

Chapter 24

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***Cross references**—Buildings and building regulations, ch. 10; land divisions and subdivisions, ch. 16; zoning, ch. 30.

State law reference—Highway advertising act, MCL 252.301 et seq.



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Sec. 24-1. 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 or profession conducted or to a commodity, service or entertainment sold or offered. This definition includes:

- (1) *On premises* means an advertising sign whose message relates to a business, service commodity, or profession lawfully being conducted, sold or offered on the same premises.
- (2) *Off premises* means an advertising sign whose message relates to a business, service commodity, or profession lawfully being conducted, sold or offered on premises other than that upon which the sign is located.

Billboards (outdoor advertising structure) means a sign that is affixed to or erected upon a freestanding framework designed or intended to be used for posting information not pertaining directly to the use of the premises on which it is located.

Election campaign signs means signs advertising candidates or soliciting votes in support of or against any proposition or issue at any general, primary, special, school or any other election.

Freestanding sign means a sign supported by one or more uprights, poles or braces placed in the ground and not attached to any building. Such sign may also be commonly known as a ground sign or pole sign.

Identification sign means a sign that identifies the activity, business, owner or resident and/or the street address and which sets forth no other advertisement.

Illuminated sign means a sign that provides artificial light directly (or through any transparent or translucent material) from a source of light connected with such sign, or a sign illuminated by a light so shielded that no direct rays from it are visible from any public right-of-way or from the abutting property.

Institutional bulletin board means a sign containing a surface area upon which is displayed the name of a religious institution, school, library, community center or similar institution and the announcement of its institutional services or activities.

Marquee sign means an identification sign attached to a marquee, canopy or awning projecting from and supported by the building above sidewalk level.

Pole sign means a freestanding sign supported by one or more uprights, poles or braces placed in the ground and not attached to any building.

Portable sign means a freestanding sign not permanently anchored or secured to either a building or the ground, but usually anchored or secured to a trailer or frame capable of being moved from place to place.

Projecting sign means a sign which projects from and is supported by a wall of a building and does not extend beyond the minimum required setback line or into and over the street right-of-way, and not less than nine feet, at its lowest point, above sidewalk or ground level.

Real estate sign means a sign located on premises containing land or buildings for sale, rent or lease or buildings under construction and intended for sale, rent or lease.

Surface display area means the entire area of any sign within a single continuous perimeter enclosing the extreme limits of lettering, representations, emblems, or other figures, together with any material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the background against which it is placed. Structural members bearing no sign copy shall not be included. One side or all faces of a freestanding or projecting sign shall be included in calculating surface display area if the advertising is the same on both sides.

Temporary sign means a display or informational sign with or without a structural frame including seasonal produce sales or decorative displays for holiday or public demonstrations.

Wall sign (fascia sign) means a sign which is attached directly to or painted upon a building wall and which does not extend more than 18 inches therefrom nor above the roof line, with the exposed face of the sign in a plan parallel to the building wall.

Window sign means a sign affixed to, in contact with, or within 12 inches of a window; installed for purposes of viewing from outside the premises. This does not include merchandise located in a window.

(Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 2)

Cross reference—Definitions generally, § 1-2.

Sec. 24-2. Signs prohibited.

Any sign not expressly permitted by this chapter is prohibited.

(Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 3)

Sec. 24-3. Signs permitted without a permit.

The following signs shall be permitted in the township without the necessity of obtaining a sign permit and subject to the requirements stated in this chapter:

- (1) House numbers legible from the street, and name plates (fraternal, social, apartment and professional) identifying the occupant or address of a parcel of land, and not exceeding two square feet in surface display area.
- (2) Memorial signs or tablets, especially those containing the names of the buildings and dates of construction.
- (3) For sale signs attached to vehicles.
- (4) Flag bearing the official design of a nation, state, municipality, business institution or organization.
- (5) Traffic or other municipal signs, also private traffic control signs which conform to the requirements of the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

- (6) Park and playground signs.
 - (7) Election signs subject to the following:
 - a. They shall be removed within ten days following the election.
 - b. They shall not be placed closer than 500 feet from any polling place entrance.
 - (8) One temporary, nonilluminated real estate sign per lot, advertising the sale or lease of a property or building, not exceeding 40 square feet in surface display area (but no more than 20 square feet per side); such a sign being placed no closer to the street line than ten feet from the road right-of-way.
 - (9) Temporary construction signs subject to the following:
 - a. Total surface display area shall not exceed 32 square feet.
 - b. Sign height shall not exceed eight feet.
 - c. Placement shall be ten feet inside the property boundaries to which the sign pertains.
 - (10) Trespassing, safety or caution signs, not exceeding two square feet in area shall be permitted.
 - (11) One nonilluminated sign attached to a residence announcing a home occupation or professional service not to exceed four square feet in surface display area and attached flat against a building wall.
- (Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 4)

Sec. 24-4. Signs permitted with a permit.

