

ARTICLE 9

SIGNS

900 Purposes

The purposes of this Article are to regulate the types and dimensions of signs in the various zoning districts of Sharon Hill Borough, to recognize the commercial communication requirements of all sectors of the business community, to protect the public from damage or injury caused or attributable to distractions and obstructions caused by improperly designed or located signs, to safeguard property values and to assure that signs are consistent and harmonious in relation to the buildings and areas where they are placed.

901 Sign Restrictions and Standards

1. Prohibited Signs. It is unlawful to erect or maintain the following signs:
 - a. Flashing, blinking, twinkling, spinning, animated, inflatable, aerial, crane or lighted moving signs including automatic color changing and rotating lamps and other moving objects that call attention to the sign. The use of rotating search lights for advertising is allowed.
 - b. Advertising cloth or paper banner or signs of any similar character suspended or hung on any property.
 - c. Wall bulletins or any other signs painted directly on the facade of a building or other structure.
 - d. Curb or sidewalk signs or signs painted, attached or suspended from any outdoor bench, chair or similar structure.
 - e. Swinging and hanging signs.
 - f. Signs, letters, posters and advertisements which are tacked, pasted, tied or otherwise affixed to poles, posts, buildings, fences or other structures located on public property or within public rights-of-way.
 - g. Neon signs, as defined in Article 2.

2. General Restrictions and Standards. The following restrictions shall apply to all permitted signs:
- a. No sign shall be located, arranged or placed in a position where it will cause danger to traffic or will interfere with traffic through glare; block required sight lines for streets, sidewalks or driveways; cause confusion with a traffic control device by reason of color, location, shape or other characteristics; or through any other means.
 - b. Except for traffic signs, no sign shall be erected within the right-of-way lines of any public street, nor shall any such sign be closer than ten (10) feet to the right-of-way line of a public street, unless specifically authorized by other ordinances and regulations of the Borough or other governmental bodies or agencies having jurisdiction or regulatory authority in the matter.
 - c. All external illuminated signs shall be turned off no later than one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) hour after closing of the business or entity which they identify or advertise.
 - d. No illuminated sign shall be lighted on days when the business or permitted use is not open for business.
 - e. Every sign must be constructed of durable materials and shall be solidly and firmly attached, supported and/or anchored to the supports or framework.
 - f. Every sign must be kept in good condition and repair. Any sign which is allowed to become dilapidated shall be removed by and at the expense of the landowner or lessee of the property on which it is located.
 - g. Where an establishment moves from or vacates a particular address or premises, the owner of such building or premises shall, within thirty (30) days, remove any sign and sign structure which was displayed by such establishment. However, this provision shall not apply where a new establishment at the same address or location shall continue or assume the same name as the establishment that vacated the premises.

3. Freestanding Signs

- a. The bottom or lowest edge of any freestanding sign shall be no closer to the ground than eight (8) feet. At least six (6) feet of the upper portion of the eight (8) foot space shall be open and unobstructed. No more than two (2) feet above the ground level can be devoted to and maintained for flowers, ground covers and low spreading shrubs. If such plantings are installed, they shall be maintained at the maximum height of two (2) feet and shall be free of weeds, debris and other undesirable material.
- b. All single-post freestanding signs shall be made of metal, except for those used in residential districts which may be made of pressure treated timbers. All such posts shall be embedded in the ground at least three (3) feet six (6) inches unless otherwise directed by the Zoning Officer.
- c. Freestanding signs shall be illuminated only by concealed or indirect lighting.
- d. There shall be a distance of not less than seventy-five (75) feet between freestanding signs.
- e. In residential districts, freestanding signs shall be set back a minimum of six (6) feet from the front property line.

4. Ground Signs

- a. The top edge of a ground sign shall be a maximum of five (5) feet above ground level.
- b. Ground signs shall be supported and permanently placed by embedding, anchoring or connecting the sign in such a manner as to incorporate it into the landscape or architectural design scheme.
- c. The setback shall be as required for freestanding signs in Section 901.3.e above.
- d. Illumination. See subsection 3c above relating to freestanding signs.

5. Window Signs

A maximum of twenty-five (25) percent of the total window area may be used for permanent signs that are etched, painted or permanently affixed to the window.

6. Temporary Signs

- a. The use of any temporary sign shall require a permit which shall be effective for not more than thirty (30) days, and not more than three (3) permits shall be authorized in any one (1) calendar year.
- b. Temporary signs shall be removed immediately upon expiration of the permit.
- c. The cost of permits for temporary signs shall be determined by Borough Council.
- d. The size of these signs shall not exceed one (1) square foot of sign area for every linear foot of building width or, where the sign is not related or attached to a building, its size shall not exceed twenty-five (25) percent of that for permanent signs in the district.
- e. No temporary sign may be placed in a location where it may deter the flow of pedestrian traffic or impair the vision of any pedestrian or motorist or cause a safety hazard or inconvenience.

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Signs for Which a Permit Is Not Required (Exempt Signs)

The following signs are exempt from the need to secure a permit.

