

Chapter 12. SIGNS

12.1 General Purpose and Intent

It is the intent of this article to authorize the use of signs whose types, sizes and arrangements are compatible with their surroundings, preserve the natural beauty of the area, protect existing property values in both residential and non-residential areas, prevent the endangerment of public safety, express the identity of the community as a whole or individual properties or occupants, are legible in the circumstances in which they are seen, and are appropriate to traffic safety. These regulations are designed and intended to improve the overall aesthetic of the community by preventing over-concentration, improper placement, and excessive height, bulk and area of signs.

12.2 Applicability

- A.** Except as otherwise provided, no sign shall be erected, altered, constructed, moved, converted or enlarged except in accordance with the provisions of this chapter and pursuant to issuance of a Sign Permit. No Sign Permit shall be issued unless plans and supporting information have been submitted to clearly demonstrate that the sign will conform with all applicable requirements of this chapter, or to clearly demonstrate that the sign is exempt from issuance of a Sign Permit.
- B.** Notwithstanding the above, changing or replacing the permanent copy of an existing lawful sign shall not require a permit, provided the copy does not change the nature of the sign so as to render it in violation of this ordinance.

12.3 General Provisions

- A.** The scale of the sign(s) should be appropriate for the building on which they are placed. Signs should reflect the proportional and dimensional relationships of the structure.
- B.** Signs should not obscure architectural features and should be integrated with the design of the building.
- C.** Any structurally unsafe sign that endangers the public safety shall be immediately removed unless it is repaired and made otherwise to comply with the requirements of this Ordinance.
- D.** No sign shall be located within a sight triangle area or so as to impair traffic visibility.
- E.** Signage on buildings should be pedestrian-oriented in pedestrian-oriented areas as well as near entrances.
- F.** Electric signs shall be placed so as not to be easily reached by pedestrian traffic. The bottom of the sign shall be located a minimum of ten (10) feet above grade immediately under the sign, if the sign is within 15 feet of the edge of the street right-of-way.
- G.** All wall or monument signs, if internally lit, must be covered with an opaque acrylic or similarly opaque surface. Exposed neon, argon, LED or similarly sized tube lighting is allowed, but must be recessed within a channel not exceeding four (4) inches in width that fully cuts-off the casting of glare on all sides.

12.4 Computation of Signage Area

The area of a sign face (which is also the sign area of a wall sign or other sign with only one face) shall be computed by means of the smallest rectangle that will encompass the extreme limits of the writing, representation, emblem or other display, together with any material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or structure against which it is placed, but not including any supporting framework, base, bracing or decorative fence or wall when such fence or wall otherwise meets the regulations of this chapter and is clearly incidental to the display itself.

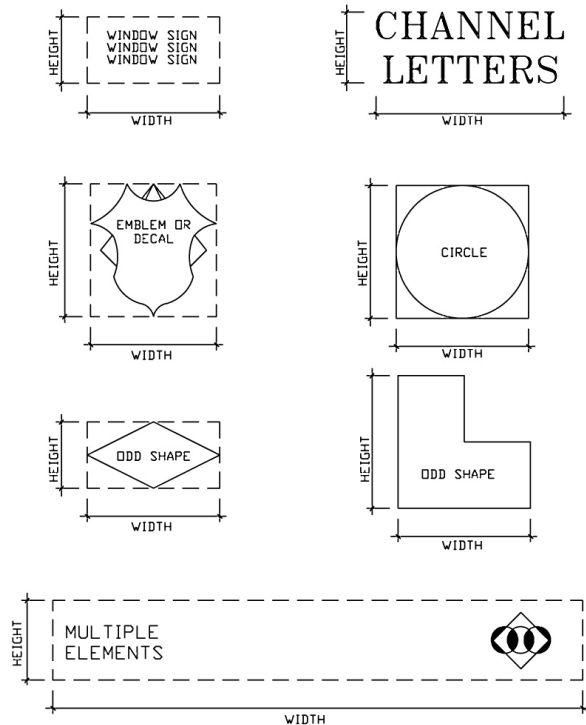
For a single wall on a single-occupant building, all pieces of information or other graphic representations on that wall shall be measured as though part of one sign, encompassed within one rectangle, which may not exceed the permitted total wall area to which the sign is affixed. For a single wall on a multi-occupant building, the area of signs shall be computed using these principles and each individual sign shall not exceed the permitted total wall area to which the sign(s) is affixed.

