

Article 19 Sign Regulations

Section 19.01 - Purpose

The purpose of this Article is to regulate on-site signs and outdoor advertising so as to protect the health, safety, and general welfare, to protect property values, and protect the character of the various neighborhoods in Hillsdale Township.

The principal features are the restriction of advertising to the use of the premises on which the sign is located and the restrictions of the total sign area permissible per site. Any sign placed on land or on a building for the purpose of identification or for advertising a use conducted on the premises shall be deemed an accessory use. It is intended that the display of signs will be appropriate to the land, building, or use to which they are appurtenant and adequate, but not excessive, for the intended purpose of identification or advertisement. With respect to signs advertising business uses, it is specifically intended, among other things, to avoid excessive competition and clutter among sign displays. Outdoor advertising signs (billboards), which advertise products or businesses not connected with the site or building on which they are located, are deemed to constitute a principal use of a lot.

Section 19.02 - Definitions

- A. **Abandoned Sign:** A sign which no longer advertises or identifies a business, lessor, owner, or activity conducted upon or product available on the premises where such sign is displayed.
- B. **Billboard:** See "Outdoor Advertising Sign"
- C. **Business District or Shopping Center:** A group of two (2) or more stores, offices, research, or manufacturing facilities which collectively have a name different than the name of any of the individual establishments and which have common off-street parking and entrance facilities.
- D. **Canopy or Marquee Sign:** Any sign attached to or constructed within or on a canopy or marquee.
- E. **District:** Zoning District as established by the Hillsdale Township Zoning Ordinance.
- F. **Free Standing Sign:** A sign supported by a structure independent of any other structure.
- G. **Height of Sign:** The vertical distance to the top edge of the copy area or structure, whichever is higher as measured from the adjacent street grade.
- H. **Identification Sign:** A sign which carries only the name of the firm, the major enterprise, of the principal product or service offered for sale on the premises or a combination of these things only to identify location of said premises on which the firm or major enterprise is situated, or on which the principal product is offered for sale.
- I. **Off-Site Sign:** (Off-Premises Sign) - A sign other than an on-site sign.
- J. **On-Site Sign:** (On-Premises Sign) - A sign which advertises or identifies only good, services, facilities, events, or attractions on the premises where located.
- K. **Outdoor Advertising Sign:** A sign, including billboards, on which the written or pictorial information is intended to advertise a use, product, service, goods, event, or facility located on other premises, and which is intended primarily for advertising purposes.

- L. **Sign:** Any structure or part thereof, or device attached thereto or painted or represented thereon, or any material or thing, illuminated or otherwise, which displays or includes any numeral, letter, word, model, banner, emblem, insignia, device, code mark, or other representation used as, or in the nature of, an announcement, advertisement, direction, or designation, of any person, firm, organization, place, commodity, service, business, profession, or industry, which is located upon any land or in any building, in such manner as to attract attention from outside the premises. Except signs not exceeding one (1) square foot in area bearing only property numbers, post box numbers, or names of occupants of premises.
- M. **Temporary Sign:** A sign that is intended to be displayed for a limited period of time.
- N. **Wall Sign:** A sign attached to or erected against the wall of a building with the face in a plane parallel to the plane of the building wall.
- O. **Window Sign:** A sign installed on or in a window for purposes of viewing from outside the premises. This term does not include merchandise located in a window.
- P. **Portable Sign:** Any sign not permanently attached to the ground or a building.

Section 19.03 - General Sign Regulations

The following regulations shall apply to all signs in Hillsdale Township:

A. Illuminated Signs:

1. RR, LFR, MDR, HDR, MFR, OSC, and NSC Districts - only indirectly illuminated signs shall be allowed, provided such sign is so shielded as to prevent direct light rays from being visible from the public right-of-way or any adjacent residential property.
2. In GSC and I districts - indirectly or internally illuminated signs are permitted providing such sign is so shielded as to prevent direct light rays from being visible from the public right-of-way or any adjacent residential property.

B. Measurement of Sign Area:

The area of a sign shall be computed as including the entire area within a regular geometric form or combination of such forms comprising all the display area of the sign and including all of the elements of the matter displayed. Frames and structural members not bearing copy or display materials shall not be included in computation of sign area. Where a sign has two (2) or more faces, the area of all faces shall be included in determining the area of the sign, except that where two (2) such faces are placed back-to-back, parallel to one another, and less than twentyfour (24) inches apart, the area of the sign shall be the area of one face.

C. **Height of Signs:** No free standing sign shall exceed a height of twenty-five (25) feet.

D. **Setback Requirements for Signs:** Except where specified otherwise in this Ordinance, all signs shall be set back a minimum of one-half (1/2) the yard requirements as measured from the road right-of-way line.

