

**DIVISION 16. SIGNS.<sup>10</sup>**

**Sec. 6-163. RESIDENTIAL ZONES SPECIFICATIONS.**

- (a) The purpose of the regulations contained in this section is to avoid signs that are likely to create traffic hazards or otherwise be detrimental to the public health, welfare and safety; to aid in preserving and enhancing the aesthetic, environmental and historical values of the community; to protect, conserve and enhance property values; and to maintain and preserve pleasant surroundings so as to improve life for all residents of Greenwich. Prohibition of off-site commercial signs in the following subsection should significantly reduce the number of signs cluttering residential zoned areas by removing the inducement to lot owners to erect such signs and shifting commercial interests' advertising to other available traditional forms of media. Necessary and desirable communication by on-site commercial and on-site and off-site non-commercial signs is maintained but regulated by rules as to size, location and number to meet this regulations' purposes. (7/3/93)
- (b) All signs that name, advertise or direct attention to a business, product, service, or other commercial activity offered or existing elsewhere than on the premises where such sign is displayed are expressly prohibited in residential zones. (7/3/93)
- (c) All signs that are on a banner, canopy, or marquee, and all portable signs are expressly prohibited in residential zones. (7/3/93)
- (d) All projecting, wall, window and lighted signs (except nameplate signs that may be wall signs and may be illuminated) are expressly prohibited in residential zones. (7/3/93)
- (e) All other commercial and non-commercial free-standing signs that are located back of the lot line (as defined in Section 6-166) and conform to the rules provided below are permitted in residential zones. (7/3/93)

**PERMANENT SIGNS IN RESIDENTIAL ZONES**

	<u>MAXIMUM SIZE</u>	<u>MAXIMUM NUMBER</u>	<u>PERMIT REQUIRED</u>
(1) Nameplate Signs (7/3/93)	2 sq. ft.	1 per lot	No
(2) Signs pertaining to a profession or occupation permitted as an accessory use on the lot (7/3/93)	3 sq. ft.	1 per lot	No
(3) Signs pertaining to legally non-conforming uses on premises (7/3/93)	3 sq. ft.	1 on each street frontage	Yes
(4) Signs pertaining to institutional uses permitted in residential zones: churches, schools, hospitals, nursing homes, parks and wild life reservations (7/3/93)	20 sq. ft. each sign	1 on each street frontage	Yes

<sup>10</sup> State law reference: As to authority to regulate signs, See C.G.S. § 8-14.

(7/3/93)

	<u>MAXIMUM SIZE</u>	<u>MAXIMUM NUMBER</u>	<u>PERMIT REQUIRED</u>
(5) Signs pertaining to other uses authorized by the Board of Appeals as special exceptions or by the Commission by special permit. (7/3/93)	8 sq. ft.	1 on each street frontage	Yes
(6) Real estate signs pertaining to the premises on which they are located. (7/13/93)	3 sq. ft.	1 on each street frontage	No
(7) All other lawful signs not specifically provided for. (7/3/93)	3 sq. ft.	1 on each street frontage	No

**TEMPORARY SIGNS IN RESIDENTIAL ZONES**

- |  |           |                           |    |
|--|-----------|---------------------------|----|
| (1) Temporary civic and non-profit organization signs on or off the premises for a period of no more than 15 days before the advertised event and no more than one day after the event. (7/3/93) | 8 sq. ft. | 1 on each street frontage | No |
| (2) All other lawful temporary signs not specifically covered for a period of no more than 15 days before the advertised event and no more than one day after the event. (7/3/93)                | 3 sq. ft. | 1 on each street frontage | No |
- (f) This regulation does not supersede any other regulation specifically governing signs. If any provision of this regulation or its application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications that can be given effect without the invalid portions. (7/3/93)
- (g) The owner of any lot in a residential zone on which exists a sign that does not conform to the requirements of this ordinance shall without notice or action from the town forthwith remove such signs provided, however if such sign exists on July 3, 1993, the owner shall be obligated to remove such sign: (7/3/93)
- (1) before installing any new sign on the lot;
  - (2) before any change is made in the certificate of occupancy, business or use of the premises;
  - (3) before a building permit will be issued for any construction on the premises;
  - (4) when such sign becomes insecure, unsafe or out of repair; or
  - (5) if such sign shall be reposted, altered or moved.

