

Chapter 30 - SIGNS

Sec. 30-1. - Definitions.

The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Advertising sign means a sign which directs attention to a business, commodity, service or entertainment conducted, sold or offered upon premises other than where such sign is located or to which it is affixed.

Blade sign means a sign attached to a wall in a perpendicular manner.

Business sign means a sign which directs attention to a business or profession conducted, or to a commodity, service or entertainment conducted, sold or offered upon the premises where such sign is located or to which it is affixed.

Canopy and awning, fixed, means any hood, canopy or awning made of cloth, other flexible material or metal with metal frames attached to a building, and carried by a frame, either supported or not supported from the ground or sidewalk.

Canopy and awning, retractable, means any hood, canopy or awning made of cloth, other flexible material or metal with metal frames attached to a building, and so erected as to permit its being retracted when not in use.

Changeable copy/reader board means a sign, or portion thereof, with characters, letters or illustrations that can be changed or rearranged without altering the face or the surface of the sign. A sign on which the only copy that changes is an electronic or mechanical indication of time or temperature shall be considered a "time and temperature" portion of a sign and not a changeable copy sign for purposes of this chapter.

Flashing sign means any illuminated sign on which the artificial light is not maintained stationary or constant in intensity and color at all times when such sign is in use. For the purpose of this chapter, any moving illuminated sign, excluding scrolling light messages on a changeable copy/reader board sign, shall be considered a flashing sign.

Gross surface area of a sign means the entire area covered by the sign consisting of the area comprised within a single continuous perimeter enclosing the extreme limits of its display area, and in no case passing through or between any adjacent elements of it; but such perimeter shall not include any structural elements lying outside the display area of the sign.

Ground sign or monument means a sign supported by uprights, columns or braces placed in the ground and not attached to any building.

Historical plaque means a commemorative plaque placed by a recognized federal, state or local historical agency depicting and identifying a building's contribution to the field of architecture, or a building or site's contribution to the life of an individual, or as being representative of an historical event or an era of development in the village.

Integrated center means a building, series of attached buildings or separate buildings under single ownership or management or having contractual agreements between the separate buildings' owners.

Marquee means any fixed hood, constructed of metal or other noncombustible material, supported solely by and extending from the building to which it is attached.

Pole sign means a sign, mounted or otherwise attached, to a steel column or other suitable material placed in the ground, the bottom of which is no less than eight feet above grade.

Sign means a name, identification, description, display, or illustration which is affixed to, or painted on, or represented directly or indirectly, upon a building, structure, billboard or parcel of land; and which directs attention to an object, product, place, activity, person, institution, organization, or business. Each display surface of a sign shall be considered to be a separate sign. The term "sign" does not include the following:

- (1) Any sign of the United States, state or municipal corporation;

- (2) The flag, emblem of insignia of a nation, governmental unit, school or religious group;
- (3) Signs located completely within an enclosed building with no display surface visible from the building exterior; provided, however, that the provisions of this chapter regulating flashing and moving signs shall apply to all signs in any way visible from the building exterior;
- (4) Paper signs affixed to the interior of the window of a building for a period of less than 30 days that do not cover more than 25 percent of the total window area of the facade where they are exhibited;
- (5) Identification and addresses of establishments on awnings, marquees, or buildings;
- (6) Street or house number signs not exceeding 1½ square feet in area;
- (7) Directional signs or instructional signs conveying directions or instructions for the safety or convenience of the public (vehicular or pedestrian) or necessary for the operation of the premises and not exceeding three square feet in area.

Temporary sign means a sign, banner, bunting, pennant, valance or advertising display to be displayed for a limited period.

Wall sign means a sign attached, applied to, painted or placed against the exterior front, rear or side wall of any building, with an exception in section 30-4(b).

Window sign means signs, regardless of material, placed inside or upon a window with a display surface visible from the building exterior.

(Code 1997, § 86-1; Ord. No. MC-909, § 1, 6-24-2014; Ord. No. MC-913, § 3, 9-23-2014; Ord. No. MC-954, § 1, 4-12-2016)

Sec. 30-2. - Administration of chapter.

