

CHAPTER 19: SIGNS

Article

I. IN GENERAL

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ARTICLE I: IN GENERAL

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§ 19-1 AUTHORITY.

This chapter is adopted pursuant to the authority granted under S.C. Code, § 4-9-30 and S.C. Code, Title 6, Chapter 7, as amended.

(1976 Code, § 19-1) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-1), 6-9-86)

§ 19-2 PURPOSE.

The purpose of this sign chapter is to provide fair and comprehensive regulations that will promote safety by eliminating confusing, distracting and unsafe signs; assure the opportunity for businesses to advertise in an efficient and cost-effective manner; and encourage a positive visual environment within the county. It is declared that the regulation of signs within the county is necessary and in the public interest:

- (1) To promote traffic safety by providing that signs do not create traffic hazards by distracting or confusing motorists or impairing motorists' ability to see pedestrians, other vehicles, obstacles or traffic signs;
- (2) To promote the safety of persons and property by providing that signs do not create a hazard due to collapse, fire, collision, decay or abandonment;
- (3) To promote the economic well-being of the county by creating a favorable physical image;
- (4) To protect the right of citizens to enjoy the county's natural scenic beauty;
- (5) To protect property values within the county;
- (6) To afford the business community equal and fair opportunity to advertise and promote its products and services without discrimination 1 over the other;
- (7) To improve the legibility and effectiveness of commercial and governmental signs;
- (8) To preserve and promote the public health, safety and welfare in the county.

(1976 Code, § 19-2) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-2), 6-9-86)

§ 19-3 DEFINITIONS.

Except as specifically defined herein, all words in this chapter shall have their customary dictionary meanings. For the purpose of this chapter, certain words or terms are defined as follows:

Alterations or repairs shall mean improvements to a sign not exceeding 50% of the replacement value of the same type sign.

Dimensional requirements shall mean those measurements contained in this chapter that identify the area and height requirements for signs.

Display surface area shall mean the area within a regular geometric shape enclosing all elements of informational or representational matter including blank masking. Structural supports not bearing information shall not be included in the computation of display area. All decorative embellishments or appurtenances such as directional arrows which are not a part of the display area shall not be greater than 20% of the display area.

Marquee shall mean a permanent structure which projects over the entrance and is attached to and supported by a building.

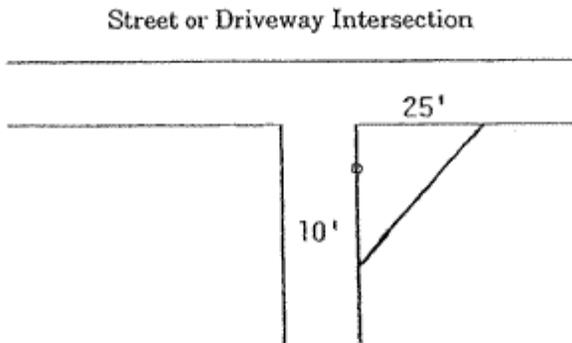
Nonconforming signs shall mean signs which were in existence prior to the adoption of this chapter and which do not conform to the provisions of this chapter. [Such signs] are declared to be nonconforming signs.

Parapet shall mean that portion of a building wall that rises above the roof line.

Permanent window sign shall mean a sign that is placed on or attached to the interior side of a window.

R-S, R-20, R-15, R-12, R-10, R-7.5, R-D, R-M, RM-1, RM-2, RM-A, OD, POD, C-1, C-2, C1-N, C1-R, S-1, I-1, RD-R and PD-C shall mean county zoning districts as defined and described in the county zoning ordinance, a copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference [included as appendix A to the Code].

Sight triangle shall mean, measured from the curb or edge of pavement, the triangle area created by a line connecting points on the front and side for lines at a distance (as indicated below) from the intersection of said lines or the extension of said lines:



Sign shall mean a device designed to inform or attract the attention of persons not on the premises on which the device is located, or to advertise, promote the interest of, or attract attention to any business, industry, individual, group, enterprise, activity, service, event, use or product, or which transmits information or an idea by means of words, lettering, parts of letters, figures, numerals, phrases, sentences, emblems, devices, designs, tradenames or trademarks, or other pictorial matter designed to convey such information and displayed by means of paint, bills, posters, panels, or other devices created on an open framework, or attached or otherwise applied to stakes, posts, poles, trees, buildings or other equipment, structures or supports.

Sign, abandoned A sign shall be considered abandoned when the business activity or firm which such sign advertises is no longer in operation, or when the sign no longer displays copy.

Sign, billboard shall mean a permanent, freestanding, off-premise sign.

Sign copy shall mean all words, letters, numbers, figures, characters, artwork, symbols, or insignia that are used on a display surface area.

Sign, directional shall mean an off-premise sign not greater than 4 feet by 8 feet in total size, the purpose of which is limited exclusively to the identification of a use or occupancy located elsewhere and which tells the location of or route to such use or occupancy.

Sign, freestanding shall mean a sign which is permanently affixed to the ground and which is not a part of a building or other structure.

Sign, mobile shall mean a sign, such as an A-frame, which is movable by a person without aid of a motor vehicle or other mechanical equipment.

Sign, multiple use identification shall mean a sign stating the name of the group development and the major tenants.

Sign, off-premises shall mean any sign that advertises goods, products, services, or facilities, or that directs persons to a different location from where the sign is located.

Sign, on-premises shall mean any sign that disseminates information that directly relates to the use of the property on which it is located and is not a separate and distinct use.

Sign, owner shall include the person receiving benefit from the sign and/or the property owner.

Sign, portable shall mean a sign, including the trailer assembly or other transporting apparatus or any equipment to which the sign is attached, which may be moved from 1 location to another, is not permanently affixed to the ground, and is differentiated from a "mobile sign" in that it may be equipped for transportation by motor vehicle or other mechanical means. Trailer signs are considered to be portable signs.

Sign, projecting shall mean any sign, other than a "wall sign," which projects from and is supported by a building and projects more than 12 inches.

Sign, roof shall mean a sign that is erected, constructed, or maintained above the roof of any building.

Sign, temporary shall mean a sign which disseminates information about special events or occurrences, property for sale, land development, or contractor's or craftsmen's signs at a construction site, subject to the provisions of § 19-44(c).