Section 19.04 - Signs Permitted in All Districts

Subject to the other conditions of this Ordinance, the following sign shall be permitted anywhere within Hillsdale Township:

- A. Off-premises signs which bear names, information, and emblems of service clubs, places of worship, civic organizations, and quasi-public uses shall be permitted on private property with permission of the Planning Commission. Each sign shall be not more than nine (9) square feet in area, shall not exceed a height of eight (8) feet, and shall be set back a minimum of ten (10) feet from the road right-of-way line.

- B. Signs which direct traffic movement on to or within a property and which do not contain any advertising copy or logo, and which do not exceed nine (9) square feet in area for each sign. Horizontal directional signs, on and flush with paved areas may exceed nine (9) square feet. A directional sign shall be located on the lot or parcel behind the road right-of-way line.
- C. One church announcement bulletin shall be permitted on any site which contains a church regardless of the district in which located, provided said bulletin does not exceed twenty-five (25) square feet in area and a height of six (6) feet, and is set back a minimum of ten (10) feet from the road right-of-way line.

Section 19.05 - Prohibited Signs

- A. **Miscellaneous Signs and Posters:** Tacking, pasting, or otherwise affixing of signs or posters visible from a public way except “no trespassing”, “no hunting”, “beware of animal”, warning or danger signs, and other legal posting as required by law, located on the walls of buildings, barns, sheds, on trees, poles, posts, or fences is prohibited.
- B. **Banners:** Pennants, banners, searchlights, twirling signs, sandwich board signs, sidewalks or curb signs, balloons, or other gas-filled figures are prohibited except as provided in Section 19.10G. - “Temporary Signs”.
- C. **Swinging Signs:** Signs which swing or otherwise noticeably move as a result of wind pressure because of the manner of suspension or attachment are prohibited.
- D. **Moving Signs:** Except as otherwise provided in this Article, no sign or any portion thereof which moves or assumes any motion constituting a non-stationary or fixed condition shall be permitted.
- E. **Abandoned Signs:** Signs that advertise an activity, business, product, or service no longer conducted or available on the premises on which the sign is located shall be prohibited.
- F. **Unclassified Signs:**

The following signs are prohibited:

1. Signs which imitate an official traffic sign or signal which contains the words “stop”, “go slow”, “caution”, “danger”, “warning”, or similar words, except as otherwise provided in this Article.
2. Signs which are of a size, location, content, coloring, or manner of illumination which may be confused with or construed as a traffic control device or which hide from view any traffic or road sign or signal or which obstructs the view in any direction at a road intersection.
3. Signs which contain statements, words, or pictures of an obscene, pornographic, or immoral character.

Section 19.06 - Permitted Signs in AR District

- A. Each sign advertising the type of farm products grown on the farm premises shall not exceed nine (9) square feet in area.
- B. One identification sign shall be permitted for each public road frontage for a vehicle entrance, for a school, church building, or other authorized use or lawful nonconforming use, except home occupations. Each sign shall not exceed twenty-five square feet in area and eight (8) feet in height.

Section 19.07 - Permitted Signs in RR, LFR, MDR, HDR, MFR, OSC, and NSC Districts

- A. One identification sign shall be permitted for each public road frontage, for a subdivision, multiple family building development, mobile home park, and each OSC or NSC business. Each sign shall not exceed twenty-five (25) square feet in area. One additional sign advertising "For Rent" or "Vacancy" may be placed on each public road frontage of a rental residential development provided that such sign shall not exceed nine (9) square feet in area and is incorporated into the identification sign. Each sign shall be located behind the right-of-way line of any public road.
- B. One identification sign shall be permitted for each public road frontage for a vehicle entrance for a school, church, public building, or other authorized use lawful nonconforming use, except home occupations. Each sign shall not exceed twenty five (25) square feet in area and eight (8) feet in height.

Section 19.08 - Permitted Signs in GSC and I Districts

On-site canopy or marquee signs, wall signs, and free-standing signs are allowed, subject to the following:

