

SEWRPC Model Zoning Ordinance Regulations for Signs

The following sign regulations are intended to comply with the Reed v. Town of Gilbert U.S. Supreme Court decision in 2015, which determined that content-based sign regulations are unconstitutional. These regulations have not been reviewed by an attorney. Review by the municipal attorney is strongly recommended before adopting these regulations as part of a town, village, city, or county zoning ordinance.

Content-based sign regulations are those that consider the message, text, or event on the sign when determining if a sign is an allowed use. In other words, if the Zoning Administrator must read what will be on the sign to determine which regulations apply, the sign is NOT content neutral. Regulations that have nothing to do with a sign's message, including size, type of sign (wall sign, pylon sign, etc.), lighting, and construction materials, may continue to be regulated under local and county zoning ordinances. Exceptions in this model include for election campaign signs, which are regulated in accordance with provisions in the Wisconsin Statutes; and directional signs, which help provide safe traffic flow. For more information, see the following October 2015 "Perspectives on Planning" newsletter article on sign regulations prepared by Professor Brian Ohm of UW-Extension:

<https://wisconsin.planning.org/documents/924/APA-WI-15-10-Oct-2015-Sign-Regs-After-Reed.pdf>

In the following model ordinance, additional requirements a community may wish to consider adopting are shown in *[brackets and italics]*. Communities may also adjust or revise the Ordinance to reflect community preferences regarding sign types, size, number, and other requirements. Where the word "*Town*" appears in italics, the word "Village," "City," or "County" may be substituted. These regulations are intended to be adopted as a Section in an existing zoning ordinance. As such, they do not include provisions for appeals, variances, permit fees, severability, nonconforming uses and structures, and similar considerations which would typically be addressed in other sections of a complete zoning ordinance. Please contact SEWRPC if you would like examples of other zoning ordinance sections.

Please contact SEWRPC at (262) 547-6721 or sewrpc@sewrpc.org if you have any questions or would like a Word version of this model sign ordinance.

(Note: The following section numbers should be numbered as appropriate to fit the existing community zoning ordinance format.)

- 6.01 Purpose and Intent
- 6.02 Compliance
- 6.03 Noncommercial Signs
- 6.04 Existing Nonconforming Signs
- 6.05 Exemptions
- 6.06 Abandoned Signs
- 6.07 Permit Procedures
- 6.08 Measurement Standards
- 6.09 Construction and Maintenance
- 6.10 General Provisions
- 6.11 Landscaping
- 6.12 Signs Permitted in All Districts Without a Permit
- 6.13 Signs Permitted in Agricultural Districts With a Permit
- 6.14 Signs Permitted in Residential Districts With a Permit
- 6.15 Signs Permitted in Business and Manufacturing Districts with a Permit
- 6.16 Signs Permitted in Institutional and Park Districts with a Permit
- 6.17 Signs Permitted in Nonmetallic Mining and Landfill Districts With a Permit
- 6.18 Temporary and Portable Signs [*and Searchlights*]
- 6.19 Signs Prohibited in Any District

Related Definitions

6.01 PURPOSE AND INTENT

The intent of this Section is to provide comprehensive and balanced sign regulations that will preserve the right of free speech and expression; avoid excessive levels of visual clutter or distraction that are potentially harmful to traffic and pedestrian safety, property values, business opportunities, and community appearance; and ensure that signs are well-constructed and maintained and expressive of the identity of individual activities and the community as a whole.

6.02 COMPLIANCE

No sign shall hereafter be located, erected, moved, reconstructed, extended, enlarged, converted, or structurally altered without conformance with the provisions of this Ordinance and a sign permit, unless exempted from sign permit requirements under Section 6.05 or Section 6.12.

6.03 NONCOMMERCIAL SIGNS

Any sign authorized by this Ordinance may contain a noncommercial message. Noncommercial signs shall be subject to the same permit requirements, restrictions on size and type, and other specifications set forth in this Section.

6.04 EXISTING NONCONFORMING SIGNS

A. **Signs Lawfully Existing** at the time of the adoption or amendment of this Ordinance may be continued although the size or location does not conform with the provisions of this Ordinance. Such signs shall be deemed nonconforming uses or structures and the nonconforming use and structure provisions of this Ordinance shall apply. Maintenance of a nonconforming sign shall comply with Section 6.09.C.

- B. **When a Business or Other Use Changes** necessitate a new sign message or sign structure, the sign shall be brought into conformance with the provisions of this Ordinance, including an application for a sign permit.

