

## Chapter 111 SIGNS<sup>1</sup>

### ARTICLE I. IN GENERAL

#### Sec. 111-1. Jurisdiction.

This chapter applies to all land within the unincorporated limits of the county.

(Code 2000, § 54-1; Ord. of 5-2-1994(1), § 103)

#### Sec. 111-2. Purpose.

- (a) The purpose of this chapter is to seek to promote aesthetic conditions and reduce possible traffic hazards within the county along its streets and roads. The promotion of sound sign use patterns is intended to reduce or eliminate the occurrence of certain conditions which can threaten the general health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the county.
- (b) This chapter shall provide for the following to:
  - (1) Define certain terms used in this chapter.
  - (2) Establish minimum standards for signs.
  - (3) Provide procedures for administering this chapter.
  - (4) Provide penalties for violation of this chapter.
  - (5) Repeal conflicting ordinances.

(Code 2000, § 54-2; Ord. of 5-2-1994(1), §§ 104, 105)

#### Sec. 111-3. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

*Sign* means any surface bearing lettered or pictorial matter designed to convey information visually and exposed to public view; or any structure designed to carry such visual information. Signs are classified into the following types:

- (1) *Animated signs*, means any sign, or part of a sign, that uses any movement or change of lighting or color to depict action or create a special effect or scene. (Prohibited)

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<sup>1</sup>State law reference(s)—Prohibited placement of campaign posters, signs and advertisements, O.C.G.A. § 16-7-58; control of signs and signals, O.C.G.A. § 32-6-50 et seq.; unlawful placement of signs within right-of-way of public road, O.C.G.A. § 32-6-51; outdoor advertising near state highways, O.C.G.A. § 32-6-70 et seq.

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- (2) *Advertising separate use sign* means a sign which directs attention to a business, commodity, service, or entertainment offered elsewhere than the premises where the sign is displayed.
  - (3) *Billboards*, means any sign that exceeds 300 square feet in area. (Prohibited)
  - (4) *Flashing sign*, means a sign, the illumination of which is not kept constant in intensity at all times when in use, and which exhibits marked changes in lighting effects. (Prohibited)
  - (5) *Identification sign, building* means a sign attached to a building which is used to identify only the name of the organization or enterprise occupying the premises.
  - (6) *Identification sign, entrance* means a sign at the entrance drives of residential developments, entrance drives of multi-store shopping centers, entrance drives of multi-tenant office parks, entrance drives of multi-entity industrial parks, and on or within 30 feet of the buildings or tenant spaces which the entity occupies.
  - (7) *Moving sign* means a sign which revolves, rotates, swings, undulates, or otherwise attracts attention through the structural movement of parts. (Prohibited)
  - (8) *Off-premises signs* means signs that are not on the same parcel as the entity to which they apply. (Prohibited)
  - (9) *On-premises signs* means signs that are on the same parcel as the entity to which they apply.
  - (10) *Out-of-store marketing device* means any facility which is located outside of a primary building on a site zoned for C-1, C-2, M and I/O . Examples of out-of-store marketing devices include: fuel pumps, bank ATM units, newspaper racks, drink machines, ice boxes, and phone booths.
  - (11) *Point of business sign* means a freestanding sign which directs attention to a business, commodity, service, or entertainment offered upon the premises where the sign is displayed.
  - (12) *Portable sign* means a sign, lighted or not, which is designed to be moved or is not anchored into the ground and advertising copy changed periodically.
  - (13) *Roof signs* means signs that extend higher than the height of the roof or the parapet of a building. (Prohibited)

Other Definitions:

- (1) *Drive-thru/Drive-in Facility*. Any location where products and/or services are distributed to, or business is transacted with, a person seated in a motor vehicle.
- (2) *Measurement of sign face*. The entire area within the continuous perimeter, enclosing the limits of all writing, representation, emblem, or any figure or similar character. This shall also include any open space(s) or color(s), forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate such.
- (3) *Measurement of sign tops/heights*. The height of a sign shall be computed as to the distance from the base of the sign at normal grade to the top of the highest attached component of the sign. Normal grade shall be construed to be the lower of: (1) existing grade prior to construction, or (2) the newly established grade after construction, exclusive of any filling, berming, mounding, or excavating solely for the purpose of locating the sign. In cases in which the normal grade cannot reasonably be determined, sign height shall be computed on the assumption that the elevation of the normal grade at the base of the sign is equal to the elevation of the nearest point of the crown of a public street or the grade of the land at the principal entrance to the principal structure on the zone lot, whichever is

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greater. Where the normal grade is below the normal grade of a public street, the sign base can be raised to the elevation of the normal grade of the street before the height limitations are applied (surveyor's certificate required).

