

**ARTICLE XIX
SIGNS**

Section 19.1 PURPOSE

A. The purpose of this Article is to regulate commercial and noncommercial outdoor signs in a manner which: recognizes the communication needs of both businesses and other parties; protects property values and neighborhood character; creates a more attractive business climate; promotes pedestrian and traffic safety by reducing sign distractions, obstructions and other hazards; and promotes pleasing community environmental aesthetics.

B. Compliance with this Ordinance does not relieve the applicant of the responsibility for compliance with other township, state or federal sign regulations, nor does the issuance of a Zoning Permit grant permission to the applicant to place signs on any property including road rights-of-way other than property owned or otherwise legally under the control of the applicant. The issuance of a zoning permit only assures the applicant that the sign meets the requirements of the Township Zoning Ordinance.

Section 19.2 PERMIT REQUIRED

Except as otherwise provided in Sections 19.3, 19.4 and 19.10, no sign may be constructed, erected, moved, enlarged, illuminated or substantially altered unless a Zoning Permit has been issued in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance. Mere repainting or changing the message of a sign shall not in and of itself be considered a substantial alteration.

Section 19.3 SIGNS EXCLUDED FROM PERMIT

The following signs are permitted without a Zoning Permit, but shall conform to the requirements set forth herein as well as all other applicable requirements of this Article.

A. One (1) sign not exceeding six (6) square feet in sign face area that is customarily associated with residential use and that is not of a commercial nature, such as signs: giving property identification; names or numbers of occupants; such as 4-H Clubs group memberships; or, centennial farm signs.

B. Signs not exceeding two and one-half (2 1/2) square feet in sign face, on mailboxes or newspaper tubes, and signs posted on private property relating to private parking, or warning the public against trespassing or danger from animals.

C. Signs erected by or on behalf of or pursuant to the authorization of a governmental body, including legal notices, identification, and informational signs, including historical markers, traffic, directional, and regulatory signs.

- D. Official signs of a non-commercial nature erected by public utilities.
- E. Flags, or insignia of any governmental or non-profit organization when not displayed in connection with a commercial promotion or as an advertising service.
- F. Integral decorative or architectural features of buildings or work of art, so long as such features or works do not contain letters, trademarks, moving parts, or lights.
- G. Signs directing and guiding traffic on private property that do not exceed four (4) square feet each and that bear no advertising matter.
- H. Informational signs not exceeding (1) one square foot in sign face.
- I. A total of two (2) banners, one (1) banner and one (1) commercial advertising flag, or two (2) commercial advertising flags, each such banner or commercial advertising flag not to exceed twenty-four (24) square feet in sign face, used to attract attention to a community activity or event (also see Sec. 19.4, A, 4.)
- J. Street name signs located in accord with County Road Commission standards at street intersections, not to exceed one (1) square foot in sign face.

Section 19.4 TEMPORARY SIGNS: PERMIT EXEMPTIONS

- A. The following temporary signs, related to temporary land uses, are permitted without a Zoning Permit. However, such signs shall conform to the requirements set forth herein as well as all other applicable requirements of this Article.
 - 1. Real estate signs: Signs containing the message that the real estate on which the sign is located (including buildings) is for sale, lease, or rent, together with information identifying the owner or agent. Not more than one such sign shall be erected per site, shall not exceed six (6) square feet in sign face area, and shall be removed within ten (10) days after sale, lease or rental. However, a second sign may be erected on a site of twenty (20) acres or more in area and having a street frontage width of six hundred sixty (660) feet or more as long as the second sign shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet in sign face area.
 - 2. Construction site identification signs: Such signs may identify the project, the owner or developer, architect, engineer, contractor and subcontractors, funding sources, and may contain related information including, but not limited to, sale or leasing information. Not more than one such sign, not exceeding thirty-two (32) square feet in sign face area, shall be erected per site. In the place of the one large sign up to four (4)

individual smaller signs may be erected on the site, upon the condition that each such smaller sign shall not exceed four (4) square feet in sign face area per sign.

3. Political Signs: Signs erected in connection with elections or political campaigns. Such signs shall be removed within three (3) days following the election or conclusion of the campaign. No such exempt sign may exceed six (6) square feet in sign face area. Any larger political signs require a Zoning Permit.
4. Special temporary event signs: One sign not exceeding twenty-four (24) square feet in sign face indicating a special temporary event such as a carnival, circus, festival or similar event, placed on the lot where the activity is to take place. Such signs may be erected not sooner than two (2) weeks before the event and must be removed not later than three (3) days after the event.
5. Seasonal commodity signs: Seasonal commodity signs shall not have a total sign face greater than thirty-two (32) square feet, of which not more than twenty (20) square feet may be on premises and not more than twelve (12) square feet may be off-premise. No single off-premise sign face shall be more than six (6) square feet. Such signs shall not be set in place for use until one (1) week before the beginning of the harvest season.
6. Yard sale, or garage sale signs or other similar temporary activity signs not covered in the foregoing categories, so long as such signs meet the following restrictions:
 - a. Not more than one (1) such sign may be located on any lot.
 - b. No such sign may exceed four (4) square feet in surface area.
 - c. Such signs shall be erected not more than three (3) days prior to the event and shall be removed immediately following the event.
 - d. Such signs shall not be erected more than one (1) time per each six (6) months.
 - e. Directional signs not exceeding two (2) square feet in area may be erected, but no advertising signs may be installed on public or utility poles.
 - f. All signs shall be removed within twenty-four (24) hours of the sale.