(7/3/93)

- (h) A sign that was constructed, installed, or maintained in conformity with a permit which has lapsed or has not been renewed shall be removed forthwith without notice or action from the town. (7/3/93)
- (i) It shall be a violation of this ordinance and shall be subject to enforcement remedies and penalties provided by the zoning ordinance and by state law to install or maintain any sign requiring a permit without such a permit or to fail to remove any sign that is in violation of this ordinance and to continue such violation.

**Sec. 6-164. BUSINESS ZONES SPECIFICATIONS.**

- (a) The following signs are permitted in business zones and all other signs are expressly prohibited.
  - (1) LBR, CGBR, LB, CGB, GB and WB Zones.

	<u>MAXIMUM SIZE</u>	<u>MAXIMUM NUMBER</u>	<u>PERMIT REQUIRED</u>
(A) Signs as permitted and regulated by Section 6-163 – Residential Zones above.	See Sec. 6-163	See Sec. 6-163	See Sec. 6-163

	<u>MAXIMUM SIZE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>PERMIT REQUIRED</u>
(B) Any sign advertising the use of the land and building upon which displayed, for the sale of goods or services on the same premises, or the name or location of the proprietor, as follows:	(i) Total of all signs on the lot excluding window and door signs shall not exceed 2 sq. ft. for each foot of building frontage. One free standing sign which shall not exceed 25 sq. ft. in area shall be permitted, provided the area of such sign is included within the above total, and provided further, that no portion of the building is located less than 35 feet from the street curb line. When no portion of a building is located less than 65 ft. from the curb line, such free standing sign shall not exceed 40 sq. ft. in area. In the event that a building has more than one street frontage, the distance from the street curb line shall apply only to the side where a free standing sign is proposed to be located.	On exterior wall of building except free standing sign must be back of lot line	Yes

	MAXIMUM SIZE	LOCATION	PERMIT REQUIRED
	(ii) In addition to the above, rear entrance signs facing parking areas shall be permitted provided they do not exceed 1 sq. ft. for each foot of building fronting on a public or a private parking area to which the owner has right of access.	On exterior wall of building except that one free standing sign is permitted back of lot line but not exceeding 6 sq. ft. in area.	Yes
	(iii) In the absence of all other signs as permitted under paragraphs (1) and (2) above, one free standing sign facing each street to which the building has access may be permitted. The total area of such sign(s) shall not exceed presently allowed maximum size. The overall height of such sign(s) shall not be more than 2½ feet above the surface of the ground to which the sign is affixed.	Back of lot line	Yes
(C) Permanent Windows and Door Signs*	In addition to the above but not to exceed 15% of each window surface to which applied. Such sign shall be confined to lettering and insignia only.	Applied to Window	No

\* Under conditions where building design is such that the use of exterior wall sign(s) is inappropriate, as recommended by the Architectural Review Committee during the review of a comprehensive signage plan, giving consideration to street corner buildings as a special situation;

Such building is allowed larger permanent window signs, in lieu of any exterior building wall signs as follows:

- (a) letter height to be increased from 9" to 15";
- (b) percentage of window area covered increased from 15% to 20% provided that all letters are either on the window or mounted on a clear sign panel hung behind the window. (1/1/87)

	MAXIMUM SIZE	LOCATION	PERMIT REQUIRED
(D) Temporary Window Signs	In addition to the above but not to exceed 1/3 of each of no more than 2 window surfaces to which applied adjacent to the main building entrance. Not permitted on same window as permanent window sign.	Applied to Window	No
(E) Christmas holiday decorations (non-commercial wording or symbol – 40 day limit).		Back of lot line	No
(F) Temporary identifying signs for a building project on the lot for which a building permit has been issued and in effect.	24 sq. ft.	Back of lot line. 1 per each street frontage.	Yes
(G) Signs pertaining to the sale, lease, or rental of the property on which they are located.	15 sq. ft.	1 per each street frontage. Back of lot line.	Yes, if aggregate under one permit is 12 sq. ft. and over.
(2) GBO Zone			
(A) Signs as permitted and regulated in Section A-Residential Zones above in addition to the following:			
(B) Signs giving the Name and insignia of one or more occupants of a permitted office or laboratory.	15 sq. ft.	1 per each public entrance, 15 ft. back of lot line.	Yes

(6/25/94)

	MAXIMUM SIZE	LOCATION	PERMIT REQUIRED
(C) Christmas holiday decorations (non-commercial wording or symbol – 40 day limit).	-	Back of lot line	No
(D) Signs pertaining to the sale, lease, or rental of the property on which they are located.	15 sq. ft.	1 per each street frontage, back of lot line.	Yes, if aggregate under one permit is 12 sq. ft. and over.