1. Public notice, warning or official traffic sign required by a federal, state or local law, regulation or ordinance.
2. Any sign inside a building, not attached to a window or door, that is not legible from a distance of more than three (3) feet beyond the lot line of the property on which such sign is located.

3. Building markers that only include building name, date of construction or historical data on an historic site, provided that there is only one (1) per building with a maximum area of six (6) square feet.
4. Flags of the United States, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, foreign nations having diplomatic relations with the United States or any other flag adopted or sanctioned by an elected legislative body of competent jurisdiction, provided that such flag does not exceed sixty (60) square feet in area and shall be flown from a pole not more than forty (40) feet in height.
5. Incidental signs containing no commercial message of any kind, provided that such signs do not exceed eight (8) square feet.
6. Signs advertising the sale or rental of the premises or lot upon which they are erected, provided that there is no more than one (1) such sign per street frontage. Such sign shall be neither illuminated nor exceed eight (8) square feet in residential districts and twenty (20) square feet in nonresidential districts. All such signs shall be removed on or before the date of settlement.
7. Signs advertising the development of the premises where they are erected. Such signs shall not exceed eight (8) square feet in residential districts and twenty (20) square feet in nonresidential districts.
8. Nameplate signs on private residences, provided that they do not exceed one hundred forty-four (144) square inches.
9. Decorations for a recognized, officially designated holiday, provided that they do not create a traffic or fire hazard.
10. Yard sale or garage sale signs, provided that they do not exceed two (2) square feet and shall be removed within twenty-four (24) hours after such sales.
11. Signs announcing a political, educational, charitable, civic, religious, athletic or similar campaign or event, provided that such signs are erected for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days or more than four (4) times in any calendar year for a maximum annual total of one hundred twenty (120) days. Such signs shall not exceed eight (8) square feet.

12. Temporary banners advertising or denoting special events.
13. Changeable copy signs. These signs shall be permitted for churches, schools and other uses which by their nature require changeable copy signs, provided that only one (1) such sign shall be permitted. However, in the case of a corner property with a frontage in excess of one hundred (100) feet, one (1) additional sign is permitted on the side of the property. The size of such signs shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet.

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Signs for Which a Permit Is Required

The following signs, as described under each zoning district or group of districts, are permitted, provided that they meet the applicable conditions in Section 901 and a sign permit has been obtained.

1. Signs in Residential Districts. The following types of signs and no others shall be permitted in the R-1, R-2 and R-3 Residence districts:
 - a. Nameplate signs, not exceeding two hundred eighty-eight (288) square inches.
 - (1) Not more than one (1) such sign per dwelling shall be permitted.
 - b. Identification signs for apartment buildings or complexes, schools, churches and similar permitted uses other than individual dwellings, provided that:
 - (1) Such signs shall be freestanding signs, ground signs or wall signs only.
 - (2) Not more than one (1) wall sign and one (1) freestanding or ground sign shall be permitted for each frontage.
 - (3) The size of freestanding, ground and wall signs shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet.
 - c. Signs identifying nonresidential uses permitted as valid nonconforming uses, provided that they meet the same requirements as subsection b above.

- d. Signs identifying major home occupations and home professional offices (accessory use signs), family day care homes and community residence facilities.
- (1) Types of signs permitted shall be ground signs or wall signs.
 - (2) Ground signs and wall signs shall not exceed six (6) square feet.
 - (3) A professional office or home occupation may display one (1) ground sign or one (1) wall sign but not both.
- e. Except for signs for uses noted in subsection c above, illumination, where provided, shall be by external white light only.

2. Signs in the C - Commercial District

The following signs and no others shall be permitted in the C-Commercial district.

- a. Any sign permitted in a residential district with the requirements in residential districts, as noted in Section 903.1.
- b. Wall signs, freestanding signs, ground signs, window signs and awning or canopy signs.
- c. There shall be not more than one (1) wall sign for each frontage.
- d. The size of wall signs shall not exceed one (1) square foot of sign area for each linear foot of building width.
- e. Where permitted, not more than one (1) freestanding sign per deeded property shall be permitted.
- f. The size of freestanding signs and ground signs shall be not more than twelve (12) square feet.
- g. Window signs shall comply with Section 901.5.

- h. Awning or canopy signs may be substituted for wall signs with the requirements of subsections 903.2.c and d above. These signs are permitted in addition to wall signs only if the combined area of the wall sign and the awning or canopy sign does not exceed that permitted for wall signs above (903.2.d).
- i. Signs in shopping centers.
 - (1) All signs permitted for individual establishments shall be permitted for shopping centers.
 - (2) The freestanding sign identifying a shopping center shall not exceed sixty (60) square feet. The same sign structure may contain the names of individual establishments in the shopping center with the allotted sign area for each establishment of not more than ten (10) square feet. The identification of each establishment shall be permitted in addition to the sixty (60) square foot (maximum) area identifying the shopping center.
 - (3) Not more than one (1) such freestanding sign shall be permitted for each road frontage.
 - (4) For interior establishments, only one (1) wall sign shall be permitted.
 - (5) The size of wall signs shall be one (1) square foot of sign area for every linear foot of building or establishment width.
 - (6) One (1) additional wall sign shall be permitted on end or corner establishments. The size of this additional sign shall not exceed fifty (50) percent of the area of the principal wall sign.

