fails to remove or alter the structure so as to comply with the standards herein set forth within ten (10) business days after such notice, such sign or other advertising structure may be removed or altered to comply with this Ordinance by the

Zoning Administrator at the expense of the permittee or owner of the lot upon which it is located.

- C. The Zoning Administrator may cause any sign or other advertising structure that is an immediate peril to persons or property to be removed summarily and without notice.
- D. If the work authorized under a sign permit is not completed within six (6) months after the date of issuance, the said permit shall become null and void.