The following signs shall be permitted in the township upon obtaining a sign permit through the township building inspector in accordance with the terms of this chapter and subject to the requirements stated in this section:

- (1) Institutional bulletin board located on the premises to which the sign pertains and not exceeding 50 square feet in surface display area.
- (2) One sign, not to exceed 32 square feet, per entrance may be placed identifying a subdivision or development. The sign may be illuminated. The sign may contain only the name of the subdivision or development and developer. The sign and structure must be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing and intended character of the general vicinity.
- (3) One sign placed flat against the main building announcing the identification of an apartment development that shall not exceed 12 square feet in surface display area. Such a sign may be illuminated provided that the source of the light is not visible beyond the property lines of the parcel upon which it is located.

- (4) The following types of signs shall be permitted on the premises of offices, businesses, or other commercial enterprises except industries and may be illuminated in accordance with provisions of this section:
- a. Freestanding signs:
 1. Two on-premises advertising signs per business not exceeding 140 square feet in surface display area. For every commercial business that owns over 100 feet of road frontage, that business would be allowed one more advertising sign per 100 square feet of frontage with a maximum of no more than four signs per business.
 2. Such signs may be located in the front yard with the leading edge of the sign at least ten feet back of the right-of-way line.
 3. The bottom of freestanding signs shall be no less than six feet from ground level and the top of the sign shall be no higher than 30 feet in height.
 - b. Wall signs:
 1. One per building, not exceeding 15 percent of the building face to which it is attached.
 2. Wall signs shall be placed flat against the main building or parallel to the building on a canopy and may only face public streets or parking areas which are part of the development.
 3. Wall signs shall not project above the roof line or cornice.
 - c. Marquee signs:
 1. Marquee signs shall not exceed the surface display area permitted for wall signs.
 2. No portion of a marquee sign shall be higher than the roof line or cornice.
 - d. Projecting signs:
 1. One per building, with a surface display area not exceeding 1½ square feet in area for each lineal foot of the building frontage up to a maximum of 50 square feet.
 2. Projecting signs shall be attached directly to a building by means of building mounts or hung from a mast arm. These support members may also include decorative appurtenances, but external bracing such as guy wires and metal framework shall be prohibited.
 3. Signs must project at a 90-degree angle to the building surface to which attached.
 4. Projecting signs shall not exceed beyond the minimum required setback line or into and over the street right-of-way.
 5. The minimum clearance of a projecting sign over a sidewalk shall be nine feet.

- e. Service station signs: In the case of gasoline service stations, a two-sided sign indicating only price and grade of gasoline, as shown on the pumps, either side not to exceed 16 square feet in surface display area, may be permanently attached to the support pole of the freestanding sign. If the support pole is poorly located, such price sign may be attached to a light standard or support. Price signs shall be attached with the bottom of the sign no lower than six feet from ground level.
- f. Parking lot signs:
 - 1. One directional sign at each point of ingress or egress shall be permitted, which may bear the sponsor's ad, name or trademark, the enterprise it is intended to serve and directions of movement.
 - 2. Surface display area per sign shall not exceed six square feet.
- g. All signs as regulated by subsection 24-3(5) shall be permitted upon the premises of industries; provided, however, that the maximum permitted surface display area shall be 200 square feet.
- h. One freestanding sign identifying an industrial complex, located at the entrance and not exceeding 100 square feet in surface display area nor higher than six feet above the ground shall be permitted. Such signs shall be at least 30 feet from any street line and may be illuminated provided the source of illumination is not visible beyond the property line of the parcel.
- i. Freestanding signs identifying shopping malls or shopping centers shall be permitted. The signs shall conform to section 24-4(4)a. of this section. Each business within the mall or shopping center shall be permitted one wall sign conforming to the requirement of section 24-4(4)b. of this section. Where the roof structure of a building containing more than one business is extended over a walkway along the outer edge of the building, one marquee sign and/or one under hanging sign may be permitted of each business in the building.

(Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 5)

Sec. 24-5. Sign illumination.

Signs for which illumination is permitted may be illuminated by a direct or indirect source of light provided the light source is shielded in a manner so that no direct rays or glare emanating from the light source are visible from any public right-of-way or from the abutting property. Signs which incorporate any flashing or intermittent lights are prohibited. This shall not, however, preclude the use of time-temperature, programmable message signs and neon signs. Signs shall not revolve or move in any manner.

(Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 6)

Sec. 24-6. Moving or revolving signs prohibited.

Any sign which revolves or has any visible moving parts, visible revolving parts or visible mechanical movement of any type, or other apparent visible movement achieved by electrical, electronic or mechanical means, excepting those actions associated with the time-temperature and programmable message signs, shall be prohibited.

(Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 7)

Sec. 24-7. Signs not to constitute a traffic hazard.

No sign shall be erected at the intersection of any street in such a manner as to obstruct free and clear vision; or any location by reason of the position, shape or color, it may interfere with, obstruct the view of or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal or device; or which makes use of the words "stop," "look," "danger," or any word, phrase, symbol or character in such manner as to interfere with, mislead or confuse traffic.

(Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 8)

Cross reference—Traffic and vehicles, ch. 26.

Sec. 24-8. Temporary signs.

Any freestanding sign not permanently anchored or secured to either a building or ground, including but not limited to, A frame, T frame, or inverted T shaped structures, including those signs mounted on wheeled trailers, shall be permitted in the township upon obtaining a sign permit through the township building inspector in accordance with the terms of this chapter and subject to the requirements stated in this section:

- (1) All illuminated portable signs shall comply with the requirements of section 24-4.
- (2) All portable signs shall be located no closer than one-half the setback distance for a permanent structure to the street right-of-way line.
- (3) Any portable signs shall not exceed 50 square feet in surface display area.
- (4) No sign permit shall be issued for a business more than twice a year or for more than 15 consecutive days.

(Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 9)

Sec. 24-9. Outdoor advertising structures.

Outdoor advertising structures and billboards, other than those signs which exclusively advertise businesses on the premises on which they are located, shall be permitted in the township upon obtaining a sign permit through the township building inspector in accordance with the terms of this chapter and subject to the requirements stated in this section:

- (1) *Location.* Outdoor advertising structures shall be located at least 25 feet from the right-of-way line of the street on which it fronts.
- (2) *Illumination.* Outdoor advertising structures may be illuminated; providing, however, that such illumination is not visible beyond the property lines of the parcel upon which the structure is located.

- (3) *Maintenance.* Outdoor advertising structures shall be adequately maintained. Such maintenance shall include property alignment of structure, continued readability of structure and preservation of structure with paint or other surface-finishing material. If an outdoor advertising structure is not maintained, written notice of any disrepair shall be issued by the building inspector to the owner of such structure. If the disrepair is not corrected within 30 days, such structure shall be removed at the owner's expense.
 - (4) *Size.* No outdoor advertising structure shall exceed 720 square feet in surface display area.
 - (5) *Spacing.* No outdoor advertising structure shall be located within 500 feet any other outdoor advertising structure.
 - (6) *Compliance with other regulations.* The outdoor advertising structure or billboard complies with Public Act No. 106 of 1972, the Highway Advertising Act (MCL 252.301 et seq.).
- (Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 10; Ord. of 10-7-1991)

Cross reference—Zoning, ch. 30.

Sec. 24-10. Construction requirements.

Signs and sign structures shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the Uniform Building Code. All signs of electrical construction and installation shall comply with the National Electrical Code and shall be connected by a licensed electrician.

(Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 11)

Sec. 24-11. Administration of the chapter; permits.

(a) The township building inspector shall administer this chapter. If the township building inspector shall find that any of the provisions of this chapter are being violated, he shall notify the violator, in writing, setting forth the nature of the violation and the steps necessary to correct the violation. The township building inspector shall order the discontinuance of any violation of this chapter. The failure to comply with any such order of the township building inspector shall subject the violator to enforcement of the nuisance and penalty provisions of this chapter.