It shall be the responsibility of the village manager or his designee to administer this chapter.

(Code 1997, § 86-2)

Sec. 30-3. - Violations; enforcement.

It is unlawful to display any sign in violation of the provisions of this chapter. Each day of any such violation shall constitute a separate offense under this chapter. Any person who owns or manages a building or premises and any occupant thereof who displays a sign shall comply with the provisions of this chapter. The village manager or his designee is hereby designated and authorized to enforce this chapter.

(Code 1997, § 86-3)

Sec. 30-4. - Permitted and prohibited signs.

(a) The following types of signs only are permitted signs within the standards set out in this chapter:

- (1) Ground or monument signs;
- (2) Wall signs;
- (3) Pole signs;
- (4) Temporary signs;
- (5) Marquees;
- (6) Fixed canopies and awnings;
- (7) Retractable canopies and awnings;
- (8) Window signs not exceeding 25 percent of the total window area of the facade where they are exhibited;
- (9) Historical plaques;
- (10) Advertising signs on bus shelters;
- (11) Changeable copy/reader board signs; and

(12) Blade signs.

(b) Prohibited signs include:

- (1) Signs on fences or on walls which are not a part of a building or structure;
- (2) Flashing signs, which are illuminated signs (whether stationary, revolving, or rotating) which contain any flashing lights or lights creating an illusion of movement, except those signs which display time and temperature information only;
- (3) Moving signs, which are signs which flutter, undulate, swing, rotate, oscillate, or otherwise move by natural or artificial means. Pennants, banners and inflatable signs are specifically included within the definition of moving signs with an exception cited in section 30-11;
- (4) Advertising signs except for temporary subdivision advertising signs, as provided in section 30-10, and bus shelter advertising signs authorized by subsection (a)(10) of this section;
- (5) Signs painted on building walls which face or are visible from a public right-of-way;
- (6) Signs which project more than 24 inches into a public right-of-way;
- (7) Pole signs in the B-1 downtown core zoning district and B-2 downtown transition zoning district;
- (8) Changeable copy/reader board signs in the B-1 downtown core zoning district and B-2 downtown transition zoning district; and
- (9) Illuminated tubing, rope lights and string lights, including neon, LED, and incandescent, used to outline, stripe, highlight, or decorate portions of commercial buildings or building elements such as doors, windows or awnings, except:
 - a. Lights temporarily displayed in connection with a civic, patriotic, or religious holiday, provided they are removed within 14 days after the holiday; and
 - b. Lights permanently affixed to a commercial building as an element of an overall architectural concept.
- (10) Any sign not included as a permitted sign.

(Code 1997, § 86-4; Ord. No. MC-909, § 1, 6-24-2014; Ord. No. MC-913, § 3, 9-23-2014; Ord. No. MC-954, § 1, 4-12-2016; Ord. No. MC-1072, § 1, 1-10-2023)

Sec. 30-5. - Size, area and other restrictions regarding certain sign types.

- (a) *Changeable copy/reader board signs.* All messages for changeable copy/reader board signs shall be limited to the business to which the sign is attached or public service announcements.
- (b) *Ground sign or monument signs.* Ground or monument signs shall not exceed eight feet above grade in height.
- (c) *Historical plaques.* Historical plaques shall not exceed four square feet in area and shall be affixed flat against a building, or if a vacant site, shall be permanently mounted on a pole or other suitable support.
- (d) *Poles signs.* Pole signs shall conform to the following table:

Pole Signs

Size of building or integrated center (square feet)	Maximum height (feet)	Maximum gross surface area (square feet)
0 to 35,000	Not allowed	Not allowed
35,001 to 100,000	18	150
100,001 to 250,000	23	200
250,001 and over	28	250

(Code 1997, § 86-22)

Sec. 30-6. - Signs on residential properties.