6.05 EXEMPTIONS

The following signs are exempt from the regulations contained in this Ordinance:

- A. **A Sign Posted** by the *Town*; a County, State, or Federal agency.
- B. **A Sign Integrated** into or on an automatic teller machine, coin-operated machine, or vending machine.
- C. **A Sign Carried** by a person.
- D. **A Sign Not Visible** from any public street, highway, sidewalk, bicycle path, or park.
- E. **Street Addresses and Numbers.**
- F. **Murals** and other works of art that are not related by logo, pictorial depiction, or other means to the advertisement of any product or service or the identification of any business.
- G. **Holiday** lights and decorations containing no commercial message and displayed during the appropriate time of year.
- H. **Flags** of the United States and Wisconsin and other countries or states, up to a maximum of three per lot or parcel. If the flag is displayed on a flagpole, the maximum dimension of any flag shall be proportional to the flagpole height, and the hoist side of the flag shall not exceed 20 percent of the vertical height of the pole. Flags must be flown in accordance with protocol established by the U.S. Congress. Any flag not meeting these requirements shall be considered a sign subject to the requirements of this Ordinance and not allowed as an exemption under this Section 6.05.

6.06 ABANDONED SIGNS

All signs, sign messages, and/or supporting structures, as applicable, shall be removed by the owner or lessee of the premises upon which a sign is located when the business it advertises is no longer conducted, or is dilapidated or beyond repair under the provisions of Section 66.0413 of the Wisconsin Statutes. If the owner or lessee fails to remove such signs or sign structures, the Zoning Administrator shall give the owner a 30-day written notice by certified mail to remove said sign. Upon failure to comply with the first notice, the Zoning Administrator shall, by certified mail, send a second notice giving the owner an additional 48 hours to remove the sign. Upon failure to comply with the second notice, the *Town* may cause removal to be executed, the expenses of which will be assessed as a special tax to the property on which the abandoned sign is located.

6.07 PERMIT PROCEDURES

No sign shall hereafter be located, erected, moved, reconstructed, extended, enlarged, converted, or structurally altered without a sign permit except those signs exempted in Section 6.05 or 6.12 of this Ordinance, and all signs shall fully conform with the provisions of this Ordinance.

- A. **Applications for a Sign Permit** shall be made on forms provided by the Zoning Administrator and shall include the following information:
 1. Name, address, and telephone number of the applicant and property owner.
 2. Location of the building, structure, or lot upon which the sign is to be attached or erected.
 3. Name of the person, firm, corporation, or association erecting the sign.

4. Written consent of the owner or lessor of the building, structure, or lot upon which the sign is to be affixed. No written consent is required if the property owner is the applicant.
 5. A scale drawing or image of the sign, including colors to be used. A written description of the drawing shall also be submitted, including a detailed description of the materials, colors, and letter height, type, and style to be used; the sign dimensions; the type of illumination, if any; and the method of construction and attachment.
 6. A scale drawing of the site indicating the location and position of the sign in relation to nearby buildings and structures, existing signs on the site, and abutting public streets, parks, and public rights-of-way.
 7. A description of any existing signs that will remain on the site.
 8. Copies of any other permits required and issued for the sign.
 9. Additional information as may be required by the Zoning Administrator, Building Inspector, or Plan Commission.
- B. **Sign Permit Applications** shall be filed with the Zoning Administrator or designee. The Zoning Administrator shall review the application for its completeness and accuracy and approve or deny, in writing, the application within 20 [*10 for communities with full-time Zoning Administrators*] working days of receipt of a complete application, unless Plan Commission review is required or the time is extended by written agreement with the applicant. If deemed necessary because of sign type, location, or proposed construction, the Zoning Administrator may refer any application for a sign permit to the Building Inspector and/or the Plan Commission for review and guidance. The Building Inspector and/or Plan Commission shall review and make a recommendation within 45 days of receiving the application. When reviewing a sign permit application, the *Town* shall consider the following:
1. The location, appearance, material, lighting, height, and size of the proposed sign and supporting structure in relation to the site and surrounding uses.
 2. The safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicle operators on adjoining streets and highways and occupants of abutting properties.
 3. The effect of the sign on the scenic beauty or character of the streetscape, neighborhood, and community.
- C. **Time to Construct.** A sign permit shall become null and void if work authorized under the permit has not been completed within six months of the date of issuance. The Zoning Administrator may approve an extension of up to three months based on a written request from the applicant.
- D. **Bond.** Applicants for a sign permit shall, before the permit is granted, execute a cash bond or other appropriate surety in a sum fixed by the Plan Commission upon recommendation of the Zoning Administrator, but not to exceed \$25,000. The form of the cash bond or other surety shall indemnify the *Town* against all loss, cost of damages, or expense incurred or sustained by or recovered against the *Town* by reason of the erection, construction, or maintenance of the sign. A liability insurance policy issued by an insurance company authorized to do business in the State of Wisconsin and conforming to the requirements of this Section may be permitted by the Plan Commission in lieu of a bond or other surety.

