

ARTICLE X

SIGN REGULATIONS

1000. **Purpose And Intent.** These regulations are provided in order to establish rules and standards for the construction, maintenance and, when necessary, the removal of signs. The execution of these regulations recognizes that: The purpose of this Article is to protect the dual interest of the public safety and welfare and to ensure the maintenance of an attractive physical environment while satisfying the needs of sign users for adequate identification, communication, and advertising.

1001. **General Sign Provisions.** The following provisions shall apply to all signs:

1001.1 Signage requirements shall differ according to use. For the purpose of this Ordinance signage shall be permitted or allowed by the use of the property.

1001.101 **A** Agriculture Signage shall include the following zoning districts:
Forest and Agriculture
Forest and Agriculture/Residential
Conservation and Preservation
Preservation Agriculture

1001.102 **R** Residential Signage shall include the following zoning districts:
Five-Acre Residential
One-Acre Residential
One Half-Acre Residential
10,000 Square Foot Residential
Resort Residential
General Residential
General Resort Residential
Resort Commercial (Residential Use)
Mobile Home Park
Rural General Residential

1001.103 **TC** Transitional Commercial shall include the following zoning districts:
Office Commercial
Neighborhood Commercial
Village Commercial
Resort Commercial
Medical District
Village 10,000 Square Feet Residential
Rural Village Commercial

1001.104 **CI** Commercial and Industrial shall include the following zoning districts:

- General Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Resort Services
- Limited Industrial
- Heavy Industrial (*Amended Ord. 2008-57*)

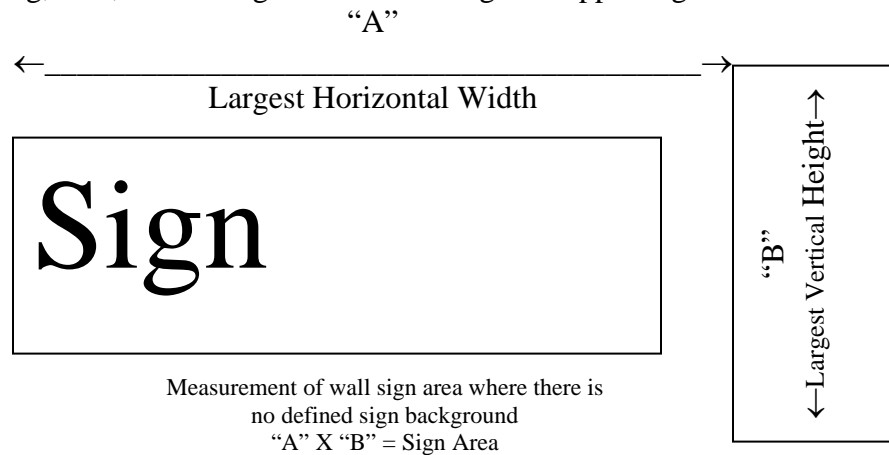
1001.2 Compliance with building codes. All signs shall comply with the appropriate detailed provisions of the Code of the County of Georgetown.

1001.3 Permits. No sign, except those identified as exempt (Appendix B, Table 4), shall be erected, displayed, altered, relocated or replaced until a sign permit has been issued.

1001.4 Determining number of signs. For the purpose of determining number of signs, a sign shall be considered to be a display surface or device containing elements organized, related and composed to form a unit. Where matter is displayed in a random manner without an organized relationship of elements *each* element shall be considered to be one (1) sign. The two (2) components of back-to-back or V-shaped signs shall be considered as one sign. The number of signs displayed on a property shall be as indicated in Table 2.

1001.5 Determining type of signs. There shall be two (2) categories of signs: Freestanding, which includes monument, pole and portable signs; and Building, which includes wall, window, canopy, awning, marquee, projecting and roof as shown in Table 3. Type of signs allowed vary depending on classification as designated in Table 4.

1001.6 Sign Area. The entire face of a sign, including the advertising surface and any framing, trim, or molding but not including the supporting structure.