- A. Signs permitted for single buildings on developed lots or group of lots developed as one lot, not in a shopping center, not subject to Section 19.08B, are subject to the following:
 - 1. Each developed lot or parcel shall be permitted at least eighty (80) square feet of sign area for all exterior on-site signs. The area of exterior on-site signs permitted for each lot or parcel shall be determined as two (2) square feet of sign area or each one (1) linear foot of building length which faces on a public road. The maximum area for all exterior on-site signs for each developed lot or parcel shall be 200 square feet. No free-standing identification sign shall exceed 100 square feet in area. No exterior wall sign for businesses without ground floor frontage shall exceed twenty-four (24) square feet in area.
 - 2. Each developed lot or parcel shall be permitted two (2) exterior on-site signs. For every developed lot or parcel which is located at the intersection of two (2) collector or arterial roads or highways as classified in the "Master Plan" three (3) exterior on-site signs shall be permitted. Only one (1) free-standing identification sign shall be permitted on any single road. All businesses without ground floor frontage shall be permitted one (1) combined exterior wall sign, in addition to the number of signs allocated to the developed lot or parcel. The total area of all exterior signs shall not exceed the total sign area permitted in Section 19.08A.1.
 - 3. Each sign shall pertain exclusively to the name and type of business carried on within the building
- B. Signs permitted for a shopping center or other integrated group of stores; commercial buildings, office buildings, or industrial buildings not subject to Section 19.08A. are subject to the following:
 - 1. Each shopping center or commercial district shall be permitted one (1) free-standing identification sign for each collector or arterial road or highway, as classified in the "Master Plan" that it faces. Each sign shall state only the name of the shopping center and major tenants located therein. The sign area shall be determined as one (1) square foot for each one (1) linear foot of building which faces one public road. The maximum area for each free-standing sign shall be

- (200) square feet. Tenants of a shopping center shall not permit individual free-standing identification signs.
2. Each business in a shopping or commercial district with ground floor frontage shall be permitted one exterior wall sign. The area for such an exterior wall sign shall be computed as one (1) square foot for each one (1) linear foot of building frontage occupied by the twenty-five (25) square feet in area. Each sign shall pertain exclusively to the name and type of business carried on within the building.
- C. Window signs shall be permitted and shall not be included in total sign area computation if said signs do not occupy more than twenty-five (25) percent of the total window area of the floor level on which displayed or exceed a total of (200) square feet for any one building. If window signs occupy more than (25) percent of said window area or exceed a total of (200) square feet for any one building, they shall be treated as exterior signs and shall conform to Section 19.08 A.1. and 19.08 B.2.
 - D. A time and temperature sign shall be permitted in addition to the above conditions, provided that ownership identification or advertising copy does not exceed ten (10%) percent of the total sign area and further provided that the total area of the sign does not exceed thirty (30) square feet.
 - E. In addition to the provisions of section 19.08A. and B. above, an automobile service station may have one (1) additional sign for each public road or highway frontage for a vehicle entrance, for the purpose of advertising gasoline prices and other services provided on the premises. Said sign shall be mounted on a free-standing structure or on the structure of another permitted sign, provided that clear views of road traffic by motorists or pedestrians are not obstructed in any way. Said sign shall not exceed eight (8) square feet in area and shall not advertise the brand name of gasoline or other materials sold on the premises.

Section 19.09 - Outdoor Advertising Signs

- A. Outdoor advertising signs are permitted only on undeveloped and vacant unimproved lots in GSC and I Districts, and shall be considered the principal use of such lots. Signs shall not be placed on a lot with any other building thereon, and no structure shall be placed on a lot where such sign is located.
- B. Where two (2) or more outdoor advertising signs are located along the frontage of a road or highway, they shall be not less than (1,000) feet apart. A double-face (back-to-back) or a V-type structure shall be considered a single sign, provided the interior angle of such signs does not exceed twenty (20) degrees.
- C. The total surface area, facing in the same direction along the advertising sign, shall not exceed three hundred (300) square feet. Signs may be single or double-faced and shall contain no more than two (2) faces or panels.
- D. Outdoor advertising signs shall not exceed twenty (20) feet in height from ground level. The permitted height may be increased to forty (40) feet by the Planning Commission, if it can be shown that excessive grades, building interference, bridge obstruction, and similar conditions obstruct views of the sign.
- E. Outdoor advertising signs shall not be erected on the roof of any building, nor have one sign above another.

Section 19.10 - Temporary Signs

Unilluminated on-site temporary exterior signs may be erected in accordance with the regulation of the Article.