	MAXIMUM SIZE	MAXIMUM NUMBER	LOCATION	PERMIT REQUIRED
(3) BEX-50 Zone				
(A) Signs as permitted and regulated in Section A- Residential Zones above in addition to the following:				
(B) Signs giving the name of the occupant of a permitted office. Office nameplate sign. (6/25/94)	32 sq. ft.	1 per entrance	15 ft. or more back of lot line	Yes
(C) Major tenant nameplate sign. (6/26/94)	100 sq. ft.	One	500 ft. from property line; not visible from roadway	Yes
(D) Other tenants nameplate signs. (6/25/94)	32 sq. ft. per tenant; 500 sq. ft. – total all other tenants	One per tenant; multiple tenants listing permitted on one sign	500 ft. from property line; not visible from roadway	Yes

	<u>MAXIMUM SIZE</u>	<u>MAXIMUM NUMBER</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>PERMIT REQUIRED</u>
(4) "P" Zone				
(A) Signs as permitted in Section A-Residential Zones, in addition to the following:				
(B) Signs identifying the parking area and any limitations of its use.	10 sq. ft.	1 per each street on which area has access located at entrance, back of lot line		Yes

**Sec. 6-165. MEASUREMENT OF SIGN AREA.**

- (a) The area of a sign shall be considered to include all lettering, wording and accompanying designs or symbols together with any background different from the building whether painted or applied when it is designed as an integral part of and obviously related to the sign, and when the sign consists of individual letters or symbols attached to, or painted on, a building wall or window, the area shall be considered to be that of the smallest rectangle which encompasses all of the letters or symbols. (6/25/94)
- (b) In the case of a free-standing sign, or a sign that can be seen from both sides, the area shall be determined by multiplying the outside dimensions of the sign, not including the vertical, horizontal or diagonal supports which affix the sign to the ground, unless such supports are evidently designed to be part of the sign.

**Sec. 6-166. LOCATION OF SIGN.**

- (a) No sign shall be located on the roof of any building or on any exterior wall so as to project above the top of said exterior wall at the location of the sign. No business sign shall face any lot line of any immediately adjoining lot in a residence zone within a forty (40) foot distance.
- (b) All signs on the property shall be so located that they will not interfere with the vision of a driver entering or leaving the property or interfere with visibility at an intersection or traffic light.
- (c) No sign shall project more than nine (9) inches over any public traveled way.
- (d) A sign may be affixed only to that portion of a building or structure wall which encloses the use to which the sign pertains.
- (e) All signs that are on the public right of way are expressly prohibited except those signs erected by or on behalf of:

(6/25/94)

- (1) a governmental body to convey public information or direct pedestrian or vehicular traffic;
- (2) a public transit company bus stop or similar signs;
- (3) a public utility informational signs; or
- (4) (i) a hospital or educational, civic, historic, or religious institution; a neighborhood, fraternal or athletic organization; or a country club, that give directions thereto or convey public information and
  - (ii) temporary non-commercial signs, under guidelines issued by the Office of the First Selectman or designee and for which a permit has been issued by the Zoning Enforcement Officer pursuant to such guidelines. All of such signs shall be no more than five square feet in area. (7/3/93)
- (f) For the purpose of enforcement of Sec. 6-163 for residential zones only the term "lot line" shall be deemed to be the line 15 feet from the edge of the adjacent road surface and the term "right of way" shall be deemed to be the area within the lot line (as so defined) and the edge of the adjacent road surface unless the lot owner or other interested person can show the true lot line or true right of way. (7/3/93)
- (g) Any sign on the public right of way that does not conform to this section shall be forfeited to the public and subject to confiscation without notice by any authorized officer. (7/3/93)
- (h) The location of flags excepted from the definition of a sign in Section 6-5(44) shall be prescribed by the Zoning Enforcement Officer. (7/3/93)

#### **Sec. 6-167. HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS.**

- (a) Free-standing signs, including posts, shall not exceed a height of ten (10) feet in a residential zone, or fifteen (15) feet overall in a business zone above the surface of the ground where located. There shall be a clear space underneath a free-standing sign located within the required front or street side yard in a business zone so that the sign will not interfere with the vision of a driver approaching a street intersection. The clear space shall be at least seven (7) feet four (4) inches, measured above the center line of the intersecting street as measured in Section 6-126, to the bottom of the sign.
- (b) Window and wall signs shall not exceed four (4) feet in height.

