

Article 8 ■ SIGN REGULATIONS

SECTION 8.1 SCOPE

These Standards are adopted to:

- a. Maintain and enhance the aesthetics of the community.
- b. Enhance pedestrian and vehicular traffic safety.
- c. Preserve public health, safety, and welfare.
- d. Minimize the adverse effects of signs on nearby public and private property.
- e. Minimize driver distraction.
- f. Encourage appropriate plants and landscaping material.
- g. Avoid excessive signage.
- h. Protect and enhance the scenic views and natural landscapes.
- i. Protect and enhance economic viability by assuring aesthetic appeal for visitors and residents.
- j. Promote the use of aesthetically pleasing sign materials and colors.
- k. Avoid obstacles, distractions, or traffic hazards, which impair a traveler's ability to see pedestrians, traffic signs, or vehicles.
- l. Preserve the right to enjoy scenic amenities.
- m. Enhance the effectiveness of necessary directional and warning Signs.
- n. Preserve property values.
- o. Provide for the effectiveness of Permitted Signs.
- p. Avoid adverse lighting or reflection.
- q. Require structurally safe Signs.

SECTION 8.2 PERMIT PROCEDURE

Prior to construction or establishment of any sign, except as otherwise specifically noted in this Ordinance, a [permit](#) shall be obtained from the Township Zoning Enforcement Officer. A sign permit shall become null and void if the work for which the permit was issued has not been completed within a period of 6 months after the date of the permit.

- a. APPLICATION FOR A PERMANENT SIGN. [Application for a permit](#) to construct or locate a permanent sign shall be obtained from the Township Zoning Administrator. The application shall include the following information.
- 1) Name, address, telephone number of the landowner, developer, or petitioner.
 - 2) A map of the property at a scale of 1"=10' showing the location and type of existing structures on the site, property boundaries, location and type of structures on adjacent properties, road rights-of-way, entrances and exits onto the subject property and exact location of the proposed sign(s) with setback from all structures and property lines. The drawings submitted for sign permits must comply with all pertinent aspects of the approved site plan in instances where a site plan is required.
 - 3) An elevation drawing of the proposed sign(s) depicting its design, lettering, method of illumination and other relevant information. The dimensions of the height and length, and width of the sign(s) and height between ground elevation and the bottom of the sign, shall be noted.
 - 4) In the case of a wall sign, an elevation of the wall of the building on which the sign is to be placed, including a depiction of the wall sign at scale, shall be shown. The dimension of the building wall and the sign shall be depicted.
 - 5) The proposed dates of construction and completion of the sign.
 - 6) Structural information necessary to comply with all current building codes.
 - 7) A fee shall be paid to Tittabawassee Township for each sign permit. A schedule of fees shall be established and amended from time to time by the Township Board.
- b. APPLICATION FOR A PORTABLE/TEMPORARY SIGN. [Application for a permit](#) to install a temporary sign shall be obtained from the Township Zoning Administrator. The application shall include the following information.
- 1) Name, address, telephone number of the landowner, developer, or petitioner.
 - 2) Address at which the sign will be located.
 - 3) The size of the sign to be installed.
 - 4) The proposed dates the sign will be in place.
 - 5) A fee shall be paid to Tittabawassee Township for each sign permit. A schedule of fees shall be established and amended from time to time by the Township Board.
 - 6) In the 30 days leading up to an election and up to 5 days following the election, the requirement to obtain a temporary sign permit shall be waived.
- c. All portable signs are subject to the restrictions outlined in the following Table of Special Purpose Sign Regulations and subject to the location restrictions for permanent signs in the applicable Zoning District. Each such sign shall require a permit if it is to be posted more than 3 days.

Zoning District	Duration of Permit	Permits per Parcel
AG/RES used for non-residential use	14 days	Unlimited
AG/RES (All Other)	14 days	1 per year
COMMERCIAL	30 days	2 per year
INDUSTRIAL	30 days	2 per year
TEMPORARY LAND DEVELOPMENT	1 year	1 per year

SECTION 8.3 EXEMPTIONS

- a. ACTIONS EXEMPT FROM PERMITTING. The following operations shall not be considered as creating a sign and therefore shall not require a sign permit.