Sign, wall shall mean any sign painted on or attached flat and parallel to the exterior wall or surface of a building or other structure and which projects not more than 12 inches from that wall or surface.

Sign, weekend real estate directional shall mean an off-premise sign which is erected after 7:00 p.m. on Friday and removed not later than 7:00 a.m. on the following Monday, which has a display surface area not greater than 24 inches by 24 inches in size, and which does not exceed 3 feet in height, the purpose of which is to direct potential purchasers or lessees to property which is offered for sale or lease.

Subdivision shall mean all divisions of a tract or parcel of land into 2 or more lots, building sites, or other divisions for the purpose, whether immediate or future, of sale, legacy, or building development. This shall include all division of land involving a new street or a change in existing streets, resubdivision, and, whether appropriate, the process of subdividing the land or areas subdivided.

Usable wall area shall mean the exterior wall or surface area of a building or structure that excludes doors.

(1976 Code, § 19-3) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-3), 6-9-86; Ord. No. 1661, § 1, 4-21-87; Ord. No. 1690, § 1, 6-2-87; Ord. No. 2248, § 2, 5-7-91; Ord. No. 3550, § 1, 12-18-01)

§ 19-4 PENALTIES.

Any person, firm, corporation or agent, who shall violate the provisions of this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished within the jurisdictional limits of magistrate's court. Each such person, firm, corporation or agent shall be deemed guilty of a separate offense for each and every day or portion thereof during which any violation of any of the provisions of this chapter is committed or continued.

(1976 Code, § 19-3) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-16), 6-9-86; Ord. No. 2626, § 3, 9-6-94; Ord. No. 3550, § 1, 12-18-01)

§ 19-5 OWNER RESPONSIBILITY.

It shall be the responsibility of the sign owner to maintain and ensure conformance of the provisions of this chapter.

(1976 Code, § 19-5) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-4(7)), 6-9-86)

§ 19-6 PROHIBITED SIGNS.

(a) *Signs imitating traffic or emergency signals.* No sign shall be permitted which imitates an official traffic sign or signal, or contains words or symbols displayed in a manner which might mislead or confuse drivers of vehicles, or which displays intermittent lights resembling the color, size, shape, or order of lights customarily used in traffic signals or on emergency vehicles or law enforcement vehicles, except as part of a permitted private or public traffic control sign.

(b) *Signs or devices employing confusing, distracting or intense illumination when visible from the public right-of-way.* No sign shall be permitted which utilizes intense flashing (strobe type) lights, spotlights, floodlights, flashing or blinking lights, or any type of pulsating or moving light which may impair the vision, cause glare, or otherwise interfere with any driver's operation of a motor vehicle.

(c) *Signs employing confusing motion.* No sign shall be permitted which employs motion in such a manner as to obstruct or interfere with a driver's view of approaching, merging, or intersecting traffic, or a traffic signal, device, or sign; or which would otherwise interfere with a driver's operation of a motor vehicle.

(d) *Sign lighting which is incompatible with residential character.* No sign shall be illuminated in such a way that it casts intense illumination onto any residential premises located in any residential district in a manner which by intensity, duration, location or other characteristic is incompatible with the residential character of the district in which such illumination is cast.

(e) *Public right-of-way.* No sign shall project into a public right-of-way.

(f) *Roof mounted signs.* Roof mounted signs are prohibited in all districts except as provided in § [19-44\(a\)\(2\)b](#) and (3)b.

(g) *Off-premise signs.* Except as provided for elsewhere in this code, no off-premise sign shall be placed or attached to any curb, sidewalk, utility pole, bridge, tree or other surface located on public property or placed in the public right-of-way. Any person, firm, corporation or other entity violating the provisions of this § [19-6\(g\)](#) shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$25 for a first offense violation. Any person, firm, corporation, or other entity committing a second or subsequent violation of this § [19-6\(g\)](#) shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable within the jurisdictional limits of magistrate's court.

(h) *Obscene or Pornographic Signs.* No sign, visible to the public, shall exhibit statements, words or pictures of an obscene or pornographic nature. For purposes of this subsection, obscene words, photographs, or depictions are defined as provided in S.C. Code, § 16-15-305(B), (C), (D), and (E), as amended.

(1976 Code, § 19-6) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-6), 6-9-86; Am. Ord. No. 1690, § 1, 6-2-87; Am. Ord. No. 3698, § 1, 6-3-03; Am. Ord. No. 3914, 5-17-05; Am. Ord. No. 3955, § 1, 9-20-05)

§ 19-7 NONCONFORMING SIGNS.

Nonconforming signs may be continued in operation and maintenance after the effective date of this chapter, provided that nonconforming signs shall not be:

(1) Changed to or replaced with another nonconforming sign;

(2) Structurally altered so as to extend their useful life;

(3) Expanded;

(4) Relocated;

(5) Re-established after damage or destruction of more than 50% of the replacement value of the same type sign at the time of such damage or destruction; or,

(6) Modified in any way that would increase the degree of nonconformity of such sign. Except in the case of (5) hereinabove, this shall not prevent repairing or restoring to a safe condition any part of a sign or sign structure or normal maintenance operations performed on a sign or sign structure or replacement sign faces.

(1976 Code, § 19-7) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-7), 6-9-86; Ord. No. 3583, § 1, 4-2-02)

§ 19-8 SIGNS USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH USES PERMITTED ON REVIEW.

Such signs (used in conjunction with uses permitted on review) shall be approved by the board of zoning appeals.

(1976 Code, § 19-8) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-4(3)), 6-9-86)

§ 19-9 ABANDONMENTS.

An abandoned sign must be removed within 30 days after receipt of notification by the zoning administrator.

(1976 Code, § 19-9) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-4(5)), 6-9-86)

§ 19-10 BUILDING GRAPHICS.

Drawings painted on buildings that contain no copy, symbols, or other references to products or services shall not be considered signs and shall be exempt from the provisions of this chapter. Drawings painted on buildings that do contain copy, symbols, or other references to products or services shall be considered wall signs and shall be subject to the regulations of the district in which they are located.

(1976 Code, § 19-10) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-4(8)), 6-9-86)

§ 19-11 NONCOMMERCIAL COPY.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, any sign authorized by this chapter is allowed to contain noncommercial copy in lieu of any other copy.

