

# Sign Ordinance



A sign ordinance can help a municipality reduce the visual clutter of signage and end business sign wars. It also can help protect, establish, or enhance community identity.

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By regulating the type, size, and location of signs in a municipality (as well as the process for erecting signs), a sign ordinance can help preserve or create community character and stop visually distracting sign competition between businesses. A municipality may adopt a sign ordinance as a part of the zoning ordinance or as a stand-alone ordinance.

This guide provides links to helpful guides, model ordinances, and examples for establishing and improving sign ordinances.

## GUIDES AND MODEL ORDINANCES

The guides below look at the various aspects of designing and implementing sign ordinances. Some also include model ordinances.

### [Sign Ordinance: A Comprehensive, Content-Neutral Approach to Local Sign Control](#)

(Montgomery County Planning Commission)

This signage guide and model sign ordinance incorporates best practices from communities around the country, appropriate federal and state statutes, and provisions informed by court decisions involving signage. The model sign ordinance includes regulations for on-premises signs and off-premises signs (i.e., billboards) as well as detailed general regulations including an extensive sign illumination regulations section. The first seven parts of this guide include detailed information regarding the impact of signs, the need for sign regulation, other state and federal laws governing signs, different approaches to sign regulation, and the complexities of new signage technologies.

### [Context-Sensitive Signage Design](#)

(American Planning Association)

This publication provides an overview of sign regulation, discusses legal issues, safety, aesthetics, and provides some national case study examples of the process for adopting sign ordinances.

### [A Framework for On-Premise Sign Regulations](#)

(D.B. Hartt and Alan Weinstein)

This guide explains the framework for formulating sign regulations, legal considerations, and ways to accommodate both community and business interests. It also includes model ordinance provisions.

### [Serving on a Sign Ordinance Committee](#)

(United States Sign Council)

This document provides a basic understanding of sign ordinances, permissible and prohibited actions of sign ordinance committees, definitions of various sign terminology, and a brief discussion on design review and design review committees.

## OTHER MODEL ORDINANCES

In addition to the guides listed above that include model ordinances, see:

### [Model Zoning Ordinance Regulations for Signs](#)

(Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission)

This model was updated in light of the 2015 Supreme Court case *Reed vs. Town of Gilbert*, which addressed the unconstitutionality of content-focused sign ordinances.

### [Model Sign Ordinance](#)

(Pocono Mountain Chamber of Commerce)

This model sign code was drafted for Monroe County municipalities and was written based upon local municipal ordinances.

### [Model On-Premise Sign Code](#)

(United States Sign Council)

This model sign code provides municipalities with a means to both understand and regulate the use of *on-premise* signs within their jurisdictions. To this end, the model provides regulatory schemes for on-premise signs only and does not address billboards.

## ORDINANCE EXAMPLES

Below are examples of sign ordinances from municipalities in Pennsylvania and other states. (For more examples, see the Scenic City Certification Program's [Example Ordinances webpage](#).)

### [Radnor Township Sign Ordinance](#)

Radnor Township (PA) regulates billboards as a part of its sign ordinance, which is part of the township's zoning ordinance. The provisions prohibit digital billboards and have specific requirements for the location, number, size, and height of billboards.

### [Hermitage Zoning Ordinance](#)

See Section 409 for sign regulations.

### [Lancaster Township Zoning Ordinance](#)

See Article 12 for sign regulations.

### [Frederick County Sign Regulations](#)

A table describes the size and setback limits for different types of signs in each zoning district in Frederick County (MD).

### [Columbia Heights Sign Code Regulations](#)

Section of Columbia Heights (MN) zoning code dealing with sign regulations.

### [Hopkins Sign Ordinance](#)

Sign ordinance for the City of Hopkins (MN).

### [West Hollywood Sign Ordinance and Design Guidelines](#)

Sign ordinance and sign design guidelines for the City of West Hollywood (CA).



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