

ARTICLE 8 - SIGNS

8.1 GENERAL

- A. Signs in all Districts may be located in any required yard, provided that:
 - 1. Said signs shall be set back from any side lot line at least the side yard distance required for the adjoining lot.
 - 2. No signs shall be permitted within twenty (20) feet of a street or public right-of-way.
- B. Sign computation and dimensional schematics are shown on the Sign Computation and Dimensional Schematics.

8.2 PROHIBITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS, GENERAL

- A. No sign shall be placed or located or displayed upon any sidewalk, nor shall any sign project over the sidewalk, nor over any public right-of-way with the following exceptions:
 - (a) Temporary Signs if authorized under §8.7 of this Ordinance.
 - (b) An identification sign no larger than two (2) square feet in area. Such signs shall have a vertical clearance over the sidewalk or public right-of-way of at least eight (8) feet.
- B. No sign shall be affixed in any manner to any tree, nor to any public utility pole.
- C. No sign shall be in whole or in part changing, blinking, flashing, moving, mobile, revolving or animated except for signs commonly known as "barber poles" ordinarily and customarily used in connection with barber shops.
- D. No roof signs (often known as "sky signs") shall be permitted.
- E. No off-site directional signs shall be permitted except signs erected by the Town of Smithfield, the State of Rhode Island or the Federal Government indicating the route to major public facilities, shopping areas and the like.
- F. No "A" frame, pennant, flag larger than fifteen (15) square feet in area, whirligig, banner or string light bulbs (other than those used for the seasonal sale of Christmas trees) shall be permitted.
- G. No animated sign illuminated by flashing or intermittent lighting shall be permitted.
- H. No billboards shall be permitted.
- I. Signs affixed to trailers, mobile units or parked vehicles are not permitted to be parked on any premises for the principal purpose of advertising a business.

8.3 SIGN PERMITS

- A. Except as hereinafter provided in paragraph C, no sign shall be erected, altered or enlarged, or affixed to any building or placed on any premises without a permit issued by the Official. Such permits shall only be issued in conformance with the provisions of this Section.
- B. Application for sign permits shall be accompanied by such plans, drawings and specifications as the Official may require. Such permits may be issued on a permanent basis or for an indefinite period not to exceed one hundred eighty (180) days. A permit issued for an indefinite period shall become invalid when the product or activity

advertised on the sign has been discontinued or inactive for a period of one (1) year. Fees for all sign permits shall be as the Town Council may, from time to time, determine.

- C. The following types of signs shall be authorized by right, without the necessity of a permit therefore.
1. One (1) sign, bearing the names of the occupant of a dwelling, not to exceed three (3) square feet in area. If the occupant is engaged in a customary home occupation or is a professional, the sign may also display a word or words indicating such occupation or profession.
 2. One (1) sign offering accommodations for guests, not to exceed two (2) square feet in area.
 3. One (1) real estate sign per principal building or lot if there is no building thereon, not to exceed six (6) square feet in a residential district and twelve (12) square feet in business, office and industrial districts. Such signs shall be removed forthwith upon sale or rental of the premises advertised.
 4. Signs identifying the use of the premises by a religious or educational institution, not to exceed ten (10) square feet in area.
 5. Signs prohibiting trespassing, hunting, and the like, not to exceed one (1) square foot in area.
 6. Street name signs, and signs erected by the Town, or State, for the direction and control of traffic.
 7. Window signs; however, the total area of such signs shall not be greater than fifteen (15) percent of the area of the window through which they are to be viewed. Window signs exceeding this area limitation are expressly prohibited.
 8. Signs on or adjacent to the entry of a multiple occupancy building listing the names and/or occupations of the occupants thereof, provided that the size of such sign shall not exceed one (1) square foot for each occupant.
 9. Signs not to exceed six (6) square feet in area designating historical places or points of interest, erected by governmental authority or by a duly chartered historical association or the like with approval of the Traffic Safety Commission.
 10. Signs indicating, "Entrance", "Exit", "Parking", or the like, erected on a premises for the direction of persons or vehicles, no to exceed two (2) square feet in area.
 11. Directional signs not exceeding two (2) square feet in area pertaining to churches, schools, institutions and other non-profit uses with approval of the Traffic Safety Commission.
 12. Non-commercial decorative or national flags shall be allowed in all districts.
 13. A limit of two (2) commercial flags per business.
 14. Signs identifying public uses operated by a unit of government.
 15. No signs may be posted on trees, utility poles, traffic or regulating signs of any nature.
 16. A bulletin board for public, charitable or religious institutions when located upon the premises of said institutions. These bulletin boards shall not exceed ten (10) square feet in area and shall bear no commercial advertising. There shall be no more than one bulletin board on site.

8.4 MAINTENANCE OF SIGNS

- A. All signs whether erected prior to the effective date of this Ordinance or not, and whether a permit is required or not, shall be maintained in a safe and neat condition to the satisfaction of the Official. Failure to correct a violation of this provision within ten (10) days after notice thereof shall constitute grounds for revocation of the permit, or for removal of the sign if it was erected prior to the time when such permit was required, or if it is a type for which no permit is required.

