

# Northumberland County Zoning Ordinance

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## Revision Notes:

- 1) 2-11-2010
  - a. Former Art. XII, Sign Regulations, was re-designated Art. XIII, and former §148-104 through 148-110, contained therein, were re-designated §148-116 through 148-122, respectively, 2-11-2010.

## ARTICLE XIII Sign Regulations

### § 148-116 Purpose.

The following sign regulations are established to assure compatibility of signs with surrounding land usage, to enhance the economy of the County, to protect the public investment in streets and highways, to promote the safety and recreational value of public travel, to preserve natural beauty and to protect tax revenues by promoting the reasonable, orderly and effective display of outdoor advertising.

### [§ 148-117 Definitions.](#)

[For definitions and word usage see §148-3A.](#)

### § 148-~~117~~-118 Outdoor advertising.

No person, except a public officer or employee in performance of a public duty, shall paste, post, paint, print, ~~mail~~nail, tack, erect, place, maintain or fasten any sign, pennant, outdoor advertising sign, billboard or notice of any kind, or cause the same to be done, facing or visible from any public street or public open space, except as provided herein.

### § 148-~~118~~-119 Exceptions.

The following shall not be deemed to be included within the definition of "sign":

- A. Signs of a duly-constituted governmental body, including traffic or similar regulatory devices, street names, legal devices or ~~warnings at railroad crossing~~informational notices.
- B. Memorial or historical tablets or signs.
- C. Signs required to be maintained by law or governmental order, rule or regulation, with a total surface area not exceeding 10 square feet, on any lot or parcel.
- D. Signs which are within a ballpark or ~~other similar private~~ recreational use area and which cannot be seen from a public street or adjacent properties.
- E. Flags or emblems of a civic, philanthropic, educational or religious organization, temporary in nature.
- F. Signs displayed for the direction or convenience of the public, including signs which identify rest rooms, location of public telephones, freight entrances, no trespassing and posted signs, or the like.
- G. Signs directing traffic on private property but bearing no advertising matter, with a total surface area not exceeding eight square feet per sign on any lot or parcel, and provided

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that no parts of such signs ~~other shall be located more than columns and supports shall be located between 3 1/2 and seven~~ four (4) feet above-grade.

H. Signs placed by a public utility company showing the location of underground facilities.

I. Temporary political signs and posters.

J. Temporary real estate signs advertising property for sale or rent less than six (6) square feet in area

K. Temporary construction signs less than six (6) square feet in area.

L. Signs identifying a single-family dwelling, its occupant(s), its location, or farm identification less than 10 square feet. (i.e. The Smith's, Oak Tree Pt., Oak Tree Farm, etc.)

M. Business hours signage on the wall less than six (6) square feet in area.

N. Signage on windows

O. Holiday flags/decorations.

H.P. Temporary Signs- shall not exceed thirty two (32) square feet in area, and shall not be internally or externally illuminated.

## § 148-120 Measurement of sign area.

Sign area shall include the entire face of the sign (one side only) including frame, if any, but shall not include the supporting structure unless they include advertising. Where the sign consists of individual letters or a sign face of irregular shape, the sign area shall include the smallest rectangle that can encompass the letters or the sign face. Space for changeable copy (including fuel prices or similar displays) shall be included in the area of the sign. Where a sign has two or more faces, or panels, the area of all faces or panels shall be included in determining the area of the sign, except where two such faces are placed back-to-back or at forty-five (45) degrees interior angle, or less.

## § 148-~~119~~-121 Permitted Signs.

Signs will be permitted in various districts as follows:

A. Conservation District C-1.

1. Free Standing Signs- Each parcel shall be permitted one freestanding sign per parcel provided all other standards are met.

i. Pole- Free Standing Signs

1. Any pole free standing sign located within this district shall not exceed twenty-five (25) square feet in sign area.

2. The maximum height for a pole freestanding sign shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet above grade.

ii. Monument- Free Standing Signs

1. Any monument free standing sign located within this district shall not exceed 32 square feet in sign area.

2. The maximum height for a monument freestanding sign shall not exceed six (6) feet above grade.

2. On Structure Signs

i. Wall Signs

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1. For wall signs mounted flat on the building: a maximum of one hundred (100) square feet.
2. On structure signs shall not project above the eaves line for buildings with pitched roofs. Wall signs may extend above a roofline only when attached to a parapet wall or similar structure that is an approved architectural component of the structure.
3. Wall signs shall not extend beyond the sides of the building, nor should the depth of the sign exceed one (1) foot from the wall face.

