

SIGN REGULATIONS

10 ARTICLE TEN – SIGN REGULATIONS

1001 Purpose

The Sign Regulations provide standards for communicating information in the environment of the City of Storm Lake and its jurisdiction. The regulations recognize the need to protect public health, safety, and welfare; to maintain the city's attractive appearance; to provide for adequate business identification, advertising, and communication of information; and to encourage the fair enforcement of sign regulations.

1002 Definition of Terms

The following definitions shall be used for terms contained in this chapter that are not otherwise defined in the Storm Lake Municipal Code or in this Zoning Ordinance.

1. **Abandoned Sign:** A sign, including sign face and supporting structure, which refers to a discontinued business, profession, commodity, service, or other activity or use formerly occupying the site; or which contains no sign copy on all sign faces for a continuous period of six months.
2. **Attached Sign:** A sign, which is structurally connected to a building or depends upon that building for support.
3. **Auxiliary Design Elements:** Terms that describe secondary characteristics of a sign, including its method of illumination and other features within the bounds of its basic shape.
4. **Awning and Awning Sign:** A temporary or movable shelter supported entirely from the exterior wall of a building and composed of non-rigid materials, except for a supporting framework. An awning sign is a message printed on such a shelter.
5. **Back-lit Sign:** A sign with an indirect source of light or light source located in the interior of the sign, which illuminates a sign by shining through a translucent surface.
6. **Banner:** Material with a printed message or graphic secured or mounted from a structure in such a way as to allow wind movement.
7. **Building Marker:** An historic or commemorative plaque, or a building name or cornerstone carved into a masonry surface.
8. **Business Center Identification Sign:** A sign that identifies a building or group of commercial buildings in single ownership or control, sharing parking and access.

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9. Canopy: A projecting non-movable structure cantilevered or suspended from a building, supported by the main structural members to which it is attached, and used only as a roof or fixed shelter.
10. Canopy Sign: A sign, which is attached or made an integral part of a canopy.
11. Clearance: The distance from the bottom of a sign face elevated above grade and the grade below.
12. Detached Sign: A sign, which is self-supporting and structurally independent from any building.
13. Directional Sign: A sign that serves only to designate the location or direction of any area or place.
14. Double-Faced Sign: A sign consisting of no more than two parallel faces supported by a single structure.
15. Frontage: The length of a property line of any one premises abutting and parallel to a public street, private way, or court.
16. Ground Sign: A detached on-premise sign built on a freestanding frame, mast, or pole(s) with a clearance no greater than 3 feet.
17. Illumination: Lighting sources installed for the primary purpose of lighting a specific sign or group of signs.
18. Marquee: A permanent roofed structure attached to and supported by a building and extending over public right-of-way.
19. Maximum Permitted Sign Area: The maximum permitted combined area of all signs allowed on a specific property.
20. Monument Sign: An on-premise freestanding sign with the appearance of a solid base. The width of such base shall be at least 75 percent of the width of the sign.
21. Moving Sign: A sign, which conveys its message through rotating, changing, or animated elements.
22. Nonconforming Sign: A sign that was legally erected prior to the adoption of this chapter but which violates the regulations of this chapter.
23. Pole Sign: An on-premise sign built on a freestanding frame, mast, or pole(s) with a clearance greater than 3 feet, and where the support encompasses less than 75% of the width of the sign.
24. Portable Sign: Any sign supported by frames or posts rigidly attached to bases not permanently attached to the ground or a building and capable of being moved from place to place.

