

CHAPTER 1184
Sign Regulations

<p>1184.01 Intent.</p> <p>1184.02 General requirements for all signs in all districts.</p> <p>1184.03 Measurement of sign area.</p> <p>1184.04 Prohibited signs.</p> <p>1184.05 Signs permitted in all districts without a permit.</p> <p>1184.06 Wall signs.</p> <p>1184.07 Projecting signs.</p> <p>1184.08 Ground signs.</p> <p>1184.09 Roof signs.</p> <p>1184.10 Portable and temporary signs.</p>	<p>1184.11 Small advertising signs.</p> <p>1184.12 Traffic direction or guidance signs.</p> <p>1184.13 Trailer mounted signs.</p> <p>1184.14 Off-premise signs.</p> <p>1184.15 Structural requirements.</p> <p>1184.16 Sign permits.</p> <p>1184.17 Sign permit fee.</p> <p>1184.18 Maintenance.</p> <p>1184.19 Variances.</p> <p>1184.99 Penalty.</p>
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CROSS REFERENCES

Definitions - see P. & Z. 1131.53 et seq.
 Sign variances - see P. & Z. 1135.05(c)
 Nonconforming signs - see P. & Z. 1181.08
 Sign permit fees - see BLDG. 1315.02

1184.01 INTENT.

The purpose of these sign regulations is are to promote and protect the public health, welfare and safety by regulating existing and proposed outdoor advertising, outdoor advertising signs and outdoor signs of all types. They are intended to protect property values, create a more attractive economic and business climate, and natural beauty of designated areas.
 (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.02 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL SIGNS IN ALL DISTRICTS.

The regulations contained in this section shall apply to all signs and all zoning districts.

(a) Any illuminated sign or lighting device shall employ only light emitting a light of constant intensity, and no sign shall be illuminated by or contain flashing, intermittent rotating or moving light or lights except clocks and time and temperature devices. In no event shall an illuminated sign or lighting device be placed or directed so as to permit the beams and illumination therefrom to be directed or beamed upon a public street, highway, sidewalk or adjacent premises so as to cause glare or reflection that may constitute a traffic hazard or nuisance.

- (b) Signs shall not be placed on the roof of any building except the sloping portion of a mansard roof or in cases where approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals as a variance when it is determined by the Board a roof sign would be the only means of adequate identification.
- (c) A sign or part thereof or any other advertising device shall not contain or consist of banners, pennants, ribbons, balloons, flags, streamers, spinners or other similar moving devices. Such devices, as well as strings of lights, shall not be used for the purpose of advertising or attracting attention.
- (d) Signs advertising goods and services not available on the premises are prohibited except as provided for in Section 1184.14.
- (e) The property owner shall be responsible to construct and maintain all signs, including sign structures, etc., to be completely safe and free of hazard.
- (f) A sign shall not be placed in or above any public right-of-way except publicly owned signs, such as traffic control signs and directional signs, projecting signs authorized by Council and signs with information directing and guiding traffic and parking on private property where authorized by Council.
- (g) Signs with information directing and guiding traffic and parking on private property, including entrance and exit signs, shall be permitted on any private property in any zoning district. Size and location shall be in accordance with Section 1184.12.
- (h) Signs shall be limited to four colors, including black and white. The background of a sign face is considered one of the four permitted colors unless channel letters of individual sturdy mounted letters are attached to a monolithic brick or stone wall of one continuous color. In such cases, the color of the background is not considered one of the four permitted colors. The color of an opaque continuous sign band with routed translucent copy is not considered one of the four permitted colors provided one color is used for the entire sign band and the site is a multiple tenant retail or office center with three or more tenants.
- (i) Signs shall display, as the primary image only, the name of the business in text. Any additional text, graphic or image displayed on the sign face, will be considered a secondary image and shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the maximum permitted area of the sign face.
- (j) Multi-faced signs shall display the same name, message and graphics on all faces.
- (k) Reverse sides of signs shall be unobtrusive and blend with the surroundings. The reverse sides of all permanent signs and structural supports must be completely enclosed.
- (l) Obsolete signs shall be removed or replaced with a blank face within thirty (30) days of the date of discontinuance of the activity to which it was accessory. All properly maintained structural supports, including poles, may remain. Painted wall signs shall be painted over to obliterate the obsolete message. All obsolete or abandoned signs are the responsibility of the property owner. Non-complying property owners shall be notified in writing with specific time limits for removal. Failure to comply shall be authorization for the City to cause the removal of the sign and/or sign structure, and any expense incident thereto shall be paid by the property owner. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.03 MEASUREMENT OF SIGN AREA.

