

6.4.3 Signage. It is the intent of this section to ensure that businesses in the Highway Commercial District shall have the ability to identify their businesses to potential customers.

Signs shall be maintained in good repair at all times and the messages on signs must be current.

General Requirements

- A. No sign shall be erected, altered, or reconstructed unless a sign permit has been issued by the City’s Code Enforcement Officer. The exception is that one (1) sign real estate marketing sign per street frontage, pertaining to the sale or lease of the premises, is allowed without a permit. The sign shall have a maximum of thirty-two (32) square feet in surface area per side and maximum of five (5) feet high.
- B. Signs shall not be permitted where they obstruct motorist vision of pedestrians, regulatory signs, traffic control devices or street signs.
- C. Every sign shall be constructed and maintained in a manner consistent with the building code provisions and maintained in good structural condition at all times. The message must be kept current except for historical signs.
- D. No sign shall be illuminated by other than a steady, continuous light; neither intermittent nor flashing illumination will be permitted. Illumination shall be located, shielded, and directed so as to not be directly visible from any public street or residentially zoned property at grade level. All artificial illumination shall be so designed, located, shielded and directed as to illuminate only the sign face and to prevent the casting of glare or direct light upon adjacent residential property or streets.
- E. Signage on canopies, awnings, or marquees shall be limited to the name of or type of business only, and may not contain any message without permission of the Planning Commission.
- F. No signs shall be placed in the Highway Commercial District, except those listed below.
- G. The Planning Commission may approve off-premise signs when they are in the public interest. The Commission may place restrictions or conditions upon the signs. All signs must meet the respective district guidelines. (Amended 06-16-09, Ord. 2007-02, CITY CLERK)
- H. No attention-getting devices, including pennants, streamers, festooned lights, “whirligigs,” nor any sign which is designed to be moved by the wind shall be permitted, except once a year for a period not to exceed seven (7) days.**
- I. One flag display, consisting of three (3) flags, displayed according to proper flag protocol on a maximum of three (3) poles, is permitted for each business property in the HCD.

General Guidelines

- A. The scale and proportions of the sign should take into account the scale and proportions of the building on which it is mounted.
- B. Size of individual signs should be limited to the extent necessary to prevent them from obscuring or competing with other elements of the building.
- C. All signs shall be designed in good taste and protect the character of the neighborhood in which it is placed.
- D. The only types of signs that shall be permitted in this district are those listed below:

Types of Signs

- A. Wall Signs** shall be fixed flat against the wall of a building or on the face of a marquee wall. Signs shall be installed perpendicular to the building façade.
- B. Ground-Mounted Signs**
Businesses with a minimum building setback of twenty (20) feet from the fronting right-of-way shall be permitted the use of a ground mounted sign in addition to any other permitted signage. The maximum height of such signs shall not exceed twenty (20) feet. The maximum area for such signs shall be no more than thirty-two (32) square feet.
- C. Window Signs** shall be placed on the interior side of the building. Signs painted on glass windows are allowed, provided that the letter height does not exceed six (6) inches and that only black, bronze, gold or white letter is used.
- D. Canopy Signs.** Canopy or awning signs shall meet the following criteria:
1. A sign message on a canopy or awning shall contain only the name of the business and/or the type of business, type of goods sold, or services rendered. Each business is permitted up to one (1) sign hung under a canopy or awning provided the message on the sign is perpendicular to the building and the sign is at least eight and one half (8-1/2) feet above the surface of the sidewalk and is no more than four (4) square feet in size. If a wall sign is not used, a business is permitted to use up to one (1) canopy or awning sign.
 2. Signage on the canopy or awning sign shall be limited to no greater than one-half (1/2) of the area bounded by the edges of the canopy or awning not including any drip flap or vertical fascia surface. If signage is only found in fringe drip-flap portions of the canopy, the entire portion of said area shall be utilized for signage.
- E. Free-standing on-premises signs** shall meet the following criteria:
1. Free-standing signs are allowed one (1) square foot of sign face per lineal foot of street frontage for the first one hundred (100) feet; and one half (1/2) square foot of sign for each lineal foot in excess of one hundred (100) feet, up to a maximum of three hundred (300) square feet.
 2. One (1) free-standing sign is allowed for each developed site, lot or parcel. Where a site or parcel fronts on more than one (1) street, one (1) additional free-standing sign permitted for each additional street upon which it fronts, provided the additional signs each face different streets.
 3. Where two (2) or more detached buildings occupy the *same* lot or parcel, each *may* have one (1) free-standing sign, provided the total area does not exceed the allowable limits specified by the Ordinance, based on the total lineal street frontage of the site or parcel on which they are to be located.
 4. Where two (2) or more attached businesses or buildings occupy the same site or parcel, i.e., shopping center, only one (1) free-standing sign for the aggregate businesses shall be permitted per street frontage.

F. Signs not located on the premises of a business shall not be permitted. (Amended 08-11-06, Ord. 2006-15, CITY CLERK)

G. Non-Conforming Signs. Signs existing at the time of the enactment of this ordinance and not conforming to the provisions herein, but which were constructed in compliance with previous regulations and ordinances, shall be regarded as non-conforming signs and subject to the following regulations:

1. Any sign constructed after the adoption date of this ordinance and which is found to exist in violation of this ordinance shall be declared to be illegally non-conforming and shall be removed after thirty (30) days notice. If the owner or lessee fails to remove the sign during the permitted time, then the city or independent contractor secured by the city shall remove the sign and the ensuing charges shall be assessed to the owner or lessee.
2. Non-conforming signs shall not be structurally enhanced or modified so as to prolong the life of the sign.
3. No changes in the existing non-conforming signs shall be allowed except for those repairs which are necessary to keep the sign in good working order.
4. Non-conforming signs must be brought into conformance at the time of an application for site plan approval.
5. All non-conforming signs are required to be brought into compliance within three (3) years from the adoption of this ordinance, or when there is a change in business ownership, type or name, or if the sign becomes damaged to an amount greater than fifty (50) percent of its replacement cost. Signs which have a value greater than two thousand (\$2000) dollars at the time of the passage of the ordinance shall be depreciated at the rate of one thousand (\$1000) dollars per year and removed when fully depreciated, the value to be determined by the assessed value according to the Colleton County tax assessor's office.