(1976 Code, § 19-11) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-5), 6-9-86)

§ 19-12 PERMANENT SUBDIVISION SIGNS.

Two permanent signs per entrance displaying no information other than the name of the subdivision in which they are located shall be permitted provided that such signs are maintained in accordance with the provisions of § [19-42](#), and do not encroach upon vision clearance as established in § [19-42](#) herein, except that permanent subdivision signs may be located 18 inches from the right-of-way.

(1976 Code, § 19-12) (Ord. No. 2248, § 3, 5-7-91)

§ 19-13 BENCH SIGNS PROHIBITED; VIOLATION AND PENALTIES.

(a) *Person.* The term “person” shall mean any individual, firm, partnership, corporation, association or organization of any kind.

(b) *Prohibition.* It shall be unlawful for any person to own, install, construct, and/or place a bench sign within the unincorporated areas of Greenville County.

(c) *Existing bench signs.* Any bench sign already in existence on the date this section is adopted shall be removed by the owner pursuant to a general plan of removal submitted by the owner and approved by the zoning department. During the gradual phase-out period, an owner of an existing bench sign shall not be responsible for any permit fees, so long as a general plan of removal has been approved by the zoning department and further provided that the owner is presently abiding by the terms of the general plan of removal. An owner shall furnish to Greenville County in the general plan of removal the number of bench signs in existence at the time this section is adopted and the location of each bench sign.

(d) *Removal by zoning department.* In the event any bench sign shall be installed, constructed, or placed in violation of this section, or should any bench sign not be removed in accordance with the general plan of removal for existing bench signs, the zoning department shall notify, by registered mail or written notice served personally, the owner to remove the bench sign. If such order is not complied with within 30 days the zoning department shall remove or cause such bench sign to be removed at the expense of the owner thereof.

(1976 Code, § 19-13) (Ord. No. 2383, §§ 5-9, 8-4-92)

§§ 19-14 – 19-20 RESERVED.

ARTICLE II: ADMINISTRATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Section

Division 1. Generally

[19-21](#) Departments designated to administer and enforce

[19-22](#) Notification of violations

[19-23](#) Noncompliance; removal of sign

[19-24](#) Appeals

Division 2. Permits

[19-31](#) Required

[19-32](#) Application; issuance; conditions

[19-33](#) Signs for which permit not required

DIVISION 1. GENERALLY

§ 19-21 DEPARTMENTS DESIGNATED TO ADMINISTER AND ENFORCE.

The county council hereby designates the Codes Enforcement Department to administer and enforce the provisions of this chapter.

(1976 Code, § 19-21) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-13), 6-9-86; Am. Ord. No. 3914, 5-17-05)

§ 19-22 NOTIFICATION OF VIOLATIONS.

Such notifications shall be made in writing by the Codes Administrator or his/her designee, except for those signs identified in Section 19-6(g).

(1976 Code, § 19-22) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-4(2)), 6-9-86; Ord. No. 2494, § 1, 9-21-93; Am. Ord. No. 3914, 5-17-05)

§ 19-23 NONCOMPLIANCE; REMOVAL OF SIGN.

(a) In the event any sign shall be installed, erected, constructed or maintained in violation of any of the provisions of this article, other than those signs identified in Section [19-6\(g\)](#), the county or its designee shall, by written notice, inform the owner or lessee thereof of such violation and demand that it be corrected or that the offending sign be removed. If such order is not complied with in 5 days, the county shall remove or cause such sign to be removed at the expense of the owner or lessee thereof.

(b) The Codes Administrator or his/her designee may remove any sign or structure illegally placed in the public right-of-way.

1. The owner of a removed sign and/or supports may reclaim his or her property upon the payment of the following fees and costs: A \$10 retrieval fee for each sign, and a \$5 storage fee for each sign for each day the sign is stored.

2. The county may dispose of any sign and/or support not claimed by the owner within 7 days after removal from the public right-of-way.

(c) Any individual, firm, or corporation who violates a provision of this chapter shall not be issued additional sign permits until such time as the violation has been corrected or the offending sign removed.

(1976 Code, § 19-23) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-15), 6-9-86; Ord. No. 1690, § 5, 6-2-87; Am. Ord. No. 3914, 5-17-05)

§ 19-24 APPEALS.

(a) *Application.* Any person who feels that the official charged with the administration and enforcement of this chapter has erred in his interpretation or application of any provision contained herein may appeal such decision to the county board of zoning appeals. Such an appeal shall be filed in writing with the board within 20 days after receipt of a written decision by the zoning department and shall specify the grounds for each appeal.

(b) *Fee.* An application fee, as set by the County, shall be charged for each appeal filed.

(c) *Hearings.* The board of zoning appeals shall conduct hearings on all appeals filed hereunder in accordance with the provisions of article 9 of the county zoning ordinance [[appendix A](#) to the Code].

(d) *Variances.* A variance from the provisions of this chapter may be granted by the board of zoning appeals in accordance with the provisions of the county zoning ordinance.

(1976 Code, § 19-24) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-14), 6-9-86; Ord. No. 1661, § 6, 4-21-87; Am. Ord. No. 3657, § 1, 1-13-03)

§§ 19-25 – 19-30 RESERVED.

DIVISION 2. PERMITS

§ 19-31 REQUIRED.

Unless otherwise provided for herein, no sign shall be erected, placed, constructed or structurally altered until such time as a sign permit has been obtained from the county.

(1976 Code, § 19-31) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-10), 6-9-86)

§ 19-32 APPLICATION; ISSUANCE; CONDITIONS.

Applications for, the issuance of, and conditions pertaining to sign permits shall be governed by the provisions of the most recent edition of the adopted building code (with applicable appendices adopted by the County).

(1976 Code, § 19-32) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-11), 6-9-86; Am. Ord. No. 3657, § 2, 1-13-03)

§ 19-33 SIGNS FOR WHICH PERMIT NOT REQUIRED.

A permit is not required for the following types of signs and such signs shall not be considered in determining the allowable number or size of signs on any premise; provided, however, that they must comply with all other applicable sections of this chapter.

(1) Traffic, directional, warning, or information signs owned by any public or semipublic agency provided they do not exceed 6 square feet and are located on private property.