(Code 2000, § 54-3; Ord. of 5-2-1994(1), § 106)

#### **Sec. 111-4. Prohibited signs.**

The following signs are expressly prohibited in all zoning districts:

- (1) Signs imitating warning signals are prohibited. No sign shall display lights resembling the flashing lights customarily used in traffic signals or on police, fire, ambulance, or rescue vehicles; nor shall any signs use the words, slogans, dimensional shape or size of any governmental traffic sign.
- (2) No signs, except traffic signs and signals and informational signs erected or authorized by a public agency, are permitted within any street or highway right-of-way, or within 35 feet of the road centerline in the case of a proscribed right-of-way.
- (3) Signs painted or attached to natural features such as trees or rocks, utility poles, or are prohibited.
- (4) Fluttering ribbons and banners are prohibited.
- (5) Signs within 300 feet of any officially designated historical site or monument, except signs pertaining to that particular site or monument, are prohibited.
- (6) Billboards.
- (7) Roof Signs.
- (8) Signs on buildings in RES districts, except to identify short term rental emergency contact information, max of 4 square feet with 4 inch lettering.
- (9) Political signs on county-owned land parcels with a Government building.
- (10) Political signs on right-of-way within 300 feet of county owned land parcels with a Government building.
- (11) Off-premises advertising signs (vs. identification signs).
- (12) Animated or flashing signs.

(Code 2000, § 54-4; Ord. of 5-2-1994(1), § 109)

#### **Sec. 111-5. General regulations.**

- (a) Tops/heights of signs shall not exceed 8 feet in height, and tops/heights of sign structures shall not exceed 9 feet
- (b) No sign shall be located in a manner which will obstruct the view of traffic signals or the view at intersections.
- (c) All lighted signs must be erected and maintained to preclude light spill onto adjacent residential properties by being located not less than 50 feet from the nearest residential property line or residential district and being shielded if necessary.

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(Supp. No. 2)

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- (d) All signs requiring a permit shall be set back from roads with deeded rights-of-way a minimum of 5 feet from the edge of the right-of-way. On county proscriptive roads with no deeded right-of-way, the front setback is 35 feet from the centerline of such road. Signs shall be a minimum of 5 feet from all property lines other than those abutting a road.
  - (e) Off-premises advertising signs (vs. identifications signs) are prohibited
  - (f) Point of business signs (freestanding) shall meet the following requirements:
    - (1) They are allowed in agricultural, commercial and manufacturing districts only.
    - (2) Only one sign per use is allowed, or one per shopping center. If property fronts on two roads, one is allowed on second frontage also.
    - (3) The maximum area of sign face shall be 125 square feet, except shopping centers, where 300 square feet maximum is allowed.
  - (g) Identification signs, attached to a building, shall meet the following requirements:
    - (1) They are allowed in agricultural, commercial and manufacturing districts only.
    - (2) Only one per occupant is allowed.
    - (3) The maximum area of the sign face shall be 30 percent of the total area of the front face of the building but no larger than 125 square feet.
  - (h) Portable signs shall meet the following requirements:
    - (1) They are allowed in agricultural, office/institutional, commercial and manufacturing districts only.
    - (2) Allowed for a temporary period of not more than 30 days.
    - (3) Portable signs shall be used for on-premises advertising only.
    - (4) Portable signs may be lighted but must not flash.
    - (5) In commercial or manufacturing districts, only one per lot, or combinations of lots under one ownership at the time of passage of the ordinance from which this chapter is derived, unless separated by a minimum of 1,000 square feet.
    - (6) Maximum area of the sign face shall be 50 square feet.

(Code 2000, § 54-5; Ord. of 5-2-1994(1), § 110)

### **Sec. 111-6. Unlawful signs.**

The Planning and Zoning Director or his/her designee may inspect at any time each sign regulated by the provisions of this chapter, whether permitted or not. Should any sign be installed or maintained improperly or should any violation of this chapter be noted, the Planning and Zoning Director or his/her designee will notify the owner or lessee of such sign in writing of the reasons for noncompliance. The Planning and Zoning Director or his/her designee empowered to revoke any permit issued upon failure of a sign owner or lessee to comply with the provisions of this chapter. The owner or lessee shall have three business days from receipt of notice to bring a sign into compliance or it may be removed by the county at the expense of the owner or lessee. The county may dispose of signs 10 days after removal.

