

**ARTICLE V
REGULATIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL DISTRICTS**

**CHAPTER 510
Sign Regulations**

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Sec. 510.1 PURPOSE.

In the interest of promoting the public convenience, comfort, prosperity and general welfare of the residents of Montville Township, these regulations provide for the use, location and size of signs. More specifically, the purposes of these regulations are to:

- A. Provide reasonable, yet appropriate, conditions for signage for residents, residential developments, institutions, businesses, and nonresidential establishments.
- B. Ensure that signs are located and designed to maintain a safe and orderly pedestrian and vehicular environment and eliminate any confusion or hazardous conflict between traffic control signs and devices, and other signs authorized by these regulations.
- C. Minimize the negative consequences of excessive numbers or size of signs.
- D. Provide review procedures that enable the Township to comprehensively evaluate the appropriateness of a sign to the site, building and surroundings.
- E. Prohibit all signs not expressly permitted by this Chapter.

Sec. 510.2 COMPUTATIONS.

The following principles shall control the computation of sign area and sign height:

A. Determining Sign Area or Dimension.

1. For a sign that is framed, outlined, painted or otherwise prepared and designed to include a background for a sign display, the sign area or dimensions shall include the entire portion within such background or frame.
2. For a sign comprised of individual letters, figures, emblems, logos or elements on a wall, or an irregular shaped billboard, ground or interstate pole sign, the area of the sign shall encompass the smallest regular, or a combination of regular, geometric shapes that form or approximate the perimeter of all the elements in the display. When separate elements are organized to form a single sign, but the elements are separated by open space, the area shall be calculated by determining one or more geometric forms that comprise the entire display area, including the space between the elements.
3. The sign area shall include the frame but shall not include the pole or other structural support unless such structural support is illuminated or otherwise so designated to constitute a display device.
4. The area for a sign with more than one face shall be computed by adding together the area of all sign faces visible from any one point. When two identical sign faces are placed back to back so that both faces cannot be viewed from any point at the same time, and when such sign faces are part of the same sign structure and are not more than 42 inches apart, the sign area shall be computed by the measurement of one of the faces. A v-sign shall be considered one (1) sign face and the measurement of the exterior angle between the sign faces shall not exceed ninety (90) degrees.
5. In the event there is a dispute in determining the sign area or any sign dimension, the Zoning Inspector shall have the responsibility for making such determination. The Board of Zoning Appeals is the final authority.

B. Determining Sign Height. The height of a billboard, ground sign, or interstate pole sign shall be computed as the distance from the base of the sign at normal grade to the top of the highest attached component of the sign.

1. Normal grade shall be construed to be the lower of:
 - a) Existing grade prior to construction, or
 - b) The newly established grade after construction, exclusive of any filling, berming, mounding, or excavating solely for the purpose of locating the sign.

2. In cases in which the normal grade cannot reasonably be determined, sign height shall be computed on the assumption that the elevation of the normal grade at the base of the sign is equal to the elevation of the nearest point of the crown of a public or private street or the grade of the land at the main access to the development off of the public or private road, whichever is higher.

C. Determining Building Frontage and Building Unit.

1. The building frontage shall be measured along the length of the front wall between the exterior faces of the exterior side walls.
2. In the case of an irregular wall surface, a straight line extended between the exterior faces of the exterior side walls shall be used to measure the length.
3. For lots fronting on two or more streets, or where the building has its main entrance on a wall other than the wall that faces the street, the Zoning Inspector shall determine which wall shall be the primary building frontage and which wall shall be the secondary building frontage. Only one outside wall of any business shall be considered its primary frontage and only one additional outside wall shall be considered a secondary frontage.
4. The building frontage for a building unit shall be measured from the centerline of the party walls defining the building unit.

- D. Architectural Features. Architectural features that are either part of the building or part of a billboard, ground sign or interstate pole sign structure are not considered signs and are thus exempt from these regulations.

Sec. 510.3 REGULATIONS AND MAXIMUM AREA FOR SIGNS.