(2) Official notices issued by any court, public agency or officer.

(3) Signs not exceeding 1 square foot in area and bearing only property numbers, post office box numbers, names of occupants of premises, or other identification of premises not having commercial connotations.

(4) Flags and insignia of any government except when displayed in connection with commercial promotion.

(5) Integral decorative or architectural features of buildings, except letters, trademarks, moving parts, or moving lights.

(6) Indoor signs.

(7) Time and temperature signs.

(8) On-premise signs indicating services provided on private property but bearing no advertising matter and not exceeding 5 square feet for each sign.

(9) Signs located on the inside of windows and intended for the purpose of disseminating information about products, sales or promotional campaigns located or occurring on the premises where the sign is located.

(10) Private traffic signs located on the premises for which directions are indicated, not exceeding 3 square feet for each sign.

(11) Gasoline pump signs. Signs shall be allowed in gasoline pumps so as to provide required information to the public such as "gallons," "price," "octane rating," and "type of fuel." As the tradename of the business is often incorporated into the name for the different types of fuel, said tradename and any associated symbols shall be permitted on the pumps as flat signs not to exceed 3 square feet in area per sign face and an aggregate area of 6 square feet per pump.

(12) Oil rack signs. Since oil is marketed on the pump island, the identification signs on the merchandise are visible and shall be permitted. Any additional signs on the oil rack shall not exceed 3 square feet per sign face and an aggregate area of 6 square feet per rack.

(13) Pricing signs. A sign advertising the price of gasoline, other than pump signs, shall be permitted and shall not exceed 12 square feet per sign face and an aggregate area of 24 square feet, nor shall it exceed 5 feet in height if freestanding. One such sign per on-premise frontage shall be allowed with a maximum of 2 such signs per premises. However, should such pricing sign be attached to or part of a permanent, freestanding sign which identifies the premises, such sign must conform to the requirements of freestanding signs in their respective categories.

(14) Directional signs.

(15) Product dispensing machine signs. Signs shall be allowed on product dispensing machines (e.g., soft drink machines) provided they advertise the products dispensed therein.

(16) Signs located in a group office or commercial development which are designed to be viewed primarily by persons within the development for the purpose of identifying the nature and location of individual tenants and/or obtaining directional information.

(1976 Code, § 19-33) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-12), 6-9-86; Ord. No. 1690, § 4, 6-2-87; Ord. No. 2707, § 1, 4-4-95)

§§ 19-34 – 19-40 RESERVED.

ARTICLE III: STANDARDS

Section

[19-41](#) Construction

[19-42](#) Placement

[19-43](#) Maintenance

[19-44](#) On-premise signs

[19-45](#) Off-premise signs

[Table 1](#) District requirements for permanent signs

§ 19-41 CONSTRUCTION.

All signs must be in compliance with the provisions of the most recent edition of the building code and the most recent edition of the National Electrical Code as adopted by the county.

(1976 Code, § 19-41) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-4(17)), 6-9-86; Am. Ord. No. 3657, § 3, 1-13-03)

§ 19-42 PLACEMENT.

(a) *Setback.* Signs located in a sight triangle as defined in § [19-3](#) shall not obstruct vision between a height of 3 feet and a height of 9 feet measured vertically from the street level at the base of the sign. In no case may a sign be located within 15 feet of the right-of-way.

(b) *Spacing.* No sign within a commercial district shall be erected within a 25-foot radius from any residential district boundary line unless such sign would meet the sign requirements for nonresidential uses permitted within the residential district to which it is adjacent.

(c) *Clearance.* No sign shall encroach upon vision clearances as established in subsection [19-42\(a\)](#) herein.

(d) *Grade level.* In cases where signs are located below the grade of the road to which they are oriented (as declared by the sign owner), sign height shall be measured from the grade of that street.

(1976 Code, § 19-42) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-4(4), (9)-(11)), 6-9-86)

§ 19-43 MAINTENANCE.

Any signs not meeting the following provisions shall be repaired, maintained or removed within 30 days after receipt of notification by the zoning administrator:

(1) The area around the sign shall be properly maintained clear of brush, trees and other obstacles so as to make signs readily visible.

(2) The area around the sign shall be maintained clear of trash and debris.

(3) All burned out bulbs or damaged panels must be replaced.

(4) All sign copy shall be maintained securely to the face and all missing copy must be replaced.

(5) All signs shall be maintained in a structurally safe condition.

(1976 Code, § 19-43) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-4(6)), 6-9-86)

§ 19-44 ON-PREMISE SIGNS.

(a) *Zoned areas of the county.*

(1) *Signs in residential districts.* Signs in R-S, R-20, R-15, R-12, R-10, R-7.5, R-D, R-M, RM-1, RM-2 and RM-A, zoning districts are subject to the following regulations:

a. *District requirements.* Signs in residential districts shall conform to the provisions set forth in Table 1, District Requirements for Permanent Signs.

b. *Special use limitations.*

1. *Home occupation signs.* One nonilluminated sign shall be permitted for each home occupation provided that the display surface area of such signs does not exceed 2 square feet in area and that such sign is mounted flat against the wall of the building in which such home occupation is conducted or flat against the wall of a principal structure.

2. *Reserved.*

3. *Group residential uses and nonresidential uses.* Signs identifying group housing developments, mobile home parks, residential high rise structures, and permitted nonresidential uses of a recreational, civic, charitable, fraternal, cultural, church bulletin, other religious, educational, institutional, governmental, and service nature, and not elsewhere regulated or specified, may be erected, subject to the following provisions:

(a) *Size.* Not to exceed 50 square feet; provided, however, that an additional sign not greater than 4 feet by 8 feet in size shall be allowed below and attached to such identification sign or its supporting structure.

(b) *Number.* One sign per street entrance not to exceed 2 signs per street front.

(c) *Height.* If building mounted, such signs shall not project above the roof line. If freestanding, such signs shall comply with the provisions of Table 1, District Requirements for Permanent Signs.