Where the sign faces of a double-faced sign are parallel or the interior angle formed by the faces is 60 degrees or less, only one display face shall be measured in computing sign area. If the two faces of a double-faced sign are of unequal area, the area of the sign shall be the area of the larger face. In all other cases, the areas of all faces of a multi-faced sign shall be added together to compute the area of the sign. Sign area of multi-faced signs is calculated based on the principle that all sign elements that can be seen at one time or from one vantage point should be considered in measuring that side of the sign.

Spherical, cylindrical or other three-dimensional signs not having conventional sign faces shall be computed from the smallest three-dimensional geometrical shape or shapes which will best approximate the actual surface area of such faces.

12.5 Computation of Sign Height

The maximum height shall be as measured from street grade or the sidewalk (where one exists), whichever is less.



12.6 Signs Requiring a Permit by District

A. Primarily Residential Districts (OSP, RR, GR, UR)

Permitted Sign Type(s)	Specific Applicability	Maximum Area	Maximum Height	Maximum Number
Suspended Shingle Post Sign	For Home Occupation Uses Only <i>Note: Arm signs do not require a permit</i>	6 sq ft	5 ft	1
Monument	Neighborhood Entrances	16 sq ft	7 ft	2 per neighborhood entrance

B. Mixed-Use, Primarily Commercial, and Industrial Districts (RMX, NMX, TC, HB, MI)

Permitted Sign Type(s)	Specific Applicability	Maximum Area	Maximum Height	Maximum Number
Monument	Lots Less than 2 Acres	50 sq ft	6 ft	2 *
Monument	Lots Equal to or Greater than 2 Acres	70 sq ft	7 ft	2 *
Wall	Front Facades	10% of wall **	n/a	n/a
Wall	All other facades	5% of wall **	n/a	n/a

C. Civic/Institutional Uses (All Permitted Districts)

Permitted Sign Type(s)	Specific Applicability	Maximum Area	Maximum Height	Maximum Number
Monument	Lots Less than 2 Acres	50 sq ft	6 ft	2 *
	Lots Equal to or Greater than 2 Acres	70 sq ft	7 ft	2 *
Wall		5% of wall **	n/a	n/a

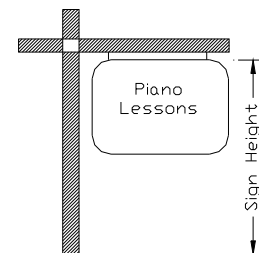
* Only one monument sign allowed per lot per street frontage.

** No individual wall sign may exceed 150 square feet if sign is within 150 feet of a public right-of-way.

12.7 Signage Types

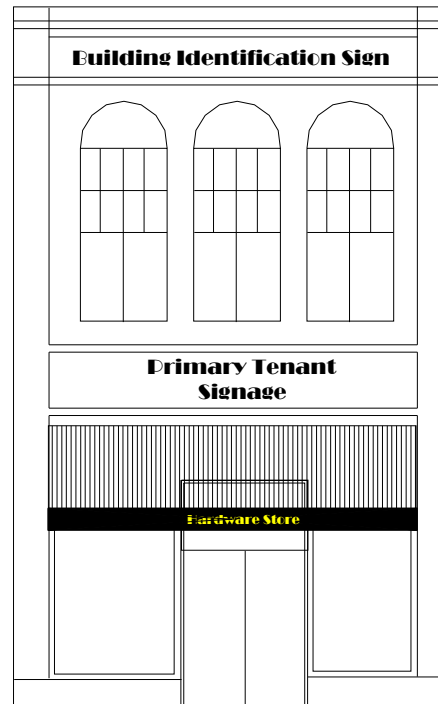
A. Suspended Shingle Post Signs

- All Suspended Shingle Post Signs shall be located a minimum of five (5) feet behind the street right-of-way.
- Suspended Shingle Post Signs shall not be internally illuminated.
- Suspended Shingle Post Signs and their supporting posts shall be of a color and material which are similar or complimentary to those of the structure housing the subject establishment.