In the case of back-to-back or V-shaped signs, the measurement will be based on only one side of the sign. Both sides of a double-faced sign or V-type shall be of equal size. The sign area of signs with three (3) or more sides (multiple side signs) containing copy message, decoration or announcement visible from a

street, highway or expressway is measured as the sum of the area of any two (2) adjacent sides.

1001.7 Determining sign height. Sign height shall be determined from the finished grade at the base to the highest point of the sign including all supports. (Also See Appendix B, Table 2)

1001.701 On-Site Signs located in A, TC, and CI areas shall not exceed a maximum height of 25’.

1001.702 Signs located on R areas shall not exceed a maximum height of 12’.

1001.703 Off-Site signs shall not exceed a maximum height of 35’

1001.8 Determining sight distance. In order to protect the visibility and safety of motorists and pedestrians, no sign shall be permitted that obstructs vision within the sight triangle. The size of the sight triangle will vary depending on the classification of the intersection as shown on Appendix B, Illustration 1.

1001.9 Illumination. Any sign with artificial illumination shall be placed and shielded so as not to directly cast light rays into nearby residences, sleeping accommodations, businesses, dwellings, and buildings or in the direction of vehicle drivers.

1001.10 Neon. Neon signs shall not be more than fifty (50) square feet in total area, per site and shall be set back from the right-of-way by a distance of at least thirty (30) feet. They shall count as part of the allowable square feet of signage.

1001.11 Sign locations. Except as other wise provided, no sign, whether temporary or permanent, except by a public agency, is permitted within any street or highway right-of-way. Signs shall not be painted or attached to trees, fence posts, telephone or utility poles, rocks or other features. No sign shall be painted or attached to the roof of any structure.

1001.12 Sign wording. No sign shall use the words “Stop”, “Danger”, or use any other work, phrase, symbol or character in a manner that might mislead, confuse or distract a vehicle driver.

1001.13 Simulated traffic signs and obstructions. Any sign, which may be confused with or obstruct the view of any authorized traffic sign or signal shall not be permitted.

1001.14 Sign Movement. Signs shall not display intermittent light or moving parts. Flashing signs or devices displaying intermittent lights or lights of changing degrees of intensity shall not be permitted – except signs indicating time and/or temperature or other messages and off-site rotating message panels.

1001.15 Sign Maintenance Required. All signs, together with all of their supports, braces, guys and anchors, shall be kept in good repair and in proper state of preservation. The display surfaces of all signs shall be kept neatly painted or posted at all times.

1001.16 High Voltage Power Line. All signs shall be located in such a way that they maintain horizontal and vertical clearance from all overhead electric conductors in accordance with the National Electric Code, provided that in no case shall a sign be erected closer than 7.5' horizontally and vertically from any conductor or public utility guy wire.

1001.17 Signs Primary Direction (facing). No sign shall be located in such a manner that the primary message or copy can only be viewed or read from private property. In essence, signs shall be facing streets, roadway, highways, thoroughfares, etc., and not intrude on the scenic vistas of residential, resort, and/or similar properties.

1001.18 Visibility. The area around a sign shall be properly maintained clear of brush, trees and other obstacles so as to make signs readily visible as well as ensuring aesthetically attractive surroundings, **providing** that the removal of trees does not in any way violate the specifics and/or the intent of the tree regulations (see Article XI). In essence, tree regulations take precedence over the authority to place a sign.

1001.19 Signs Prohibited In All Districts. Except as otherwise specifically stated, the following signs are hereby expressly prohibited within the jurisdiction of this Ordinance.

- Portable
- Sandwich
- Banner
- Inflatables
- Balloons
- Unshielded light
- Search lights
- Roof signs
- Poster handbill
- Motor Vehicle/Semi-trailer

1002. **On-Premises Signs**

1002.1 Permitting. No sign, except those identified as exempt, shall be erected, displayed, altered, relocated or replaced until a sign permit has been issued. On premises signs shall be permitted in all districts as determined by Table 4 and include, main identification signs, building signs, directory signs, onsite informational signs and subdivision signs.