B. Other temporary signs, not listed in subsection (A), shall be regarded and treated in all respects as permanent signs.

Section 19.5 DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF SIGNS

- A. For the purpose of determining the number of signs, a sign shall be considered to be a single display surface or display device containing elements organized, related, and composed to form a unit. Where matter is displayed in a random manner without organized relationship of elements, each element shall be considered a single sign.
- B. A two-sided or multi-sided sign shall be regarded as one (1) sign so long as:
1. With respect to a V-type sign, the two (2) sides are at no point separated by a distance that exceeds five (5) feet; and
 2. With respect to double faced (back to back) signs, the distance between the backs of each face of the sign does not exceed three (3) feet.

Section 19.6 COMPUTATION SIGN AREA

- A. The sign face area of a sign shall be computed by including the entire area within a single, continuous, perimeter of not more than eight (8) straight lines, or a circle or an ellipse, enclosing the extreme limits of the writing, representation, emblem, or other display, together with any material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or structure against which it is placed, but not including any supporting framework or bracing that is clearly incidental to the display itself.
- B. If the sign consists of more than one (1) section or module, all of the area, including that between sections or modules, shall be included in the computation of the sign face area.
- C. With respect to two-sided, multi-sided or three- dimensional signs, the sign face area shall be computed by including the total of all sides designed to attract attention or communicate information that can be seen at any one time by a person from one vantage point. Without otherwise limiting the generality of the foregoing:
1. The sign face of a double-faced, back-to-back sign shall be calculated by using the area of only one side of such sign, so long as the distance between the backs of such signs does not exceed three (3) feet.
 2. The sign face area of a double faced sign constructed in the form of a "V" shall be calculated by using the area of only one side of such sign (the larger side if there is a size difference), so long as the interior angle of the "V" does not exceed 30 degrees and at no point does the distance between the backs of such sides exceed five (5) feet.

Section 19.7 SIGNAGE TABLES

- A. Tables 19-1 and 19-2 in Sections 19.8 and 19.9 respectively summarize the

signage allowed by this Ordinance for each category of land use. To use the Tables refer to the key to the tables (below) and related footnotes (in Sections 19.8 and 19.9):

B. Key to Table:

Example: 1/2/48 (1) = N/SFSF/TSF (footnote)

Legend:

- N = Number of Signs
- SFSF = Allowed Square Footage of Sign Face
- TSF = Total Square Footage of Sign face and area encompassed by support structure
- V = Variable Number of Signs Allowed
- NA = Not Applicable
- (F) = Footnote
- EA = Each Sign Face
- T = Total All Sign Faces in This Category

Section 19.8 SIGN REQUIREMENTS WHERE PERMITS ARE REQUIRED

A. Sign requirements for signs requiring permits follow in Table 19-1:

**Table 19-1
Signs Requiring Permit**

Land Use	Free Standing Business Sign A. Pole B. Ground	Wall Signage A. Wall Sign B. Marquee C. Projecting	Ingress Egress	Subdivision Group Housing	Entrance Way	Business Center	Home Occupation
1. Residential							
A. Residential Unit							1/6T/NA
B. Subdivision Development				1/32EA/45			
C. Multi-family Development				1/32EA/45			
D. Mobile Home Park				1/32EA/45	2/2EA/NA		
2. Commercial (1)	(4)						
A. Single Businesses	1/40EA/NA	V/100T/NA(2)	2/3EA/NA				
B. Single lot	1/40EA/NA	V/100T/NA(2)	2/3EA/NA				

multiple business							
C. Business Center		V/V/NA (3)	V/3EA/NA	1/V/EA/NA	V/16EA/NA	1/125T/NA (4)	
3. Industrial	1/40EA/NA	V/100T/NA	V/3EA/NA	1/322EA/45	V/16EA/NA		
4. Agriculture	1/20EA/NA	V/100T/NA	2/3EA/NA				
5. Institutional Gov., Religious	1/32EA/NA	1/20T/NA	2/3EA/NA		V/16EA/NA		

6. For off-premise highway advertising signs, see Section 19.11.

Footnotes for Table 19-1 follow Table 19-2 in next section.