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25. Premise Identification Sign: Any sign which pertains to the use of a premises and which contains information about the owner or operator of that use; the type of business being conducted or the principal brand name of a commodity sold on the premises; and other information relative to the conduct of the use.
26. Premises: A tract of one or more lots or sites that are contiguous and under common ownership or control.
27. Projecting Signs: A sign other than a wall sign that is attached to and projects from a building face.
28. Residential Sign: A small detached or attached sign located on a residential premise, conveying a message communicated by the owner of the property.
29. Roof Sign: Any sign or part of sign erected upon, against, or directly above a roof or on top of or above the parapet or cornice of a building.
 - (a) Integral Roof Sign: A roof sign positioned between an eave line and the peak or highest point on a roof, substantially parallel to the face of a building.
 - (b) Above-Peak Roof Sign: A roof sign positioned above the peak of a roof or above a parapet or cornice.
30. Sign: A symbolic, visual device fixed upon a building, vehicle, structure, or parcel of land which is intended to convey information about a product, business, activity, place, person, institution, candidate, or political idea.
31. Sign Type: A functional description of the use of an individual sign. Includes owner identification, advertising, directional, electronic message, and temporary.
32. Street Facade: Any separate external face of a building, including parapet walls and omitted wall lines, oriented to and facing a public street, private way, or court. Separate faces oriented in the same direction or within 45 degrees of one another are considered part of the same street facade.
33. Temporary Signs: A sign, flag, banner, pennant, sandwich board, or valance constructed of lightweight materials which is not permanently attached to building or land, and which is intended for display for a limited period of time.
34. Wall Sign: A sign attached to and parallel with the side of a building.
35. Window Sign: A sign painted on or installed inside a window for the purpose of viewing from outside the premises.
36. Zone Lot: A parcel of land in single ownership that is large enough to meet the minimum zoning requirements of its zoning district and can provide such yards and other open spaces that are required by the site development regulations.

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1003 General Sign and Street Graphics Regulations

a. Compliance

Each sign or part of a sign erected within the zoning jurisdiction of the City of Storm Lake must comply with the provisions of this chapter and of other relevant provisions of the City of Storm Lake's Municipal Code.

b. Resolution of Conflicting Regulations

This chapter is not meant to repeal or interfere with enforcement of other sections of the City of Storm Lake's Municipal Code. In cases of conflicts between Code sections, State or Federal Regulations, the more restrictive regulations shall apply.

c. Prohibited Signs

The following signs are prohibited in all zoning districts.

1. Signs painted on or attached to rocks, trees, or other natural objects.
2. Signs or sign structures which resemble or conflict with traffic control signs or devices, which mislead or confuse persons traveling on public streets, or which create a traffic hazard.
3. Signs on public property or public right-of-way, unless specifically authorized by the Zoning Administrator.
4. Portable signs except as otherwise permitted by this Article and subject to a temporary permit.
5. Signs which create a safety hazard by obstructing the clear view of pedestrians or vehicles, or which obscure official signs or signals.
6. Abandoned signs. Any abandoned sign must be removed within 180 (one hundred eighty) days of date of abandonment.
7. Signs that are not clean or in substantial good repair, or are not affixed to a sound structure.
8. Signs advertising activities that are illegal under Federal, state, or local laws and regulations.

d. Exempt Signs

The following signs are permitted in any zoning district and are exempt from other provisions of this chapter.

1. Bulletin boards including electronic message centers for religious assembly or school uses, provided that they have a maximum sign area of 20 square feet and are not located in a required sign setback.