#### **Sec. 6-168. ILLUMINATED SIGNS.**

- (a) A sign may be illuminated if illumination is confined to, or directed to, the surface of the sign. Flashing, rotating, or intermittent illumination, or neon illumination or other similar exposed illumination, including unshielded incandescent, LED or fluorescent bulbs shall not be permitted. The sign shall be so designed and shielded that the light sources cannot be seen from any adjacent residential zone or from the street. (5/4/2005, 4/24/2013)
- (b) Interior illumination of a sign shall not be permitted unless such illumination is confined to letters.
- (c) The Building Official shall be guided by the opinion of the Traffic Division of the Police Department in administering this Section. (4/24/2013)
- (d) Electronic message signs which are typically programmable and have changing or scrolling messages on display screens using LED, LCD, plasma, or functionally equivalent technology are not permitted. (4/24/2013)



**Sec. 6-169. DESIGN AND LETTERING.**

Signs shall be designed in harmony with the building and established development, in accordance with recommendations of the Architectural Review Committee. Three dimensional signs shall not exceed three (3) feet (four feet in a BEX-50 zone) in any dimension. All store units in the same building or in separate buildings in an integrated shopping center shall have a uniform design and placement of signs. No more than three (3) different colors, including black and white shall be used in a sign and no more than two (2) different colors shall be used in any lettering. Lettering shall be no larger than eighteen (18) inches (four (4) feet in a BEX-50 zone) in height. Lettering of permanent window and door signs shall be no larger than nine (9) inches in height except as allowed pursuant to Sec. 6-164(a)(1)(c). (1/1/87) (6/25/94)

**Sec. 6-170. SPECIAL DEVICES.**

The exterior use of pennants, banners, spinners, streamers, moving signs, ground signs, sales signs, special promotion signs, or other eye catching devices may be allowed for a seven (7) day period not to exceed once in any twelve (12) month period under a permit issued for special events such as openings, new management, and special promotional events. No sign or device held in the air by balloon or other means and no searchlights shall be permitted.

**Sec. 6-171. SIGN REPAIRS; ALTERATIONS.**

- (a) Signs may be repaired by repainting or by replacing of lettering, wording and accompanying symbols. Such repair shall not be considered an alteration within the meaning of this Chapter provided that the outside dimensions of signs as measured above are not changed; the location, height or illumination of a sign is not changed; and no substantial change in lettering, wording or symbols is made. (7/3/93)
- (b) Nothing in this Section shall prevent a sign from being altered so as to become more conforming with the existing regulations provided that a permit where required under Section 6-175 is obtained.

**Sec. 6-172. REMOVAL OF SIGNS.**

It shall be the responsibility of the property owner to remove or cause to be removed all business signs within one (1) month from the time the premises are vacated.

**Sec. 6-173. REPLACEMENT, ALTERATION OR RELOCATION.**

No sign shall be replaced, altered or relocated without conforming to the existing requirements of this Article at the time of such replacement, alteration or relocation.

**Sec. 6-174. PROHIBITED SIGNS.**

Any sign that is the structure, building, any part thereof, or any associated structure designed to symbolize and/or identify by its shape or color a particular product, service, organization or business is prohibited.

**Sec. 6-175. PERMIT PROCEDURE.**

- (a) A permit shall be required for the erection, relocation or alteration of a sign as listed in Sections 6-163 and 6-164.
- (b) After issuance of a permit for erection of a sign with removable panels or letters for advertising programs at a theater, no new permit shall be required for rearrangement of the approved panels or letters to indicate changes in program. (5/4/2005)
- (c) All permits will expire by limitation at the end of six (6) months from date of issuance, if not used, except that permits for approved subdivision signs shall be issued for a period of one (1) year only, with the privilege of renewal by the Zoning Enforcement Officer without additional fee for only one (1) additional year. (5/4/2005, 5/1/2013)