No sign shall be displayed on buildings or premises, or that portion thereof used for residential purposes, regardless of the zoning district in which it is located, or on any vehicles parked on such property for more than 24 hours where such vehicle is readily visible to the general public, except for the following permitted signs:

- (1) One nameplate sign not exceeding 144 square inches in area, which may be combined with a street or house sign.
- (2) Noncommercial and nonilluminated signs behind or affixed to windows or doors.
- (3) In the case of apartment houses for more than two units, in addition to the foregoing and in addition to any other signs permitted by reason of any commercial use of the first floor, one identification wall sign not exceeding five square feet in area indicating the name of the building or the ownership or management of such building.
- (4) Multifamily complexes which have more than eight units shall be permitted one identification ground sign no larger than 50 square feet and six feet in height.
- (5) Temporary signs permitted under section 30-9.

(Code 1997, § 86-5)

Sec. 30-7. - Signs of certain charitable, educational and similar organizations.

- (a) No sign shall be displayed on the building or premises of a private educational, philanthropic, civic or charitable institution or organization or any private club, except for temporary signs permitted under section 30-9 and except for identification signs, identifying the name or nature of the institution or organization and bulletin board signs, being structures of a permanent nature but having changeable words or figures.
- (b) The total area of all signs on the premises of each such institution or organization shall not exceed 100 square feet in area, and no one sign shall exceed 30 square feet in area.

(Code 1997, § 86-6)

Sec. 30-8. - Business signs.

Business signs of any type not prohibited by section 30-4 may be displayed on any property used for business or manufacturing purposes, subject to the following limitations and regulations:

- (1) Where a sign is illuminated by light reflected upon it, direct rays of light shall not beam upon any part of an existing residential building, nor into a residential district, or into a street. A sign located in direct line of vision of a traffic signal shall not have red, green or amber illumination. In the B-1 downtown core zoning district and B-2 downtown transition zoning district, ground or monument signs shall only be externally illuminated by lighting hardware mounted on the sign that reflects light directly on the sign from above.
- (2) The total permitted gross surface area of all signs for a single building shall not exceed 2.5 times in square feet the total building frontage expressed in linear feet, up to a maximum of 500 square feet for a building with one frontage, 800 square feet for a building with two frontages, and 1,000 square feet for a building with three or more frontages. If a single building is designed for occupancy by more than one business use and is so used, the formula to be applied in ascertaining the permitted gross surface area for each individual establishment shall be based on the formula set out in this subsection. The owner of the building shall then be responsible for negotiating with all tenants in the building, the amount of signage allowable for each business. Exception: In the B-1 downtown core zoning district and B-2 downtown transition zoning district, the total permitted gross surface area of all signs for a single building shall not exceed two times in square feet the linear footage of a building up to a maximum of 400 square feet of signage for any one use.
- (3)

No wall or blade sign shall project more than 24 inches into a public right-of-way, and any such sign shall be limited in height to the height of the building or 30 feet above grade at the base of the building, whichever is lower. The sign shall be no lower than nine feet above grade. Exception: In the B-1 downtown core zoning district and B-2 downtown transition zoning district, the height of a blade sign shall be limited to two feet below the roof line of the building.

- (4) Any permanently installed sign entirely separate from any structure, located entirely upon private property and not projecting into a public right-of-way and otherwise in conformance with all requirements of this chapter shall not be higher than 28 feet above grade.
- (5) Signs which are not embodied as part of the soft or pliable material of an awning or canopy and which project from a building in excess of six inches or over a public right-of-way shall have the lowest portion no less than nine feet above grade, immediately below the sign.
- (6) A unified shopping center or integrated center in single ownership or control may erect only one pole sign to serve the shops therein in addition to the individual signs allowed by this chapter. Such sign shall conform to the standards in [section 30-5](#).
- (7) Blade signs shall not exceed six square feet in area, shall be no more than either three feet in length or three feet in width and shall project no more than three feet from the face of the building.
- (8) Ground or monument signs shall not exceed eight feet in height. Exception: In the B-1 downtown core zoning district and B-2 downtown transition zoning district, ground or monument signs shall not exceed five feet in height and 20 square feet in area.