6.08 MEASUREMENT STANDARDS

- A. **Signable Area.** The signable area of a building is designated as the area of the facade of the building up to the roof line which is free of windows and doors or major architectural detail on which signs may be displayed. In computing signable area, any facade which faces or abuts a public right-of-way may be utilized. Calculations may include parapet walls, but shall exclude door and window openings.
- B. **Option 1 (see Illustration No. 1):**

Measuring Sign Face. In calculating the area of a sign to determine whether it meets the requirement of this Ordinance, the Zoning Administrator shall include the sign copy and any border or frame surrounding that copy. Supporting posts or foundations shall be excluded from the area calculation. The area of irregularly shaped signs or signs containing two or more detached elements shall be determined by the area of the smallest regular polygon that will encompass all elements of the sign.

Alternative to “B” above:

B. Option 2 (see Illustration No. 1):

Measuring Sign Face. In calculating the area of a sign to determine whether it meets the requirements of this Ordinance, the Zoning Administrator shall include the sign copy and any border or frame surrounding that copy. Supporting posts or foundations shall be excluded from the area calculation. For a wall sign comprised of individual letters, figures, or elements on a wall or similar surface of the building or structure, the area and dimensions of the sign shall encompass a regular geometric shape (rectangle, circle, trapezoid, triangle, etc.), or a combination of regular geometric shapes, which form, or approximate, the perimeter of all elements in the display, the frame, and any applied background that is not part of the architecture of the building.

C. Measuring Sign Height. The sign height shall be the vertical distance measured from the grade at the base of the sign structure to the highest point of such sign or sign structure. In the case where a sign is to be located in a raised planting bed or berm, the grade shall be determined by the average of the grades measured at the base of the planting bed or the toes of the slope at the front and back of the bed or berm.

6.09 CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

- A. Wind Pressure and Dead Load Requirements.** All signs and supporting structures shall be designed and constructed to withstand wind pressure of not less than 40 pounds per square foot of area; and shall be constructed to receive dead loads as required in the *Town Building Code* or other applicable ordinance.
- B. Protection of the Public.** The temporary occupancy of a sidewalk or street or other public property during construction, removal, repair, alteration, or maintenance of a sign is permitted provided the space occupied is roped or fenced off, or otherwise isolated.
- C. Maintenance.** The owner of any sign shall keep the sign and supporting structure in good maintenance and repair which includes restoring, repainting, or replacement of a worn or damaged legally existing sign to its original condition; and shall maintain the premises on which the sign is erected in a clean, sanitary, and inoffensive condition, free and clear of all obnoxious substances, rubbish, and weeds. Restoration or painting which changes the size, color, or location of a sign will require a new sign permit.
- D. Supporting Foundations, Posts, or Braces** shall be constructed of galvanized iron or properly treated wood, steel, copper, brass, or other noncorrosive and noncombustible material. Projecting signs shall be attached to the supporting building or structure by noncorrosive metal bolts, anchors, cable, or other metal attachments so as to ensure permanent and safe construction, and shall be maintained free from rust or other defects. Every means or device used for attaching any sign shall extend through the walls of the building should the Building Inspector determine that the safe and permanent support of such sign so requires and shall be securely anchored by wall plates and nuts to the inside of the walls or to bearings on the underside of two or more roof or ceiling joists in accordance with instructions given by the Building Inspector. Small flat signs containing less than 10 square feet of area may be attached to a building by the use of lag bolts or other means to the satisfaction of the Building Inspector.

- E. **No Signs** or sign anchors, braces, or guide rods shall be attached, fastened, or anchored to any fire escape, fire ladder, or standpipe. No sign or any sign anchor, brace, or guide rod shall be erected or maintained so as to hinder or prevent ingress or egress through any door, window, or fire escape or so as to hinder or prevent the raising or placing of ladders against such building by the Fire Department.
- F. **Signs with Electrical Wiring** shall require an electrical permit from the *Town* Electrical Inspector. [*Overhead electrical wiring shall be prohibited.*]
- G. **If External Illumination** is approved, the fixture shall be mounted on a permanent unmovable base and the neck soldered so as to prevent the fixture from being tampered with or redirected.

