

ARTICLE: 12.0-SIGN REGULATIONS

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SIGN REGULATIONS

SECTION 12.01 - PURPOSE

The purpose of this Article is to regulate all exterior signs placed for exterior observance so as to protect property values, to protect the character of the various neighborhoods in Freedom Township, to protect health, safety and morals and to promote the public welfare.

The principle features are the restriction of advertising to the use of the premises on which the sign is located and the restriction of the total sign area permissible per site. Any sign placed on land or on a building for the purposes of identification or for advertising a use conducted therein or thereon shall be deemed to be accessory and incidental to such land, building or use. It is intended that the display of signs will be appropriate to the land, building or use to which they are appurtenant and be 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 in their demand for public attention. It is further intended that all signs within one complex or center be coordinated with the architecture in such a manner that the overall appearance is harmonious in color, form and proportion.

It is also intended by this Article that all temporary signs erected for directional purposes, for public information or to call attention to special events shall be confined to those that are of general public interest and that such signs shall be limited to the giving of information.

All other signs, commonly referred to as outdoor advertising, billboards, or poster panels which advertise products or businesses not connected with the site or building on which they are located, are deemed by this Article to constitute a principal use of a lot. Any widespread display of outdoor advertising is deemed to be inappropriate to the character and sound development of the Freedom Township and it is intended that such advertising be confined to undeveloped commercial or industrial property.

SECTION 12.02 - GENERAL SIGN REGULATIONS

No sign shall be erected or replaced at any location where, by reason of the position, size, shape, color, or illumination, it may interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal or device so as to interfere with, mislead, or confuse traffic. All signs shall be designed, constructed, and maintained so as to be appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of their vicinity so as not to change the essential character of such area. Signs shall conform to all yard and height requirements of the district in which located unless otherwise provided in this Article. A permit for any sign whether freestanding or mounted on or applied to a building or other structure or for any change in copy, shall be obtained from the Township Zoning Administrator before such sign may be erected, replaced, or relocated. Strings of pennants or flags attached to or part of a sign, or independently displayed for purposes of advertising, shall be prohibited.

SECTION 12.03 - SIGNS PERMITTED IN ALL ZONING DISTRICTS

Subject to the other conditions of this Ordinance, the following signs shall be permitted anywhere within Freedom Township.

- A. One sign shall be permitted for all building contractors, one for all professional firms and one for all lending institutions on sites under construction, each sign not to exceed six (6) square feet overall, with not more than a total of three (3) such signs permitted on one site. The sign shall be confined to the site of the construction, construction shed or construction trailer and shall be removed within fourteen (14) days of the beginning of the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.
- B. One temporary real estate "For Sale" sign located on the property and not exceeding six (6) square feet in area shall be permitted for each lot. If the lot or parcel has multiple frontage, one additional sign not exceeding six (6)

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square feet in area shall be permitted on the property on each street frontage. Under no circumstances shall more than two (2) such signs be permitted on a lot. Such sign(s) shall be removed within seven (7) days following the sale.

- C. Street banners advertising a public entertainment or event, shall be displayed not more than fourteen (14) days prior to or seven (7) days after the public entertainment or event.
- D. Name, directional and informational signs and emblems of service clubs, places of worship, civic organizations, and quasi-public uses shall be permitted on private property if set back in accordance with the requirements of the zoning restrictions relating to the classification of the property on which the sign is placed. Each sign shall be not more than three (3) square feet in area. The top of such sign shall not exceed eight (8) feet above grade. In the event that there is a need for more than one sign at one location, all such signs must be consolidated and confined within a single frame.

**SECTION 12.04 - SIGNS PERMITTED IN AGRICULTURAL/RESOURCE DISTRICT**

The following signs are permitted:

- A. One incidental sign advertising the type of farm products grown on the farmstead premises is permitted. Such sign shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area.
- B. One sign for each public street frontage identifying a park, or school building, other authorized use, or a lawful nonconforming use, each sign not to exceed eighteen (18) square feet in area.

**SECTION 12.05 - SIGNS PERMITTED IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS**

The following signs are permitted:

- A. One sign for each public street frontage advertising a recorded subdivision or development, each sign not to exceed eighteen (18) square feet in area. Such sign shall be removed within one year after the sale of ninety (90) percent of all lots or units within said subdivision or development.
- B. One sign for each public street frontage identifying a multiple-family building, subdivision, or development, not having commercial connotations, each sign not to exceed eighteen (18) square feet in area.
- C. One sign advertising "For Rent" or "Vacancy" may be placed on each frontage of a rental residential development provided that such sign shall not exceed three (3) square feet in area and is incorporated into the identification sign permitted in Section 12.05C, preceding.
- D. One sign for each public street frontage identifying a school, church, public building, other authorized use or lawful nonconforming use, each sign not to exceed eighteen (18) square feet in area.
- E. Include bed & breakfast sign requirement.