The surface area of a sign shall be computed as including the entire area within a regular, geometric form or combination of regular, geometric forms comprising all of the display area of the sign and including all of the elements of the matter displayed and any facade covering the frame and structural members. All exposed frames and structural members not exceeding twenty-four inches (24") in diameter or twenty-four inches (24") in width for those round or square in form, respectively, shall not be included in the computation of surface area. A sign may have one or two opposite faces or sides, each having the permitted sign area. Signs having more than two faces or sides shall be reduced in size so that the total surfaces visible from any one direction shall not exceed the permitted sign area. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.04 PROHIBITED SIGNS.

The following types of signs are prohibited and shall be removed, altered or repaired in accordance with the provisions of this chapter:

- (a) Signs containing statements, words or pictures of an obscene, indecent or immoral character;
- (b) Signs containing or which are in imitation of, an official traffic sign or signal;
- (c) Signs that are of a size, shape, design, location, movement, content, coloring or manner of illumination which may be confused with or constructed as a traffic control device or maintained by the State, City, railroad, public utility or similar agency or which hide from view any traffic or street sign or signal or create a traffic hazard;
- (d) Signs which advertise an activity, business, product or service no longer conducted, including all frame and structural members.
- (e) Signs or parts of signs that may swing or otherwise noticeably move as a result of wind pressure because of the manner of their suspension or attachment, except real estate "for sale" signs, the bottoms of which are no higher than three feet above the ground, may swing if secured with closed eyelets or hinges in such a manner that the sign cannot become disconnected from the main support or anchoring mechanism.
- (f) Signs located within the public right-of-way except where specifically authorized by Council; per Section 1184.02(f); or
- (g) Signs which have been erected or placed on a premises without obtaining a required permit. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.05 SIGNS PERMITTED IN ALL DISTRICTS WITHOUT A PERMIT.

The following signs shall be permitted in any zoning district without a permit:

- (a) One sign advertising the sale, lease or rental of the premises upon which the sign is located. The area of the sign shall not exceed thirty-two square feet in area, except in all residential districts where the area of the sign including add-ons shall not be more than five square feet and is placed not less than eight feet back of the property line. Where the principal building is less than eight feet back of the property line, such sign may not be placed more than five feet in front of the principal building.
- (b) One sign pertaining to a home occupation, as herein specified, shall be permitted, provided the sign is not over one square foot in area and is mounted flat against the wall of the dwelling or principal building on the premise.

- (c) One bulletin board or sign for churches, libraries, museums or similar institutions provided it does not exceed forty square feet in area and is placed not nearer than twenty feet from the front line and a minimum of eight feet from the side lot line. The sign, when located on a corner lot, shall be placed a minimum of twenty feet (20') from the side lot line and not obstruct the view across the corner of an intersecting street. Such signs or bulletin boards erected upon the premises of a church or similar institution shall be for the purpose of displaying the name and activities thereof, or the services provided therein.
- (d) One identification placard for multiple-family dwellings if it does not exceed twenty-four square feet in area and is placed not nearer than twenty feet from the front line, nor eight feet from the side lot line, and does not obstruct the view across the corner of intersecting streets.
- (e) Political signs not exceeding six square feet in area, provided such signs shall be placed no earlier than ninety days before election day and removed within two weeks following election day.
- (f) Garage sale, etc., signs not exceeding four square feet in area provided such signs are placed and removed within twenty-four hours of the sale date.
- (g) School activity signs not to exceed eight (8) square feet.
- (h) Tradesmen signs during a period of service not to exceed six (6) square feet.
- (i) Civic banners will be permitted with the approval of the Planning Commission or the Mayor. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.06 WALL SIGNS.

(a) In a business or industrial district, each business or industry shall be permitted one wall sign for each forty feet of the building facing a public street.

(b) The total area of a wall sign(s) for any single business or industrial enterprise shall not exceed three square feet per lineal foot of building facing a street with a maximum of one hundred twenty (120) square feet each.