(b) Application for a permit to erect or replace a sign shall be made to the township building inspector by submission of the required forms, fees, exhibits, and information by the owner of the property on which the sign is to be located, or by his agent, or lessee. The application shall contain the following information:

- (1) The property owner's name and address in full.
- (2) Applicant's name and address.
- (3) Address of property on which the sign is to be situated.
- (4) Business to which the sign belongs or relates.

- (5) Total display area in square feet.
- (6) Proposed setback from right-of-way.
- (7) Sign type.
- (8) Sign purpose.
- (9) Sign height and width of building to be served.
- (10) Drawing of proposed sign indicating proposed copy.

(c) Sign permits issued on the basis of plans and applications approved by the township building inspector authorize only the design and construction set forth in such approved plans and applications, and not other design.

(d) The township building inspector shall not approve plans or issue sign permits for any sign which does not conform to the provisions of this chapter.

(e) The township building inspector shall maintain a record of all sign permits issued, and such record shall be open for public inspection.

(f) Permit fees will be established by resolution of the township board of trustees.
(Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 12)

Sec. 24-12. Procedures for variance from terms of chapter.

(a) *Generally.* These variance procedures are instituted to provide an opportunity for the relaxation of the terms of this chapter where it would not be contrary to the public interest and where, owing to the conditions peculiar to the sign request and not the result of the action of the applicant, literal enforcement of the chapter would result in an unnecessary and undue hardship.

(b) *Procedures.*

- (1) An applicant for a variance shall file a written request with the township building inspector setting forth the specific variance requested and the reasons for the variance.
- (2) The township building inspector shall investigate the request and prepare a written recommendation regarding the request for the township zoning board of appeals.
- (3) The applicant shall be afforded an opportunity to appear before the township zoning board of appeals in support of the request for a variance.
- (4) The township zoning board of appeals shall not approve an application for a variance unless it finds that:
 - a. Strict enforcement of the chapter would cause unnecessary hardship and deprive the applicant of rights enjoyed by similarly situated township residents or businesses.
 - b. The conditions and circumstances of the applicant are unique and not applicable to other township residents or businesses.

- c. The conditions and circumstances were not created by the applicant.
 - d. The requested variance will not confer special privileges that are denied other similarly situated residents or businesses.
 - e. The requested variance is not contrary to the spirit and interest of this chapter.
- (Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 13)

Sec. 24-13. Violations of chapter declared a nuisance.

Violations of the provisions of this chapter are hereby declared to be a public nuisance which may be enjoined or which may subject the violator to civil damages and the fines and penalties provided in section 1-7.

(Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 14)

Sec. 24-14. Nonconforming signs; alterations; replacements.

For the purpose of this chapter:

- (1) A nonconforming sign is one that does not conform with the provisions of this chapter but which was lawfully existing and maintained within the township prior to and at the time the ordinance from which this chapter derives became effective, or was lawfully in existence and in use on the property inside the township on the date that the ordinance from which this chapter is derived went into effect.
- (2) A nonconforming sign shall not be repaired, altered, reconstructed, relocated, or expanded in any manner unless or until the sign is made to conform with the provisions of this chapter. Ordinary maintenance and minor repairs which will not increase the normal life of the sign which are required for safety purposes will be permitted. Structural alterations to a nonconforming sign are prohibited.
- (3) Notwithstanding any other provision contained in this chapter, in the event a change in the ownership or name of the business identified or advertised by a nonconforming sign necessitates the replacement of a sign face, the nonconforming sign may be altered by either repainting the sign face or replacing one or more removable panels on the sign without first making the entire sign conform with the provisions of this chapter. Nothing contained herein shall extend or alter the applicable period of time within which the nonconforming sign must be made to conform to the provisions of this chapter.
- (4) If the use of a nonconforming sign is discontinued for more than six months, it shall be made to conform with the provisions of this chapter or shall be removed.
- (5) All nonconforming signs shall be brought into conformance with a ten-year grace period from the effective date of this chapter amendment.

- (6) An inventory of nonconforming signs shall be prepared within six months of amendment of this chapter. Owners of property on which nonconforming signs are located shall be notified by certified mail with nine months of amendment of this chapter stating the time they shall have to bring their signs into conformance.
(Ord. of 6-5-1989, § 15; Amend. of 4-7-2003)