Section 19.9 SIGN REQUIREMENTS WHERE PERMITS ARE NOT REQUIRED

A. Sign requirements for signs for which permits are not required follow in Table 19-2:

**Table 19-2
Sign Without a Permit**

Land Use	Commodity	Estate	Political	Etc.	Flag	Construction Site	Temporary Event
1. Residential		1/6T/NA					
A. Residential Unit	1/6T/NA	1/6T/NA	V/6/NA	1/4/NA		1/32/NA	
B. Subdivision Development						1/32/NA	
C. Multi-Family Development		1/6T/NA	V/6/NA	1/4/NA		1/32/NA	
D. Mobile Home Park			V/6/NA			1/32/NA	
2. Commercial (1)							
A. Single Businesses		1/6T/NA	V/6/NA		2/24/NA	1/32/NA	1/24/NA
B. Single lot multiple business		1/6T/NA	V/6/NA			1/32/NA	1/24/NA
C. Business Center		1/6T/NA	V/6/NA			1/32/NA	1/24/NA
3. Industrial		1/6T/NA	V/6/NA		2/24/NA	1/32/NA	
4. Agriculture	V/5/NA	1/6T/NA	V/6/NA	1/4/NA		1/32/NA	

5. Institutional Gov., Religious		1/6T/NA	V/6/NA	1/4/NA	2/24/NA	1/32/NA	A/24/NA
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B. Footnotes to Tables 19-1 and 19-2.

- (1) Lots in excess of one hundred (100) feet in width shall be allowed two-tenths (0.2) of one (1) square foot of additional sign face for each one (1) foot of lot width in excess of one hundred (100) feet. "Width" shall be measured along the traveled portion of the roadway which has the primary business focus.

Should there be reasonable doubt as to whether a commercial development is a Single Lot Multiple Business or a Business Center, only the standards for one (1) development classification may be applied to any single development.

- (2) The total accumulated square footage of any one and/or all types of wall, marquee or projecting sign faces shall be one hundred (100) square feet.
- 3) Each business may have one (1) square foot of sign face for each foot of building frontage not to exceed one hundred twenty (120) square feet in sign face area.
- (4) One (1) free-standing identification sign may be erected for a shopping center or other integrated group of stores or commercial buildings. The area for said sign shall be based on one (1) square foot of sign face for each lineal foot of building front, however, it shall not exceed one-hundred and twenty-five (125) square feet in area.
- (5) See Sec. 19.4 A 5.

Section 19.10 GASOLINE SERVICE STATIONS

Automobile gasoline service stations, including any business selling gasoline, in addition to the principal signs may, attach two (2) other signs, not exceeding fifteen (15) square feet in display area, per side, to the column(s) of the pylon sign, advertising the price of gasoline or other accessory product sold on the premises, including the advertising of accepted credit cards. Directional signs or lettering displayed over individual entrances or service bays, shall be permitted, provided they consist only of the words, "washing", "lubrication", "repairs" or "mechanic on duty" or similar words directly relating to motor vehicle services offered on the premises. Not more than one (1) such sign, per bay, shall be permitted and each sign shall not exceed four (4) square feet in total display area.

Section 19.11 OFF-PREMISE HIGHWAY ADVERTISING SIGNS

Off-premise highway advertising signs are those signs and sign structures which are defined and regulated by the Michigan Department of Transportation pursuant to the Highway Advertising Act of 1972, Public Act 106 of 1972, as amended, and as further regulated by this Ordinance. (Found at MSA 9.391(101) and thereafter, or at MCL 252(302) and thereafter.) An off-premise highway advertising sign is also defined as one which advertises a business, product or profession which is not located on the premises of the sign. Permits are required from MDOT for signs along State and Federal highways.

In addition to such regulations and administration, set forth in the above-cited statutes, the following shall also apply to any such signs and structures on the applicable lands along State and Federal Highways.

1. The size of such signs shall not exceed one hundred twenty-eight (128) square feet in area, including border or trim, but excluding ornamental base or apron, supports and other structural members;
2. Such sign and sign structure shall not be closer than one thousand (1,000) feet to another such off-premise advertising sign and sign structure, on the same side of the highway;
3. Such sign and sign structure shall not exceed twenty-four (24) feet in height;
4. Such sign and sign structure shall meet the front and side yard set back requirements for a structure located in the Zoning District;
5. Such sign and sign structure shall be maintained in regards to structural soundness and readability, and in accordance with the other provisions of this said Article XIX.

Off-premise highway advertising signs shall only be permitted as regulated by MDOT adjacent to State and Federal Highways.

All off-premise highway advertising signs shall, prior to construction, require a Zoning Permit from the Township.

The permit fee schedule shall be established by resolution of the Township Board. All permit fees shall be paid upon application.

