

**§ 225-7-1. Definitions.**

For the purpose of this article, certain terms and words pertaining to signs are hereby defined. The general rules of construction contained in Article XIV are applicable to these definitions. The following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

**ACCESSORY SIGN** — A sign relating only to uses of the premises on which the sign is located or to products sold on the premises on which the sign is located or indicating the name or address of a structure or the occupants or management of a structure on the premises where the sign is located.

**DETACHED SIGN** — A sign not attached to or painted on a structure, but which is affixed to the ground. A sign attached to a flat surface such as a fence or wall, not a part of a structure, shall be considered a detached sign.

**DOUBLE-FACED SIGN** — A sign with two parallel, or nearly parallel, faces back to back and located not more than 24 inches from each other.

**FLASHING SIGN** — An illuminated sign on which the artificial or reflected light is not maintained stationary and constant in intensity and color at all times when in use. Any sign which revolves or moves, whether illuminated or not, shall be considered a flashing sign.

**FLAT SIGN** — Any sign attached to, and erected parallel to the face of, or erected or painted on the outside wall or window of a structure and supported throughout its length by such wall or structure and not extending more than 18 inches from the structure wall.

**ILLUMINATED SIGN** — Any sign, except a neon sign, designed to give forth artificial light or designed to reflect light from one or more sources of artificial light erected for the purpose of providing light for the sign.

**INDIRECTLY ILLUMINATED SIGN** — A sign which does not produce artificial light from within itself but which is opaque and backlighted or illuminated by spotlights or floodlights not a part of or attached to the sign itself, or a sign within but with no exposed or exterior bulbs, tubes or other light source.

**MARQUEE SIGN** — Any sign attached to or hung from a marquee. For the purpose of this article, a "marquee" is a covered structure projecting from and supported by the structure with independent roof and drainage provisions and which is erected over a doorway or doorways as protection against the weather.

**PROJECTING SIGN** — A sign which is attached to and projects more than 18 inches from the face of a wall of a structure. The term "projecting sign" includes a marquee sign.

**SIGN** — A structure, display or device that is arranged, intended, designed or used for advertisement, announcement, identification, description or direction.

**SIGN AREA** — That area within a line including the outer extremities of all letters, figures, characters and delineations, or within a line including the outer extremities of the framework or background of the sign, whichever line includes the larger area. The support for the sign background, whether it be columns, pylon or a structure or part thereof, shall not be included in the sign area. Only one side of a double-faced sign shall be included in a computation of sign area; for other signs with more than one face, each side shall be included in a computation of sign area. The area of a cylindrical sign shall be computed by multiplying 1/2 of the circumference by the

height of the sign.

**§ 225-7-2. General sign regulations.**

- A. All signs shall meet the definition of "accessory sign."
- B. The following regulations apply generally to all signs and are in addition to the regulations contained elsewhere in this chapter:
- (1) No sign, unless herein excepted, shall be erected, constructed, posted, painted, altered, maintained or relocated, except as provided in this article and in these regulations, until a permit has been issued by the Administrator. Before any permit is issued, an application especially provided by the Administrator shall be filed, together with three sets of drawings and/or specifications [one to be returned to the applicant] as may be necessary to fully advise and acquaint the Administrator with the location, construction, materials, manner of illumination and/or securing or fastening, number of signs applied for and the wording of the sign or advertisement to be carried on the sign. All signs which are electrically illuminated shall require a separate electrical permit and inspection. All signs shall be erected on or before the expiration of 30 days from the date of issuance of the permit; otherwise, the permit shall become null and void and a new permit shall become null and void and a new permit shall be required. Each sign requiring a permit shall be clearly marked with the permit number and name of the person or firm placing the sign on the premises. Fees for sign permits shall be in accordance with the schedule adopted by ordinance, a copy of which is maintained in the office of the Administrator.
  - (2) Structural and safety features and electrical systems shall be in accordance with the requirements of the applicable codes and ordinances. No sign shall be approved for use unless it has been inspected by the department issuing the permit and is found to be in compliance with all the requirements of this chapter and applicable technical codes.
  - (3) The following signs are exempted from the provisions of these regulations and may be erected or constructed without a permit, so long as they are in accordance with the structural and safety requirements of the applicable codes:
    - (a) Official traffic signs or sign structures, provisional warning signs or sign structures, and municipal directional signs or sign structures, when erected or required to be erected by a governmental agency, and temporary signs indicating danger.
    - (b) Changing of the copy on a bulletin board, poster board, display encasement or marquee.
    - (c) Temporary nonilluminated signs, not more than six square feet in area, advertising real estate for sale or lease or announcing contemplated improvements of real estate, and located on the premises, one such sign for each street frontage.
    - (d) Temporary nonilluminated signs, not more than 10 square feet in area, erected in connection with new construction work and displayed on the premises during such time as the actual construction work is in progress, one such sign for each street