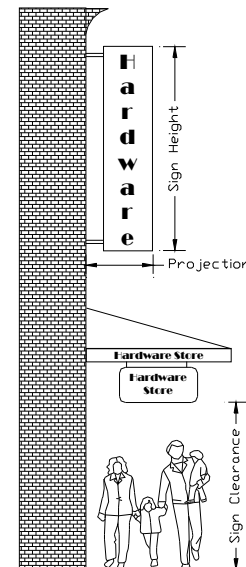
B. Wall Signs

1. The maximum permitted aggregate area of Wall Signs includes the area of any windows or doorways.
2. The preferred location for Wall Signs is between the first floor window and window sill of second floor, or on a sign frieze area of the building if original to building. (Exception: Building identification which is an integral part of the building's design and architectural character shall not be considered a sign for the purposes of this Standard.)
3. Signs may be placed on or behind windows, but at no such time shall the opacity (visibility into the building) be less than 50 percent of the total window area.
4. A Projecting Sign may be substituted for a Wall Sign.
5. No Wall Sign shall project more than 18 inches from the building wall. Further, no Wall Sign or its supporting structure shall cover any window or part of a window, nor shall it extend beyond the highest point of a roofline, parapet, or mansard roof.
6. **Maximum Awning Sign Area:** 50 percent of Awning area



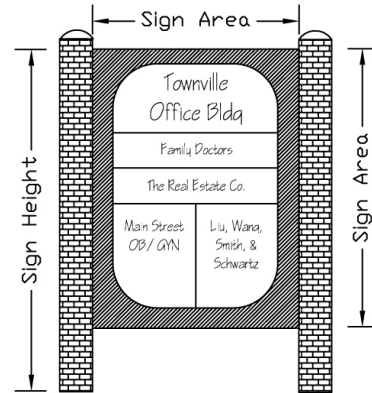
C. Under Awning and Projecting Signs

1. **Under-Awning Sign Standards** (*Permit not required*)
 - a. **Maximum Dimensions:** Height: 16"
Width: 40"
 - b. **Sign Clearance:** 8 feet
2. **Projecting Sign Standards**
 - a. **Minimum Width of Façade:** 20 ft (not applicable in the TC District)
 - b. **Maximum Height:** 8 feet*
(*Sign may not extend above the soffit, parapet, or eave line, as appropriate, of the building to which it is attached.)
 - c. **Maximum Area:** 10 square feet
 - d. **Maximum Projection from Wall:** 4 feet



D. Monument Signs

1. Only buildings set back more than 30 feet from the right-of-way and having street frontage may use a Monument Sign.
2. All Monument Signs shall be located a minimum of five (5) feet behind the street right-of-way.
3. No Monument Sign greater than five (5) square feet in area shall be located closer than ten (10) feet to any adjacent lot line. A 15 foot side-yard setback shall be required if the side lot line abuts a residential district.
4. A Suspended Shingle Post Sign may be substituted for a Monument Sign but shall meet all height and area requirements as provided.
5. The base and surrounding structural components of a monument sign must be finished with materials consistent with those of the principal structure. Up to an additional 15 feet of sign area is permitted for a monument sign that is routed or sandblasted.
6. **Neighborhood Identification Signs**
 - a. **Maximum Sign Area:** 16 square feet per single face (max. total of 32 square feet)
 - b. **Maximum Height:** Seven (7) feet
 - c. **Maximum Number per Principal Entrance:** 2
 - d. Residential development identification signs which exist prior to the effective date of this Section may be replaced with new signs in the same location as the existing signs as long as the sign will comply with the sign area and height limitations of this Section.
7. Developments with over 300,000 square feet of retail commercial space and adjacent to a limited-access highway are allowed to exceed specified maximum height and area computations as recommended by the Administrator and subject to approval by the Town Council.