6.10 GENERAL PROVISIONS

- A. **Signs Facing Residential Districts.** No sign except those permitted in Sections 6.04, 6.05, and 6.12 shall be permitted to face a residential district within 100 feet of such district boundary. The distance shall be calculated as the shortest measurable distance between the face of the sign to the edge of the residential zoning district, in a straight line without regard to intervening structures.
- B. **Signs Facing Federal Aid Primary Highways** shall meet all the requirements and regulations, including applicable permits, set forth in Wisconsin Statutes and Federal regulations, and shall fully conform with the provision of this Ordinance.
- C. **Words and Phrases on Signs** should be minimized to allow reading or interpretation from a moving vehicle at posted speed limits without hazard. A combination of 10 words, sets of numbers, logos, or pictures normally will be considered as a guide and the applicant may be requested to modify the sign to delete excessive verbiage or numbers.
- D. **Signs Shall Not Resemble**, imitate, or approximate the shape, size, form, or color of railroad or traffic signs, signals, or devices and shall not obstruct or interfere with the effectiveness of railroad or traffic signs, signals, or devices.
- E. **Signs Shall Not Be Placed** so as to obstruct or interfere with traffic visibility, nor be lighted in such a way as to cause glare or impair driver visibility upon public ways.
- F. **Signs May Be Illuminated Provided** they are not located in a Residential Zoning District [*or list specific districts*]. Signs, other than public traffic control signs, shall have no elements that are flashing, blinking, rotating, or pulsating. Bare (uncovered) light bulbs are prohibited. Signs that include changeable copy reader boards and Electronic Message Boards (EMBs) shall not be considered flashing or pulsating signs, provided they comply with all other applicable provisions of this Ordinance.
- G. **Sign Colors.**
 - 1. Florescent colors shall not be permitted. Where such colors constitute a component of a standard corporate theme or identity, muted versions of such colors shall be used.
 - 2. Color schemes and lettering styles shall be used consistently on all signage used on a single lot or shopping center.

6.11 LANDSCAPING

All permanent freestanding signs shall be set in a landscaped base [*, except in an agricultural zoning district or the B-__ (Central Business District) zoning district*]. The base shall be of appropriate size to contain flowers, groundcover, ornamental grasses, shrubs, and/or other base plantings [*except turf grass*] that will

enhance and complement the sign. The landscape area shall be at least six feet wide with a length of at least 1.5 times the overall length of the sign face or sign structure, whichever is longer.

6.12 SIGNS PERMITTED IN ALL DISTRICTS WITHOUT A PERMIT

The following signs are permitted in all zoning districts without a permit, subject to the specified conditions:

- A. **Signs Carved Into** or affixed flat to a building in such a way that they are not directly illuminated, are not made of a reflecting material, do not contrast sharply in color with the building, and do not exceed two inches in thickness.
- B. **Temporary Freestanding or Wall Signs** on properties or buildings for sale, lease, or rent not exceeding six square feet in area on one side or 12 square feet in area on all sides and a maximum of six feet in height in a residential district; or not exceeding 24 square feet in area on one side or 48 square feet in area on all sides and a maximum of 12 feet in height in other districts. If not attached to a wall, such signs shall be set back at least 10 feet from a side or rear lot line, shall not be located in a public right-of-way, and shall be removed within 10 days after the property or building is sold, leased, or rented.
- C. **One Additional Temporary Freestanding Sign**, not exceeding six square feet in area on one side or 12 square feet in area on all sides, provided that no such signs shall exceed four feet in height or be erected or placed within a public right-of-way. Such temporary signs are limited to no more than three days duration two times in any calendar year.
- D. **A Permanent Wall Sign** not to exceed two square feet in area and mounted flush against a dwelling.
- E. **Election Campaign Signs**. As provided in Section 12.04 of the Wisconsin Statutes, election campaign signs are permitted in residential zoning districts subject to the following requirements:
 - 1. The sign shall not be erected prior to the first day of the “election campaign period” as defined in the Wisconsin Statutes, and shall be removed within 10 days following the election.
 - 2. Election signs shall not exceed 11 square feet in area unless the sign is affixed to a permanent structure; does not extend beyond the perimeter of the structure; and does not obstruct a window, door, fire escape, ventilation shaft, or other area which is required by the *Town* building code to remain unobstructed.
 - 3. No election campaign sign shall be placed within a public right-of-way nor so close to a pedestrian way as to hinder or endanger safe passage.

6.13 SIGNS PERMITTED IN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS WITH A PERMIT

The following signs may be permitted in all Agricultural Zoning Districts [*or list specific districts*] subject to the following regulations:

- A. **Each Farm is Permitted the Following On-Premise Signs:**
 - 1. Wall signs affixed to or painted on farm buildings, provided the total area of such signs shall not exceed 100 square feet.
 - 2. One ground or pylon sign, which shall meet the requirements of Section 6.15.B for ground signs or Section 6.15.I.1 for pylon signs. One additional ground or pylon sign shall be allowed along each street on which the farm has frontage.
 - 3. One additional freestanding sign not to exceed 10 feet in height above the ground surface and meeting all yard requirements for the district in which the sign is located. Said sign shall not exceed 16 square feet in area on one side and 32 square feet in area on all sides.

- B. **One Off-Premise Ground or Pylon Sign.** Off-premise ground signs shall not exceed eight feet in height and shall not exceed 32 square feet on one side or 64 square feet on all sides. Off-premise pylon signs shall not exceed 10 feet in height or 16 square feet in area on one side or 32 square feet on all sides. Off-premise ground or pylon signs shall not be located within a public right-of-way or within the vision clearance triangle of any intersecting streets.