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2. One non-illuminated real estate sign per premises with a maximum size of six square feet per premises. Such signs shall have a maximum height of six feet and shall not be located on public right of way. Such signs shall be removed within 7 days of the disposition or buyer taking possession of the premises.
 3. Official signs authorized by a government or governmental subdivision that gives traffic, directional, or warning information.
 4. Seasonal decorations for display on private or public property.
 5. Non-illuminated construction signs with a total size of 100 square feet per premises. Such signs shall be removed within 7 days of the completion of construction.
 6. One temporary sign per zoned lot for grand openings or special events, provided that such sign remains in place for a maximum of seven days.
 7. Works of graphic art painted or applied to building walls, which contain no advertising or business identification messages and authorized by the Zoning Administrator.
 8. Non-illuminated political campaign signs on private property.
 9. Residential signs under 2 square feet in size.
 10. Neighborhood or subdivision identification signs under 50 square feet.
 11. Street numbers, house numbers or address numbers.
 12. Signs which are not visible from a public right-of-way, private way, or court or from a property other than that on which the sign is installed.
 13. Window signs in commercial and industrial zones.
- e. Temporary and Civic Signs
1. Temporary signs are permitted in Commercial and Industrial zoning districts, subject to the following requirements:
 - (a) The total size of such signs does not exceed 40 square feet.
 - (b) No more than two such signs are permitted at any single premises. Subject to maximum square footage.
 - (c) Temporary signs may be present at any single premises for a maximum of 14 consecutive days.
 2. Temporary signs for non-profit civic campaigns or events, or other non-commercial events are permitted in any zoning district and are exempt from other provisions of this Article, subject to the following requirements:

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- (a) The maximum size of such signs is 10 square feet when located in any residential, and LC Limited Commercial zoning district; and 40 square feet in any other zoning district.

f. Portable Signs

1. In no case shall a sign that was designed for or used as a portable type sign be converted for use as a permanent wall, pole or monument sign.
2. No portable sign is allowed to be flashing.
3. Maximum square footage of a portable sign is 32 square feet.
4. No portable sign is allowed on City Right of Way.
5. Portable signs shall be allowed by permit with only 5 permits allowed per year, per business at 2 weeks per occurrence.

g. Buffer Yards

No sign other than on-premise directional signs shall be placed within any buffer yard required by Article 8, Landscaping and Screening Regulations, except buffer yards adjacent to intervening streets.

h. Vision-Clearance Area

No sign may project into or be placed within a vision-clearance area defined by a triangle with legs of 20 feet from the point at which property lines meet the curbs or edges of two intersecting streets, private ways, or courts or an intersecting street, private way, or court and driveway (approach), meet.

1004 General Regulations: Basic Design Elements For On-premise Signs

a. Wall Signs and Graphics

Wall signs and graphics are subject to the following general regulations:

1. A wall sign shall not extend more than 30 inches from the wall to which it is attached.
2. A wall sign must be parallel to the wall to which it is attached.
3. A wall sign may not extend beyond the corner of the wall to which it is attached, except where attached to another wall sign, it may extend to provide for the attachment.
4. A wall sign may not extend beyond its building's roofline, or adjacent roofline whichever is higher.

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5. A wall sign attached to a building on its front property line may encroach upon public right-of-way by no more than 18 inches. Such a wall sign shall provide minimum clearance of eight feet, six inches.
6. For the purpose of calculating permitted sign areas pursuant to this chapter, signs painted on the walls of buildings shall be considered wall signs.
7. Where permitted, canopy signs are counted as wall signs when calculating total permitted sign area.

b. Projecting Signs and Graphics

Projecting signs and graphics are subject to the following general regulations:

1. The maximum projection of any projecting sign shall be as follows:
 - (a) 3 feet over public sidewalks less than 12 feet wide;
 - (b) 5 feet over public sidewalks 12 feet wide or more, or over private property.
2. A projecting sign may be no closer than two feet from the vertical plane of the inside curb line.
3. Each projecting sign must maintain at least the following vertical clearances:
 - (a) 15 feet over parking lots;
 - (b) 18 feet over driveways.
4. No projecting sign extending three feet or more from a property line may be located within 10 feet of any other projecting sign extending three feet or more from a property line, or 5 feet from adjoining business frontage.
5. Projecting signs must minimize visible support structure and may not expose guy wires, cables, turnbuckles, angle iron, or other similar external support structure.
6. Projecting signs are not allowed in alleys.

c. Pole Signs

Pole signs, where permitted, are subject to the following general regulations:

1. Each pole sign must maintain at least the following vertical clearances:
 - (a) 7 feet, 6 inches over private sidewalks;
 - (b) 10 feet if located within vision clearance area (Section 1003(h))
 - (c) 15 feet over parking lots;
 - (d) 18 feet over driveways

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2. Permitted pole signs may revolve at a rate not to exceed six revolutions per minute.

d. Roof Signs

Roof signs are subject to the following regulations:

1. Where permitted, integral roof signs may be used interchangeably with wall signs.
2. Integral roof signs may not exceed the permitted height for pole signs.
3. An integral roof sign must be mounted parallel to the wall of the building that it faces.

