

## CHAPTER 126

# OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SIGNS

### 126.01 Definitions

### 126.02 Sign Regulations

### 126.03 Other Sign Regulations

**126.01 DEFINITIONS.** For use in this chapter the following terms are defined:

1. "Advertising sign" means an advertising device as defined by Chapter 306C.10 of the *Code of Iowa* having the capacity of being visible from any public right-of-way.
2. "Area of sign" means the surface area of the sign.
3. "Business sign" means a sign that directs attention to a business or profession or a commodity, service, or entertainment sold or offered upon the premises where such a sign is located.
4. "Display sign" means an advertising sign.
5. "Flashing sign" means any illuminated sign on which such illumination is not kept stationary or constant in intensity and color at all times where such sign is in use.
6. "Illuminated sign" means any sign that has characters, letters, figures, designs, or outlines illuminated by electric lights or luminous tubes as a part of the sign.
7. "Marquee sign" means any sign affixed to any hood, marquee, or canopy over the entrance to a building.
8. "Nameplate sign" means any sign that states the name or address or both of the business or occupant of the lot where the sign is placed.
9. "Rotating sign" means a sign that revolves or rotates on its axis by mechanical means.
10. "Sign" means a name, identification, description, display, illustration, or device which is affixed to or represented directly or indirectly upon a building, structure, trailer, or land in view of the general public and which directs attention to a product, place, activity, person, institution, or business. A sign does not include the following: flags of nations, states, and cities or organizations; objects or devices visible through windows; or works of art, except murals, which in no way identify a commercial product or have a commercial purpose.
11. "Surface area of sign" the entire area within a single continuous perimeter enclosing the extreme limits of the actual sign surface, not including any structural elements outside the limits of such sign and not forming an integral part of the display. Only one side of a double-face or V-type sign structure shall be used in computing total surface area.

**126.02 SIGN REGULATIONS.** All signs hereafter erected or maintained, except official traffic signs, shall conform to the provisions of these regulations. Existing signs shall be

allowed to remain; however, if changed or replaced, the signs will be required to conform to all provisions of these regulations.

1. General Provisions for all Zoning Districts. The following regulations apply to all signs hereafter permitted in all Districts.

A. Signs shall be permitted within the public right-of-way or public easements for up to 14 days of any 30-day period.

B. No advertisement or advertising structure shall be posted, erected, or maintained which simulates any official, directional, or warning sign erected or maintained by the State, County, City, or other governmental subdivision or which incorporates or makes use of lights simulating or resembling traffic signals or control signs.

C. No signs shall be permitted to obstruct any window, door, fire escape, stairway, or opening intending to provide light, air, or access to any building or structure.

D. Upon notification by the Zoning Administrator that a sign is rotted, unsafe, or unsightly, the owner of said sign or owner of the property upon which the sign is located shall remove or repair the sign.

E. The owner, lessee, or manager of any sign anchored in the ground and/or the owner of the land on which the sign is located shall keep grass or weeds and other growth cut and debris and rubbish cleaned up and removed from the ground surrounding the sign.

F. No sign may obstruct the view of any highway or railroad so as to render dangerous the use of the highway.

G. Signs for service clubs and semi-public institutions are permitted within the public right-of-way, provided that they are not more than 500 feet from the corporate limits and further provided that they do not exceed three square feet in area. These signs are for the purpose of displaying the emblem of the club or institution and information on time and location of meetings.

H. No sign may obscure, imitate, resemble, or physically interfere with an official traffic control sign, signal, or device.

2. Signs in Residential Districts. No sign shall be erected in any Residential District except:

A. A nameplate sign identifying the owner or occupant of a building or dwelling unit, provided such sign does not exceed four square feet in surface area. Such sign shall not be illuminated.

B. A temporary sign advertising an event shall be permitted in the public right-of-way or public easement for only 14 days prior to the date of the event. A permit may be obtained from the Zoning Administrator to place signs for additional days.

C. A sign pertaining to the lease or sale of the building or property, provided such sign does not exceed four square feet in surface area. Such signs shall not be illuminated.

D. A temporary sign not exceeding four square feet in surface area identifying an engineer, architect, contractor, or product engaged in or used in

the construction of a building may be erected upon issuance of the building permit. A temporary sign shall be removed prior to the occupancy of the building. Such sign shall not be illuminated except for signs required by State or federal law.

E. One identification sign on premises not to exceed 24 square feet in surface area displaying location information for churches, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, clubs, offices, libraries or similar use. Such signs may be illuminated.

F. Directional non-illuminated signs on premises not exceeding two square feet in surface area displaying directional information for churches, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, clubs, libraries or similar uses excluding office or commercial establishments, provided that each such use shall be limited to one such sign per thoroughfare approach.

G. Business signs located in Residential zones as nonconforming or home occupations shall not be located in the front yard. Signs shall be attached to the house and shall not be illuminated and not larger than two square feet in surface area.

3. Signs in Commercial Districts or Transition Districts and Industrial Districts. Signs may be erected in Commercial and Industrial Districts subject to the following provisions:

A. The total surface area of all business signs on a lot shall not exceed 64 square feet. Signs may be illuminated.

B. Signs shall be on premises and limited to one sign for a business location of 100 foot frontage or less; one additional sign for each additional 100 feet of frontage; or a minimum of one sign per individual business. Rear signs on businesses shall be governed by the same restrictions as those pertaining to frontage.

C. No sign may be erected within 100 feet of an adjoining Residential District. Business identification signs on the same premises may be located up to 30 feet from a Residential District boundary.

D. For corner lots, the "frontage" used to determine allowable sign area shall be the least dimension along a street, but an equivalent sign area shall be allowed facing the intersecting street.

E. Any signs not permanently affixed to buildings or permanently anchored in the ground shall not be permitted in either zoning district.

F. No sign shall project above the highest point of a roof.

G. Signs painted on a building shall be governed by the square footage limitations specified above. Such signs shall be maintained in good condition and shall be repainted, removed, or painted out when, in the opinion of the Zoning Administrator, such sign is not so maintained.

H. Where a sign is illuminated, the source of light shall not be visible from any public right-of-way, and such light shall be directed away from any Residential District.

- I. Signs which project more than 18 inches from the building must be at least nine feet above grade and may extend a maximum of eight feet provided that they do not extend further than a point two feet in back of the curb face.

**126.03 OTHER SIGN REGULATIONS.** Signs regulations that are not listed will follow the most current edition of the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* published for the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.

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