6.14 SIGNS PERMITTED IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS WITH A PERMIT

The following signs are permitted in all Residential Zoning Districts (*or list specific districts*) subject the following regulations:

- A. **Permanent Ground Signs** placed at the entrance to a subdivision or development, which shall be set back at least 10 feet from a street right-of-way or side or rear lot line. The Plan Commission may permit the sign to be located closer to a street right-of-way after determining that the sign will have no adverse impact on public safety. The Plan Commission shall determine the appropriate size of the sign based on the design of the sign and its compatibility with adjacent land uses. In addition:
 - 1. The Subdivider, condominium association, or homeowners association shall be responsible for paying all costs for maintenance of the sign and associated landscaping. Written agreements shall be on file between the *Town* and the Subdivider, condominium association, and/or homeowners association as to the maintenance and care of the sign and landscaping. The agreement shall also identify the responsible party for paying the costs of removing the sign in the event it is not properly maintained.
 - 2. All subdivision or development ground sign placement, replacement, relocation, and removal shall be at the expense of the Subdivider, condominium association, or homeowners association. If the sign is in disrepair or becomes a hazard to public safety, the *Town* shall have the authority to remove the sign and assess the costs as provided for in the agreement.
- B. **Temporary Signs** on land actively being subdivided or developed, provided the sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in area on one side, and 64 square feet in area on all sides, and shall not be closer than 10 feet to a street right-of-way or side or rear lot line. The sign shall be removed at the time development has been completed, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

6.15 SIGNS PERMITTED IN BUSINESS AND MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS WITH A PERMIT

The following signs are permitted in all Business and Manufacturing Zoning Districts (*or list specific districts*) subject to the following regulations:

- A. **On-Premise Awning, Canopy, or Marquee Signs** affixed flat to the surface of the marquee, awning, or canopy are permitted provided the sign does not extend vertically or horizontally beyond the limits of said marquee, awning, or canopy. A marquee, awning, or canopy may extend to within two feet of the vertical plane formed by the curb of a public street. A sign not exceeding two square feet in area located immediately in front of the entrance to an establishment may be suspended from a canopy or overhang provided that the sign shall be at least 10 feet above the sidewalk.
- B. **On-Premise Ground Signs** shall not exceed eight feet in height above the mean centerline street grade and shall not exceed 32 square feet on one side or 64 square feet on all sides on lots with a frontage less than 150 feet. On-premise ground signs shall not exceed 10 feet in height above the mean centerline street grade and shall not exceed 50 square feet on one side or 100 square feet on all sides on lots with a frontage of 150 feet or more. Ground signs shall be set back at least 10 feet from a public right-of-way or side or rear lot line [*except in the B-__ (Central Business District)*].

C. **Electronic Message Boards (EMBs) and Changeable Copy Reader Boards.** EMBs or changeable copy reader boards may be included as part of ground signs, subject to the following additional requirements:

1. Changeable copy reader boards and EMBs can be included on ground signs; however, the changeable copy area shall not exceed 50 percent of the total sign face area.
2. The changeable copy portion of the sign must occupy a secondary position to the name of the business, development, and/or tenant.
3. EMB may display static images only. No blinking, flashing, moving, scrolling or animated messages are permitted. A message/image on an EMB shall not flash, scroll, twirl, or otherwise move when changing.
4. Text or images, or any portions thereof, on an EMB may change up to, but not more frequently than, once every five seconds.
5. The maximum illumination of any electronic message or manual changeable letter sign shall not exceed 15 foot-candles when measured with a light meter held perpendicular to the sign at a distance of 24 inches.
6. Each sign shall be placed in such a manner so as to not interfere with, confuse, or present any hazard to traffic or pedestrians.
7. A sign containing an EMB shall not be located closer than 100 feet from a residentially zoned property. The distance shall be calculated as the shortest measurable distance between the face of the sign to the edge of the residential zoning district, in a straight line without regard to intervening structures.
8. Audio speakers and all forms of pyrotechnics are prohibited.

D. **On-Premise Menu Boards**, not to exceed two per drive-through or walk-up food establishment.

E. **On-Premise Projecting Signs**, subject to the following requirements:

1. The sign shall not exceed 40 square feet in area on one side and 80 square feet in area on all sides for any one building.
2. The sign shall not extend above the top of the wall to which it is attached or above the top of the second floor window, whichever is lower.
3. The sign shall not extend more than six feet into any required yard and shall not be less than 10 feet from all side and rear lot lines.
4. The sign shall not extend more than three feet into any public right-of-way.
5. The sign shall not exceed a height of 20 feet above the mean centerline street grade.
6. The sign shall not be less than 10 feet above the sidewalk or less than 15 feet above a driveway, alley, or other area used by motor vehicles.

F. *[On-Premise Roof Signs shall not exceed 10 feet in height above the roof, shall meet all the yard and height requirements for the district in which they are located, and shall not exceed 200 square feet on all sides for any one building.]*

G. **On-Premise Wall Signs** shall not exceed in area 30 percent of the signable area of the building, as defined in Section 6.08 of this Ordinance, or 300 square feet, whichever is less, and shall not extend above the roof line of the building, except those on the face of a parapet. Wall signs shall not extend more than 12 inches from the wall surface. Signs attached to fences shall be considered to be wall signs.