(Code 1997, § 86-7; Ord. No. MC-913, § 3, 9-23-2014; Ord. No. [MC-1072](#), § 1, 1-10-2023)

Sec. 30-9. - Temporary signs.

In addition to signs otherwise permitted by this chapter, the following temporary signs shall be permitted, so long as such temporary signs are otherwise in conformity with this section and all other provisions of this chapter:

- (1) Real estate signs (nonilluminated), advertising the sale or lease of the premises on which they are maintained, not exceeding ten square feet in area for residential properties and 32 square feet in area for commercial properties. Only one sign per lot or premises is permitted, except that on corner lots, one such sign may face each street. Such signs shall be removed immediately upon sale or lease of the premises. The signs must be located on private property.
- (2) Architect-contractor signs. One sign of an architect or contractor not exceeding ten square feet in area may be displayed on a premises located in any residence district established by the village zoning ordinance, as amended, and one such sign not exceeding 20 square feet on a premises located in any business or manufacturing district established by the village zoning ordinance where new construction or remodeling work is in progress, to be removed immediately upon completion of such work. In an area zoned for commercial or industrial use where the property on which construction or remodeling is in progress, one contractor-architect's sign may be erected on each street frontage the property abuts. Such signs may not be located closer than eight feet from the property line or one-half the distance between the property and the building lines, whichever is less.
- (3) Decorations displayed in connection with civic, patriotic or religious holidays.
- (4) Flags, emblems and signs of political, civic, philanthropic or education organizations temporarily displayed for noncommercial purposes. The signs must be located on private property unless placed by federal, state or municipal government and shall not be located on property zoned as public land or within 100 feet of a polling place.
- (5) Political campaign signs not exceeding 32 square feet in area for each premises. These signs shall be confined within private property with the permission of the property owner.

(Code 1997, § 86-8; Ord. No. MC-848, § 1, 5-24-2011)

Sec. 30-10. - Temporary subdivision advertising signs.

The village manager or his designee, when requested in writing, may mitigate the provisions of this chapter regarding advertising signs on a temporary basis only in accordance with the following provisions for the purpose of encouraging rapid and competitive sale of new subdivision development within the village:

- (1) *Temporary defined.* As used in this section, the term "temporary" means an indefinite length of time which shall terminate upon sale of 90 percent of all available parcels included in the platted subdivision.
- (2) *Onsite allowance.* One sign shall be allowed for advertising the subdivision. The surface area cannot exceed 32 square feet in area and eight feet in height above grade.
- (3) *Authorization.* All temporary subdivision sign location requests shall be reviewed by the village manager and authorized by letter.
- (4) *Removal.* All permitted subdivision signs shall be removed when required by this section.

(Code 1997, § 86-9)

Sec. 30-11. - Pennants, or banners or inflatable signs.

The village manager or his designee, when requested in writing, may mitigate the provisions of this chapter prohibiting pennants, banners and inflatable signs, but on a temporary basis only in accordance with the following provisions:

- (1) *Defined.* As used in this section, the term "temporary" means no more than two one-week periods.
- (2) *Authorization.* Authorization for pennants, banners and inflatable signs shall be in writing signed by the village manager or his designee, and shall state the number of days such use is to be permitted. No such authorization shall be given more than once per quarter in a calendar year for a specific location.
- (3) *Conditions.* Authorization for inflatable signs shall be subject to, the following conditions:
 - a. The signs must be anchored to the ground;
 - b. The signs must be placed so as not to diminish the number of customer parking spaces in a parking lot;
 - c. The signs must not obstruct vehicle or pedestrian ways.
- (4) *Fees.* The fee for any pennant, banner or inflatable sign erected without prior approval shall be in an amount as provided on the village fee schedule.
- (5) *Removal.* All authorized pennants, banners and inflatable signs shall be removed at the expiration of such authorization. Pennants, banners and inflatable signs erected without prior approval shall be immediately removed upon notification by the village.