frontage.

- (e) Nonilluminated signs warning trespassers or announcing property as posted.
  - (f) Signs on a truck, bus or other vehicle, while in use in the normal course of business. This section should not be interpreted to permit parking for display purposes of a vehicle to which signs are attached in a district where such signs are not permitted.
- (4) The Administrator, upon application as required in this article, may issue temporary permits for the following signs and displays for a period not exceeding 30 days when, in his opinion, the use of such signs and displays would be in the public interest and would not result in damage to private property:
- (a) Signs advertising a special civic or cultural event such as a fair or exposition, play, concert or meeting, sponsored by a governmental or charitable organization.
  - (b) Special decorative displays used for holidays, public demonstrations or promotions for nonpartisan civic purposes.
  - (c) Special sales promotion displays in a district where such sales are permitted, including displays incidental to the opening of a new business.
- (5) Pennants, banners, streamers and all other fluttering, spinning or similar types of signs and advertising devices are prohibited, except for national flags and flags of political subdivisions of the United States and except for flags of bona fide civic, charitable, fraternal and welfare organizations, provided that during nationally recognized holiday periods or during a special civic event, pennants, banners, streamers and other fluttering, spinning or similar types of advertising devices pertaining to said periods or events may be displayed by temporary permit as provided above in this article.
- (6) No flashing signs or exposed neon tubing shall be permitted in any district.
- (7) No sign which is not an integral part of the structure design shall be fastened to and supported by or on the roof of a structure, and no projecting sign shall extend over or above the roofline or parapet wall of a structure.
- (8) Applications for unusual signs or displays which give rise to questions of interpretation of these regulations may be referred by the Administrator to the Board of Appeals for the purpose of interpretation by the Board and recommendation for action on the application by the Administrator. If, in the opinion of the Board, the application is not adequately covered by these regulations, the Board may make recommendations for amendment of this chapter.
- (9) No sign shall be constructed, erected, used, operated or maintained which:
- (a) Displays intermittent lights resembling, or seeming to resemble, the flashing lights customarily associated with danger or such as are customarily used by police, fire or ambulance vehicles or for navigation purposes.
  - (b) Is so located and so illuminated as to provide a background of colored lights blending with traffic signal lights to the extent of confusing a motorist, when

viewed from the normal approaching position of a vehicle at a distance of 25 feet to 300 feet.