- 1) REPLACING COPY. The changing of the advertising copy of an approved painted or printed sign, where the sign structure does not change, or on a theater marquee and similar approved signs which are specifically designed for the use of replaceable copy.
- 2) MAINTENANCE. Painting, repainting, cleaning, light bulb replacement, and other normal maintenance and repair of a sign or a sign structure unless a structural change is made.

- b. SIGNS EXEMPT FROM PERMITTING

The following exempt Signs are allowed in all zoning districts within the Township. All exempt signs shall comply with setback provisions for the Zoning District in which they are located.

- 1) SIGNS AT CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS. One sign may be displayed during the construction period, commencing with the issuance of a building permit. The signs shall have a maximum area of thirty-two (32) square feet. The signs shall be confined to the site of the construction and shall be removed no more than four (4) days after the beginning of the intended use of the project or one year from issuance of permit. Corner and through lots are allowed one sign on each side of parcel bordering a roadway.
- 2) ON PROPERTIES FOR RENT/SALE/LEASE
 - a) One sign is allowed, when located on land or building intended to be rented, leased or sold. On corner or through lots, one sign is allowed on each side of the parcel which borders a roadway.
 - b) On parcels used for commercial or industrial uses, the sign shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet in area or six (6) feet in height.
 - c) On parcels used for agricultural or residential uses, the sign shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area or four (4) feet in height.
- 3) SMALL SIGNS. In the all zoning districts, one (1) sign is permitted without a permit. The sign shall be no greater than six (6) sq. ft. or four (4') ft. in height. All signs must be a minimum of ten (10) feet from the edge of the road or curb. Signs are not allowed in

the area between a sidewalk and the adjoining roadway. In the 30 days leading up to an election and up to 5 days following the election, the number of small signs allowed per parcel shall be increased to ten (10) in all zoning districts.

- 4) DECORATIONS. In the VC, GB, RB, I-1 and I-2 districts, signs and decorations smaller than one (1) square foot are permitted. Flags or banners, properly anchored to permanently mounted poles that are less than three (3) square feet are permitted. Flags, banners and signs larger than this shall be treated as portable/temporary signs.
- 5) CROP IDENTIFICATION. Crop identification signs in the agricultural district.
- 6) PRIVATE TRAFFIC DIRECTION SIGNS. Signs located on private property, necessary to promote vehicular and pedestrian safety are exempt from permitting. These may include directional signs, parking signs, and other related signs at the discretion of the owner, not exceeding two (2) square feet.
- 7) FLAGS. Two (2) flags are allowed to be exempt from these regulations. If additional flags will be displayed no more than the time period allowed for a portable sign, the flag will be considered a portable sign and is subject to portable sign regulations. If the flag will be displayed more than the time period allowed for portable signs, the flag becomes a permanent sign and must be calculated into the total sign area allowed for a parcel.
- 8) ADDRESSES. All structures in all zoning districts including apartment units and office suites) shall display a street number address in Arabic numerals at least three (3") inches in size.
- 9) VEHICLE SIGNS. Signs attached to legally licensed vehicles that are used upon the highways for transporting persons, goods or equipment.
- 10) GOVERNMENTAL SIGNS. Traffic or other municipal signs including, but not limited to, the following, legal notices, historic site designations, municipal facility directional signs, street or traffic signs, railroad crossing signs, danger and other emergency signs as may be approved by the Township Board or any Federal, State or County agency having jurisdiction over the matter of the sign. Such signs may be located in any zoning district. However, all signs on governmental property on which a municipal building is located shall meet the commercial zoning district requirements state herein.
- 11) COMMUNITY SPECIAL EVENT. Community special event signs approved by the Township Board.
- 12) DECORATIVE SIGNS. Signs of a decorative nature, not used for any commercial purpose, provided that such signs shall be displayed for a period of not more than sixty (60) consecutive days, nor more than sixty (60) total days in any one year.