(2) *Signs in office and commercial districts.* Signs in the O-D, POD, C-1, C1-N, C1-R, C-2 and C-3 zoning districts are subject to the following provisions:

a. *District requirements.* Signs in office and commercial district shall conform to the provisions set forth in Table 1, District Requirements for Permanent Signs.

b. *Special provisions.*

1. *Group office and commercial developments.* Where 2 or more separate tenants occupy the same parcel or where the obvious intent is to function as a single center, 2 freestanding signs shall be permitted per street front of each development. Each sign shall not exceed 1 square foot of display surface area for each linear foot of street frontage or 225 square feet, whichever is less. Where a single freestanding sign is used in lieu of the 2 allowable freestanding signs, display area may be increased to 300 square feet.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, when a group commercial development has over 2,000 linear feet of continuous frontage on any public road and a single freestanding sign is used in lieu of the 2 freestanding signs otherwise allowed, the maximum allowable display area is increased to 450 square feet. In addition, in the case of a group commercial development with over 2,500 linear feet of continuous frontage on any interstate highway, the allowable display area for a single sign used in lieu of the two freestanding signs otherwise allowed is increased to 672 square feet and the maximum height for such sign is increased to 50 feet.

When a group commercial development (shopping mall, shopping center, etc.) has 2,000 linear feet of continuous frontage on a public road, the following provisions shall supplement the established criteria with regard to directional/monument signs and attached exterior building signs:

(a) *Detached entrance signs (monument signs).*

i. Only 1 sign is permitted at each entrance drive into the property from a public roadway, provided that if more than 1 entrance to the property from a public roadway exists, signs must be a minimum of 100 feet apart.

- ii. Entrance signs shall comply with the provisions of § [19-42](#).
- iii. Monument signs may not measure higher than 36 inches as measured from the ground at the base of the sign to the top of the sign.
- iv. Signs may identify the name of the development by logo and/or name and may contain directional information.
- v. Maximum sign area shall not exceed 50 square feet per sign face.
- vi. Signs may be illuminated.
- vii. Signs may not be constructed in a public right-of-way.

(b) *Attached building signs (major tenants).*

i. A major tenant is defined as being a minimum of 25,000 square feet in building area and having a minimum of 2 sides of its building exposed to a parking lot, a street, a public access drive or entrance drive and having customer entrances opening directly onto the parking areas. A

major tenant may have an ancillary detached building (i.e. an auto center) and the square footage of the detached building shall be included in the overall size of the major tenant. The detached building will be allowed to have the same signing as the main building is permitted.

ii. Major tenants in the development may have 1 attached building sign per exterior building side visible from a parking lot, a street, a public access drive or entrance drive and may elect to locate up to 2 attached signs on any exterior building side so long as the total number of attached signs does not exceed the total number of exterior building sides.

iii. The attached building sign shall identify the major tenant's name in letters and or logo. However, the maximum height of each letter or logo shall not exceed 8 feet in height nor cover no more than 20% of the total area of the wall or facade on which the sign is placed.

iv. Attached building signs will be located 24 inches below the top of the parapet or wall on which the sign is attached. Attached building signs shall not project more than 3 feet from the building or canopy.

v. The main building of the development may have no more than 2 signs that identify the name of the development at each exterior entrance to the building; 1 on the building and 1 on the door.

(c) *Attached exterior building signs (non-major retail shop tenants).*

i. Retail shop tenants are defined as those tenants having a lease area of less than 25,000 square feet.

ii. A retail shop tenant may have no more than 1 exterior attached sign, which sign shall be located at a point nearest an entrance to the shop.

iii. The retail shop exterior attached sign shall identify the tenants name in letters and/or logo.

iv. The maximum height of each letter or logo shall not exceed 6 feet in height and may total no more than 20% of the total area of the wall or facade on which the sign is placed. An attached sign shall be located at least 24 inches below the top of the parapet or wall on which the sign is attached and not lower than 14 feet from the bottom of the sign to the ground. Attached building signs shall not protrude more than 1 foot from the wall.

2. In addition to the above, each motion picture theater located on the premises may erect 1 freestanding sign not to exceed 50 square feet in display surface area per screen.

3. Other regulations governing freestanding signs shall be provided by articles I and III herein.

4. In addition to the above, 1 rear or service entrance wall sign is allowed not to exceed 10 square feet in area.

5. End units of multi tenant retail establishments under 25,000 square feet shall be allowed one (1) additional sign on the end of the unit, not to exceed the following size:

The maximum height of each letter or logo shall not exceed 6 feet in height and may total no more than 20% of the total area of the wall or façade on which the sign is placed. An attached sign shall be located at least 24 inches below the top of the parapet or wall on which the sign is attached and not lower than 14 feet from the bottom of the sign to the ground. Attached building signs shall not protrude more than 1 foot from the wall.

6. Signs in office and commercial districts shall conform to the provisions set forth in Table 1, District Requirements for Permanent Signs. An additional separate sign may be permitted upon review by the board of zoning appeals when required by an area product franchise upon presentation of a contract setting forth the area covered by the franchise and a bona fide, reasonable requirement for separate signs.

7. Upon review by the board of zoning appeals, a variance permitting a roof sign in lieu of another type authorized sign may be granted to a business upon a showing of hardship in that no other type sign is feasible and a roof sign is necessary. The size, height, and location of such sign shall be determined by the board of zoning appeals in compliance with all other provisions of this chapter.

(3) *Signs in service and industrial districts.* Signs in S-1 and I-1 zoning districts are subject to the following provisions:

a. *District requirements.* Signs in service and industrial districts shall conform to the provisions set forth in Table 1, District Requirements for Permanent Signs.

b. *Special provisions.*

1. *Group industrial developments.* Where 2 or more separate tenants occupy the same parcel or where the obvious intent is to function as a single center, 2 freestanding signs shall be permitted per street front of each development. Each sign shall not exceed 1 square foot of display surface area for each linear foot of street front or 225 square feet, whichever is greater. Where a single freestanding sign is used in lieu of the, allowable freestanding sign display area may be increased to 300 square feet.

In addition, each tenant shall be allowed 1 wall sign per street frontage that it faces not to exceed 20% of the useable wall area of that tenant.

Where 2 or more tenants own adjoining parcels and the intent is not to function as a single center, signs shall be governed by provisions of the district in which they are located. Businesses occupying the same parcel or other businesses subject to group development sign provisions may be excluded from such provisions upon application to the board of zoning appeals for a variance showing they do not function as a single center.