(c) Wall signs shall not extend into any street, sidewalk, alley or public thoroughfare for a distance greater than twelve inches, shall have at least nine feet clearance between the lower edge of the sign and the ground and fourteen and one-half feet clearance over any area used by motor vehicles. Said wall signs require the approval of City Council per Section 1184.02(f).

(d) Wall signs made of glass shall not exceed twelve square feet when double strength glass is used and forty square feet when plate or wired glass is used.

(e) No wall sign shall be so erected as to cover the doors or windows of any building, or otherwise prevent free ingress and egress from any window, door or fire escape of any building.

(f) Each wall sign erected, hung or suspended or permitted under the terms of this chapter shall be securely fastened to a building or other structure upon the premises owned or occupied by the applicant and amply supported vertically and horizontally to prevent falling from its own weight or from wind pressure, and to prevent the same from becoming a hazard to persons using the public street or sidewalk in the vicinity of the sign. No sign as herein referred to shall be suspended from or supported by a cornice or coping, but shall be anchored to the supporting walls of the buildings. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.07 PROJECTING SIGNS.

(a) In a business or industrial district, each business or industry shall be permitted one projecting sign for each face of the building facing a public or private street.

(b) Projection of a projecting sign shall not exceed six feet measured from the face of the main building, shall not exceed thirty square feet in size, shall not be closer than twenty-four inches from the face of curb or edge of pavement, and shall have at least nine feet between the lower edge of the sign and the ground and fourteen and one-half feet over any area used by motor vehicles.

(c) Projecting signs shall be not less than five feet from the side property line or division wall between different occupants.

(d) No projecting signs shall contain an area of glass in excess of nine square feet when plate or wired glass is used.

(e) Small projecting signs which do not exceed three square feet in area or two feet in any dimension may project up to two and one-half feet over a sidewalk, street, alley or other public property, and shall have a clearance of at least eight feet over any sidewalk and fourteen feet over any street or alley.

(f) All projecting signs placed in or extending above the public right-of-way require the approval of City Council per Section 1184.02(f).
(Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.08 GROUND SIGNS.

(a) In a business or industrial district one ground sign for each forty feet of building facing a public or private street shall be permitted for each business or industrial establishment in lieu of a projecting sign. This sign may be located within ten feet of the right of way of any street or highway. The maximum area of such sign shall not exceed thirty square feet and the height shall not exceed twenty feet above grade level at the street right-of-way line. Ground signs placed more than ten feet back of the street property line however, may be increased in size ten square feet in area and five feet in height for each additional five feet of setback up to a maximum of one hundred (100) square feet in area and forty feet in height above the grade level.

(b) One ground sign serving a group of five or more business establishments in business and industrial districts and placed at least twenty feet back of the property line shall be permitted on each street serving such group of businesses in lieu of individual ground signs. The maximum area of such a ground sign shall not exceed one hundred (100) square feet for five business establishments, but may be increased in size by ten square feet for each additional business up to a maximum of two hundred (200) square feet. Such signs shall not exceed thirty feet in height for one hundred (100) square foot signs with an additional one foot added to height permitted with each additional ten square feet of sign area up to a maximum of forty feet in height.

(c) All ground signs shall have at least twelve feet clearance between the grade level at the street right-of-way line and the lower edge of the sign when located within ten feet of the right-of-way of any street or highway. Such sign shall be supported by a single column, the diameter of which shall not exceed twelve inches, or twin columns not exceeding four inches in diameter.

(d) Any part of any ground sign shall be not less than fifty feet from any residential district.

(e) Ground signs of monument type placed at a minimum setback of ten feet from the street right-of-way may have a maximum display area of forty square feet and a maximum height not to exceed twenty feet above grade level at said street right-of-way. Monument signs placed more than ten feet back of the street property line may be increased in size ten square feet in area and five feet in height for each additional five feet of setback up to a maximum of one hundred square feet in area and forty feet in height above the street grade level.
(Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.09 ROOF SIGNS.

(a) Signs placed on or above the roof of any building shall not be permitted except on the sloping portion of a mansard roof or in cases with approval of the Zoning Board of Appeals as a variance when it is determined by the Board that a roof sign would be the only means of adequate identification.