SECTION 8.4 MEASUREMENT OF A SIGN

Measurement of a sign includes the entire area within a circle, triangle, or parallelogram enclosing the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, or any figure of similar character, together with any frame or other material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the background against which it is placed. This excludes the necessary supports or uprights on which the sign is placed but includes any sign tower. Where a sign has two or more faces, the area of all faces shall be included in

determining the area of the sign, except that where two such faces are placed back to back and are at no point more than two feet from one another, the area of the sign shall be taken as the area of one face if the two faces are of equal area, or as the area of the larger face if the two faces are of unequal area. In the case of a sphere, the total area of the sphere shall be divided by four (4) to determine the maximum permitted sign area. The height of a sign shall be measured from the average grade of the lot at the setback line. If a sign includes a numeric address, the portion of the sign containing the address numbers shall not be counted toward the total square footage of the sign.

SECTION 8.5 TABLE OF SIGNS PERMITTED

District	Type	# per Parcel	Size	Setbacks	Maximum Height
CG	None	0	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
AG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non dwelling use • Small sign • Wall Sign • Portable/temporary • Integral Sign 	1 1 1 1 1	32 sq. ft. 6 sq. ft. no limit 32 sq. ft. no limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within required yard • Within required yard • Any wall • Within required yard • Any wall or roof 	5 ft. 4 ft. Any wall 5 ft. Any wall or roof
R-1A	• Non dwelling use	1	32 sq. ft.	• Within required yard	5 ft.
R-1	sign	1	6 sq. ft.	• Within required yard	4 ft.
R-2	• Small sign	1	2 sq. ft.	• Any wall	Any wall
	• Wall Sign	1	32 sq. ft.	• Within required yard	5 ft.
	• Portable/temporary	2	24sq. ft. each	• Within required yard	5 ft.
	• Subdivision				
R-3	• Same as AG district	1	Same as AG district	• Same as in AG district	Same as AG district
R-4	• Wall sign	1	32 sq. ft.	• Any wall	Any wall
	• Subdivision	2	24 sq. ft.	• Within required yard	5 ft.
	• Portable/temporary				
VC Wash.	• Freestanding or	1 or	18 sq. ft.	• Within required yard	6 ft.
	• Monument	1	32 sq. ft.	• Within required yard	6 ft.
VC M-47	• Freestanding or	1 or	32 sq. ft.	• Within required yard	18 ft.
GB	• Monument	1	32 sq. ft.	• Within required yard	6 ft.
RB	OR/AND				
	• Wall/Window	1	64 sq. ft. or 70% of any wall	• Any wall facing a road	Height of highest eave
	• Integral				
	• Marquee/Canopy	1	64 sq. ft. or 70% of any wall	• On structure	Height of highest eave

District	Type	# per Parcel	Size	Setbacks	Maximum Height
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portable/temporary • Temporary land development 	1	32 sq. ft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within required yard 	5 ft.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Banners 	see notes	see notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • see notes 	n.a.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic message board 	1	32 sq. ft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within required yard 	42 8 ft.
I-1 I-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wall and window • Integral (wall only) 	1	64 sq. ft. or 70% of any wall facing a road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any wall • Within required yard 	Any wall
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freestanding or Monument 	1	32 sq. ft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within required yard 	18' at grade of lot line
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roof 	1	60 sq. ft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within required yard 	Roof line
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portable/temporary • Temporary land development 	1	32 sq. ft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within required yard 	5 ft.

NOTES TO TABLE

- a. THROUGH LOTS. In the case of through lots (a lot or lots held under one ownership fronting on two streets), on a street, one sign may be allowed per access.
- b. CORNER LOTS. In the case of a corner lot, situated on two or more streets, signs may be permitted on each street according to the regulations for individual signs in the table. If the property owner chooses to only have signage on one of the street frontages, additional bonus provisions will be applied to the sign on the street where the sign is located. Bonus provisions will be based on those available to the property owner had he chosen to locate the sign on the unsigned street frontage.
- c. BUSINESS CENTER If there are three (3) or more businesses located on the same parcel, the Planning Commission shall determine the allowable sign size at the site plan review stage.
- d. SIGN TYPE. No premises other than through or corner lots shall be permitted more than two signs of different types or more than one (1) sign of any particular type.
- e. UPPER FLOOR OCCUPATION. Each business occupancy other than the ground floor shall be entitled to one (1) additional sign of the wall or flat type on the structure or incorporated within a permitted projecting sign. These wall signs shall not be larger than two-thirds (66%) of the permitted wall sign for the first floor business.