H. **On-Premise Window Signs**, except for painted signs and decals, shall be placed only on the inside of commercial buildings. Window signs shall not exceed 25 percent of the glass area of the pane upon which the sign is displayed.

I. **On- or Off-Premise Pylon Signs**, subject to the following requirements:

1. [Unless meeting the locational requirements in Paragraph 2 below,] Pylon signs shall meet the following requirements:
 - a. The sign face shall not exceed 32 square feet on one side or 64 square feet on all sides.
 - b. The sign shall not extend into any public right-of-way.
 - c. The sign shall not be less than 10 feet from all side lot lines.
 - d. Shall not exceed 20 feet in height above the mean centerline street grade.
2. [Pylon signs on lots located within 150 feet of an interchange providing access to an Interstate Highway may be a maximum of 40 feet in height and shall be set back a minimum of 15 feet from all lot lines. The sign face shall not exceed 100 square feet on one side or 200 square feet on all sides.]

J. **On- or Off-Premise Wayfinding and Directional Signs** provided that no sign shall be placed in a street right-of-way, exceed four square feet in area on one side or eight square feet in area on all sides, or exceed a height of four feet above the ground surface.

K. **Combinations** of any of the above signs shall meet all the requirements for that type of sign. The total number of signs shall be limited as follows:

1. Shopping centers may provide one ground or pylon sign for each 500 feet of street frontage. The shopping center may also provide one wall, canopy, and/or fascia sign for each business in the shopping center.
2. The Town may require the owner of a shopping center or other multi-tenant building to submit a master sign plan for review and approval. The number and size of signs shall conform to the requirements of this Ordinance.
3. Gasoline and/or service stations may provide a maximum of one ground sign per street frontage and one wall sign. One pylon sign may be substituted for one of the ground signs. Price signs for gasoline or diesel fuel sales required by State or Federal regulatory agencies shall not be subject to the limitations on the number of signs; however, such price signs shall not exceed an additional 20 square feet in area and shall be incorporated into a permanent sign.
4. For all other free-standing businesses and industries, total signs shall be limited by the following table:

<u>Floor Area</u>	<u>Maximum Number Of Signs Permitted</u>
0 - 5,000 sq. ft.	2
5,001 - 20,000 sq. ft.	3
20,001 - 50,000 sq. ft.	4
More than 50,000 sq. ft.	5

[Large development with one or more buildings totaling a floor area of 20,001 square feet or greater with multiple arterial street frontages may have an additional ground sign to identify the development, subject to Town Board approval following a recommendation from the Plan Commission.]

5. Menu boards, wayfinding/directional signs, and window signs shall not be included in the calculation of the maximum number of signs under Paragraph K.4.

6.16 SIGNS PERMITTED IN INSTITUTIONAL AND PARK DISTRICTS WITH A PERMIT

The following signs are permitted in all Institutional and Park Zoning Districts (or list specific districts), subject to the following requirements:

- A. **One Ground or Pylon Sign**, which shall meet the requirements of Section 6.15.B for ground signs or Section 6.15.I.1 for pylon signs.

- B. **One Wall Sign**, which shall not exceed in area 30 percent of the signable area of the building, as defined in Section 6.08 of this Ordinance, or 300 square feet, whichever is smaller, and shall not extend above the roof line of the building except for those allowed on the face of a parapet.
- C. **Bulletin Boards on Ground, Pylon, or Wall Signs**, in addition to the signs allowed under 6.16.A and 6.16.B, which shall not exceed 32 square feet in area. Bulletin Boards shall be set back at least 10 feet from any public right-of-way or any side or rear lot lines.
- D. **Wayfinding and Directional Signs** provided that no sign shall be placed in a street right-of-way, exceed four square feet in area on one side or eight square feet in area on all sides, or exceed a height of four feet.

6.17 SIGNS PERMITTED IN NONMETALLIC MINING AND LANDFILL DISTRICTS WITH A PERMIT

The following signs are permitted in all Non-Metallic Mining and Landfill Zoning Districts (*or list specific districts*), subject to the following requirements:

- A. **One On-Premise Ground or Pylon Sign**, which shall meet the requirements of Section 6.15.B for ground signs or Section 6.15.I.1 for pylon signs.
- B. **One Off-Premise Ground or Pylon Sign**. Off-premise ground signs shall not exceed eight feet in height and shall not exceed 32 square feet on one side or 64 square feet on all sides. Off-premise pylon signs shall not exceed 10 feet in height or 16 square feet in area on one side or 32 square feet on all sides. Off-premise ground or pylon signs shall not be located within a public right-of-way or within the vision clearance triangle of any intersecting streets.
- C. **Wayfinding and Directional Signs** provided that no sign shall be placed in a street right-of-way, exceed four square feet in area on one side or eight square feet in area on all sides, or exceed a height of four feet.