2. Signs in service and industrial districts shall conform to the provisions set forth in Table 1, District Requirements for Permanent Signs. An additional separate sign may be permitted upon review by the board of zoning appeals when required by an area product franchise upon presentation of a contract setting forth the area covered by the franchise and a bona fide, reasonable requirement for separate signs.

(4) *Signs in PD-R and PD-C districts.* No specific regulations are imposed upon signs located in PD-R and PD-C districts. However, it is the intent of this chapter that signs within PD-R and PD-C districts be appropriate for the locations in which they are established and that regulations governing the display surface area, number, location, and height of signs should be generally followed as for the least restrictive zone related to site size of the development, as set forth in the county zoning ordinance [Appendix A to the Code].

(b) *Unzoned areas of the county.* Signs allowed for uses in unzoned areas shall be subject to the district regulations governing the same use in zoned areas. Signs prohibited in zoned districts shall also be prohibited in the unzoned portions of the county. (For example: If a tract of land in an unzoned area of the county is being used for an industrial plant, that land would be allowed to have only the same types of signs that are allowed in the corresponding I-1 district.)

(c) *Temporary signs.* The following types of on-premise temporary signs may be erected in any zoned district or unzoned area of the county in addition to signs permitted otherwise, subject to the following provisions:

(1) *General temporary sign provisions.* Temporary signs shall not encroach upon vision clearances established in § 19-42(a) herein due to excessive height. The height of temporary signs not within established site clearance or setback areas shall be governed by the dimensional requirements of the district in which they are located. Temporary signs shall be nonilluminated. Mobile signs and portable signs shall be governed by the provisions of subsections (e) and (f) herein respectively.

(2) *Temporary subdivision signs.* Temporary signs announcing a land subdivision development may be erected on the premises of the land subdivision, provided that such signs do not exceed 50 square feet in area, are set back at least 10 feet from any property line, are spaced at least 500 feet apart, and are removed within 1 year from the date the sign permit was issued. Extensions may be granted upon approval of the zoning administrator.

(3) *Contractor's signs, craftsmen's signs, and other signs pertaining to construction.* One sign displaying the names of the building contractors, architects, engineers, craftsmen, and similar information is permitted upon the premises of any work under construction or any work of a major repair or improvement, provided that the sign does not exceed 60 square feet in area, is set back 10 feet from property line, or does not encroach upon the vision clearances set forth in § 19-12(a) herein and the sign is removed within 7 days after completion of the work.

(4) *Real estate signs.* Sign offering real estate for sale, rent or lease, provided that combined display surface area of all such signs does not exceed 4 square feet for every 100 feet of street frontage and that total display surface area shall not be required to be less than 6 square feet on any individual lot and not more than 5 feet in height if located in the 10-foot setback.

(5) *Other temporary signs.* Signs which disseminate information for not more than 60 days about special events or occurrences, provided that the sign:

- a. Shall be removed within 7 days of completion of the event;
- b. Shall be confined to private property and shall be located on the same property where the event will occur;
- c. Shall conform to the dimensional requirements of the district in which they are located.

and

(6) *Combination signs.* When temporary subdivision, contractor's and/or real estate signs are erected on a common support, the signs shall not exceed the greater of 100 square feet or 4 square feet for every 100 feet of street frontage.

(d) *Mobile signs.* Where permitted, 1 mobile sign may be used as a temporary sign on the same premises in addition to the allowable permanent signs, provided the following provisions are met:

(1) *Location.* Mobile signs shall be permitted in O-D, POD, C-1, C-2, C-3, C1-N, S-1 and I-1 zoning districts, and the unzoned areas of the county.

(2) *Setback.* The setback requirements of § 19-42(a) herein shall be met.

(3) *Display area.* The surface display area shall not exceed 6 square feet per face.

(4) *Height.* The sign height shall not exceed 3 feet measured vertically from ground level to the top of the sign.

(5) *Duration of use.* A mobile sign shall not be located on the same premises for more than 30 consecutive days or 120 total days during a consecutive 12-month period. Once a mobile sign is removed from a premise, a 30-day waiting period is required before another mobile sign can be used.

(6) *Spacing.* No mobile sign shall be located within a radius of 50 feet from another mobile sign or portable sign.

(7) *Conversion to a permanent sign.* Mobile signs must be removed at the end of the time set forth in subsection (d)(5) herein, or be converted to a permanent freestanding sign. Signs being converted to a permanent freestanding sign shall be counted towards the number of permanent signs allowed by this chapter for the district in which they are located.

(e) *Portable signs.* Where permitted, 1 portable sign may be used as a temporary sign on the same premises in addition to the allowable permanent signs, provided the following provisions are met:

(1) *Location.* Portable signs shall be permitted in C-1, C1-R, C-2, S-1 and I-1 zoning districts, and the unzoned areas of the county.

(2) *Setback.* Portable signs located in a sight triangle as defined in § 19-3 shall not obstruct vision between a height of 3 feet and a height of 9 feet measured vertically from the street level at the base of the sign. In no case may a portable sign be located within 5 feet of the right-of-way.

(3) *Display area.* The surface display area shall not exceed 50 square feet per face.

(4) *Spacing.* No portable sign shall be located within a radius of 50 feet from another portable sign or mobile sign.

(5) *Lighting.* Portable signs shall not utilize blinking, flashing, or color lights, or lights with a wattage greater than 10 watts.

(6) *Drop cords.* Drop cords used with portable signs shall be made of rubber and no smaller than 12-3 heavy duty.

(7) *Electrical signs.* All electrical, portable signs must be approved by the Underwriters Laboratory (UL), and have a visible UL label, and meet local electrical codes.

(8) *Permit requirement; duration.* No portable sign shall be placed on a premise until such time as a permit has been obtained from the county codes department. Such a permit shall cost \$50 and shall be valid for a period of 1 year from the date of issuance. No portable sign permit shall be issued for a period of 30 days following the expiration of a previous portable sign permit issued for the same premises.

At the time it issues a portable sign permit, the codes department shall also issue a corresponding numbered plate, sticker, decal or other appropriate device which shall be valid for a period of 1 year and which shall be displayed at all times on the vertical side of the portable sign. No portable sign may be located on a premises unless it displays such a valid numbered plate, sticker, decal or other appropriate device.