- (c) Is located on a public sidewalk.
- (10) Permitted signs for a nonconforming business, commercial or industrial use in a residential District shall consist of those signs permitted in the C-1 Community Commercial District.
- (11) Except as otherwise specifically provided in these regulations, all signs shall be subject to the provisions of Article X governing nonconforming uses.
- (12) Except as otherwise provided, these regulations shall be interpreted to permit one sign of the permitted type, in accordance with applicable regulations, for each street frontage, for each permitted use on the premises. For the purpose of this regulation, sign "types" are flat, detached, projecting, and marquee signs and special purpose signs specifically listed in the district regulations.
- (13) Except as otherwise provided, any sign may be a flat, detached or projecting sign, and, except as otherwise provided, no detached sign shall exceed a height of 15 feet.
- (14) Signs of permitted types and sign area may be placed on walls of structures other than the front, except on side or rear walls facing, and within 100 feet of, a residential district.
- (15) Unless otherwise specified in these regulations, all signs shall comply with the yard requirements of the district in which they are located, provided that one accessory sign may occupy required yards in a district where such sign is permitted by these regulations, if such sign is not more than 30 square feet in area and other requirements of these regulations are complied with.
- (16) No sign, portable or otherwise, is to be placed or located to conflict with the vision clearance or other requirements of applicable traffic ordinances.
- (17) No signs shall be attached to trees, utility poles or any other unapproved supporting structure.
- (18) The owner and/or tenant of the premises and the owner and/or erector of the sign shall be held responsible for any violation of these regulations. Where a sign has been erected in accordance with these regulations, the sign company shall be relieved of further responsibility under these regulations after final approval of the sign by the Administrator.
- (19) All signs shall be maintained in good condition and appearance. After due notice has been given as provided below, the Administrator may cause to be removed any sign which shows gross neglect or becomes dilapidated.
- (20) The Administrator shall remove or cause to be removed any sign erected or maintained in conflict with these regulations, if the owner or lessee of either the site or the sign fails to correct the violation within 30 days after receiving written notice of violation from the Administrator. Removal of a sign by the Administrator shall not affect any proceedings instituted prior to the removal of such sign.

- (21) All signs posting property and/or real estate for sale must have the zoning classification listed on or attached to such sign before the sign is placed at or on such property.
- (22) All signs are an accessory use.
- (23) Signs existing at the time of enactment of this chapter and not conforming to its provisions but which were constructed in compliance with previous regulations shall be regarded as nonconforming signs. Any sign existing in violation of this chapter shall be removed, altered, or repaired in accordance with the provisions of this chapter within six months of enactment of this chapter.
- (24) Signs advertising an activity, business, product, or service no longer conducted on the premises are prohibited.
- (25) In mixed-use districts, the sign regulations governing the permitted use shall apply.
- (26) One detached sign setting forth the name or simple announcement for any public, charitable, educational, or religious institution may be permitted on the premises of the institution in all zoning districts, provided: **[Added 5-10-2012 by Ord. No. 2012-02 ]**
  - (a) The sign does not exceed 40 square feet, or 50 feet if on property with frontage on Maryland Route 20; **[Amended 9-12-2019 by Ord. No. 2019-03 ]**
  - (b) Existing detached signs, if present, are removed;
  - (c) The sign is placed on a monument made of brick. The Planning Commission may approve a base of different materials if, after review at a public meeting, the Planning Commission finds that the proposed base material appropriate to the character of the area in which the sign will be located;
  - (d) The overall height of the sign, including the base and outer extremities of the framework or background of the sign, shall not exceed seven feet, or eight feet if on property with frontage on Maryland Route 20; **[Amended 9-12-2019 by Ord. No. 2019-03 ]**
  - (e) The overall width of the sign, including the outer extremities of the framework or background of the sign, shall not exceed nine feet, or 12 feet if on property with frontage on Maryland Route 20; **[Amended 9-12-2019 by Ord. No. 2019-03 ]**
  - (f) Illumination of the sign shall not be brighter than necessary for clear and adequate visibility;
  - (g) Lights from any illuminated sign shall be so shaded, shielded, or directed so that the light intensity or brightness will not be objectionable to surrounding areas;
  - (h) Electronic or graphic display signs must have an automatic dimmer control to produce a distinct illumination change from a higher illumination level to a lower level one half-hour before sunset and one half-hour after sunrise. Signs shall not be illuminated between 12:00 midnight and 8:00 a.m.;
  - (i) The electronic display shall contain static messages only. Messages shall not be