(Code 1997, § 86-10; Ord. No. MC-954, § 1, 4-12-2016)

Sec. 30-12. - Construction requirements.

All signs must meet the applicable requirements of the village's building and construction codes.

- (1) *Fireproof construction.* No sign of which the majority of the display area is within four feet of any building or which is greater than 18 square feet in area shall be constructed at any location within the village limits unless the face is constructed of noncombustible material.
- (2) *Obstruction to doors, windows or fire escapes.* No sign, retractable canopy or awning shall be erected, relocated or maintained so as to prevent free ingress to, or egress from, any door, window or fire escape. No sign, retractable canopy or awning of any kind shall be attached to a standpipe or fire escape.
- (3) *Signs not to constitute traffic hazards.* In order to obtain and secure reasonable traffic safety, it is unlawful for any person to erect or maintain any sign, retractable canopy or awning in such a manner as to obstruct free and clear vision, or as to distract the attention of the driver of any vehicle by reason of the position, shape, color or intensity thereof. Pursuant to the foregoing, no sign, retractable canopy or awning shall be erected or maintained in such manner as to be likely to

interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal or device. Accordingly, no sign, retractable canopy or awning shall make use of the words "stop," "go," "look," "slow," "danger," or any other similar word, phrase, symbol, or character, or employ any red, yellow, orange, green or other colored lamp or light, in such a manner as to interfere with, mislead, or confuse traffic.

(Code 1997, § 86-11)

Sec. 30-13. - Inspections.

The village shall make inspections of signs as it deems necessary, and, for this purpose, has the right during business hours to enter upon the premises where a sign is maintained. If it is found that a sign is out of repair, unsafe, or nonconforming to this chapter, the owner shall be notified in writing of the condition, and if the owner does not remedy the sign within 30 days from the time of the service of the notice, the building inspector shall act in accordance with section 30-17.

(Code 1997, § 86-12)

Sec. 30-14. - Nuisances.

Any sign displayed in violation of this chapter is hereby deemed a public nuisance. Any sign, retractable canopy or awning which is immediately dangerous to persons or property in its existing condition, or which is declared to be a fire hazard by the village fire chief or his nominee is hereby declared to be a nuisance and may be abated as such.

(Code 1997, § 86-13)

Sec. 30-15. - Maintenance.

All signs, retractable canopies and awnings shall be kept and maintained in a safe, neat and orderly condition and appearance, and shall be repainted or otherwise maintained periodically by the permittee to prevent corrosion or deterioration caused by weather or age, and to keep the same in a safe, neat and orderly condition and appearance.

(Code 1997, § 86-14)

Sec. 30-16. - Removal of certain signs.

Any sign, retractable canopy or awning and nonconforming sign structure now or hereafter existing, which advertises a business no longer being conducted, or a product no longer being sold, shall be taken down and removed by the owner, agent or person having the beneficial use of the building, structure or premises upon which such sign may be found, within 30 days after receipt of written notice by the village to so act. Upon failure to comply with such notice within the time specified in such order, the building inspector is hereby authorized to cause removal of such sign. Any expense incident thereto shall be paid by the owner, agent or person having beneficial use of the building, structure or premises to which such sign is attached.

(Code 1997, § 86-15)

Sec. 30-17. - Unsafe and unlawful signs.

- (a) If the building inspector shall find that any sign, retractable canopy or awning is unsafe or insecure or is a menace to the public, has been constructed, erected, or is being maintained in violation of the provisions of this chapter, he shall give written notice of such finding to the permittee of the same. If the permittee fails to remove or alter the sign, retractable canopy or awning so as to bring it into compliance with the standards established by this chapter within 30 days after receipt of such notice, such sign, retractable canopy or awning may be removed by the village at the expense of the permittee.
- (b) If, upon reasonable and diligent search, the permittee cannot be found and the notice described in this section cannot be given, then the village may remove the sign, retractable canopy or awning or, in the alternative, may send written notice of the building inspector's finding to the owner of the building, structure or premises. If the owner then fails to remove or alter

the sign, retractable canopy or awning so as to bring it into compliance with the standards established by this chapter within 30 days after receipt of such notice, such sign, retractable canopy or awning may be removed by the village at the expense of the owner.