## ii. Projecting Signs

1. For projecting signs: a maximum of 12 square feet.
2. The top of projecting signs shall not be higher than the eave line and the bottom shall not be lower than eight (8) feet above grade.
3. Projecting signs shall not project more than four (4) feet from the wall on which they are mounted.

## iii. Canopy or Awning Signs- For canopy or awning signs: a maximum of fifty (50) square feet.

- ~~1. Business signs.~~
- ~~2. Church bulletin boards and identification signs.~~
- ~~3. Directional signs.~~
- ~~4. Home occupation signs, with a total surface not to exceed eight square feet per sign.~~
- ~~5. Temporary signs.~~

## B. Agricultural District A-1.

1. Free Standing Signs- Each parcel shall be permitted one freestanding sign per parcel provided all other standards are met.
  - i. Pole- Free Standing Signs
    1. Any pole free standing sign located within this district shall not exceed fifty (50) square feet in sign area.
    2. The maximum height for a pole freestanding sign shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet above grade.
  - ii. Monument- Free Standing Signs
    1. Any monument free standing sign located within this district shall not exceed sixty-four (64) square feet in sign area.
    2. The maximum height for a monument freestanding sign shall not exceed eight (8) feet above grade.
2. On Structure signs
  - i. Wall Signs
    1. For wall signs mounted flat on the building: a maximum of one hundred (100) square feet.
    2. On structure signs shall not project above the eaves line for buildings with pitched roofs. Wall signs may extend above a roofline only when attached to a parapet wall or similar structure that is an approved architectural component of the structure

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3. Wall signs shall not extend beyond the sides of the building, nor should the depth of the sign exceed one (1) foot from the wall face.

ii. Projecting Signs

1. For projecting signs: a maximum of 12 square feet.

2. The top of projecting signs shall not be higher than the eave line and the bottom shall not be lower than eight (8) feet above grade.

~~3.~~ Projecting signs shall not project more than four (4) feet from the wall on which they are mounted.

iii. Canopy or Awning Signs- For canopy or awning signs: a maximum of fifty (50) square feet.

~~2.—Business signs.~~

~~3.—Church bulletin boards and identification signs.~~

~~4.—Directional signs.~~

~~5.—Home occupation signs.~~

~~6.—Temporary signs.~~

C. Residential R-1, ~~and Residential Waterfront R-2,~~ and Residential Recreational R-4  
Districts.

1. Free Standing Signs- Each parcel shall be permitted one freestanding sign per parcel provided all other standards are met.

i. Pole- Free Standing Signs

1. Any pole free standing sign located within this district shall not exceed twenty-five (25) square feet in sign area.

2. The maximum height for a pole freestanding sign shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet above grade.

ii. Monument- Free Standing Signs

1. Any monument free standing sign located within this district shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in sign area.

2. The maximum height for a monument freestanding sign shall not exceed six (6) feet above grade.

2. On Structure signs

i. Wall Signs

1. For wall signs mounted flat on the building: a maximum of one hundred (100) square feet.

2. On structure signs shall not project above the eaves line for buildings with pitched roofs. Wall signs may extend above a roofline only when attached to a parapet wall or similar structure that is an approved architectural component of the structure

3. Wall signs shall not extend beyond the sides of the building, nor should the depth of the sign exceed one (1) foot from the wall face.

ii. Projecting Signs

1. For projecting signs: a maximum of twelve (12) square feet.

2. The top of projecting signs shall not be higher than the eave line and the bottom shall not be lower than eight (8) feet above grade.

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~~1.3. Projecting signs shall not project more than four (4) feet from the wall on which they are mounted.~~

~~iii. Canopy or Awning Signs- For canopy or awning signs: a maximum of fifty (50) square feet.~~

~~2. Business signs, only to advertise the sale or rent of the premises upon which erected, with a total surface area not exceeding 32 square feet per sign.~~

~~3. Church bulletin boards and identification signs, with a total surface area not exceeding 40 square feet per sign.~~

~~4. Directional signs, with a total surface area not exceeding four square feet per sign.~~

~~5. Temporary signs, with special permission from the Zoning Administrator.~~

## D. Business B-1 and Industrial M-1 Districts.

1. Free Standing Signs- Each parcel shall be permitted one freestanding sign per parcel provided all other standards are met.

### i. Pole- Free Standing Signs

1. Any pole free standing sign located within this district shall not exceed fifty(50) square feet in sign area.

2. The maximum height for a pole freestanding sign shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet above grade.

### ii. Monument- Free Standing Signs

1. Any monument free standing sign located within this district shall not exceed sixty four (64) square feet in sign area.