A. Address Sign (No Permit Required):

1. Nonresidential Districts – One (1) address sign not exceeding two (2) square feet and a maximum of four (4) feet in height shall be permitted for each business in a nonresidential district.
2. Residential Districts – One (1) address sign not exceeding two (2) square feet and a maximum of four (4) feet in height shall be permitted for each dwelling or use authorized by Section 410.3 (B) & (C) in a residential district.

B. Awning/Canopy Sign (Permit Required):

See “Wall Sign”

C. Billboard (Permit Required, also see Section 510.8 A):

All billboards shall conform to the following: Not more than one billboard shall be located on a lot. A billboard shall not be located nearer than 2,500 feet from another billboard. Billboards located within 3,000 feet of the right-of-way of Interstate 71 or any state route shall comply with all applicable federal and state regulations including O.R.C. § 5516.06 and § 5516.061.

1. Nonresidential Districts – Billboards in nonresidential districts shall be regulated as a business use. Billboard shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet or a height of eight (8) feet. Such sign shall be located a minimum of forty (40) feet from the street right-of-way, twenty-five (25) feet from the side and rear property lines and 100 feet from a residential district.
2. Residential Districts – Billboards in residential districts shall be regulated as a business use on land used for agricultural purposes. A billboard shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet in area and six (6) feet in height. Such sign shall be located a minimum of forty (40) feet from the street right-of-way, and 100 feet from the side and rear lot lines.

D. Directional Sign (Permit Required):

Directional signs in all districts shall not exceed four (4) square feet and shall not exceed four (4) feet in height.

E. Ground Signs (Permit Required, also see Section 510.8 A):

All ground signs shall be erected in a landscaped setting and not on sidewalks, drives or in parking lots. Neither the landscaping nor the ground sign shall obstruct the view of vehicles entering or exiting the property.

1. Nonresidential Districts –

All ground signs in nonresidential districts shall conform to the following:

- a) A maximum of two (2) sign faces, either as a double-sided ground sign or as two (2) single-sided ground signs, shall be permitted per nonresidential development and shall be located at the main access off of the public road. One (1) additional ground sign shall be permitted for a corner lot when the total lot frontage of all streets equals or exceeds 300 feet. When a ground sign is located on a lot with more than one tenant, it is the property owner's responsibility to determine if the sign area shall be devoted to identification of the building(s), the anchor tenant, all tenants, or some combination thereof;
- b) Ground signs shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet and shall not exceed a height of six (6) feet. Ground signs may have up to 75 percent of the permitted sign area devoted to changeable copy. When an additional ground sign is permitted for a corner lot as determined above, the combined total sign area shall not exceed fifty-six (56) square feet, and the square footage of any one sign shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet; and
- c) Ground signs shall be located no closer than ten (10) feet from the street right-of-way line. Ground signs shall be located no closer than ten (10) feet from any side lot line bordering another nonresidential district. When a side lot line of a nonresidential district coincides with a residential zoning district boundary line, the minimum side setback shall be twenty-five (25) feet.

2. Residential Districts –

Grounds signs in residential districts shall be permitted:

- a) At the entrance to a residential subdivision, planned neighborhood development or planned residential development a maximum of two (2) sign faces, either as a double-sided ground sign or as two (2) single-sided signs, shall be permitted; and/or
- b) For authorized nonresidential uses as permitted in Section 410.3 B. & C. and may have up to 75 percent of the permitted sign area devoted to changeable copy.

All ground signs in residential districts shall conform to the following:

- a) Ground signs shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet and shall not exceed a height of six (6) feet.

- b) Ground signs shall be located no closer than ten (10) feet from the street right-of-way line. Such sign shall be located no closer than twenty-five (25) feet from any side lot line.

F. Interstate Pole Sign (Permit Required, also see Section 510.8 A):

- 1. Nonresidential Districts – Interstate pole signs shall only be permitted in the Highway Commercial District. Any business located in the Highway Commercial District within 660 feet of the Interstate 71 right-of-way may have one (1) interstate pole sign. The area of an interstate pole sign shall not exceed 160 square feet. The minimum height of the pole shall be fifteen (15) feet, and the maximum height of the pole shall be 100 feet. Such sign shall be located within fifty (50) feet of the building or parking area. Interstate pole signs may have up to 100 percent of the permitted sign area devoted to changeable copy. The interstate pole sign shall be erected in a landscaped setting.
- 2. Residential Districts – Not permitted.