- f. **ADDITIONAL BUILDING ENTRANCE.** One (1) sign not exceeding four (4) square feet may be permitted per additional building entrance, exit or service window.
- g. **STREET BANNERS.** Fabric signs, suspended across public streets advertising a public entertainment or event. The location of each street banner must be specifically approved by the Saginaw County Road Commission or the Michigan Department of Transportation (for banners on M-47). A copy of the Road Commission or MDOT permit must be on file with the Zoning Administrator prior to display of the banner. These signs may be displayed during the event being advertised and for no more than 14 days before and 4 days after it.
- h. **ELECTRONIC MESSAGE BOARDS.** The message/symbol/picture change cycle of a changeable message sign shall be not less than six (6) seconds per message/symbol/picture.
- i. **NONDWELLING USE SIGNS.** In the AG, R-1A, R-1, and R-2 districts, only nondwelling use signs may be illuminated.
- j. **WALL SIGNS.** Signs constructed of fabric that are securely anchored to a building so that no portion of the sign moves, are maintained in good repair and meet all other provisions of this ordinance are permitted. These signs are considered permanent signs and must be within the maximum square footage and placement allowed for such signs.

SECTION 8.6 BONUS PROVISIONS

In all commercial and industrial districts, additional signage is permitted under the following conditions: (The percentage bonus provisions shall be applied to the maximum size as specified in section 8.5)

- a. **LANDSCAPING.** Ten percent (10%) bonus in the size of one sign when any freestanding or monument sign which is erected in a landscaped area. The landscaped areas must contain a minimum of two (2) square feet for each square foot of the sign area. The landscape design must be approved by the Planning Commission or its designee.
- b. **DESIGN.** A twenty (20%) bonus in sign area will be allowed if at least fifty (50%) of the total sign structure is comprised of brick, stone or architectural block.
- c. **HEIGHT.** Ten percent (10%) bonus in the size of one sign when any freestanding or monument sign which is erected at least one (1') foot lower than the maximum height allowed.
- d. **SPEED LIMIT.** In areas where the speed limit is 35 mph, no bonus shall be given. Where the speed limit is 45 mph, an additional 8 sq. ft. of sign structure shall be allowed. Where the speed limit is 55 mph, an additional 16 sq. ft. of sign structure shall be permitted.
- e. **FRONTAGE.** An additional 8 sq. ft. of sign structure size shall be permitted for every 25 feet over the first 200 lineal feet of lot frontage.

SECTION 8.7 PROHIBITED SIGNS

Signs are prohibited that:

- a. Are of a size, location, movement, content, coloring, or manner of illumination which may be confused with or construed as a traffic control device or emergency vehicle.
- b. Obstruct a motorist's view of any traffic signs, street sign, or traffic signal.
- c. Are not properly anchored or secured to a building or the ground.

SECTION 8.8 ILLUMINATION

There shall be no flashing, oscillating, or intermittent, illumination of any sign located in the line of vision of a traffic control device or interfering with safe vision along any roadway, especially at intersections. All illuminated signs shall be designed and located to prevent the light from being cast upon adjoining residences and shall be located at least one hundred fifty (150') feet from any residential use. The illumination of any sign shall not be detrimental or annoying to surrounding property nor constitute a safety hazard, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

In the AG, R-1A, R-1, R-1V and R-2 districts, only non dwelling use signs may be illuminated.

SECTION 8.9 NONCONFORMING SIGNS

- a. INTENT. This ordinance is intended to encourage the eventual elimination of signs which do not comply with the ordinance. The elimination of non-conforming signs is as much a subject of health, safety, and welfare as is the prohibition of new signs in violation of this ordinance. Therefore, this ordinance attempts to realize the removal of non-conforming signs and to avoid any unreasonable invasion of established property rights.
- b. CONTINUANCE. A Nonconforming Sign may be continued during the useful life of the Sign if it is maintained in good condition. It shall not, however, be replaced by another Nonconforming Sign. It may not be structurally altered so as to prolong the useful life of the Sign. It may not be reestablished after damage or destruction is the Department determines that the estimated cost of reconstruction exceeds fifty (50%) percent of the estimated replacement costs.