3. Signs in the LI-Limited Industrial District

The following signs and no others shall be permitted in the LI-Limited Industrial district:

- a. Any sign permitted in a residential or commercial district with the requirements noted in Sections 903.1 and 903.2.
- b. Wall signs, freestanding signs, ground signs, awning or canopy signs and window signs.
- c. There shall be not more than one (1) wall sign for each frontage.
- d. The size of wall signs shall not exceed one and one-half (1½) square feet of sign area for each foot of building width.
- e. Not more than one (1) freestanding sign or ground sign for each frontage shall be permitted (see limitations noted in Sections 901.3 and 901.4).
- f. The size of freestanding signs and ground signs shall not exceed sixty (60) square feet.
- g. Window signs shall be permitted in accordance with Section 901.5.
- h. Awning or canopy signs may be substituted for wall signs with the requirements of 903.3.c and d above. These signs are permitted in addition to wall signs only if the combined area of the wall sign and the awning or canopy sign does not exceed that permitted for wall signs alone (903.3.d).

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Nonconforming Signs

Signs which are nonconforming or which identify nonconforming uses shall be governed by the following requirements.

1. A sign which is nonconforming at the effective date of this Ordinance may be continued although such sign does not conform with the provisions of this Ordinance, but the size of any such nonconforming sign shall not be enlarged.
2. A nonconforming sign may be changed to or replaced by another nonconforming sign, provided that the degree of nonconformity is not greater than that of the original sign. Whenever a nonconforming sign has been changed to a more restricted nonconforming sign,

such sign shall not thereafter be changed to a less restricted nonconforming sign.

3. No nonconforming sign which has been damaged to more than fifty (50) percent of its value or has been removed or discontinued for ninety (90) days shall be repaired, rebuilt or replaced, except as a conforming sign.
4. If a nonconforming use of a building ceases or is discontinued for a continuous period of six (6) months or more and such nonconforming use is deemed to be abandoned as per Section 1505 of this Ordinance, any nonconforming sign on the premises shall also be considered abandoned, and any subsequent signs erected or maintained on the premises shall be in conformity with the provisions of this Ordinance.

Permits and Inspections

1. Except as otherwise provided in Section 902 relating to exempt signs, no sign shall be erected in the Borough until a permit therefore has been obtained in the following manner:
 - a. An application in writing shall be made to the Zoning Officer by the person desiring the permit.
 - b. The application submitted to the Zoning Officer shall give full particulars regarding the size, shape, material and supports of the sign as well as a sketch or sketches showing the location of the sign on the building or lot, the distance from the curb line and the height of the sign. The application shall be sufficiently specific to enable the Zoning Officer to determine whether the sign complies with this Ordinance as well as with any other ordinance or regulation of the Borough relating thereto. Such application shall be accompanied by a fee as the Borough Council may establish from time to time by resolution, which shall be for the use of the Borough and which is hereby imposed in order to

cover or partially cover the cost of investigation, inspection and construction of such sign.

- c. If the person submitting the application is not the owner of the property upon which the sign is to be erected, the written consent of the owner of the property on which the sign is to be erected shall accompany the application.
2. Whenever any sign is replaced by another sign, enlarged in any manner or altered, dismantled, damaged or otherwise destroyed to the extent of more than fifty (50) percent of its value, a permit shall be required as provided in subsection 905.1 above before the sign is replaced, enlarged, altered or repaired.
3. **Unsafe and Unlawful Signs.** If the Zoning Officer shall find that any sign or other advertising structure regulated herein is unsafe or insecure or is a menace to the public or has been constructed or erected or is being maintained in violation of the provisions of this Ordinance, he shall give written notice thereof to the permittee. If the permittee fails to remove or alter the structure so as to comply with the standards set forth herein within ten (10) days after such notice, such sign or other advertising structure may be removed or altered to comply by the Zoning Officer at the expense of the permittee or owner of the property upon which it is located. The Zoning Officer shall refuse to issue a permit to any permittee or owner who refuses to pay costs so assessed. The Zoning Officer may cause any sign or other advertising structure which causes immediate peril to persons or property to be removed summarily and without notice.
4. **Inspections and Fees.** The Zoning Officer shall cause a routine inspection of all signs in the Borough to be made at least once every three (3) years and at any other time when he deems such inspection necessary. He shall report to the Borough Council all unsafe signs, all signs failing in any respect to conform to the requirements of this Article and all signs not licensed by the Borough. To cover the cost of inspection of all signs, as required by this section, the owner of every nonresidential sign located in the Borough shall pay a license or inspection fee to the Borough. The rate of such fee in each case shall be as determined from time to time by Borough Council.