

Sec. 114-516. Standards for signs.

The purpose of this division is to regulate the placement of signs in the City of Dothan to allow for reasonable advertising and at the same time maintain a semblance of order to prevent or reduce the visual clutter associated with irresponsible or haphazard placement and maintenance of said signs.

Under this chapter, the following shall apply to all signs:

- (1) All signs shall be registered in the building inspection division of the community development/engineering department and a sign placement permit must be obtained before erecting or placing any sign unless otherwise provided in this chapter. It shall be unlawful to erect or place a sign without a valid permit.
- (2) All sign faces, including surrounding support structure, shall be located at least ten feet behind the public street right-of-way line unless otherwise provided in this chapter.
- (3) Maximum allowable sign height shall be the lesser of 50 feet above the grade of the adjacent street traveled-way or the maximum height permitted in the zoning district in which it is located.
- (4) No sign shall be attached to or painted on any utility pole or utility fixture or on any tree, rock or other natural object.
- (5) No sign shall be located so as to prevent or hinder free access to or egress from any door, window or fire escape.
- (6) All construction and operation of signs shall be in accordance with the building, electrical and other applicable codes.
- (7) No sign shall use the words "stop," "danger," "go," "slow," or any other word which imitates or approximates any official traffic direction or traffic control sign.
- (8) No sign shall be illuminated in any manner that imitates or approximates any official traffic direction or traffic control device.
- (9) If any sign becomes unsightly or unsafe, the person listed on the registration as owner shall, upon notice from the city, repair/refurbish or put the sign in a safe, secure condition or remove it within ten days of the date of notification.
- (10) No part of any sign, including supporting structure, shall be located within 25 feet of the edge of pavement (edge of right-of-way for unpaved streets) of the intersection of any two streets or within 25 feet of the edge of pavement of the intersection of any street and railroad right-of-way. This requirement applies to all signs including those excepted in subsection (13) below.
- (11) No sign shall be located within 15 feet of the edge of pavement (edge of right-of-way for unpaved streets and driveways) of the intersection of any street and driveway unless otherwise provided in this chapter.
- (12) Face signs shall be flush with the face or side of the building and shall extend not more than 12 inches beyond the face or side of the building. The building official may make exception for signs architecturally designed as a complementary part of the building.
- (13) Nonilluminated, temporary real estate, construction and political signs not exceeding six square feet in area for residential zoning districts or 32 square feet in area in non-residential districts, may be placed or erected without a placement permit. If a sign is to be illuminated, an electrical permit shall be required. For City of Dothan streets, these signs may be placed no closer to the traveled way than the greater distance of four steps (approximately 10 to 12 feet) from the edge of pavement or one step (approximately 2 to 3 feet) behind the utility poles. For unpaved streets, placement shall be behind the utility pole location. If utility poles are not there, call City of Dothan Engineering Department at (334) 793-0171 for right-of-way location. For federal/state highways, signs must be placed outside of the right-of-way and may require a permit from the Alabama Department of Transportation. Questions about location may be referred to the engineering department.

(14) No stand-alone, fixed or portable sign (including temporary signs in (13) above) may be illuminated by or contain flashing, intermittent, moving or rotating lights or similar displays unless such sign is located behind the building line.

(15) With the approval of the traffic engineer, directional signs may be located closer than ten feet to the public right-of-way line, but not on the public right-of-way, provided such signs are no higher than two and one-half feet. These signs located within ten feet of the right-of-way may contain a logo and the name of the establishment, but shall contain no other commercial information.

(16) These standards shall not prohibit the erection of required public notice signs provided that such signs are not located on the public right-of-way.

(17) All signs shall be maintained in good repair and in a visually acceptable condition. The owner of the property on which freestanding and face signs are located shall be held responsible for meeting this requirement. Portable signs shall be the responsibility of the sign owner.

(Code 1977, § 23-64(a); Ord. No. 2001-252, § 1, 8-21-01)

Sec. 114-517. Portable signs.

In addition to any regulations applying to signs in general in this division, the following shall apply to portable signs:

(1) For the purposes of this chapter, a portable sign shall be defined as any sign, whether on wheels, its own trailer or otherwise, which is designed or constructed in such a manner as to be easily transported from one place to another.

(2) Portable signs shall comply with the same setback and sight distance requirements as all other signs.

(3) No portable sign shall be illuminated by or contain flashing, intermittent, rotating or moving lights. No portable sign shall be animated.

(4) Portable signs shall be used only for on-premises advertising and shall not be used as billboards.

(5) Subject to this chapter, portable signs shall be permitted uses in B-2, B-3, M-1 and M-3 districts and shall be uses permitted upon appeal in B-1, B-4 and M-2 districts.

(Code 1977, § 23-64(c))

Sec. 114-518. Nonconforming signs.

Use of legally nonconforming freestanding and face signs existing on the effective date of the ordinance from which this section is derived may be continued subject to the following requirements:

(1) No legally nonconforming sign shall be enlarged, extended or structurally altered except in conformity with this chapter.

(2) No legally nonconforming sign shall be replaced unless the sign replacing it complies fully with this chapter.

(3) Legally nonconforming signs which have been damaged by fire or other causes to the extent of more than 50 percent of the current replacement value at the time of such damage shall not be rebuilt or restored except in conformity with this chapter. Such sign if not rebuilt or restored must be removed upon notification of the building official.

(4) Any legally nonconforming sign which ceases to be used for a period of more than six consecutive months is hereby declared illegal and must be removed or made to comply with this chapter upon notification by the building official.

(Code 1977, § 23-64(d); Ord. No. 2001-252, § 1, 8-21-01)

Sec. 114-519. Billboards.

In addition to any regulations applying to signs in general in this division, the following shall apply to billboards:

- (1) For the purposes of this chapter, a billboard shall be defined as any sign, structure or device which advertises or contains information about a business, product or service not located on or offered on the premises on which the sign is located.
 - (2) Billboards shall be located no closer than 500 feet to any other billboard on the same side of any street.
 - (3) Billboards shall not be located one above the other or side by side.
 - (4) Billboards located more than 500 feet inside the Ross Clark Circle shall not exceed 400 square feet in area. Billboards located elsewhere in the city shall not exceed 700 square feet in area.
 - (5) Unless otherwise provided in this chapter, billboards shall comply with the same height, setback and sight distance requirements as all other signs.
 - (6) Billboards shall be located no closer than 100 feet to any residentially zoned district or any property used for residential purposes.
 - (7) The lowest portion of any billboard must be at least 16 feet above grade.
 - (8) Billboards shall not be illuminated by or contain flashing, intermittent, rotating or moving lights. Billboards shall not be animated.
 - (9) All billboards shall be of all-metal single-pole construction except for the sign face and trim which may be of other durable materials.
 - (10) Subject to this chapter, billboards shall be permitted uses in B-2, B-3, M-1 and M-3 districts, and shall be uses permitted upon appeal in B-1, B-4, M-2 and Agr-Conv. districts. Billboards shall not be permitted in any other district.
- (Code 1977, § 23-64(b); Ord. No. 2001-252, § 1, 8-21-01)