(b) No signboard shall be placed on the roof of any building so as to prevent the free passage from one part of the roof to any other part or interfere with any opening thereon. No signboard shall project beyond the edge of the roof in any direction and if over four feet in height shall be so constructed as to leave a clear space of at least six feet between the roof level and the lowest part of the sign and at least five feet clearance between the vertical supports. Every roof sign over four feet in height shall be set back at least five feet from the face of any front, rear or sidewall.

(c) If the roof sign is illuminated, lighting reflectors may project six feet beyond the building line.

(d) Signs shall be designed to withstand a wind pressure of thirty pounds per square foot of area subject to such pressure.

(e) Roof sign structures may be erected upon fireproof buildings to a height of not exceeding fifty feet above the roof and upon non-fireproof buildings to a height not exceeding thirty feet above the roof level.

(f) For signs over four feet above the roof, the portion of such structure covered and exposed to wind pressure shall not exceed one-third the total area thereof. All such signs shall be thoroughly secured to the building upon which they are installed, erected or constructed by iron or metal anchors, bolts, supports, chains, stranded cables, steel rods or braces.

(g) In no case shall any roof sign for any single business or industrial enterprise exceed three square feet per lineal foot of occupied building frontage with a maximum of one hundred fifty (150) square feet.

(h) Roof signs when approved shall be in lieu of wall signs.
(Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.10 PORTABLE AND TEMPORARY SIGNS.

(a) In all districts each premises or establishment may have one temporary or portable sign not exceeding fifty square feet in area announcing special public or institutional events, including the opening of a new business and including the erection of a building, displaying the name of the architect, builders or contractors, erected for a period not to exceed sixty days plus the event or construction period, but in no case longer than twenty-four months.

(b) Portable or temporary signs, including trailer mounted signs and balloons, are prohibited within one hundred (100) feet of a residential district.

(c) Small advertising signs as permitted in Section 1184.11 shall not be considered portable or temporary signs.

(d) All other portable or temporary signs, excluding those signs listed in Section 1184.05, used in conjunction with a business or industry shall conform to Section 1184.08 (ground signs) and as follows:

- (1) Limit. One temporary sign per premise and shall be required to have a sign permit prior to establishment.
- (2) Term. A temporary sign may be utilized during each calendar quarter for up to thirty consecutive days and not more than ninety days total in any calendar year.
- (3) Number. A maximum of three temporary sign permits shall be issued at any permitted premises in any calendar year.
- (4) Illumination. Temporary signs shall not be illuminated.
- (5) Setbacks. The minimum setback for all temporary signs shall be ten feet from the public right-of-way unless otherwise specifically stated within this Zoning Code. No temporary sign shall violate the visual obstruction requirements set forth elsewhere in the Zoning Code.
- (6) Bonding. A cash bond or other acceptable surety in the amount of three hundred dollars (\$300.00) must be submitted in addition to the temporary sign permit fee with each application. The permit bond or surety shall be forfeited to the City of Ashland if the temporary sign becomes in violation of this Zoning Code, including removal within two days of the expiration date of the temporary sign permit. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.11 SMALL ADVERTISING SIGNS.

(a) In business and industrial districts four small freestanding or portable advertising signs, not exceeding twelve square feet each in area, shall be permitted for each business or industrial establishment.

(b) Such small advertising signs shall not exceed eight feet in height and shall not be located closer to any street right-of-way than ten feet or the established building line, whichever is least. In no case shall any sign be located in any public street or alley right-of-way.

(c) Such small advertising signs shall only advertise products, services or activities located on the premises in which the sign is located. Price information is permitted on such signs.

(d) Trailer mounted signs are not considered small advertising signs and are not permitted for the use as such. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.12 TRAFFIC DIRECTION OR GUIDANCE SIGNS.

In all districts all parking lots having spaces for four or more cars or drive-in type car service may have traffic direction or guidance signs, including entrance and exit signs. Such signs shall not exceed six square feet in area and shall only display directional information and conditions of use and shall not extend more than three feet above the drive, street or sidewalk or otherwise obstruct visibility. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.13 TRAILER MOUNTED SIGNS.

Trailer mounted signs or similar portable signs are prohibited in all zoning districts except as permitted in Section 1184.10. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.14 OFF-PREMISE SIGNS.

(a) Off-premise signs contain information about goods, services, uses, businesses, persons, subjects, etc. not relative to the premises upon which the sign is located and shall be:

- (1) Directional: used for traffic direction only, containing only the principal name of a premises and the direction to same; or
- (2) All others, including billboards.