1005 General Regulations: Other Design Elements

a. Illumination

1. Lighting, when installed, must be positioned in such a manner that light is not directed onto an adjoining property or onto a public street or highway.

b. Marquees and Marquee Signs

1. Signs placed on, attached to, or constructed on a marquee are subject to the maximum projection and clearance regulations of projecting signs.

c. Banners

1. A banner sign projecting from a building may not exceed the wall height of the building.
2. Maximum size of a banner is 120 square feet.

d. Clocks

1. For the purposes of this chapter, clocks are not considered a moving sign.

1006 Method of Measurement for Regulators

a. Maximum Permitted Sign Area

Maximum permitted sign area for a premise is set forth as a numerical limit or as a function of the frontage of the premises on a street. For properties with frontage on more than one street, the total frontage shall be calculated as the total of all frontages.

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b. Sign Area

1. Sign area includes the entire area within the perimeter enclosing the extreme limits of the sign, including individual letters painted or applied, excluding any structure essential for support or service of the sign, or architectural elements of the building.
2. The area of double-faced signs is calculated on the largest face only.
3. The sign area for ground signs, monument signs, and architectural sign bands is calculated as the area enclosing the extreme limits of the letters, symbols, and images.

c. Height

The height of a sign is measured from the average grade level below the sign to the topmost point of the sign or sign structure.

d. Setback

The setback of a sign is measured from the property line to the supporting frame of the sign face, mast, pole or base of the sign; whichever is closest to the property line.

1007 Permitted Sign Types and Specific Regulations by Zoning Districts

The following tables set forth permitted sign types and regulations and design standards for signs and graphics for each zoning district.

Table 10-1: Permitted Sign Types by Zoning District

SIGN TYPES	RES	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	IN-1,2,3	PO	LC	CC	CBD	LI	GI
DETACHED SIGNS												
Residential	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P			
Business Identification	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P	P	P	P
Ground	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Pole								P	P	P	P	P
Monument	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P

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SIGN TYPES	RES	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	IN- 1,2,3	PO	LC	CC	CBD	LI	GI
ATTACHED SIGNS												
Awning				P	P			P	P	P	P	P
Banner								P	P	P	P	P
Building Marker	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Canopy								P	P	P	P	P
Business Identification	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P	P	P	P
Marquee						P		P	P	P	P	P
Projecting	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P	P		
Roof, Integral								P	P	P	P	P
Roof, Above Peak											P	P
Wall	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Window						P	P	P	P	P	P	P
MISCELLANEOUS												
Flag, Non Commercial	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Portable, Civic Uses Only	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
DESIGN ELEMENTS – ILLUMINATION												
Back-Lit								P	P			
Indirect, Civic Use Only	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P	P	P	P
Internal, Civic Use Only	P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P	P	P	P
Neon									P	P	P	P
Electronic Information						P		P	P	P	P	P
Moving												P
Rotating												P

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Table 10-2: Numbers, Dimensions and Locations of Signs by Zoning District