(9) *Conversion to permanent sign.* Portable signs which have been in place continuously for a period of 1 year must be removed or be converted to a permanent freestanding sign. Signs being converted to a permanent freestanding sign must be permitted by the county codes department and shall be counted towards the number of permanent signs allowed by this chapter for the district in which they are located. Portable signs which are so converted must meet the definition of a freestanding sign and have the trailer assembly removed.

(10) *Exemption for special events.* Any public agency, public or private school, religious or civic organization may utilize a portable sign for a period of 10 days per month to advertise special events or occurrences. Any such sign will be subject to the setback and spacing requirements of subsection 19-44(e)(2), but will be exempt from the permit requirements of subsection 19-44(e)(8).

(1976 Code, § 19-44) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-8), 6-9-86; Ord. No. 1555, § 1, 6-17-86; Ord. No. 1661, §§ 2-5, 4-21-87; Ord. No. 2122, § 1, 5-15-90; Ord. No. 2218, § 1, 2-5-91; Ord. No. 2248, § 1, 5-7-91; Ord. No. 2537, § 1, 1-4-94; Ord. No. 2707, § 2, 4-4-95; Ord. No. 2707-A, § 2, 4-4-95; Ord. No. 3584, § 1, 4-2-02; Am. Ord. No. 3657, §§ 4, 5, 1-13-03)

§ 19-45 OFF-PREMISE SIGNS.

(a) *Generally.*

(1) *General provision for off-premise signs.* Permits shall not be required for any off-premise sign that is set forth in § 19-33.

(2) *Off-premise signs used in conjunction with on-premise signs.* Such signs shall not count towards the number of permanent signs allowed on the property on which they are located, and they shall not exceed the maximum display area set forth herein for that type of sign.

(3) *Nonconforming signs.* Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, any off premise sign which was lawfully erected prior to June 10, 1986, and for which a permit was obtained from the county prior to April 16, 1996, shall be deemed to be legally nonconforming. Any off premise sign which is repaired or altered shall retain its legal nonconforming status provided it is not enlarged or expanded. Any off-premise sign which is relocated pursuant to the provisions of this chapter, shall continue to be deemed to be a legal nonconforming use.

(4) *Off-premise signs used in conjunction with churches or places of worship.* Churches or places of worship shall be allowed to place off-premise signs in accordance with the following conditions:

(a) The sign display surface shall be no greater than 32 square feet on each of two sides.

(b) The sign be no greater in height than 12 feet when measured from the immediate adjacent grade.

(c) Be placed no closer than 15 feet from the right-of-way.

(d) Be placed on private property with the express permission of the owner of the property.

(e) The content of the sign be limited to the name of the facility; directions to the facility; service or meeting times and general information relating to the facility or activities at the facility.

(b) *Billboards.*

(1) *Relocation of billboards permitted.* Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, any billboard which was lawfully erected prior to June 10, 1986, may be relocated to a new site, provided the relocation meets the provisions of this chapter.

(2) *Criteria for relocation of billboards.* No billboard shall be relocated to a new site except in accordance with the general provisions of this chapter, and except as follows:

a. *Location.* Billboards shall only be permitted in C-2, S-1 and I-1 districts.

b. *Spacing.* On all streets and highways within the jurisdiction of this chapter, no billboards may be established:

1. Within 1,000 feet of any other billboard located on the same side of the street;

2. Within 500 feet from the vertical point of any other billboard located on the opposite side of the street;

3. Within 500 feet of residentially zoned property on the same side of and fronting the street in question;

4. Within 500 feet of residentially zoned property on the opposite side of and fronting the street in question;

5. At intersecting streets, within 500 feet of any other billboard measured by the curb line or curb line extension. A billboard may be located at this point or at a vertical point on the opposite side of the street, provided all other criteria are met;

6. Within 1,000 feet of any historic site, place or district that is recorded on the national register, or any public park, measured by the curb line of the existing streets. A billboard may be located at this point or at a vertical point on the opposite side of the street, provided all other criteria are met;

7. Within 1,000 feet from the center of any designated scenic highway when locating a billboard on a street which intersects with a scenic highway.

When determining whether a proposed billboard meets the spacing requirements set forth herein, distances shall be measured from the center of the billboard and shall take into account any billboard, residential property, historic district, public park or scenic highway, regardless of whether it is located in the incorporated or unincorporated area of the county.

c. *Maximum allowable display area.*

1. Six hundred seventy-two square feet per sign face.
2. Twenty percent of the 672 square feet allowable for extended copy of "pop-ups."

d. *Maximum allowable height.*

1. Fifty feet for painted bulletins (14 feet by 48 feet).
2. Forty-five feet for poster panels (12 feet by 25 feet).
3. Thirty feet for poster panels (6 feet by 12 feet).

All measurements shall be taken from the road grade level to which the sign is oriented.

e. *Minimum setback from right-of-way.*

1. Twenty feet for painted bulletins (14 feet by 48 feet).
2. Fifteen feet for poster panels (12 feet by 25 feet).
3. Ten feet for poster panels (6 feet by 12 feet).

f. *Abandoned signs.* A billboard without copy shall either display copy or be removed within 90 days after official notification from the zoning administrator.

g. *Scenic highway.* No billboards shall be allowed on the following scenic highways and corridors: South Carolina Highway No. 11 Corridor (county portion), designated as the Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway; "Southern Connector" (for 2) years after the effective date of Ord. No. 3335, adopted Feb. 15, 2000); and Haywood-Howell Road.

h. *Permit issuance.*

1. *Permits for existing billboards.* All billboards existing in the county which were lawfully erected prior to June 10, 1986, shall be required to be repermited within 90 days after the effective date of this section. In order to obtain the permit, the owner shall furnish the county with the following information on each billboard:

- (a) Location.
- (b) Color photographs of each face and support structure.
- (c) Size description of each face, excluding pop-ups. No initial fee shall be charged for repermited existing billboards.

2. *Permits for relocated billboards.* A permit for the relocation of a billboard shall not be issued by the county unless:

(a) An officer of the company applying for a permit to relocate a sign certifies in writing that the company has provided the information required by subsection (b)(2)h.1. above for all of its existing billboards in the county.