- (c) The village may cause any sign, retractable canopy or awning which the building inspector finds to be an immediate peril to persons or property to be removed summarily and without notice.

(Code 1997, § 86-16)

Sec. 30-18. - Exemptions and zoning restrictions.

The provisions of this chapter regulating the location, placement, gross surface area, projection, height limitation and number of signs or other advertising structures shall be subject to and may be further restricted by any applicable provision of the present or hereafter adopted zoning ordinance of the village including provisions therein relating to nonconforming structures and uses.

(Code 1997, § 86-17)

Sec. 30-19. - Building and electrical codes.

All signs erected or constructed shall conform to all technical and structural requirements of the village building and electrical codes.

(Code 1997, § 86-18)

Sec. 30-20. - Permits and fees.

- (a) A permit shall be obtained from the building inspector on written application therefor, by any person seeking to construct, erect or maintain any sign over three square feet in area, except for temporary nonstructural signs. Such application shall be accompanied by plans and specifications which show the size, character, material, location, bracing, anchorage, support, means of attachment and other structural characteristics thereof, and of its frame and mounting. Prior to the issuance of a permit, the application plans and specifications shall be approved by the building inspector.
- (b) No permit shall be issued if the building inspector determines that the sign will constitute a hazard to traffic or the public by reason of obstruction of view, distraction, or endangering the safety of persons using public property. Any permit required elsewhere in this Code for electrical work in connection with any sign must be obtained in addition to the sign permit provided for in this section.
- (c) A nonrefundable application fee in an amount as provided on the village fee schedule shall be charged at the time of filing a request for a sign permit. Upon approval, the fee for a permit issued pursuant to this chapter shall be per square foot of the gross surface area of each sign. The fee for any reinspection of the sign shall be in an amount as provided on the village fee schedule.
- (d) The building inspector shall examine or cause to be examined all applications for permits and amendments thereto within a reasonable time after filing. If the building inspector is satisfied that the proposed work conforms to the requirements of this chapter and all laws and ordinances applicable thereto, the building inspector shall issue a permit therefor as soon as practicable.

(Code 1997, § 86-19)

Sec. 30-21. - Variations.

Upon an application or permit to construct or alter or maintain any sign which does not conform to the regulations of this chapter, upon a finding by the appearance commission that a particular hardship does exist, the village board may grant a variation in the application of the regulations of this chapter but in harmony with the general purposes and intent of this chapter.

(Code 1997, § 86-20)

Sec. 30-22. - Legal nonconforming signs.

Signs which were erected on or before July 27, 2004, and no longer conform shall be subject to the following provisions:

- (1) The size, shape, context, wording and appearance of such sign shall not be changed or altered unless necessary to comply with this chapter, as amended.
- (2) A nonconforming sign which is destroyed or damaged by fire or other casualty to the extent that the cost of restoration will exceed 50 percent of the construction cost of a comparable new sign shall not be restored unless the sign conforms to all current requirements of this chapter. If such damage or construction is less than 50 percent of the construction cost of a comparable new sign, all repairs shall be completed within 180 days from the date of the partial destruction. If such damage or destruction is less than 50 percent of the construction cost of a comparable new sign and repair construction is not completed within 180 days from the date of partial destruction, then the damaged nonconforming sign shall not be restored unless the sign is made to conform to all current regulations of this chapter.
- (3) Such signs shall be properly maintained as required by this chapter, but authorized maintenance shall not include the right to change or alter the size, shape, context, wording or appearance of such sign.

(Code 1997, § 86-21)

Sec. 30-23. - Grievance procedure.

Should a petitioner be aggrieved by a decision of the village manager in his enforcement of this chapter, the appearance commission shall hear the petitioner's request for relief.

(Code 1997, § 86-22)