6.18 TEMPORARY AND PORTABLE SIGNS [AND SEARCHLIGHTS]

In addition to the temporary signs allowed under Section 6.05 without a sign permit, the following temporary and portable signs may be allowed subject to review and approval of a sign permit:

- A. **Flag Signs, Banners, [or air-activated signs]** may be approved on a temporary basis in any district by the Plan Commission following a review and recommendation by the Zoning Administrator. Temporary sign permits shall not be granted for a period of more than three weeks, and each business or organization shall be limited to *two* temporary sign permits for a flag sign or banner in any 12-month period. Banners displayed above a street shall not exceed 120 square feet in area on each side. Banners attached to a building or other structure shall not exceed 32 square feet in area.
- B. **Temporary Signs**. A temporary sign other than a flag or banner may be allowed in any district for up to three weeks, provided the sign is not permanently mounted or affixed to the ground. The sign area shall not exceed 32 square feet on one side or 64 square feet on all sides, and shall be at least 10 feet from a property line[, *except in the B-__ (Central Business District) zoning district*]. Only one temporary sign may be located on a lot. Each business or organization shall be limited to *two* temporary sign permits in any 12-month period.
- C. **[Moveable Signs]**. *The Plan Commission may permit the use of a moveable sign on sidewalks in the B-__ (Central Business) District. The sign shall not exceed 2.5 feet in width or four feet in height. The sign shall not be permanently attached to the sidewalk and shall not be chained or attached to street trees, street furniture, or other structures or fixtures. The sign shall be displayed only during hours in*

which the business it advertises is open, and shall be located within 10 feet of the main building entrance. The sign shall be placed to allow at least three feet of sidewalk width for pedestrian movement.]

- D. *[Searchlights. The Plan Commission may permit the temporary use of a searchlight for advertising purposes in any district provided that the searchlight will not be located in any public right-of-way, will not be located closer than 10 feet to an adjacent property, and will not cause a hazard to traffic or adjoining properties. Searchlight permits shall not be granted for a period of more than five days in any six month period.]*
- E. **Permit Required.** The permit required by Section 6.07 shall be required for all temporary [*and moveable*] signs [*and searchlights*].

6.19 SIGNS PROHIBITED IN ANY DISTRICT

The following signs are not permitted in any zoning district:

- A. **Abandoned Signs.** See Section 6.06.
- B. **Advertising Vehicles or Trailers.** A vehicle or trailer which has attached to or located thereon any sign or device for the purpose of advertising a business, product, or service or for directing people to a business or activity. No person shall park any such vehicle or trailer on a public right-of-way, on public property, or on private property so as to be visible from a public right-of-way. This provision is not intended to prohibit vehicle signs that are customarily attached, lettered, or painted on a vehicle or trailer to identify the ownership or function of the vehicle.
- C. **Signs Whose Content Violates** *Town, County, State, or Federal laws or regulations, including but not limited to the obscenity provisions of Chapter 944 of the Wisconsin Statutes.*
- D. **Signs Painted, Attached,** or affixed to trees or other living vegetation.
- E. **See Section 6.10** for additional types of prohibited signs.

RELATED DEFINITIONS

(Note: The following definitions should be included in the Definitions section of a zoning ordinance.)

Mural

A picture painted on an exterior surface of a structure.

Shopping Center

A group of commercial establishments planned, constructed, and managed as a unified entity that share a common on-site parking area for customers and employees, with provision for goods delivery separated from customer access, and with aesthetic considerations and protection from the elements.

Sign

Any object, device, display, structure, or part thereof which is designed to advertise, announce, direct, identify, or inform by any means, including words, letters, figures, designs, symbols, fixtures, colors, illumination, or projected images.

Sign, Air-Activated

A sign, all or any part of, which is designed to be moved by action of forced air so as to make the sign appear to be animated or otherwise have motion.

Sign, Awning, Canopy, or Marquee

A sign that is mounted or painted on, or attached to an awning, canopy, or marquee (see Illustration No. 2).

Sign, Banner

A temporary sign composed of cloth, canvas, plastic, fabric, or similar lightweight, non-rigid material that can be mounted to a structure with cord, rope, cable, or similar method or that may be supported by stakes in the ground. Banners attached to fences shall be considered wall signs.

Sign Copy

The message or advertisement, and any other symbols on the face of a sign.

Sign, Electronic Message

A changeable message sign whose message is electrically activated.

Sign, Externally Illuminated

A sign illuminated by light sources from outside the sign.

Sign Face

The area or display surface used for the message on a sign.

Sign, Fascia

A sign that is mounted or painted on, or attached to, the flat horizontal surface piece of a building typically located directly above the front door, and sometimes referred to as a signboard or nameplate.