**SECTION 12.06 - SIGNS PERMITTED IN COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS**

- A. A sign, except outdoor advertising signs which shall be regulated as set forth in Section 12.07, herein, in the C-1 district, is permitted only where it identifies an enterprise occupying the same lot upon which the sign is located and shall conform to the following regulations.
  - 1. An identification sign, limited to one sign per building, may be affixed to a wall of the building. If the building contains more than one enterprise, as in a shopping center, each enterprise located therein may have one such sign. Total sign area for wall signs shall not exceed two (2) square feet for each foot of length or height of the wall to which it is affixed, whichever is the greater. Wall signs shall not project more than one (1) foot from the wall face, as measured to the farthest face of the sign.

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2. Where more than one sign is permitted on a wall face, the minimum horizontal distance between such signs shall be two (2) feet.
  3. One free-standing identification sign may be erected for an individual lot, or group of lots development as one lot, when not provided for by Sections 12.06 A-4 and A-5, following, and shall not exceed thirty-six (36) square feet in area for offices and eighty (80) square feet in area for other uses. If the lot fronts on more than one street, the total permitted sign area may be divided among two or more such signs, provided, however, that the maximum permitted sign area shall not be exceeded.
  4. One free-standing identification sign may be erected for a research park or office center, or combined park/office center. Such sign shall not exceed thirty-six (36) square feet in area. If the lot fronts on two or more collector or arterial streets, one such sign may be permitted for each such frontage.
  5. One free-standing identification sign stating the name of a shopping center or commercial development, and major tenants therein may be erected for a shopping center or other integrated group of stores or commercial buildings. The sign area shall not exceed one (1) square foot per front foot of building, or buildings for which it is erected; however, such sign shall not exceed two hundred (200) square feet in area. If the lot fronts on two or more collector or arterial streets, one such sign may be permitted for each such frontage.
  6. Identification signs for rear or side entrances shall be permitted, at the rate of one such sign for each entrance, provided that the area of each such sign shall not exceed four (4) square feet. The area shall not be included in the area limitations set forth elsewhere in this Section.
  7. Signs in the interior of a building or shopping center shall not be regulated by this ordinance.
  8. Roof signs may be substituted for wall signs, and wall signs may extend above the top edge of walls, provided that the top edge of such signs shall not be higher than four (4) feet above the roof surface.
  9. Signs may be placed on the vertical faces of a marquee or may project below the lower edge of a marquee not more than twenty-four (24) inches, but the bottom of a sign placed on a marquee shall be no less than eight (8) feet above the sidewalk or grade at any point. No part of the sign shall project above the top of the vertical faces of a marquee.
- B. In the I-1 district, a sign, except outdoor advertising signs which shall be regulated as set forth in Section 12.07, herein, is permitted only where it identifies a business occupying the lot upon which the sign is located. Such signs shall conform to the following regulations.
1. An identification sign, limited to one sign per building, may be affixed to a wall of the building. If the building contains more than one enterprise, each enterprise may have one such sign, similarly affixed. Total sign area shall not exceed one (1) square foot for each foot in length or height of the wall, whichever is greater, to which it is affixed. A wall sign shall not project more than one (1) foot from the face of the wall, measured to the farthest face of the sign.
  2. One free-standing identification sign may be erected for an industrial park, district, or subdivision, or for an individual lot or group of lots. The area of such sign shall not exceed eighty (80) square feet. If the lot fronts on two or more collector or arterial streets one sign may be permitted on each such frontage.
  3. Identification signs for rear or side entrances shall be permitted, at the rate of one for each entrance provided that an area of each such sign shall not exceed four (4) square feet. The area shall not be included in the area limitations set forth elsewhere in this Section.
  4. Roof signs may be substituted for wall signs, and wall signs may extend above the top edge of wall, provided that the top edge of such signs shall not be higher than four (4) feet above the roof surface.

**ARTICLE: 12.0 - SIGN REGULATIONS****SECTION 12.07 - OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SIGNS**

Outdoor advertising signs are permitted only in accordance with the following regulations.