Section 19.12 PROHIBITED SIGNS

The following signs shall not be allowed in any District:

1. Signs that are not consistent with the standards of this Ordinance,
2. Signs which are not clean or in good repair,
3. Signs that are not securely affixed to a substantial structure,
4. Signs that resemble any official traffic sign or appear to attempt to direct the movement of traffic, or are located where they interfere with motorists view of intersections or driveways,
5. Revolving, moving, or flashing signs (except time, date and weather signs), pennants, streamers, and airborne devices.
6. Signs other than utility company signs attached to utility poles, and
7. Portable signs.
8. Signs remaining after a business or activity has terminated must be removed within thirty (30) days.

Section 19.13 SIGN SETBACKS AND HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS

A. Setbacks: For the purpose of establishing sign setback requirements from an abutting roadway, the below listed types of signs shall be setback from the edge of the traveled surface of the roadway as follows in Table 19-3:

**Table 19-3
Sign Setbacks**

Sign	Feet
Business Center	32
Construction Site	32
Entrance Way	27
Free Standing	32
Historical Marker	32
Home Occupation	32
Identification	32
Informational	42
Real Estate	22
Seasonal Commodity	22
Off-premise highway advertising Signs - Billboards	At front or side yard setback and in conformance with applicable MDOT and/or Benzie County Road Commission requirements

B. No sign may extend above any parapet or be placed upon any roof surface, except that for purposes of this section, roof surfaces constructed at an angle of seventy-five (75) degrees or more from horizontal shall be regarded as wall space. This subsection shall not apply to displays, including lighting, erected in connection with the observation of holidays on the roofs of residential structures.

C. No wall sign attached to a building may project more than twelve (12) inches from the building wall.

D. Regarding ground and pole signs, whenever possible, a ground sign shall be used, not to exceed eight (8) feet in height; however, when, for safety reasons, a line of sight below the sign is needed, a pole sign, not to exceed sixteen (16) feet may be permitted.

Section 19.14 SIGN ILLUMINATION

- A. Unless otherwise prohibited by this Ordinance, signs may be illuminated if such illumination is in accordance with this section.
- B. No sign within one-hundred and fifty (150) feet of a residential zone may be illuminated between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m.
- C. Lighting directed toward a sign shall be shielded so that it illuminates only the face of the sign and does not shine directly into a public right-of-way or residential premises.
- D. Except as herein provided, illuminated signs are not permissible in the residential zoning districts.
- E. Subject to Subsection (G), illuminated tubing or strings of lights that outline property lines, sales areas, roof lines, doors, windows, or similar areas are prohibited.
- F. Subject to Subsection (G), no sign may contain or be illuminated by flashing or intermittent lights or lights of changing degrees of intensity, except signs indicating the time, date or weather conditions.
- G. Subsections (E) and (F) do not apply to temporary signs erected in connection with the observance of holidays.

Section 19.15 NON-CONFORMING SIGNS

- A. Subject to the remaining restrictions of this Section, non-conforming signs that were otherwise lawful on the effective date of this Ordinance may be continued.
- B. No person may engage in any activity that causes an increase in the extent of nonconformity of a non-conforming sign. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the non-conforming sign may be enlarged or altered in such a manner as not to increase the non-conforming condition. Illumination may not be added to any non-conforming sign.
- C. A non-conforming sign may not be moved except to bring the sign into complete conformity with this Ordinance.
- D. If a non-conforming sign is destroyed, it may not thereafter be repaired, reconstructed, or replaced except in conformity with all the provisions of this Ordinance.
- E. The message of a non-conforming sign may be changed so long as this does not create any new non-conformities (for example, by creating an off-premises sign under

circumstances where such a sign would not be allowed.)

F. Subject to the other provisions of this section, non-conforming signs may be repaired and renovated.

G. If a non-conforming sign, other than an off-premise sign, advertises a business, service, commodity, accommodation, attraction, or other enterprise or activity that is no longer operating or being offered or conducted, that sign shall be considered abandoned and shall be removed within thirty (30) days after such abandonment by the sign owner, owner of the property where the sign is located, or other party having control over such sign.

H. If a non-conforming off-premise sign remains blank for a continuous period of one hundred eighty (180) days, that off-premise sign shall be deemed abandoned and shall, within thirty (30) days after such abandonment, be altered to comply with this article or be removed by the sign owner, owner of the property where the sign is located or other person having control over such sign. For purposes of this section, a sign is "blank" if:

1. It advertises a business, service, commodity, accommodation, attraction, or other enterprise or activity that is no longer operating or being offered or conducted; or
2. The advertising message it displays becomes illegible in whole or substantial part; or
3. The advertising copy paid for by a party other than the sign owner, or promoting an interest other than the rental of the sign, has been removed.