(Code 2000, § 54-6; Ord. of 5-2-1994(1), § 111)

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**Sec. 111-7. Nonconforming signs.**

- (a) Nonconforming signs must not be replaced by another nonconforming sign except for replacement of lettered or pictorial information.
- (b) Minor repairs and maintenance are allowed but no structural repairs or changes in size are allowed except to make the sign comply with this chapter.
- (c) New point of business or identification signs related to legally existing nonconforming uses are allowed provided they comply with sign regulations applicable to the district in which the use is permitted.

(Code 2000, § 54-7; Ord. of 5-2-1994(1), § 112)

**Secs. 111-8—111-32. Reserved.**

***ARTICLE II. PERMITS***

**Sec. 111-33. Required.**

All signs shall be erected or maintained in accordance with the provisions of this chapter and only those signs that are permitted by this chapter shall be erected. No sign, except those listed in section 111-34 as not requiring a permit, shall be placed without a permit from the Planning and Zoning Director or his/her designee. Application for permits to erect, hang, or place a sign shall be submitted, accompanied by plans showing the area of the sign, the method of illumination, if any, the exact location proposed for such sign, the method of support, the vertical distance between such sign and the finished grade, and the horizontal distance between such sign and the street right-of-way line or centerline if no right-of-way. The application shall also include a photograph or line drawing of the face of the sign showing exactly what is to be portrayed. Each applicant shall, upon the request of the administrative officer, submit any additional information deemed necessary by such officer. The board of county commissioners may establish a fee schedule for sign permits which shall be renewed every three years with the exception of on premise signs.

- (1) Signs requiring a permit and that have been legally permitted prior to the date of the Board of Commissioners approval of this ordinance may remain in place as long as their permit allows, as long as they are maintained in sound condition, and as long as they display a code-compliant Jasper County sign permit number within 30 days of notice of the requirement. When their permit expires, when the sign is damaged, or when the sign requires beyond minor maintenance such signs shall be removed or they shall be resubmitted for a permit as allowed under the current ordinance. If not approved for a new permit they shall be removed.
- (2) Existing and new signs shall have a legible from 30 feet away, a permanent Jasper County sign permit number displayed on the lower left hand corner of the sign.

(Code 2000, § 54-41; Ord. of 5-2-1994(1), § 107)

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## Sec. 111-34. Exceptions.

The following signs do not require a permit and are allowed in any zoning district subject to the following provisions:

- (1) Traffic or other government signs, legal notices, railroad crossing signs, danger, and temporary, emergency or non-advertising signs.
- (2) Real estate signs not exceeding six square feet in residential areas which advertise the sale, rental or lease of the premises upon which the signs are located; only one sign is permitted for each street on which the building or property faces.
- (3) Warning signs and no trespassing signs.
- (4) Professional nameplates not exceeding one square foot in area.
- (5) Bulletin boards not over 32 square feet in area for public, civic, charitable or religious institutions when located on the premises of these institutions.
- (6) Signs denoting the architect, lender, engineer, or contractor when placed on work under construction and not exceeding 32 square feet in area.
- (7) Occupational signs denoting only the name and profession of an occupant in a commercial building and not exceeding two square feet in area.
- (8) Signs not exceeding 12 square feet in area giving information concerning the location or use of off-street parking facilities or loading and unloading facilities.
- (9) Signs indicating bus stops, taxi stands, and similar transportation facilities.
- (10) Political signs not to exceed 12 square feet in area, but not to be located on utility poles, trees or natural objects. Signs are to be located on public or private property only with permission of the property owner. Political signs shall be removed by the candidate, property owner or occupier of the property where such sign is located within three days after such candidate has been finally elected or defeated.
- (11) Garage or yard sale signs not to exceed four square feet in area when mounted on a substantial frame and erected on private property with the owner's approval.
- (12) Memorial signs, historical signs or tablets, names of buildings and date of erection when cut into any masonry surface or when constructed of bronze or other noncombustible material.
- (13) Residential development (or subdivision) name signs not exceeding 50 square feet.
- (14) Signs that are painted on the body of a vehicle.
- (15) For sale, for rent. and for lease signs related to the premises on which the sign is located and do not exceed 6 square feet.
- (16) Yard sale and garage sale signs that are posted for not more than 10 calendar days and do not exceed 6 square feet.

(Code 2000, § 54-42; Ord. of 5-2-1994(1), § 108)