changed more than one time per day; and

- (j) Neon or other attention-grabbing colors are prohibited.
- (27) Indirectly illuminated signs shall adhere to the following additional standards: [**Added 5-8-2014 by Ord. No. 2014-02** ]
- (a) External illumination shall be by a steady, stationary light source, shielded and directed solely at the sign.
  - (b) Light fixtures shall be restricted to not more than one shielded light fixture per side for sign faces up to 40 square feet and not more than two shielded light fixtures per side for sign faces over 40 square feet.
  - (c) Light sources to illuminate signs shall neither be visible from any street right-of-way, nor cause glare hazardous to pedestrians or operators of motor vehicles or so as to create a nuisance to adjacent properties.
  - (d) All ground-mounted lighting must be obscured by landscaping approved by the Planning Commission or the Zoning Administrator, as appropriate.
  - (e) The intensity of the light shall not exceed 20 lumens per square foot at any point on the sign face.
  - (f) Signs shall not have light-reflecting backgrounds but may use light-reflecting lettering or halo lighting.
  - (g) Lamps shall only produce a white light.
  - (h) Signs shall not be illuminated between 12:00 midnight and 8:00 a.m. unless the premises are open for business.
  - (i) Neon or other attention-grabbing colors are prohibited.

### § 225-7-3. Permitted signs.

- A. R-1 Low Density Residential District. Signs permitted in the R-1 District shall be subject to the general sign regulations of this article and consist of accessory nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated signs as follows:
- (1) A sign, limited in area to two square feet, to identify the owner or occupant of a dwelling or structure.
  - (2) A private directional sign, limited in area to two square feet.
  - (3) No trespassing or no hunting signs, without limitation on number or placement, limited in area to two square feet.
  - (4) A sign on a farm, limited in area to 20 square feet, advertising products raised on the premises.
  - (5) A sign limited in area to 10 square feet, for identification of a farm or a subdivision.

- (6) A customary church bulletin board, limited in area to 20 square feet.
  - (7) A sign, limited in area to 20 square feet, for identification of permitted public and semipublic uses or recreational uses.
  - (8) A temporary, nonilluminated sign, limited in area to six square feet, advertising real estate for sale or lease or announcing contemplated improvements of the real estate on which it is placed.
  - (9) A temporary sign, limited in area to six square feet, erected in connection with new construction work and displayed on the premises only during such time as the actual construction work is in progress.
  - (10) Temporary directional signs at appropriate locations, on or off the premises, for directing the traveling public, truck deliveries and employees to a subdivision or community, construction site or excavation, airport, marina, or other center of employment or visitor center or recreation facility in an isolated area, limited in area to six square feet and subject to approval of location, design, duration, and wording by the Zoning Administrator. This permitted sign is not intended as an ordinary advertising device.
- B. R-2 Mixed Residential District. Signs permitted in the R-2 District shall be subject to the general sign regulations of this article and consist of accessory nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated signs as follows:
- (1) Any sign permitted in the R-1 District.
- C. R-3 High Density Residential District. Signs permitted in the R-3 District shall be subject to the general sign regulations of this article and consist of accessory nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated signs as follows:
- (1) Any sign permitted in the R-1 District.
  - (2) A temporary sign, limited in area to 10 square feet, giving the name and/or address of the owner or management of a multiple-family dwelling or group of multiple-family dwellings.
- D. C-1 Community Commercial District. Signs permitted in the C-1 District shall be subject to the general sign regulations of this article and consist of accessory nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated signs as follows: **[Amended 5-8-2014 by Ord. No. 2014-02 ]**
- (1) Flat signs, with total aggregate sign area not more than 10% of the area of the walls fronting on a street, and no one sign with a sign area of more than 30 square feet.
  - (2) Projecting signs, if there are no marquee or detached signs, one for each business on the premises, with sign area limited to five square feet.
  - (3) Detached signs, if there are no projecting signs, limited in area to 30 square feet and limited in height to 15 feet, one for each business on the premises. A group of three or more contiguous stores, such as form a shopping center, may combine permitted detached sign area to provide a single detached sign advertising the group, if there are

no other detached signs and if the combined sign area does not exceed 60 square feet.

