

ARTICLE XX
SIGN ORDINANCE
(Adopted 3/13/12)

1. **Purpose:** Signs perform important functions that are essential for public safety and general welfare, including communicating messages, providing information about goods and services, and orienting and directing people. The purpose of the Milton Sign Ordinance is to:

- a. Promote the public, health, welfare and safety by regulating existing and proposed outdoor advertising and outdoor signs of all types;
- b. Protect property values;
- c. Enhance and protect the physical appearance of the Town of Milton;
- d. Preserve the Town's scenic and natural beauty;
- e. Prevent hazards to vehicular and pedestrian traffic safety by controlling the number, location and placement of signs;
- f. Provide easy recognition and legibility of permitted signs and uses and promote visual order and clarity on streets;
- g. Support business and community vitality through informing the public of available goods, services and activities; and
- h. Provide the Planning Board with discretion and flexibility when reviewing sign permit applications for businesses that serve the traveling public, national retail chains, high value businesses and the like.

2. **Sign permit required.**

No sign shall be placed, erected, moved, replaced, or reconstructed without a permit unless specifically exempted in this section. Such permit shall be issued by the Code Enforcement Officer provided the sign meets all the requirements of this section.

Applications for a sign permit shall be made to the Code Enforcement Officer on the form provided by him and shall include a set of plans (to scale), showing site location, sign size, colors, the design, type, and size of lettering, method of illumination (if any), and the type of materials to be used in construction and required fee. The Code Enforcement Officer shall record the plans in the CEO office prior to the issuance of the permit.

3. **Allowed without a sign permit.** The following signs are allowed in all zoning districts without a sign permit:

- a. One (1) temporary non illuminated sign no greater than nine (9) square feet in area advertising the sale, rent or lease of the premises.
- b. Political signs as regulated by NH RSA 664.
- c. Temporary non illuminated signs pertaining to yard, garage, and similar special sales or events. These signs shall only be displayed while such sale or special event is actively in progress.

- d. Directional signs indicating entrance and exit driveways, parking regulations and signs deemed essential to protect the public health, safety and welfare. Such signs shall be no larger than for (4) square feet.
 - e. Temporary signs and decorations displayed as part of the celebration of holidays, or national, state or local citywide events or festivals.
 - f. Temporary special promotional signs for public, institutional, cultural, or civic events occurring within or relative to the Town of Milton.
 - g. Bulletin or announcement boards not exceeding thirty-two (32) square feet in total area on the premises of schools, churches or other public facilities.
 - h. One (1) temporary sign not exceeding thirty-two (32) square feet on a building or project under construction identifying the architect, owner, and/or contractor.
 - i. One (1) directory sign of the principal occupants of a building may be affixed to the exterior wall at each entrance of the building. Such directory shall not exceed one (1) square foot for each occupant.
 - j. One (1) sign not exceeding two (2) square feet identifying the name and/or address of the occupant.
 - k. One (1) temporary non illuminated sign not exceeding thirty two (32) square feet advertising the sale, rent, lease of an existing commercial or industrial use or land located in the Industrial Commercial (IC) zone.
 - l. One (1) off premise directional signs indicating the general location of a business. Such signs shall be no larger than four (4) square feet. One such sign per business is allowed.
4. **Signs allowed only by permit.** A permit shall be required for signs in the following zoning districts:
- a. In the High Density Residential zone, one (1) exterior affixed, hanging or freestanding sign not exceeding four (4) square feet in area identifying a permitted use.
 - b. In the Low Density Residential zone, one (1) exterior affixed, hanging, or freestanding sign not exceeding thirty two (32) square feet in area identifying a permitted use except that signs for home occupations shall be limited to four (4) square feet.
 - c. In the Commercial Residential and Industrial Commercial zone, exterior affixed signs shall not exceed thirty two (32) square feet. For every twenty five (25) feet of additional set back, the square footage of the sign can be increased by three (3) square feet. One (1) hanging sign on each frontage provided that such sign has no more than two (2) faces and projects no more than eight (8) feet from the building face. Hanging signs shall not exceed thirty two (32) square feet in area.
 - d. Freestanding or ground signs subject to the following conditions:
 - i. Signs shall not exceed sixteen (16) feet in height nor obscure vision for traffic movement.
 - ii. The area of a sign shall not exceed thirty two (32) square feet.
 - iii. One (1) freestanding sign allowed per lot.

5. **Planning Board Review:** For businesses such as those serving the traveling public, national retail chains, high value businesses and the like, the Planning Board shall have the authority to allow an increase in the square footage of signs in the Commercial Residential and Industrial Commercial zoned districts up to a maximum of 250 square feet and to make other appropriate modifications regarding signage requirements. In making its determination, the Planning Board shall consider the abutting land uses, the visual impact, the site location and the signage requirements of the business given its location and size.
6. **General Provisions:**
 - a. Two-faced signs shall be considered as a single unit, and only one surface shall be considered in determining the area.
 - b. The material and construction of any sign shall be in accordance with the building code and other Town requirements. All signs shall be maintained in a safe condition and in good repair.
 - c. Except for directional signs, off-premise signs advertising a business are not allowed.
 - d. Internally illuminated, flashing signs and scrolling signs are not permitted.
 - e. Signs shall conform to all dimensional requirements of the Milton Zoning Ordinance.
7. **Definitions:**
 - a. *Internally illuminated sign:* a sign that is lighted by a source concealed behind a translucent sign panel.
 - b. *Sign:* any device, fixture, placard, or structure that uses color, form, graphic, illumination, symbol or writing to advertise, announce the purpose of, or identify the purpose of a person or entity, or to communicate information of any kind to the public.
 - c. *Sign Area:* the area of the smallest rectangle or circle within which the entire sign can fit and which excludes structural supports which do not contribute through shape, color, or otherwise to the sign's message. Any separate surface, board, framed or shape on or within which the sign is displayed shall be included. The height of a sign shall be measured to the highest point of the sign, including any structural or ornamental projections above the sign proper, from the average ground level above which the sign is located.
 - d. *Temporary Signs:* signs of temporary nature such as political posters, signs giving notice of a nonprofit or charitable event or function, notice of a public or nonprofit type of meeting, yard sales, a real estate sign, construction sign identifying a project, a sign announcing a new business or a relocated business provided the sign is less than eight (8) square feet. Temporary signs shall not be placed on fences, trees, utility poles or the like or a place that will obstruct or impair the vision of traffic or create a hazard or nuisance. Temporary signs shall be removed within ten (10) days of the event or function.
8. **Violations:** Any violation of this sign ordinance shall be subject to fines or penalties as indicated in Article IX Penalties of the Milton Zoning Ordinance.