2. The maximum height for a monument freestanding sign shall not exceed eight (8) feet above grade.

## 2. On Structure signs

### i. Wall Signs

1. For wall signs mounted flat on the building: a maximum of one hundred (100) square feet.

2. On structure signs shall not project above the eaves line for buildings with pitched roofs. Wall signs may extend above a roofline only when attached to a parapet wall or similar structure that is an approved architectural component of the structure

3. Wall signs shall not extend beyond the sides of the building, nor should the depth of the sign exceed one (1) feet from the wall face.

### ii. Projecting Signs

1. For projecting signs: a maximum of twelve (12) square feet.

2. The top of projecting signs shall not be higher than the eave line and the bottom shall not be lower than eight (8) feet above grade.

3. Projecting signs shall not project more than four (4) feet from the wall on which they are mounted.

iii. Canopy or Awning Signs- For canopy or awning signs: a maximum of fifty (50) square feet.

~~1. Business signs.~~

~~2. Church bulletin boards and identification signs.~~

~~3. Directional signs.~~

~~4. General advertising signs.~~

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~~5. Home occupation signs.~~

~~6.3. Temporary signs.~~

## § 148-122 Shopping Centers or multi-business

Shopping centers with five (5) or more establishments shall be permitted either one pole style or monument style sign. No separate business sign shall be permitted; however, individual on structure signs shall be permitted by the corresponding zoning district as described in § 148-121 A-D.

Pole signs for shopping centers with five (5) or more establishments shall be permitted up to seventy-five (75) square feet of sign area and fifteen (15) feet in height.

Monument signs for shopping centers with five (5) or more establishments shall be permitted up to one-hundred (100) square feet of sign area and ten (10) feet in height.

## § 148-123 Residential Subdivisions, Multi-Family Complexes, Planned Unit Developments

Residential Subdivisions, multi-family complexes, and planned unit developments are allowed one freestanding monument sign per entrance that does not exceed ten feet (10) in height and sixty (60) square feet in area.

## § 148-~~120~~-124 Setback.

Signs shall be located ~~+~~five (5) feet or more from any street right-of-way, and this shall be known as the "setback line." There shall be excepted from this setback business signs advertising the sale or rent of the premises or construction contractor signs which may be erected up to the property line.

## ~~§ 148-121 Height limitations.~~

Signs shall not ~~exceed a height of 15 feet above ground level or the~~obstruct required highway sight distances and shall not extend into or over any street right-of-way ~~to which it is oriented, whichever is higher, without special permission from the Zoning Administrator.~~

## § 148-125 Illumination.

Signs shall not have reflective backgrounds but may use reflective lettering.

Digital or electronically controlled message signs shall only be allowed on monument freestanding signs. Digital or electronically controlled message components shall comprise no more than fifty (50) percent or fifty (50) square feet, whichever is less, of the sign area. No flashing or scrolling text and/or graphics shall be permitted and, with the exception of the date, time and temperature, no text message or graphic shall be displayed for an interval of less than thirty (30) seconds.

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Pole and monument signs may be illuminated internally. When illuminated externally the light source(s) must be shielded from any roads and adjacent property and directed solely at the sign.

## § 148-126 Redevelopment.

Reconstruction or relocation of signs shall be required under the following circumstances. Required improvements shall bring on-site signage into compliance.

1. Site improvements or other improvements are made which require movement of an existing sign.
2. Any sign is replaced, refaced, remodeled or otherwise altered.
3. Existing signs interfere with required highway sight distances.

## § 148-~~122~~-127 Additional restrictions.

No sign shall be erected, maintained, located, or operated:

- A. Except for authorized traffic signs, no sign shall be erected at the intersection of any street in such a manner as to create a traffic hazard by obstructing vision between heights of two and one half (2 1/2) and eight (8) feet; or at any location where it may interfere with, obstruct the view of or be confused with any authorized traffic sign.
- B. Which imitates or resembles any official traffic sign, signal or device or uses the words "Stop" or "Danger" prominently displayed or presents or implies the need or requirement of stopping or the existence of danger on any highway.
- C. Which contains lighting which is not effectively aimed or shielded so as to prevent beams or rays of light from being directed at any portion of the traveled ways of a street or highway and which is of such intensity or brilliance as to cause glare or to impair the vision of the driver of any vehicle.
- D. Which advertises any activities which are illegal under state or federal law or regulations in effect at the location of such sign or at the location of such activities.
- E. Which is obsolete or inconsistent with state law or the provisions of this chapter.