G. Projecting Sign (Permit Required):

See “Wall Sign”

H. Public Purpose/Safety Signs (No Permit Required):

- 1. Nonresidential Districts – Permitted as provided by law.
- 2. Residential Districts – Permitted as provided by law.

I. Temporary Signs:

- 1. Nonresidential Districts – (Permit Required):

The following regulations shall apply for temporary signs in nonresidential districts:

- a) Temporary Development Signs – One (1) temporary ground sign shall be permitted at the entrance to a development on a lot proposed for nonresidential development. When a lot fronts on more than one (1) street, one (1) additional ground sign shall be permitted along each street frontage that equals or exceeds 300 feet. The temporary

development sign shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet, and shall not exceed six (6) feet in height. Such sign shall be located no closer than ten (10) feet from any street right-of-way and twenty-five (25) feet from a side lot line. Such sign shall be erected and maintained on a lot only during the period of time that the vacant lot is for sale, rent or lease or the building project is under construction.

- b) Temporary Window Signs – Temporary window signs shall be attached to the interior of the building. The signage affixed to the window or visible from the outside shall not exceed 20 percent of the total glass area of windows on the first floor of the wall of the building frontage. For the purpose of these regulations, the height of the windows on the first floor shall be that portion of window(s) within fifteen (15) feet of grade. This area is in addition to the allowable sign area for permanent window signs. All temporary window signs shall be displayed for a period of time not to exceed thirty (30) days and a maximum of sixty (60) days in a twelve (12) month period.
- c) Special Event Signs – One (1) temporary special event sign, either a ground sign or a banner attached to the front of the building, shall be permitted. Such sign shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet. A ground sign shall not exceed a height of four (4) feet. Temporary special event signs shall be displayed for a period of time not to exceed fourteen (14) days and a maximum of sixty (60) days in a twelve (12) month period. (Also see Section 330.4)
- d) Other Temporary Signs – In addition to the above, each business shall be permitted to erect one (1) additional temporary sign not to exceed six (6) square feet and four (4) feet in height. Such sign shall be displayed for no longer than thirty (30) days and a maximum of sixty (60) days in a twelve (12) month period.

2. Residential Districts –

The following regulations shall apply for temporary signs in residential districts:

- a) Temporary Development Sign (Permit Required) – One (1) temporary ground sign shall be permitted at the entrance to a residential subdivision, planned neighborhood development, or planned residential development. When a lot fronts on more than one (1) street, one (1) additional ground sign shall be permitted along each street frontage that equals or exceeds 300 feet. Temporary development signs shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet, and

shall not exceed six (6) feet in height. Such sign shall be located no closer than ten (10) feet from any street right-of-way and twenty-five (25) feet from a side lot line. Such sign shall be erected and maintained only during the period of time that the subdivision/development is under construction.

- b) Temporary Residential Sign (No Permit Required) – Each residential unit shall be permitted to erect either a temporary window sign or ground sign in the front yard. Such temporary sign shall not exceed six (6) square feet and shall not exceed a height of four (4) feet. A temporary ground sign shall be located no closer than ten (10) feet from a public right-of-way and twenty-five (25) feet from a side lot line. Such temporary residential signs shall be displayed for no longer than thirty (30) days.

- c) Temporary Signs for Uses Authorized by Section 410.3 (B) & (C) (Permit Required) – One (1) temporary ground sign or one banner attached to the front of the building, shall be permitted. Such temporary sign shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet. A temporary ground sign shall not exceed six (6) feet in height. Such sign shall be located no closer than ten (10) feet from the street right-of-way line and twenty-five (25) feet from a side lot line. Temporary signs for uses authorized by Section 410.3 (B) & (C) may be displayed for a period of fourteen (14) days not more than three (3) times per calendar year. Special event signs may be permitted for a period longer than fourteen (14) days when the Board of Zoning Appeals approves an extended timeframe, pursuant to Section 330.4.

