

Town of Hopkinton
Zoning Bylaw

ARTICLE XXVII
Signs

§ 210-176. Purpose.

The sign regulations contained herein are intended to: 1) facilitate efficient communication; 2) avoid conflict between signs and the visual qualities of the environs; 3) support economic vitality and opportunity; and 4) encourage compatibility and harmony with surrounding buildings, land and land uses.

It is the intent of these regulations to balance the need for communication, economic vitality and free speech with the desire for an attractive community with signage that is complimentary in scale and vernacular to its context. The Town encourages sign permittees, property owners, businesses, and Town boards that review and approve signage to be mindful of this balance. A general harmony in design between signage on the same lot and on the same building is encouraged.

§ 210-177. Definitions.

For the purpose of this Article, terms shall have the following meanings:

BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT – A place of business; a lawfully existing non-residential use.

HEIGHT – The vertical distance measured from the finished grade at the sign to the highest point of the sign or its supporting structure, whichever is higher.

SANDWICH BOARD SIGN – A portable A-frame sign constructed of durable materials with two identical flat faces and designed to be displayed on the ground.

SIGN – Any letter, word, symbol, drawing, picture, design, device, article or object that advertises, calls attention to or indicates any premises, persons, products, businesses or activities, or that conveys or is intended to convey any message whatever the nature of the material and manner of composition or construction. Historical date plaques and markers, athletic scoreboards, flags and insignias of governmental jurisdictions shall not be considered signs.

SIGN AREA – The area of a sign shall include all lettering, wording and accompanying symbols or designs. It shall also include the background on which they are displayed, whether open or enclosed, any frame around the sign and any “cutouts” or extensions. The area of a sign consisting of individual letters or symbols attached to or painted on a surface, wall or building shall be considered to be that of the smallest rectangle comprised of horizontals and verticals which encompasses all letters and symbols. Only one side of a two-sided identical sign shall be counted in computing the area of a sign.

TEMPORARY SIGN – Any and every sign which by its design and/or use is temporary in nature, frequently composed of paper, plastic, fabric, posterboard and/or cardboard, typically containing messages relative to sale, lease, rental or construction of property, garage or yard sales, special sales, occasional uses and events.

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§ 210-178. General Regulations.

The following regulations shall apply in all zoning districts:

- A. No exterior sign shall be displayed except as provided in this Article or otherwise exempted by this or other law.
- B. No sign shall be displayed so as to create a hazard, obstruct the line of sight at an intersection or obstruct pedestrian travel on public sidewalks.
- C. Neon signs, including any and every sign which features exposed glass tubing filled with fluorescent gas, are prohibited. No messages or graphics on permanent signs shall be formed by lights of any kind.
- D. No sign shall be mounted, affixed or painted on roofs or extend above the roof eave line of a building.
- E. No sign shall flash, rotate, be animated, make noise, be motorized or move or be designed to move by any means, either in whole or in part.
- F. "Welcome to Hopkinton" signs and signs identifying historic villages or historic districts of Hopkinton may be displayed on the following major public ways, subject to approval by the Board of Selectmen: East Main St., Main St., Cedar St., West Main St., Wood St., South St. and Hayden Rowe St. Such signs shall not exceed 20 sq. ft. in area and shall not be illuminated.
- G. The provisions of this Article shall not apply to political signs, traffic signs, roadside civic organization and club signs, Boston Marathon race pavement markings, memorials and monuments, utility, traffic and construction warning signs, public safety messages, decorations, signs integral to product dispensing devices and fuel pumps, flags and insignia of governmental jurisdictions, historical plaques, trailhead signs and kiosks, property address numbers and the like.

§ 210-179. Temporary signs.

Temporary signs and banners are permitted in all zoning districts as follows:

- A. Temporary standing signs and sandwich board signs may be displayed by community, civic and non-profit organizations promoting events. Such signs may not be displayed more than 30 days before an event and shall be removed within two business days of the event. The size of such signs shall not exceed 8 square feet.
- B. One banner or temporary sign for each business establishment may be displayed on the premises of such use. Such signs and banners shall not exceed 24 square feet in area, and shall not be displayed for more than 30 days.
- C. Due to the historic nature of the Town Common, its central community location and its use for public events, additional temporary signage is permitted on the Town Common in conjunction with specific events. Such signage shall be allowed at the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Commission and shall be subject to time and size limitations as it shall require.

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- D. Temporary signs advertising work being performed on a premises, such as for architects, painters, contractors, carpenters and the like, shall be allowed during the time that the work is being performed and for a period of 14 days following the conclusion of the work. Such signs shall not exceed 5 square feet in area.
- E. Signs indicating the donation of landscaping or other property improvements along public ways shall be allowed for up to 30 days, not to exceed 2 square feet in area..
- F. Seasonal off-site directional signs for agricultural uses may be displayed, not to exceed 6 square feet in area.