- A. Outdoor advertising signs are permitted only on unimproved lots in the I-1 district, and shall be considered the principal use of such lots. Such signs shall not be placed on a lot with any other structure thereon, and no structure shall be placed on a lot on which such sign is located.
- B. Where two (2) or more outdoor advertising signs are located along the frontage of a street or highway, they shall not be less than one thousand (1,000) feet apart. A double face (back-to-back) or a V-type structure shall be considered a single sign.
- C. The total surface area, facing in the same direction, of any outdoor advertising sign shall not exceed three hundred (300) square feet. Such signs may be single-face or double face, but no such sign shall contain more than two faces, signs, or panels.
- D. No outdoor advertising sign shall be more than twenty (20) feet in height from ground level, provided however, that the permitted height may be increased to forty (40) feet by the Zoning Administrator, if it can be shown that excessive grades, building interference, bridge obstruction, and the like exist.
- E. No outdoor advertising signs shall be erected on the roof of any building, nor have one sign above another sign.
- F. Outdoor advertising signs shall:
  1. Be designed, constructed, operated, maintained, and managed so as to be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing or intended character of the general vicinity and that such a use will not change the essential character of the area; and
  2. Not be hazardous or disturbing to existing or projected future uses.

**SECTION 12.08 - SIGNS FOR AUTOMOBILE SERVICE STATIONS**

Signs for automobile service stations shall be regulated as set forth in Section 12.06A, herein. In addition, the following regulations shall apply.

- A. The permitted wall sign or legend may be attached either to a wall of the building or the canopy of a fuel pump island.
- B. One permanent sign for the purpose of advertising gasoline prices and similar announcements, when mounted on a free-standing structure or on the structure of another permitted sign, may be installed along each street frontage, provided that clear views of street traffic by motorists or pedestrians are not obstructed in any way. Such sign(s) shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area. All temporary signs for such purposes and all banners, streamers, flags (other than state or national flags) and similar advertising objects shall be prohibited.

**SECTION 12.09 - EXEMPTIONS**

The following types of signs are exempted from all the 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 his public duty, such as directional signs, regulatory signs, warning signs, and information signs.
- B. Temporary signs announcing any public, charitable, educational, or religious event or function, located entirely within the premises of that institution and set back not less than ten (10) feet from the property line. Maximum sign area shall be twenty-four (24) square feet. Such signs shall be allowed no more than twenty-one (21) days prior to the event or function and must be removed within seven (7) days after the event or function. If building

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mounted, these signs shall be flat wall signs and shall not project above the roof line. If ground mounted, the top shall be no more than six (6) feet above ground level.

- C. Names of buildings, dates of erection, monumental citations, commemorative tablets, and the like, when carved into stone, concrete, or similar material or made of bronze, aluminum, or other permanent type construction and made an integral part of the structure.
- D. Signs directing traffic movement onto a premise or within a premise, not exceeding eight (8) square feet in area for each sign. Horizontal directional signs, on and flush with paved areas, are exempt from these standards.
- E. Temporary real estate directional signs not exceeding three (3) square feet in area and four (4) in number showing a directional arrow and placed back of the property line shall be permitted on approach routes to an open house. The top of such signs shall not exceed three (3) feet in height.
- F. Political campaign signs announcing candidates seeking public political office and other date pertinent thereto.
- G. Time and temperature signs.

**SECTION 12.10 - PROHIBITED SIGNS**

The following signs are prohibited anywhere within Freedom Township:

- A. Signs which imitate an official traffic sign or signal which contain the words "stop", "go slow", "caution", "danger", "warning", or similar words except as provided in Section 12.09B, herein.
- B. Signs which are of a size, location, content, coloring, or manner or illumination which may be confused with or construed as a traffic control device or which hide from view any traffic or street sign or signal or which obstruct the view in any direction at a street or road intersection.
- C. Signs which contain or consist of pennants, ribbons, streamers, spinners, strings of light bulbs, or other similar devices.
- D. Signs which are placed on a street or other public right-of-way.
- E. Signs which are pasted or attached to utility poles, trees, or other signs.
- F. Signs which are painted directly onto the wall, exterior surface of a window, or any other structural part of a building.

**SECTION 12.11 - PERMITS AND FEES**

- A. Application for a permit to erect or replace a sign, or to change copy thereon, shall be made by the owner of the property on which the sign is to be located, or his authorized agent, and the sign company in the case of outdoor advertising signs, to the Township Zoning Administrator by submitting the required forms, fees, exhibits, and information. Fees for sign permits shall be determined by resolution of the Township Board and no part of such fees shall be returnable to the applicant. No fee shall be required of any governmental body or agency.
- B. The application 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. The address of the property.
  - 3. An accurate survey drawing of the property showing location of all buildings and structures and their uses, and location of the proposed sign;

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- 4. A complete description and scale drawings of the sign, including all dimensions and the area in square feet.
- C. All signs shall be inspected by the Township Zoning Administrator for conformance to this ordinance prior to placement on the site. Foundations shall be inspected by the OEO on the site prior to pouring of the concrete for the sign support structure.
- D. Any sign involving electrical components shall be wired by a licensed electrician in accordance with the Freedom Township Electrical Code and the electrical components used shall bear an Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., seal of inspection.
- E. 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. A permit may be renewed and no additional fee shall be collected for the renewal.
- F. Painting, repainting, cleaning and other normal maintenance and repair of a sign or sign structure, unless a structural or copy change is made, shall not require a sign permit.
- G. All signs shall comply with the requirements of the building code of Freedom Township.
- H. Signs for which a permit is required shall be inspected periodically by the Zoning Administrator for compliance with this ordinance and other laws of Freedom Township.