J. Wall Sign (Permit Required):

Nonresidential Districts –

The following regulations shall apply for wall signs, projecting signs, and awning or canopy signs in nonresidential districts:

One and one-half (1.5) square feet of sign area per linear foot of building or building unit (see Sec. 510.2 C. 4.) frontage shall be permitted. Each building unit in a multiple-tenant building shall be permitted a maximum of thirty (30) square feet of wall signage along the building frontage. A single-tenant in a single-tenant building shall be permitted a maximum of eighty (80) square feet of wall signage along the building frontage. Minimum and maximum sign area shall be the sum of the areas of all signs attached to the building or a building unit, including wall signs, projecting signs, and awning or canopy signs.

- a) Corner Lots and Side and Rear Entrance – Additional area for wall signs shall be permitted for corner lots and side and rear entrances when a building has a secondary building frontage as defined in Section 510.2 C. The additional sign area shall not exceed 75 percent of the maximum permitted area. The total sign area shall be distributed along the primary and secondary building frontages; however, the signage on any one (1) wall shall not exceed the maximum allowed for that wall based on the building frontage.

2. Residential Districts – Not Permitted.

K. Window Sign, Permanent (Permit Required):

1. Nonresidential Districts – Permanent window signs in nonresidential districts shall only be permitted in the Office, Community Business, Highway Commercial and Rural Commercial Districts. The signage permanently affixed to the window shall not exceed 20 percent of the total glass area of windows on the first floor of the wall of the building frontage. For the purpose of these regulations, the height of the windows on the first floor shall be that portion of window(s) within fifteen (15) feet of grade.
2. Residential Districts – Not Permitted.

L. Window Sign, Temporary: See “Temporary Signs”

Sec. 510.4 SIGNS EXEMPT FROM REGULATION.

The following signs shall be exempt from regulation under the Zoning Resolution.

- A. Any sign permitted by a valid and applicable federal, state or local law, regulation or resolution or state or federal case law. (Revised June 21, 2007)
- B. Any sign inside a building, not attached to a window or door that is not legible from a distance of more than three feet beyond the building in which such sign is located.
- C. Signs that are an integral part of the original construction of vending or similar machines, fuel pumps or similar devices.

Sec. 510.5 PROHIBITED SIGNS.

All signs not expressly permitted in this Chapter or exempt from regulation pursuant to Sec. 510.10 are prohibited in the Township. Such signs include but are not limited to the following:

- A. Animated, flasher, blinker, racer type, intermittent, video, tri-vision, or similar devices, moving or revolving signs, whirligig devices, inflatable signs and tethered balloons, pennants, ribbons, streamers, spinners, exposed light bulbs, and strings of lights not permanently mounted to a rigid background, except those exempt under the previous Section, and other similar types of attention-getting devices (Revised June 21, 2007);
- B. Banners and flags except as otherwise permitted in this Chapter.
- C. Signs on temporarily placed vehicles;
- D. Signs containing any words or symbols that would cause confusion because of their resemblance to highway traffic control or direction signals.
- E. Merchandise, equipment, products, vehicles or other items not themselves for sale and placed for attention getting, identification or advertising purposes.
- F. Signs mounted on the roof of any building or structure.
- G. Permanent signs located in the public right-of-way or on utility poles which obstruct traffic.
- H. Signs, other than those exempt under the previous Section, located in the public right-of-way or attached to a utility pole, tree, trash receptacle, bench or other structure not intended or approved as a sign support. (Effective June 21, 2007)

Sec. 510.6 CRITERIA FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF SIGNS.

In addition to ensuring compliance with the numerical standards of these regulations, the Zoning Commission or Zoning Inspector shall consider the proposed general design arrangement and placement of the sign according to the following criteria:

- A. Illumination. (Also see Chapter 530, Section 530.8) Signs shall be permitted to be illuminated in compliance with the following:
 - 1. Signs may be illuminated by internally or reflected light provided that:
 - a) Light sources shall be shielded from all adjacent buildings and streets.