§ 210-180. Sign regulations by zoning district

- A. Signs are permitted by right in each zoning district as follows.
 - 1. Residence A, Residence B, Residence-Lake Front and Agricultural Districts:
 - a. Signs advertising the sale or rental of the premises on which they are located, not to exceed 6 square feet in area.
 - b. Temporary or permanent signs which advertise or otherwise relate to the premises on which they are located, including home occupations, not to exceed 6 square feet in area.
 - 2. Business, Downtown Business and Rural Business Districts
 - (a) Wall signs and projecting signs shall be allowed on each side of a building facing a public way or parking lot. The area of such signs shall not exceed, in the aggregate, 1.5 square feet for each linear foot of that building wall which faces the public way or parking lot. If a building or business establishment has a street level public entrance which does not face a public way or parking lot, there may be one secondary wall sign in the vicinity of each such entrance, not to exceed 15 square feet each.
 - (b) One standing sign per lot is allowed, not to exceed 32 sq. ft. in area. The height of standing signs shall not exceed 10 feet. Lots which have frontage on more than one public way may have two standing signs on the lot, one on each public way, not to exceed 32 square feet in area.
 - (c) Each business establishment may display one sandwich board sign or other standing sign not permanently affixed to the ground on the premises when the business establishment is open to the public. The size of such signs shall not exceed 8 square feet.
 - (d) Permanent signs shall conform to the side yard and rear yard requirements.
 - (e) Accessory signs: Two accessory signs per business establishment may be displayed, which may identify businesses or occupants or guide or direct traffic or parking. No such accessory sign shall exceed 6 square feet in area.
 - (f) In Rural Business Districts, illuminated signs shall be shielded from view of any residential district lot line adjoining the business to the maximum extent practicable.

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- (g) Temporary signs may be displayed advertising the sale or rental of the premises on which they are located, not to exceed 6 square feet in area.

3. Industrial A and Industrial B Districts

- (a) Signs must identify or otherwise relate to the primary use of the building and may not be used for other purposes, except that a non-illuminated real estate sign advertising the sale of the lot or rental of space on the lot on which it is located, and having an area of not more than 20 square feet, is permitted.
- (b) Signs shall conform to the side and rear yard requirements. Signs may be located no nearer than 15 feet to a street line.
- (c) There may be one standing sign at the entrance to each individual parcel of land. The standing sign shall not exceed 32 square feet in area or exceed 10 feet in height. There may be two wall signs on each building, each not to exceed 32 square feet in area. One such wall sign shall be located on the front of the building, and one shall be located on the rear of the building or at a building entrance not facing the street. There may be directional signs within the property, each not to exceed 10 square feet, for the purpose of directing traffic within the property.
- (d) On-site directional signs for the purpose of regulating traffic in and out of the site are allowed, provided that such signs are limited to the number reasonably necessary for the purpose, are not illuminated, do not exceed 2 square feet in area and, if freestanding, do not exceed 4 feet in height. Directional signs may be placed anywhere on the lot as needed for visibility, in such manner as not to obscure sight lines or directions for general traffic.

(4) Professional Office District; Campus Style Developments approved by the Planning Board pursuant to Article XIV:

- (a) There may be one standing sign at the main entrance to the development site for the purpose of identifying the development site or businesses located within the site. The sign area shall not exceed 32 square feet in area. The sign shall not exceed 10 feet in height and shall not be located closer than 15 feet to a street.
- (b) There may be one standing sign at secondary entrances to the development site, not to exceed 15 square feet in area. The sign shall not exceed 10 feet in height and shall not be located closer than 15 feet to a street.
- (c) There may be either one wall sign on each building or one standing sign identifying each building within the development site, not to exceed 25 square feet in area. The sign shall be located on or at the front of the building.
- (d) There may be directional signs within the development site, not to exceed 10 square feet each.

- B. The following signs are allowed by special permit from the Board of Appeals. Prior to issuing a special permit, the Board of Appeals shall find that such signs conform to the community standards expressed in the Purpose of this Article, and the sign(s) are appropriate for the size of the property, the building(s) thereon, and the neighborhood setting.

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1. Signs in connection with allowed uses, subject to such limitations as may be imposed by the Board of Appeals.
2. Off-site directional signs for the purpose of directing traffic toward business establishments, provided that such signs are limited to the number necessary to the purposes.

§ 210-181. Special Regulations

- A. Garden Apartments in Residential Districts, Village Housing in Residential Districts, Senior Housing Development, Open Space Mixed Use Development Overlay District:

In developments approved by the Planning Board pursuant to Article XIII, Garden Apartments in Residential Districts, Article XIII A, Village Housing in Residential Districts, Article XVII A, Senior Housing Development and Article XXVI, Open Space Mixed Use Development Overlay District, all signs are solely subject to such limitations of size and usage as may be imposed by the Planning Board.

- B. Adult Uses

Signs shall be permitted subject to the provisions of the requirements of those applicable to the Business District and Article XVI, Adult Uses, of this Chapter, subject to the following condition: No sign may depict or represent any sexual conduct or state of sexual excitement as defined in MGL c. 272, § 31, nor shall any such representations or depictions be placed upon or within the windows or walls of the premises so as to be visible to the public from the exterior of the premises.

- C. Wireless Communications Facilities

For wireless communications facilities permitted pursuant to Article XVI of this Chapter, there shall be no signs, except for announcement, safety, no-trespassing signs and the signs required to give a telephone number where the owner can be reached on a twenty-four hour basis. All signs shall conform to the requirements of the zoning district in which the facility is located.

§ 210-182. Nonconforming signs

Legal nonconforming signs shall be regulated as follows:

- A. Signs lawfully erected or displayed prior to the adoption of this Article may be maintained, reworded, redesigned, altered or repaired without requiring conformance with the provisions of this Article, as long as the sign is not rendered more nonconforming.
- B. The exemptions granted herein shall terminate with respect to any sign which: 1) shall have been abandoned for 6 months or more; or 2) advertises or calls attention to any products, businesses or activities which have not been carried on or sold for 6 months or more; or 3) shall not have been properly repaired or properly maintained within 60 days after notice to that effect has been given by the Director of Municipal Inspections.