**SECTION 12.12 - ILLUMINATION**

- A. The light from any illuminated sign or from any light source, including the interior of a building, shall be so shaded, shielded, or directed that the light intensity or brightness shall not adversely affect surrounding or facing premises nor adversely affect safe vision of operators of vehicles moving on public or private roads, highways, or parking areas. Light shall not shine or reflect onto or into residential structures.
- B. No sign shall have blinking, flashing, or fluttering lights or other illuminating devices which have a changing light intensity, brightness or color, or which are so constructed and operated as to create an appearance of illusion of writing or printing, except that movement showing the date, the time and the temperature exclusively may be permitted. Nothing contained in this ordinance shall, however, be construed as preventing the use of lights or decorations related to religious festivities. Beacon lights or search lights shall not be permitted as a sign or for advertising purposes.
- C. No exposed reflective type bulbs and no strobe lights or incandescent lamps shall be used on the exterior surface of any sign so as to expose the face of the bulb, light or lamp to any public street or adjacent property.

**SECTION 12.13 - COMPUTATION OF SURFACE AREA**

- A. The surface area of a sign shall be computed as including the entire area within a regular geometric form or combinations of such forms comprising all of 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 material shall not be included in computation of surface area.
- B. Only one face of a free-standing sign shall be used in computing surface area if the two sign faces are eighteen (18) inches or less apart and if the surfaces between the two faces bear no copy or other display material; however, in such cases the total sign area may be two (2) times the permitted area and shall be divided among the several faces of the sign.

**SECTION 12.14 - REMOVAL**

- A. The Ordinance Enforcement Officer(OEO) shall order the removal of any sign erected or maintained in violation of this ordinance. Thirty (30) days notice in writing shall be given to the owner of such sign or of the building,

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structure, or premises on which such sign is located, to remove the sign or to bring it into compliance with the ordinance. Upon failure to remove the sign or to comply with this notice the Township shall remove the sign; the Township shall remove the sign immediately and without notice if it reasonably appears that the condition of the sign is such as to present an immediate threat to the safety of the public. Any cost of removal incurred by the Township shall be assessed to the owner of the property on which such sign is located and may be collected in the manner of ordinary debt or in the manner of taxes and such charge shall be a lien on the property.

- B. A sign shall be removed by the owner or lessees of the premises upon which the sign is located when the business which it advertises is no longer conducted on the premises. If the owner or lessee fail to remove the sign, the Township shall remove it in accordance with Section 12.14A, herein. These removal provisions shall not apply where a subsequent owner or lessee conducts the same type of business and agrees to maintain the signs as provided in this ordinance or changes the copy on the signs to advertise the type of business being conducted on the premises and provided the signs comply with the other provisions of this ordinance.

**SECTION 12.15 - NONCONFORMING SIGNS**

Copy may be changed on nonconforming signs, provided that the sign area is not increased, and provided that no structural changes are made in the sign.

**SECTION 12.16 - RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SIGNS**

The following regulations apply to all signs, except those signs permitted in Sections 12.03, 12.03A, 12.05A, and 12.05C.

- A. The advertiser is hereby made responsible for copy, structure, lighting, and all other parts of a sign.
- B. Signs shall be constructed and erected by only individuals or companies licensed in the State of Michigan for such purpose.
- C. All signs requiring permits shall display, in a conspicuous place, evidence of the permit and containing such date as might be required by the Zoning Administrator, including the name of the individual or company erecting a sign.
- D. Each individual or company erecting signs within Freedom Township shall annually provide the Township Building Inspector with a certificate of public liability insurance. A permit for erecting a sign shall not be issued unless such certificate is on file with the Township Building Inspector.
- E. All signs and components thereof shall be kept in good repair and in a safe, clean, neat and attractive appearance.

**SECTION 12.17 - REGISTRY**

The Ordinance Enforcement Officer(OEO) shall maintain an up-to-date registry of each sign erected in Freedom Township after the effective date of this ordinance. The registry shall contain the following information: location of the sign, name and address of the property owner, advertiser, and individual or company erecting a sign and height, dimensions and face area, and date of placement on the site.