**12.8 Banner Signs**

Banner signs may be permitted via the submission of a Special Event Permit to the Land Use Administrator. Except for those banners erected by a governmental agency, banner signs may not be placed in any public rights-of-way. Banners for commercial units shall be attached to the wall or structure of the unit to which the message of the sign is applicable, provided such banners do not exceed one (1) sign per commercial unit on a single lot and provided each sign does not exceed 32 square feet of sign area. Banners for non-profit community events shall be mounted on the ground and located a minimum of five (5) feet behind the street right-of-way, provided the event sponsor has secured the permission of the property owner to post the sign, and provided such banners do not exceed two (2) per event and do not exceed 32 square feet of sign area each. For both commercial and non-profit community events, banners shall be permitted for no more than four (4) events per calendar year with a maximum time period for each event of 14 calendar days.

12.9 Signs Not Requiring a Permit

The following types of signs are exempt from permit requirements and may be placed in any zoning district subject to the provisions of this Ordinance. There shall be no limit as to the number of such signs on any lot, except as herein prescribed. All such signs (except government signs) shall be located outside a street right-of-way unless otherwise granted permission for such location by the Town of Knightdale or NCDOT.

- A. **Ballpark Signage:** Signage within ballfields and sports stadiums that is directed within the facility including, but not limited to, banners, fixed placards, and scoreboards does not require a permit.
- B. **Flags:** Flags of the United States of America, the State of North Carolina, Wake County, the Town of Knightdale, or foreign nations having diplomatic relations with the United States, or any other flag adopted or sanctioned by an elected legislative body of competent jurisdiction, as well as flags bearing a logo of corporate, nonprofit, or religious origin. Such flags shall not be flown from a pole the top of which is more than 40 feet in height. Three flags may be flown per site when the United States and State of North Carolina flags are flown with one additional flag. Such flags shall be flown in accordance with protocol established by the Congress of the United States for the Stars and Stripes. Any flag not meeting these conditions shall be considered a banner sign and shall be subject to regulation as such. Flags of the United States of America, regardless of size or number, may be flown and are exempt from these regulations.
- C. **Government Signs:** Signs posted by various local, state, and federal agencies, such as regulatory signs, welcome signs, seasonal signs/ banners/ decorations, legal notices, identification and informational signs, and traffic control signs.
- D. **Incidental Signs:**
 - 1. **Front Yard:** A maximum of four (4) incidental signs not exceeding four (4) square feet may be located in the front yard.
 - 2. **Side and Rear Yards Visible from Street:** A maximum of two (2) signs not exceeding 32 square feet each whose copy does not face the fronting street.
 - 3. **Signs on Buildings:** Signs up to three (3) square feet not otherwise regulated by this Ordinance are permitted. *(Includes Home Occupations)*

Note: Signs not visible from a public street or neighboring residence are exempt from the permit requirements of this Ordinance.
- E. **Memorial Signs & Date Blocks:** Memorial signs or tablets, and names and construction dates of buildings when cut into any masonry surface, or inscribed on or otherwise affixed to a permanent metal plaque.
- F. **Property Identification Signs:** Signs bearing only property identification numbers and names, post office box numbers, names of occupants of the premises on which the signs are located, or other identification of premises not of a commercial nature, provided such signs are not illuminated and do not exceed two (2) per lot nor two (2) square feet in sign area.
- G. **Sandwich Board Signs:** Sandwich board signs may be placed on sidewalks in the Town Center District provided they maintain clear pedestrian access a minimum of five (5) feet in width and are removed each night after the business is closed. Neither

face shall exceed three (3) feet in width or 12 square feet in area. The chalk board must be located within eight (8) feet of a doorway or under the roof line. The chalk board frame shall be a non-reflective material or color.