SIGN TYPES	RES	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	IN-1,2,3	PO	LC	CC*	CBD***	LI*	GI*
DETACHED SIGNS												
Number Permitted Per Premise	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	NA	1	NA	NA
Per Feet of Frontage	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	C	NA	C	F	H	G	G
Maximum Size (SqFt)	100	A	A	B	B	200	100	D	200	200	200	200
Maximum Height (Ft) of structure above ground	25	10	10	10	10	15	10	15	35	20	35	35
Front Yard Setback (Ft)	25	5	5	10	10	5	5	10	0	0	0	0
Side Yard Setback (Ft)	10	10	10	10	10	5	5	10	5	0	0	0
ATTACHED SIGNS												
Maximum Size (SqFt)	100	*	*	**	**	E	NA	E	300	200	200	200
Max % of Street Façade	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	20	NA	20	20	20	25	25

- A:** Total of all signs attached or detached cannot exceed 32 square feet for civic uses. Total of all signs attached or detached cannot exceed 2 square feet for residential uses including home occupations
- B:** Total of all signs attached or detached cannot exceed 48 square feet for project identification signs for multi-family or mobile home development and for non-residential uses when permitted
Total of all signs attached or detached cannot exceed 2 square feet for residential uses including home occupations
- C:** Square feet of signage per linear foot of frontage: 1 square foot with a maximum of 75 square feet.
- D:** Total of all signs attached and detached cannot exceed 100 square feet for non-residential premises only, 75 square feet for premises with primary residential use, for project identification signs for multi-family developments, 2 square feet for residential uses, including home occupations.
- E:** Total of all signs attached and detached cannot exceed 100 square feet for non-residential premises only, 75 square feet for premises with primary residential use, for project identification signs for multi-family developments, 2 square feet for residential uses, including home occupations.
- F:** 1 sign allowed per 300 feet of frontage, if frontage of premises is 50 feet or less only one sign is allowed with a maximum of 100 square feet.
- G:** 1 sign per 200 feet of frontage
- H:** For premises with frontage of 25 feet or less, one detached sign up to 90 square feet is allowed, for premises with frontage of more than 25 feet may use 3 square feet per lineal feet of frontage to a maximum of 200 square feet for a detached sign.

- *** Maximum total square feet of all signs is 500 square feet. Allowed 2 square feet signage per linear foot of frontage.
- **** Maximum total square feet of all signs is 600 square feet. Allowed 2 square feet signage per linear foot of frontage.
- ***** Maximum total square feet of all signs is 400 square feet.

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1008 General Permit Procedures

a. Applicability

Any installation, modification, or expansion of any sign, which is not exempt from the provisions of this Article, shall be subject to the following permit procedure prior to installation.

b. Maintenance of Valid Sign Permit

The owner/tenant of a property containing signs requiring a permit under this ordinance shall at all times maintain in force a sign permit for such property. Sign permits shall be issued for individual zoned lots or business frontages. A sign permit may be revoked if the sign is not maintained in good condition.

c. Sign Permit Applications

All applications for sign permits shall be submitted to the Zoning Administrator in accordance with application specifications established by the Zoning Administrator.

d. Action

Within ten working days of the submission of a complete application for a sign permit, the Zoning Administrator shall either:

1. Issue the sign permit, if the sign conforms to the provisions of this Article.
2. Reject the sign permit if the sign(s) that is the subject of the application fails in any way to conform to the requirements of this Article.

e. Permit Expiration

If a sign is not constructed in accordance with an approved permit within six months of the date of approval, such permit shall lapse.

f. Assignment of Sign Permits

A current and valid sign permit shall be freely assignable to a successor as owner of the property or holder of a business license for the same premises.

1009 Nonconforming Signs

a. All permanent signs in place and lawfully established on the effective date of this Ordinance shall be considered as legal nonconforming signs. The copy of such a sign may be changed from time to time, provided that the sign area shall not be enlarged beyond the sign area in existence on the effective date.

b. Any nonconforming sign which presently is or becomes structurally damaged or deteriorated, more than 50% of its replacement cost, shall be either removed or altered so

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as to comply with this Article.

- c. As an exception to 1009(a) portable signs or parts of which are being used as permanent signs shall not be considered legal non-conforming signs and shall be removed six months from effective date of this ordinance.