1002.2 Property Signage Requirements. The maximum number of signs, the total area of signage and the maximum height shall comply with the maximum allowances as shown in Table 2 and as follows:

1002.201 The maximum height of on-site signs in A, TC, and CI areas shall not exceed 25'. The maximum height of on-site signs in R areas shall not exceed 12'

1002.202 The total number of signs permitted by area are:

- A – 1 sign per parcel
- R – 2 signs per subdivision entrance
- TC & CI – 5 signs per parcel

1002.203 The total area of signage permitted by area is:

- A – 40 square feet per parcel
- R – 40 square feet per subdivision entrance
- TC – 400 square feet per parcel
- CI – 500 square feet per parcel

1002.204 The total area of the main identification shall not exceed by area:

- A – 40 square feet
- TC – 160 square feet
- CI – 200 square feet

1002.3 Sign Types. The types of signage permitted shall comply with the requirements as follows and as shown in Table 3.

A	Monument, Pole, Wall, Projecting
R	Monument, Wall, Canopy, Awning
TC	Monument, Wall, Window, Canopy, Awning, Marquee, Projecting
CI	Monument, Pole, Wall, Window, Canopy, Awning, Marquee, Projecting

1002.4 Window Signage. Signs displayed inside a window or upon the window pane or glass are exempt from permitting, however in no case shall such window signs cover more than 20% of the available window area facing the street or parking area of the business.

1003. **Temporary (Special Event) Sign Restrictions**

1003.1 Locations. Temporary signs on private property shall be allowed only upon the issuance of a temporary sign permit.

1003.101 Temporary signs shall be affixed to the ground and exclude portable signs, fluttering ribbons, banners, balloons and inflatables.

1003.102 Temporary signs shall be setback at least fifteen (15) feet from the street right of way or may be placed on the business identification sign provided it does not exceed sixteen (16) square feet in area and maintains adequate vision clearance.

1003.2 Duration. A temporary sign permit shall allow the use of a temporary sign for a specified period not to exceed 30 days per calendar year.

1003.3 Number and Size of Signs. Only one temporary sign shall be allowed on a lot. Temporary signs shall not exceed the number and square footage required for the zoning district in which they are located.

1003.4 Exception. Banners shall be allowed for festivals and community events, provided they are sponsored by non-profit organizations and are erected and removed within reasonable time frames as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

1004 **Sign Classifications.**

1004.1 Main Identification Signs are limited to 1 sign per property and shall not exceed 100 square feet in area A, 160 square feet in TC areas, and 200 square feet in CI areas. Such signs shall be a minimum of 10' feet from the front property line and shall not exceed 25' in height. The main identification sign shall be void in the presence of a commercial subdivision sign located on the property.

1004.2 Buildings Signs are limited to 4 signs per property. The total area allowed for building signs shall not exceed total area allowed per property minus the area of the main identification sign. Buildings signs shall not exceed 20% of any wall, window, canopy, awning, marquee or projecting surface to which they are attached.

1004.3 Commercial and Mixed Use Subdivision Signs are limited to the total area permitted by the main identification sign. Such signs shall be a minimum of 10 feet from the property line and shall not exceed 25 feet in height. In the presence of a commercial or mixed use subdivision sign a main identification sign shall not be permitted. Commercial and mixed use subdivision signs shall only be permitted for subdivisions where one of the parcels has frontage on an arterial street. Remaining parcels must be adjacent to the parcel with arterial street frontage. *(Amended Ord. # 2006-57)*

1004.4 Residential Subdivision Signs are limited to 2 signs per entrance and shall not exceed 40 square feet in area per entrance. Such signs shall not exceed 12' in height and shall be set back a minimum of 10' from the property line.