- H. Street Graphics:** Flags and banners with non-commercial copy usually attached to light poles or similar fixtures within public rights-of-way or public buildings are permitted subject to the approval of the Public Works Director and in accordance with any Street Graphics Policy that may be adopted by the Town. Similar graphics may be mounted on private property but may not exceed 12 square feet per sign.
- I. Traffic Control Signs on Private Property:** Signs directing and guiding traffic and parking on private property on which the signs are located, provided such signs are not internally or indirectly illuminated and do not exceed four (4) square feet in sign area for each sign face. Exemptions to this area requirement are permitted only for signage erected in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration's *Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD).
- J. Temporary Signs:** To prevent the promulgation of temporary signs that are not designed to be long-term additions to the aesthetic environment and which often become unsightly and create visual clutter after exposure to weather and landscape maintenance, all temporary signs including, but not limited to sales banners, real estate signs, political campaign signs, and yard or garage sale signs, shall be subject to the following provisions:
- 1. Banner Signs:** Although temporary in nature, banner signs are subject to the requirements of Section 12.8 and may not be used as a primary wall sign on a commercial unit and/or building.
 - 2. Construction Site Identification:** Construction site identification signs provided such signs do not exceed one (1) sign per construction site. Sign area shall not exceed four (4) square feet for single family or duplex construction, and 32 square feet for multi-family, mixed-use or non-residential construction, and shall not be erected prior to issuance of a Construction Improvements Permit, and shall be removed within 30 days following the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
 - 3. Political Signs:** Temporary political signs advertising candidates or issues to be decided in an election or referendum, provided such signs do not exceed one (1) sign per candidate per lot nor six (6) square feet in sign area, are not erected prior to 30 days before the appropriate election, and shall be removed within seven (7) days after the election.
 - 4. Real Estate Signs:** Real estate signs advertising the sale, rental, or lease of the premises on which the signs are located, provided such signs do not exceed one (1) sign per zoning lot or one (1) sign per each separately owned individual residential or commercial unit on a single zoning lot and provided such signs do not exceed four (4) square feet of sign area for property zoned residential and 32 square feet for property zoned non-residential. Such signs shall be removed no later than seven (7) days after sale, rental, or lease of the premises. A maximum of three (3) directional signs, each not exceeding four (4) square feet in area, shall be permitted off the subject premises.
 - 5. Yard and Garage Sales Signs:** Yard or garage sale signs announcing yard or garage sales, provided such signs do not exceed one (1) sign per site of such sale nor four (4) square feet in sign area, and shall be removed within seven (7) days after erection.

- 6. **All other Temporary Signs:** All other temporary signs not listed shall be limited by the following standards shall be erected for a maximum of 30 days and shall be removed within three (3) days after completion of the event or activity. Signs that are four (4) square feet or less are permitted anywhere on a lot (except as otherwise prohibited elsewhere in this Ordinance). Signs that are between four (4) square feet and 32 square feet in area shall be mounted on a principal building only.
- K. **Murals or Wall Art:** Murals or similar wall art located on secondary building walls (not primary frontages) are permitted, provided the total area of commercial copy does not exceed ten (10) percent of the total wall area.
- L. **Window Signs:** Signs placed or painted on the interior or exterior of glass windows or doors provided that such signs cover no more than 30 percent of the glass area of the entire storefront. Window Signs that cover more than 30 percent of the glass shall be considered as Wall Signs and shall meet requirements for Wall Signs within the appropriate zoning district.

12.10 Prohibited Signs

- A. Any sign, which the Administrator determines obstructs the view of bicyclists or motorists using any street, approach to any street intersection, or which interferes with the effectiveness of or obscures any traffic sign, device, or signal shall be prohibited.
- B. Signs which contain lights, rotating disks, words and other devices not erected by a public authority which may be erroneously construed as government signs or emergency warning signs. An example of this is a sign which contains a picture of a traffic sign plus the word "Stop", "Yield", etc.
- C. Any sign (other than a government sign), banner or display placed on any curb, sidewalk, post, pole, hydrant, bridge, tree, or other surface located on, over, or across any public street or right-of-way.
- D. Any sign located in such a way as to intentionally deny an adjoining property owner visual access to an existing sign on their property.
- E. Flashing signs, signs with flashing or reflective disks, and signs with flashing lights or lights of changing degree of intensity or color and animated, rotating, moving, or apparently moving signs. Signage used to display time and temperature is permitted.
- F. Neon tube signs or LED signs visible from outside of a building shall be limited to two (2) per business and located on the inside of a window such that no more than ten (10) percent of the window area is covered by the sign area.
- G. Pole Signs.
- H. Portable signs.
- I. Vehicular Signs except identification signs painted on or permanently attached to commercial vehicles.
- J. Roof signs that extend above or placed upon any roof surface.
- K. Off-premise advertising signs (i.e. Billboards) except those permitted in Section 12.8.
- L. Sign devices consisting of balloons, blimps, or similar types of lighter-than-air objects, shall be prohibited, except those which are subject to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.