(b) The county has certified that the off-premise sign at the original location has been completely removed.

(c) The county has verified that the proposed billboard and its proposed location meet the criteria set forth in this section.

(d) All other requirements for obtaining a permit have been met, including the payment of a permit fee as charged by the county codes department.

No permit for the relocation of a billboard shall be issued if the company requesting such permit is presently in violation of any of the provisions of this chapter.

3. *Posting of permits.* The county codes department shall issue all permits required by this section in duplicate, one of which shall be weather resistant. The owner of each billboard in the county shall be responsible for affixing the weather resistant permit to the billboard in a prominent location and for ensuring that such permit is continuously attached at all times thereafter.

4. *Renewal of permits.* All billboard permits issued in accordance with this section shall be valid only for the calendar year in which they are issued and shall be renewed not later than January 15th of each calendar year. A renewal fee of \$75 shall be charged for each billboard permit renewed. Any billboard owner who fails to remit the \$75 renewal fee by January 15th shall be charged an additional \$25 late fee for each billboard permit renewed. In the event that any billboard owner fails to remit the renewal fee and the late fee by February 15, the county shall revoke the permit, and the billboard owner shall be required to remove the billboard within 30 days.

i. *Construction of relocated signs.*

1. Any billboard relocated pursuant to the provisions of this chapter must be constructed within 12 months from the date the permit is issued.

2. A relocated billboard shall have no more faces than it had at its previous location.

3. The faces or faces of a relocated billboard shall have no more display area (square footage) per face than it had at its previous location. In no event shall the face of a relocated billboard exceed the maximum allowable display area set forth in subsection (b)(2)c. herein.

(c) *Directional signs.* Due to the severely limited size restrictions imposed thereon and in order to provide information and directional aid to the general public, directional signs may be erected in the county, provided such signs comply with the general provisions of articles I and III.

(d) *Weekend real estate directional signs.* Weekend real estate directional signs shall comply with the following requirements:

(1) Sign area may not exceed 24 inches by 24 inches;

(2) Sign height shall not exceed 3 feet above adjacent grade;

(3) Signs shall not encroach into the road right-of-way and shall not obstruct visibility at intersections;

(4) Signs shall not be erected before 7:00 p.m. on Friday evening and shall be completely removed in their entirety not later than 7:00 a.m. on the following Monday morning;

(5) No sign permitted in this subsection shall be erected within 30 feet of an intersection, and not more than 2 signs per company or development shall be allowed at an intersection;

(6) No weekend real estate directional signs shall be placed at any location other than at an intersection;

(7) No sign permitted in this subsection shall be erected more than 1 mile from the property for sale or lease, or if a subdivision, not more than 1 mile from the subdivision;

(8) No sign permitted in this subsection shall be erected on or abutting a road owned and maintained by the state of South Carolina unless specifically allowed by the South Carolina Department of Transportation.

Any violation of these provisions shall result in the offending individual, company, or corporation being barred from erecting weekend real estate directional signs for a period not to exceed months, and may also result in the penalties contained in § [19-4](#).

(1976 Code, § 19-45) (Ord. No. 1551, § 1(13-9), 6-9-86; Ord. No. 1690, § 3, 6-2-87; Ord. No. 2787, § 1, 12-5-95; Ord. No. 2830, §§ 1-3, 4-16-96; Ord. No. 3335, §§ 1, 2, 2-15-00; Ord. No. 3368, §§ 1, 2, 6-15-00; Ord. No. 3550, § 2, 12-18-01; Am. Ord. No. 3657, § 6, 1-13-03)

TABLE 1. DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS FOR PERMANENT SIGNS

| Total Number of Signs Allowed* | Special Use Provisions | Type Signs Allowed | Allowable Square Foot Area per Sign | Height Maximum | Setback |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Zoning Districts: R-S, R-20, R-15, R-12, R-10, R-7.5, RM-1, RM-2, RM-A, RD, RM | | | | | |
| 1 | Home occupation | Wall | 2 | N/A | Wall mounted |
| 1 per entrance | Permanent subdivision | Freestanding or wall | 20 | | |
| 1 per entrance not to exceed 2 per street front | Group residential and nonresidential | Freestanding or wall | 50 per sign | 12' | As set forth in § 19-42(a) |
| Zoning Districts: C1-N, OD, POD | | | | | |
| | | Wall | 20% usable wall area, 200 max. | Not above roof line | Building mounted |
| 2 per business | As set forth in § 19-44(a)(2)b | Projecting | ½ per linear foot, 200 max. | No more than 5' above parapet | Building mounted |
| | | Freestanding (1 per street front) | ½ per linear foot 200 max. | 35' max. | As set forth in § 19-42(a) |
| | | * Window | 20% of window area | | |
| | | * Mobile | 6 | 3' | As set forth in § 19-42(a) |
| Zoning Districts: C-1, C1-R, C-2 | | | | | |
| | | Wall | 20% usable wall area, 350 max. | Not above roof line | Building mounted |
| 3 per business | As set forth in § 19-44(a)(2)b | Projecting | 1 per linear foot, 225 max. | No more than 5' above parapet | Building mounted |
| | | Freestanding | 1 per linear foot, 225 max. | 35' | As set forth in § 19-42(a) |
| | | * Portable | 50 max. | N/A | As set forth in § 19-42(a) |
| | | * Window | 20% of window area | | |
| | | * Mobile | 6 | 3' | As set forth in § 19-42(a) |
| | | Wall | 20% usable area, 350 max. | Not above roof line | Building mounted |
| Zoning Districts: S-1, I-1 | | | | | |
| 3 per business | As set forth in § 19-44(a)(3)b | Freestanding | 1 per linear foot, 300 max. | 35' | As set forth in § 19-42(a) |
| | | Marquee | No restriction | Not above roof line | Building mounted |
| | | Projecting | 1 per linear foot, 300 max. | No more than 5' above parapet | Building mounted |
| | | * Portable | 50 max. | N/A | As set forth in § 19-42(a) |
| | | * Window | 20% of window | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|----------|------|----|--|
| | | | area | | |
| | | * Mobile | 6 | 3' | As set forth in § 19-42(a) |

* Window signs, mobile signs and portable signs shall not count toward the total number of signs allowed unless they are converted to permanent signs.