- A. In all districts, one (1) sign for each public road frontage advertising a recorded subdivision or development shall be permitted. Each sign not to exceed twenty-five (25) square feet in area. Each sign shall be removed within one (1) year after the sale of seventy (70%) percent of all lots or units within said subdivision or development.
- B. In MFR Districts, one (1) sign on each public road frontage of a new multiple family development advertising the new dwelling units for rent or sale, not to exceed twenty-five (25) square feet in area shall be permitted. Each sign shall be removed within sixty (60) days of the initial rental or sale of seventy (70%) percent of the dwelling units within the development.
- C. One identification sign shall be permitted for all building contractors, one for all professional design firms and one for all lending institutions on sites under construction, each sign not to exceed nine (9) square feet in area, with not more than a total of three (3) such signs permitted on one site. If all building contractors, professional design firms, and lending institutions combine together in one identification sign, such sign shall not exceed twenty-five (25) square feet in area with not more than one sign permitted on one site. Signs shall have a maximum height of ten (10) feet and shall be confined to the site of the construction, construction shed, or construction trailer and shall be removed within fourteen (14) days after final inspection by the Zoning Administrator.
- D. Temporary real estate direction signs, not exceeding three (3) square feet in area and four (4) in number, showing a directional arrow and placed back of the road right-of-way line, shall be permitted on approach routes to an open house. Signs shall not exceed three (3) feet in height.
- E. Temporary signs announcing any annual or semi-annual public, charitable, educational, or religious event or function is to occur, shall be permitted. Maximum sign area shall not exceed twenty-five (25) square feet. Signs shall be allowed no more than twenty-one (21) days prior to the event or function. If building mounted, signs shall be flat wall signs and shall not project above the roof line. If ground mounted, signs shall not exceed six (6) feet in height. Signs shall be set back in accordance with Section 19.03D. of this Ordinance.
- F. In RR, LFR, MDR, HDR, MFR, OSC, and NSC districts, one (1) temporary real estate "For Sale", "For Rent", or "For Lease" sign, located on the property and not exceeding nine (9) square feet in area shall be permitted. In the GSC and I districts, one (1) signs of this type shall be permitted, provided it does not exceed twentyfive (25) square feet in area and is set back in accordance with Section 19.03D. of this Ordinance. If the lot or parcel has multiple street frontage, one (1) additional sign not exceeding nine (9) square feet in area in the RR, LFR, MDR, HDR, MFR, OSC, and NSC and twenty-five (25) square feet in area in the GSC and I districts is permitted on a lot or parcel. Such signs shall be removed within seven (7) days following the sale, rent, or lease. In no case, shall a sign list the sale, rent, or lease of a building which is not located on the property on which the sign is located.
- G. Banners, pennants, searchlights, balloons, or other gas-filled figures are permitted in GSC and I districts for a period not to exceed thirty (30) consecutive days. Such signs and objects shall not obstruct pedestrian or vehicular view.

Section 19.11 - Exempted Signs

The following types of signs are exempted from all provisions of this Ordinance, except for construction and safety regulations and the following standards:

- A. Signs of a non-commercial nature and in the public interest, erected by, or on the order of a public officer, in the performance of a public duty, such as directional signs, regulatory signs, warning signs, and informational signs.
- B. Political campaign signs announcing candidates seeking public political office and other data pertinent thereto, except as prohibited in Section 19.05A, providing that these signs shall be removed within seven (7) days after the date of the election for which they were posted.
- C. Names of brands, manufacturer's labels and logos, date of erection, monument citations, commemorative tablets, and the like, when carved into stone, concrete, metal, or similar materials or made of other permanent type construction and made an integral part of the structure.

Section 19.12 - Nonconforming Signs

Nonconforming signs shall not be reestablished after the activity, business, or usage to which or related has been discontinued for ninety (90) days or longer.

Section 19.13 - Permits and Fees

- A. Application for a permit to erect or replace a sign shall be made by the owner of the property, or his authorized agent, to the Township Clerk, by submitting the required forms, fees, exhibits, and information. Fees for sign permits for all signs erected pursuant to Sections 19.04, 19.06, 19.07, 19.08, 19.09, and 19.10 shall be established by resolution of the Township Board.
- B. An application for a sign permit shall contain the following information:
 - 1. The applicant's name and address in full, and a complete description of his relationship to the property owner.
 - 2. If the applicant is other than the property owner, the signature of the property owner concurring in submittal of said application is required.
 - 3. The address of the property.
 - 4. An accurate scale drawing of the property showing location of all buildings and structures and their uses, and location of the proposed sign.
 - 5. A complete description and scale drawing of the sign, including all dimensions and the area in square feet.
- C. All proposed sign locations or relocations shall be inspected on the site by the Township Zoning Administrator for conformance to this Ordinance prior to placement of the site foundations shall be inspected by the Zoning Administrator on the site prior to pouring of the concrete for the sign support structure.
- D. A sign permit shall become null and void if the work for which the permit was issued has not been completed within a period of six (6) months after the date of the permit. Said sign permit may be extended for a period of thirty (30) days upon request by the applicant and approval of the Planning Commission.
- E. Painting, repainting, cleaning, and other normal maintenance and repair of a sign or a sign structure, unless a structural or size change is made, shall not require a sign permit.

Section 19.14 - Removal of Signs

Signs erected or maintained in violation of this Ordinance shall be removed.