- M. Sign devices consisting of banners, streamers, pennants, windblown propellers, strung light bulbs, and similar installations shall be prohibited, with the exception of banners as a Special Events Sign as provided in Section 12.8.
- N. Any sign whose sign face was initially constructed and designed to be placed and/or transported on wheels, regardless if said sign face is removed from its base and placed on or in the ground so as to otherwise classify said sign as a "free-standing" sign as herein defined.
- O. Other signs not expressly permitted in this Ordinance.

12.11 Sign Illumination

- A. All lighted signs shall have their lighting directed in such a manner as to illuminate only the face of the sign. Lighting fixtures used to illuminate an outdoor advertising sign either shall be by directed ground lighting or mounted on the top of the sign, and shall comply with shielding requirements. All lighted signs shall meet all applicable Electrical Ordinances.
- B. No sign within 100 linear feet of a pre-existing residential structure may be illuminated between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 6:00 a.m. A residence shall be deemed "pre-existing" for purposes of this Chapter if it has a valid building permit in effect for construction of said structure or if construction of said structure was complete on or prior to the effective date of this provision.
- C. All lighting shall be in conformance with Chapter 11.

12.12 Maintenance and Upkeep of Signs

All signs and all components thereof, including supports, braces, anchors, etc., shall be kept in a good state of repair, in compliance with all building and electrical Ordinances, and in conformance with the requirements of this Ordinance. Any sign which is determined by the Administrator as being insecure, in danger of falling or otherwise endangering the public safety shall be immediately removed by its owner unless it is repaired and made to otherwise comply with the requirements of this Ordinance.

12.13 Non-conforming Signs

- A. Nonconforming signs shall follow the provisions set forth in the previously adopted Unified Development Ordinance. To that end, 90 days after the effective date of the original UDO:
 1. Any flashing sign shall stop flashing.
 2. Any portable sign or banner not in compliance with this Chapter shall be removed.
 3. Any off-premise sign not in compliance with this Chapter shall be removed.
 4. Any temporary sign not in compliance with this Chapter shall be removed.
- B. The ordinary maintenance or repair of a non-conforming sign is allowed. The copy of an on-site non-conforming sign may be altered, replaced, or modified if the following two (2) conditions are met:
 - There is no change in the supporting structural components of the said on-site non-conforming sign; and

- Only the existing on-site tenants operating a business on the related site at the time of the original sign construction , and whose name already appears on the non-conforming sign are permitted to locate copy on the non-conforming sign.

New tenants may be permitted to locate on the related site; however, if they wish to add their tenant name to the existing non-conforming sign, the sign shall be immediately brought into compliance with all provisions of this Chapter. Under no circumstance however, shall the non-conforming condition of any non-conforming sign be increased. Any other alteration, replacement, conversion or change will require the entire sign to be immediately brought into compliance with all provisions of this Chapter.

- C. Non-conforming signs which are destroyed or damaged by 50 percent or more of their value shall not be rebuilt or repaired except in conformance with this Chapter.
- D. When the establishment to which a sign is related ceases or is vacated, the sign shall be classified as 'obsolete', and such sign, including all of its attendant supports, frames, and hardware, shall be removed within 180 days of the cessation or vacating of the use or establishment unless such sign is used by a new use or establishment on the premises in accordance with all other provisions of this Chapter.
- E. If there is an expansion of the heated square footage of an existing business, or a change in use to an existing building (except multi-tenant buildings), and there were one or more on-premise non-conforming signs which advertised the former or current business or use, any new signs and all new sign faces for the new use or business must meet all sign requirements for the district.