SECTION 8.10 CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

- a. CODES. All signs shall conform to the latest edition of the applicable building and electrical codes.
- b. FASTENINGS. All signs must remain safe and secure during the period of use. All parts of the Signs, including bolts and cables, shall remain painted, and free of corrosion.
- c. FIRE ESCAPES. A sign may not obstruct a fire escape.
- d. IDENTIFICATION. All signs for which a permit is required shall identify the name and operating telephone number of the person responsible for the sign.
- e. DISPLAY OF STREET ADDRESS. The street and/or building address number shall be displayed on the primary freestanding identification sign for each premises on land located in any commercial or industrial district. Display of street address numbers shall conform with the following standards:

- 1) Address number shall be displayed on the sign face or on the supporting structure of the sign, at a minimum height of two (2) feet above grade.
 - 2) The height of numbers shall be eight (8") inches.
 - 3) If the premises which are identified by a primary freestanding identification sign contains more than one street address number, the street address number displayed on the sign shall identify the lower and upper ends of the address range to which the sign pertains.
 - 4) Display of street address numbers on a sign structure shall not be considered a sign subject to the regulations contained in unless the height of the address numbers exceeds eight (8") inches, in which case the street address number shall be considered a sign, subject to the limitations on size and number signs contained in this ordinance.
- f. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLIANCE.** The owner of the parcel on which a sign is placed and the person maintaining the sign are each fully responsible for the condition and the maintenance of the sign, and the area around the sign.

VIOLATIONS AND REMOVAL

- a. Any sign erected, altered, or converted subsequent to the passage of this ordinance and in violation of any provisions thereof is hereby declared to be a nuisance per se. Any person or anyone acting on behalf of any such person who shall violate any provisions of this ordinance, or who shall fail to comply with any requirements thereof shall be guilty of a municipal civil infraction as provided in Ordinance No. 01-01, Tittabawassee Township Municipal Sanctions for Ordinance Violations Ordinance. Each day that there is a failure to comply shall constitute a separate offense. A violator of this ordinance shall also be subject to such additional sanctions, remedies, and judicial orders as are authorized under Michigan law, including costs and attorney's fees.
- b. Upon discovery of a violation of this Article the Zoning Administrator shall provide written notice to the person in possession of the premises upon which the sign is erected as is reasonably available and to the owner of the premises upon which the sign is erected as shown by the records of the Township Assessor. Such notice shall state the defects found upon inspection of the sign and order the sign to be brought into compliance with this Article or removed.
- c. The Zoning Administrator or his representative shall also post a copy of such notice upon the violating sign or upon the premises upon which the sign is erected. Such notice shall be sufficiently weatherproof to withstand normal exposure to the elements and shall be readily visible from the nearest public thoroughfare.
- d. If the violating sign has not been removed or brought into compliance with this Article within thirty (30) days from the issuance of the order specified in B. above, the Zoning Administrator or his deputies shall provide notice to the person in possession of the premises upon which the violating sign is erected and to the owner of premises upon which the sign is erected. The owner may request an interpretation of the Ordinance or an administrative decision at the Zoning Board of Appeals. Notice shall be provided in the same manner as in B. and C. above.
- e. If the Zoning Board of Appeals determines that the sign involved is in violation of this Article he shall order the action necessary to bring the sign into compliance. Based upon

competent evidence and testimony the Board of Appeals shall also establish a reasonable time by which the requirements of the order shall commence and shall be completed.

SECTION 8.11 ABANDONED SIGNS.

A sign or sign insert shall be removed by the owner or lessee of the premises upon which the sign is located when the business is no longer conducted on the premises and the Township determines that the sign is in a condition that is detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the Township. This may include structural deficiencies or poor maintenance. If the owner or lessee fails to remove it within 30 days of the termination of the business, or the property owner fails to provide the Township with a permit request for a replacement sign within one hundred and eighty (180) days of the business no longer being conducted on the premises, the Zoning Enforcement Officer, or a duly authorized representative, may remove the sign at cost to the property owner. When a successor to a defunct business agrees to maintain the signs as provided in this code, this removal requirement shall not apply.