Sign, Flag

Devices generally made of flexible materials, such as cloth, paper, or plastic, and supported by a single vertical pole mounted into the ground or on a portable structure. They may or may not contain sign copy (see Illustration No. 2).

Sign, Freestanding

Any sign which is supported by structures or supports in or upon the ground and independent from any building. Freestanding signs include ground signspylon signs, and signs less than four feet in height supported by a single pole or post.

Sign, Ground

A low sign independent from any building that is in contact with or in close proximity to the ground and usually supported by posts or pillars on the sides and/or a structural base of not less than 75 percent of the width of the sign face (for example, a sign with a face eight feet wide would require a structural base of six feet or more in width). Also see Illustration No. 2.

[Note: A community may also wish to specifically include monument signs, and require the use of a masonry base such as brick, concrete, or stone. In such cases a distinction should be made in the definitions and ordinance regulations between monument signs and ground signs that are supported by posts or pillars.

]

Sign, Illuminated

Any sign which has characters, letters, figures, designs, or outlines illuminated, either internally or externally, by electric lights or luminous tubes.

Sign, Internally Illuminated

A sign illuminated by light sources enclosed entirely within the sign cabinet and not directly visible from outside the sign.

Sign, Menu Board

A permanently mounted sign displaying the foods, products, or services for a drive-through or walk-up facility.

Sign, Moveable

A sign that is not permanently attached to the ground or attached to a building or structure, and which is removed and stored inside daily (see Illustration No. 2).

Sign, Noncommercial

Signs expressing personal political, religious, or other opinions, and not advertising any product, service, or event.

Sign, Off-Premise

A sign which is not related to a product sold, a service offered, or identify the property on which the sign is located. This definition does not include noncommercial signs that meet all applicable requirements of this Ordinance.

Sign, Projecting

A sign that is wholly or partly dependent upon a building for support and which projects more than 12 inches from such building (see Illustration No. 2).

Sign, Pylon

A freestanding sign permanently affixed to the ground by one or more supports so that the bottom edge of the sign face is eight feet or more above the ground (see Illustration No. 2). A pylon sign includes a sign supported by a single pole, also referred to as a “pole sign.”

[Sign, Roof

A sign mounted on the main roof portion of a building, and which is wholly dependent upon the building for support (see Illustration No. 2).]

Sign, Vehicle or Trailer

A sign permanently or temporarily attached to or placed on a vehicle or trailer and used primarily as a stationary sign.

Sign, Wall

A sign fastened to or painted on the wall of a building or structure in such a manner that the wall becomes the supporting structure for, or forms the background surface of, the sign. This definition includes signs located on a parapet wall of a building and signs composed of individual letters, numbers, or symbols (see Illustration No. 2).

Sign, Window

A sign that is applied, painted, or attached to the exterior or interior of a window or located in such manner within the building that it can readily be seen from the exterior of the building through a window (see Illustration No. 2).

Structure

Any erection or construction, such as buildings, towers, masts, poles, booms, signs, decorations, carports, machinery, and equipment.

Illustration No. 1
SIGN MEASUREMENT OPTIONS

Option 1: Using smallest geometric figure that includes all sign elements:

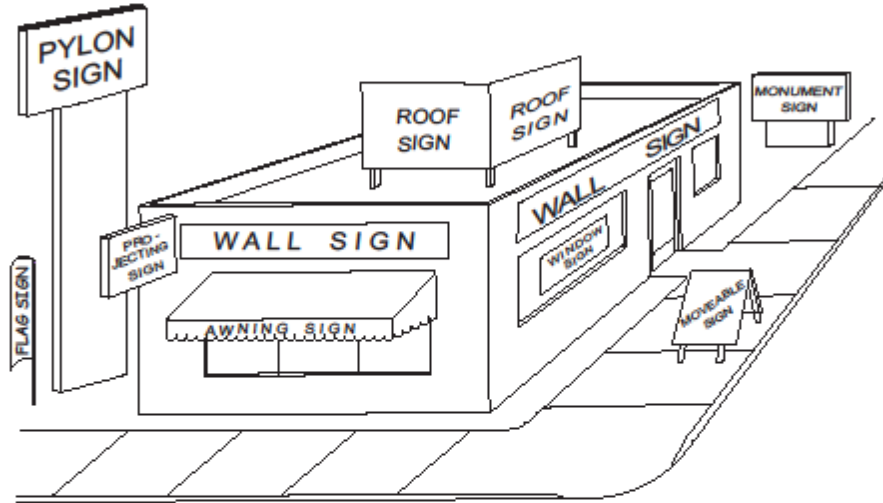


Option 2: Using multiple geometric figures for sign elements:



Source: Alan C. Weinstein, Inc. and D.B. Hartt, Inc., A Framework for On-Premise Sign Regulations, March 2009, and SEWRPC.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 2
Sign Types



Source: Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.