(b) Off-premise signs, other than directional, shall be permitted only in M-2 and M-3 Industrial Districts.

(c) All off-premise signs shall be approved by the Planning Commission. In making their determination, the Commission shall consider visibility, obstruction of view of adjacent uses, other signs in the area, location, size, etc., plus any additional matters that the Commission feels appropriate.

(d) Directional off-premise signs shall have a maximum display area of twenty (20) square feet and minimum setback of ten (10) feet from the street property line.

(e) The maximum display area of an off-premise advertising sign shall be three hundred (300) square feet and the maximum height shall be forty (40) feet; signs of an area of one hundred fifty (150) square feet or larger shall be separated by a distance of no less than one thousand (1,000) feet.

(f) Such signs shall not be located so as to interfere with the visibility and safe operation of vehicles or pedestrians entering or leaving the premise or intersecting streets or crosswalks.

(g) Such signs shall not be located within ten feet of any lot line or within one thousand (1,000) feet of a residential district.

(h) Such signs shall conform to all appropriate sections of this chapter except in conflict with this section and limitations based upon buildings and number of signs.

(i) Seat benches, trash containers, telephone booths, bus shelters, vehicles, vending machines and similar devices containing off-premise signs shall be exempt from these provisions with the approval of the Planning Commission.

(j) Off-premise signs, other than directional, shall be permitted only one (1) per location.

(k) Off-premise signs, other than directional, including billboards placed more than ten (10) feet and less than fifteen (15) feet off the street property line, shall have a maximum display area of thirty (30) square feet and the height shall not exceed twenty (20) feet above grade level at the street right-of-way. Off-premise signs placed more than ten (10) feet back of the street property line may be increased in size ten (10) square feet in area and five (5) feet in height for each additional five (5) feet of setback up to a maximum of three hundred (300) square feet in area and forty (40) feet in height above the grade level. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.15 STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS.

All structural requirements shall be in accordance with applicable codes, shall be constructed to withstand a wind stress of thirty pounds per square foot and shall be as approved by the Building Inspector; however, the owner is responsible to construct and maintain all signs so as to render them safe to persons, property and traffic. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.16 SIGN PERMITS.

(a) Signs shall not be required to have a permit when a proposed sign is considered and approved along with a request for an occupancy certificate or building permit or is listed in Section 1184.05. In other cases, only the following types of signs shall be required to have a sign permit:

- (1) Wall signs to be erected after the adoption of these sign regulations;
- (2) Projecting signs to be erected after the adoption of these sign regulations;
- (3) Ground signs to be erected after the adoption of these sign regulations;
- (4) Roof signs to be erected after the adoption of these sign regulations; and
- (5) Off-premise signs to be erected after the adoption of these sign regulations; and
- (6) Portable or temporary signs per Section 1184.10(b), excluding those specifically listed in Section 1184.05 and traffic directional signs.

(b) In a business or industrial district, window display signs are permitted without a permit and shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of available area.

(c) The Building and Zoning Inspector shall have the authority to determine the need for a permit where these regulations do not specifically address the case.

(d) A permit shall become void if the work for which the permit was issued is not completed within six months of the date of the permit. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.17 SIGN PERMIT FEE.

Fees for sign permits shall be forty dollars (\$40.00) for each sign for which a permit is required. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.18 MAINTENANCE.

All signs and sign structures, including their supports, anchors, guys, etc., shall be kept properly painted and/or galvanized and generally maintained in a proper state of preservation and safety. The Building and Zoning Inspector may order the removal of any sign that is not maintained in accordance with these conditions. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.19 VARIANCES.

The Zoning Board of Appeals may grant a variance from any sign regulation.
(Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)

1184.99 PENALTY.

Whoever violates any provision of this Zoning Code for which no other penalty is provided shall be fined not less than five dollars (\$5.00) nor more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00). A separate offense shall be deemed committed each day during or on which a violation occurs or continues. The owner of any building or premise or part thereof, where any thing in violation of this Zoning Code is placed or exists and any architect, builder, contractor, agent or person employed in connection therewith and who may have assisted in the commission of any such violation shall be guilty of a separate offense. (Ord. 30-08. Passed 7-1-08.)