- 1004.5 Real Estate Signs are limited to 1 sign per property not exceeding 4 square feet in area and 6 feet in height for residential areas and 32 square feet in area and 8 feet in height in all others areas. Such signs shall be removed upon sale of property. Real Estate signs are exempt from permit requirements.
- 1004.6 Farm Product Signs are limited to 2 signs per property not to exceed 16 square feet in area per sign and 12' in height. Such signs shall be removed at the end of the selling period for such seasonal farm products.
- 1004.7 Land Subdivision and Development Signs are limited to 1 sign per subdivision or development and shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and 12 feet in height. Such signs shall be placed a minimum of 10' from the property line. Such signs shall not be erected more than 100 days prior to the start of construction and at no point prior to subdivision or development approval from the Planning Commission. Subdivision and development signs shall be removed at the end of 1 year or upon construction of the permanent identification sign, whichever comes first.
- 1004.8 Construction Signs are limited to 1 sign per property and shall not exceed 16 square feet in area and 12' in height. Such signs shall be a minimum of 10' from the property line. Construction sign should accommodate the name of the primary general contractor and at the discretion of the general contractor, the names of pertinent subcontractors. Such signs shall be removed when the permanent identification sign is constructed or a certificate of occupancy for the building is issued, whichever comes first.
- 1004.9 Political Signs shall not be larger than 16 square feet in area and 12' feet in height. Such signs shall not be erected more than 100 prior to the date of an election (balloting) and shall be removed within 14 days following the date of the election (balloting), or a run-off- election, should that be necessary.
- 1004.10 Directional Signs shall be permitted by the County or State and shall not exceed 6 square feet.
- 1004.11 Address and Name of Resident Signs shall not exceed 2 square feet in area and 6 feet in height unless they are attached to the wall of the principal building. Such signs shall not contain any commercial advertising or identification.
- 1004.12 Artwork shall not include any commercial messages or references.
- 1004.13 Flags, Emblems and Insignias are limited to 3 per property and shall not exceed 40 square feet in area per flag. Flagpoles shall not exceed 25' in height.
- 1004.14 Handicapped Parking Space Sign shall meet the minimum requirements of the ADA requirements.

- 1004.15 Home Occupation Sign are limited to 1 per property and shall not exceed two square feet in area. Such signs shall contain only the name of the business and/or business owner and shall be mounted flat against an exterior wall, on a window or a door of the principal building.
- 1004.16. Historic Signs shall be as required by the South Carolina Department of Archives
- 1004.17 Private Driveway Signs are limited to one per driveway entrance and shall not exceed 2 square feet in area. Such signs are limited to the words "Private Driveway" and the address of the residences utilizing the driveway.
- 1004.18 Public Signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and 10 feet in height. Such signs shall be erected by the County Council or under the direction of Council.
- 1004.19 Security and Warning Signs shall not exceed 2 square feet in areas A & R and 5 square feet in areas CT & CI.
- 1004.20 Roadside Vendor's Signs are limited to 1 per vendor and shall not exceed 16 square feet in area and 12' in height.
- 1004.21 On-Site Informational Signs shall not exceed 2 square feet in area and 6' in height. Such signs shall be placed no closer than 5' to any property line.
- 1004.22 Non-commercial Signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area and 12 feet in height. No such sign shall be located in any site triangle. *(Amended Ord. 2008-57)*
1005. **Off-Premises Signs** The regulations contained in this section are designed to prevent the over concentration, improper placement, and excessive height, bulk, number and surface area of off-site (off-premise) signs. In developing the criteria herein it is recognized that there is a marked distinction between "off-site" and "on-site" signs.
- On-site signs are in actuality an integral part of a business enterprise. On the other hand, off-site signs, in particular those referred to as "outdoor advertisements", make a distinct use of public thoroughfares and generally represent a business entity in and of themselves.
- 1005.1 Restrictions on Changes, Alterations, Movement, Etc.. Except for ordinary maintenance, poster panel replacement, copy changes, or repair not involving structural, material, or electrical changes, no off-site sign, or parts thereof, shall be re-erected, additionally illuminated, reduced in size, enlarged, or moved unless the entire off-site sign structure is brought into conformity with this Ordinance.
- 1005.2 Zoning Restrictions. Off-site signs, which comply with the provisions of this Ordinance, are permitted in General Commercial, Limited Industrial and Heavy Industrial Zoning Districts, providing the lot on which the off-site sign is to be

placed is vacant. The lot does not contain other signs that require a permit.
(Amended Ord. #2002-30)

1005.3 Size Restrictions. No off-site sign facing streets with four (4) or more traffic lanes may exceed four hundred forty (440) square feet in area. Off-site signs facing streets with fewer than four (4) traffic lanes may not exceed three hundred (300) square feet in area.