- b) Lights shall not be of such brightness so as to cause glare that is hazardous to pedestrians or motorists, or cause reasonable objection from adjacent residential districts.
 - 2. Signs shall not be lighted to obstruct traffic control or any other public signs. Signs visible from sight lines along streets shall not contain symbols or words, or red and green lights that resemble highway traffic signs or devices.
- B. Construction Standards. (Revised June 21, 2007)
- 1. All signs shall be constructed in a professional manner in conformance with the appropriate building code and other applicable requirements of the Township and shall be structurally sound and located so as to pose no threat to pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
 - 2. Except for banners, flags, temporary signs and window signs that conform in all respects with the requirements of this Resolution, all signs shall be constructed of permanent materials and shall be permanently attached to the ground, a building, or another structure by direct attachment to a rigid wall, frame, or structure.
 - 3. All signs shall be rigidly secured and no sign shall swing from a bar, crane, awning or other sign. No part of any sign shall be revolving, oscillating or otherwise designed to move.
 - 4. No sign shall be erected so as to project over or obstruct any window, door, fire escape, balcony, platform, stairway, ladder, vent or other means of ingress or egress of any building.
 - 5. No sign shall be located on the roof of any building.
 - 6. Permanent signs shall be fabricated on and of materials that are of good quality, good durability and are complimentary to the building of which they become a part.
 - 7. Temporary signs shall be durable and weather-resistant, non-illuminated and fastened or anchored sufficiently, whether attached to the building or positioned in the ground.

Sec. 510.7 MAINTENANCE.

All signs shall be maintained in accordance with the following:

- A. The property owner shall maintain the sign in a condition fit for the intended use and has a continuing obligation to comply with all building code requirements.

- B. Whenever any sign, either conforming or nonconforming to these regulations, is required to be removed for the purpose of repair, refurbishing, or repainting, the same may be done without a permit or any payment of fees provided that all of the following conditions are met:
 - 1. There shall be no alteration or remodeling to the structure or the mounting of the sign itself.
 - 2. There shall be no enlargement or increase in any of the dimensions of the sign or its structure.
 - 3. The sign shall be accessory to a legally permitted, conditional or nonconforming use.
- C. The Zoning Inspector may order any sign to be painted or refurbished at least once each year, if needed to keep the sign in a neat and safe condition. All supports, guys, braces and anchors for such signs shall be maintained in a safe condition, and it shall be unlawful for the owners or person having charge of such sign not to remove the same after receiving notice from the Zoning Inspector.
- D. Any sign that is deemed by the Zoning Inspector to be in an unsafe condition or constructed, erected or maintained in violation of this Zoning Resolution, the owner of the business shall be immediately notified, in writing, and shall, within 48 hours of such notification, correct such unsafe condition, initiate corrective action, or remove the sign.

Sec. 510.8 ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES.

- A. ODOT Permit Requirements. Any sign subject to regulation by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) under Ohio Revised Code Chapter 5516 and which is required to obtain a state permit shall not be issued a zoning certificate without evidence that the state permit has first been issued, or notification from ODOT that a state permit is not required.
- B. Sign Application Requirements. An application for a sign permit shall be made to the Zoning Inspector and shall include the following:
 - 1. Detailed drawings of the sign showing the color, design, size, background, and materials of the sign and the frame or structure; and
 - 2. A complete building sketch or photograph showing the location of the sign and its relationship to the building, the site, the adjacent parcels and parking lots, drives and sidewalks;
 - 3. A permit fee for each sign application, pursuant to the current fee schedule.

Sec. 510.9 ALTERATION AND REMOVAL OF NONCONFORMING SIGNS.

- A. Nonconforming signs shall be removed and any subsequent modification or replacement, excluding maintenance pursuant to Sec. 510.13, shall conform to all requirements of this Chapter:
 - 1. When more than 50 percent of the value of the sign has been destroyed, deteriorated or has been taken down;
 - 2. When the use which the nonconforming sign has voluntarily not been used for and been vacant for 2 consecutive years, it then can be ordered removed.
- B. A nonconforming sign shall not be altered, modified or reconstructed other than to comply with this Chapter except:
 - 1. When the existing use has new ownership which results in a change in the name of the use or business on the property;
 - 2. When the space is reoccupied by a similar use and the new occupant requires no external building or site renovation; or
 - 3. When alterations do not require changes to the structure, framing, or erection or relocation of the sign unless such changes conform to this Chapter.