8.5 VILLAGE, COMMERCIAL, HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL, PLANNED CORPORATE, PLANNED DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRIAL SIGNS

- A. The following special provisions shall apply to signs in all Village, Commercial, Highway Commercial, Planned Development, Planned Corporate, and Industrial Districts:
1. One (1) or more wall signs are permitted for each wall fronting on a street or parking area. The total area of such signs combined shall not exceed one (1) square foot for each front foot of street frontage of the front yard or of the corner side yard of the premises on which said signs are located, except where the principal front yard or corner side yard of the premises total less than fifty (50) feet of street frontage, then the total surface area of all signs combined on any one (1) premises shall not be more than five hundred (500) square feet in area. Such signs may not be directly painted on any wall, but may consist of individual letters attached to or cut into such wall; in such case, the area of such sign shall be figured on the basis of the perimeter required to contain all the letters, numbers or other devices comprising the sign. If a building is provided with a portico, projecting shelter, balcony or the like the sign may be erected on such structure, provided it does not extend over a public way.
 2. In addition to the signs permitted under A1, above, where the area in front of a building permits, there may be one (1) free-standing sign for each street on which it fronts not to exceed sixteen (16) square feet per side in area for each fifty (50) linear feet of lot frontage, or fraction thereof, if it is set back from the street line.
 - a) Exterior signs in all business, office and industrial districts shall be located twenty (20) feet or more from any residential district boundary line. Said signs shall pertain only to the use or business conducted on the premises on which it is located.
 - b) Height requirements: Freestanding signs must be erected so that the lowest portion of the sign, not including the support, is higher than eight (8) feet and the highest portion of the sign, including the support, is not above fourteen (14) feet. Freestanding signs not located in an area of pedestrian travel must be erected so that the lowest portion of the sign is higher than four (4) feet and the highest portion of the sign including the support is not higher than ten (10) feet. Monument signs shall not exceed five (5) feet in height
 3. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the following modifications are permitted:
 - a) Theaters: The marquee of a theater shall be considered as comprising part of the wall area in determining the total sign area to be permitted.
 - b) Subdivisions, Land Development Projects: One (1) Subdivision/ Land Development Project name sign, not to exceed sixteen (16) square feet may be permitted during construction for each entry to a subdivision/land development project from a public way during construction after which

the subdivision/land development project name sign shall not exceed four (4) square feet.

- c) Contractors, Developers: For each construction or development project there may be issued a temporary permit for one (1) standing sign, not to exceed sixteen (16) square feet in area, setting forth facts and names pertinent to the project. Such sign shall be removed forthwith when the project is completed.
- d) Gasoline Stations: Standard pump head signs of gasoline filling stations are not considered to be part of the required sign area. Such signs, however, must not be animated nor illuminated by flashing or intermittent lighting.
- e) Plaza: Where a group of three (3) or more business buildings or stores are built as a "plaza" or "Shopping Center" and it is desired to identify the grouping as such, in addition to the signs permitted for individual buildings or businesses, there may be permitted one (1) standing sign, not to exceed forty (40) square feet in area displaying only the plaza or center name, set back not less than fifty (50) feet from any street property line.

8.6 ILLUMINATION OF SIGNS

- A. Except as otherwise prohibited herein, signs may be illuminated by any fixed steady light source, of such nature and in such manner that the brightness of the sign face does not exceed one hundred (100) lumens per square foot. Except for neon type signs, where permitted, such illumination shall be so arranged that its source is not directly visible from any way, occupied building or abutting property and no illumination shall be of any color that might be confusing to traffic. Christmas lights shall not be deemed as coming within the provisions of this paragraph but this paragraph shall apply to window signs.
- B. Illuminated signs shall not cause glare distracting to drivers, nor shall they be in such a position or such color as will hamper the readability of traffic lights or traffic signs.
- C. No signs shall be illuminated in residential districts.
- D. Signs may be illuminated externally by a stationary light of white or off-white color.
- E. There shall be no internally illuminated box signs.

8.7 TEMPORARY SIGNS

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Section, Temporary Signs shall be permitted to advertise non-residential uses, subject to the following:

- A. Temporary Signs, permitted under this Sub-section are defined as banners professionally prepared as determined at the sole discretion of the Official, not to exceed sixty (60) square feet.
- B. No Temporary Sign shall be erected without a permit issued by the Official. A permit shall be required for each Temporary Sign, however, no permit fee shall be charged.
- C. No more than one (1) Temporary Sign is allowed to be displayed per business and no more than four (4) shall be displayed on any building where multiple businesses are located, including retail shopping centers. Temporary Signs may be displayed only on existing free-standing signs, roofs, or on building walls.

- D. Temporary Sign Permits may be issued for up to a total of eight (8) weeks in any calendar year. No business may display a Temporary Sign or Signs in the aggregate in excess of eight (8) calendar weeks.
- E. During periods of major highway construction which impair the visibility and/or ingress/egress to non-residential uses as determined by the sole discretion of the Official, said Official may authorize at his/her discretion, additional Temporary Signs, including off-site signs, to further identify access to the business and/or to confirm that the establishment is open for business.
- F. Temporary Signs erected across a highway advertising a civic event in the Town of Smithfield are allowed subject to a permit from the Official and authorization from the jurisdiction which owns the highway.