1005.4 Height Restrictions. No off-site sign or parts thereof, including base or apron, supports, supporting structures and trim shall exceed thirty-five (35) feet in height.

1005.5 Allowances. Outcrops on off-site signs are permitted. Off-site signs may be illuminated. Off-site signs may utilize rotating message panels.

1005.6 Placement and Location Restrictions. All off-site signs shall comply with the sight distance and vision clearance requirements and shall maintain a minimum ten-foot setback from the street right-of-way.

1005.601 No off-site sign shall be erected within seven hundred and fifty (750) feet of a church.

1005.602 No part of any off-site sign shall be located closer than 1,000 feet from any other off-site sign located on either side of the same roadway.

1006. Fees And Bonds

1006.1 Application Fee. In order to defray some of the administrative and associated costs, a fee will be charged as determined by County Council.

1006.2 Temporary and Special Purpose Sign Fee. County Council will establish a fee for the permit of a temporary or special purpose sign. One-half of the fees will be returned to the applicant if the sign is removed within three (3) days after the permit has expired; if the sign is not removed, the Zoning Administrator will retain the fee.

1006.3 Political Sign Exemptions. Political campaign signs are exempt from permit fees but are required to post a one hundred dollar (\$100) refundable bond. The bond will be refunded if such signs are removed within fourteen (14) days following the date of the election (balloting), or a runoff election, should that be necessary. If, in the opinion of the Zoning Administrator, the signs have not been properly removed, the \$100 refundable bond will be forfeited and added costs assessed as deemed appropriate by the Zoning Administrator.

1006.4 Annual Fee. An annual off-site sign fee shall be paid to the County. The specific amount of the fee in each instance shall be determined by the County Council.

The Council reserves the right to adopt and/or change fees, by resolution, as it deems appropriate.

1007. **Impoundment Of Signs.**

1007.1 Signs subject to removal without notice. The Zoning Administrator shall have the authority to remove without notice to the owners thereof, and impound for a period of ten (10) days, signs placed within any street or highway right-of-way; signs attached to trees, fence posts, telephones and utility poles, or other natural features; abandoned signs; and signs erected without permit.

1007.2 Signs in compliance, but without a permit. When a sign requiring a permit under this Ordinance is erected without a sign permit, the Zoning Administrator shall use the following procedure.

1007.3 Violation sticker. The Zoning Administrator or designee shall attach a highly visible sticker reading "VIOLATION" to the face of the sign. The sticker shall include the date that it was attached to the sign with instructions to call the Zoning Administrator immediately.

1007.4 Failure to obtain permit. If, within ten (10) working days, the owner of the sign fails to contact the Zoning Administrator and get a permit for the sign, the Zoning Administrator shall have the sign removed and impounded without any further notice.

1007.5 Recovery, disposal of impounded signs. The owners of signs impounded may recover same upon the payment of the County's labor and time costs for removal and a fine of one (\$1.00) dollar for each square foot of such impounded sign(s) prior to the expiration of the ten (10) day impoundment period. In the event it is not claimed within (10) days, the Zoning Administrator shall have authority to discard or sell the sign.

1008. **Scenic Areas And Highways.** Georgetown County Council recognizes that County citizens may desire more comprehensive sign regulations than those contained in this article in various sections of the County and along these public highways. Therefore, County Council reserves the right to establish scenic areas in which additional sign controls and regulations may be enacted and enforced under the provisions of this Ordinance.

1009. **Protection Of First Amendment Rights.** Any sign allowed under this Ordinance may contain, in lieu of any other copy, any otherwise lawful non-commercial message that does not direct attention to a business operated for profit or to a commodity or service for sale. No sign shall include language that creates a danger to the public health and welfare. *(Amended Ord. 2008-57)*