- (4) Marquee signs, if there are no projecting signs, two for each business on the premises, with sign area for each sign limited to three square feet.
  - (5) Temporary, nonilluminated paper signs in show windows, limited to 20% of the total glass area of the window in which they are placed.
  - (6) Directional signs, limited in area to two square feet, giving directions to motorists regarding the location of parking areas and access drives shall be permitted as accessory signs and not included in any computation of sign area.
- E. C-2 Highway Commercial District. Signs permitted in the C-2 District shall be subject to the general sign regulations of this article and consist of accessory nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated signs as follows: **[Amended 5-8-2014 by Ord. No. 2014-02 ]**
- (1) Flat signs, with total aggregate sign area not more than 10% of the area of the walls fronting on a street, and no one sign with a sign area of more than 60 square feet.
  - (2) Projecting signs, if there are no marquee or detached signs, one for each, business on the premises, with sign area limited to 10 square feet.
  - (3) Detached signs, if there are no projecting signs, limited in area to 30 square feet and limited in height to 30 feet, one for each business on the premises. A group of three or more contiguous stores, such as form a shopping center, may combine permitted detached sign area to provide a single detached sign advertising the group, if there are no other detached signs and if the combined sign area does not exceed 100 square feet.
  - (4) Marquee signs, if there are no projecting signs, two for each business on the premises, with sign area for each sign limited to three square feet.
  - (5) Temporary, nonilluminated paper signs in show windows, limited to twenty percent (30%) of the total glass area of the window in which they are placed.
  - (6) Directional signs, limited in area to two square feet, giving directions to motorists regarding the location of parking areas and access drives shall be permitted as accessory signs and not included in any computation of sign area.
- F. C-3 Town Center Commercial District. Signs permitted in the C-3 District shall be subject to the general sign regulations of this article and consist of accessory nonilluminated, or indirectly illuminated signs as follows: **[Amended 5-8-2014 by Ord. No. 2014-02 ]**
- (1) Any sign permitted in the C-1 District.
- G. MCI Mixed Commercial/Industrial District. Signs permitted in the MCI District shall be subject to the general sign regulations of this article and consist of accessory nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated signs as follows: **[Amended 5-8-2014 by Ord. No. 2014-02 ]**
- (1) Any sign permitted in the C-2 District except as otherwise limited in Subsection G(2), (3), and (4), following.
  - (2) Flat signs, limited in area to 100 square feet, one for each street frontage or one for each



industrial structure of more than 20,000 square feet of floor area on the premises.

- (3) A detached sign, limited in area to 100 square feet and limited in height in 30 feet.
  - (4) Directional signs of any type, limited in area to five square feet, in such number and in such locations as required for proper management of the premises. Such signs shall not be included in any computation of sign area.
- H. MRec Maritime Recreational District. Signs permitted in the MRec District shall be subject to the general sign regulations of this article and consist of accessory nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated signs as follows: **[Amended 5-8-2014 by Ord. No. 2014-02 ]**
- (1) Any sign permitted in the C-1 District, plus one additional sign of the permitted type if placed on the water side of a waterfront property and oriented to be read from boats in the water.
- I. MC Maritime Commercial District. Signs permitted in the MC District shall be subject to the general sign regulations of this article and consist of accessory nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated signs as follows: **[Amended 5-8-2014 by Ord. No. 2014-02 ]**
- (1) Any sign permitted in the C-1 District, plus one additional sign of the permitted type if placed on the water side of a waterfront property and oriented to be read from boats in the water.
- J. MWD Maritime Water-Dependent District. Signs permitted in the MWD District shall be subject to the general sign regulations of this article and consist of accessory nonilluminated or indirectly illuminated signs as follows: **[Amended 5-8-2014 by Ord. No. 2014-02 ]**
- (1) Any sign permitted in the C-1 District, plus one additional sign of the permitted type if placed on the water side of a waterfront property and oriented to be read from boats in the water.