

DIVISION 12. - SIGN STANDARDS

Sec. 13-590. - General.

(a) General provisions.

- (1) Unless otherwise provided herein, no sign may be constructed, erected, moved, enlarged, illuminated or substantially altered except in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. Mere repainting or changing the message of a sign shall not, in and of itself, be considered a substantial alteration.
- (2) These sign standards are intended to complement the requirements of the building and electrical codes adopted by the commission. Wherever there is inconsistency between these regulations and the building or electrical code, the more stringent requirement shall apply.
- (3) Compliance with the standards requirements of this section shall not constitute a defense to an action brought to abate a nuisance under the common law.

(b) Exempt, permitted and prohibited signs.

- (1) Permitted signs. Unless expressly prohibited herein, all signs are permitted by this division, subject to the setback provisions of section 13-591.
- (2) Prohibited signs. It shall be unlawful to erect, cause to be erected, maintain or cause to be maintained, any sign not expressly authorized by this code. Without limiting the generality of the above, the following signs are expressly prohibited:
 - a. Signs that are in violation of the building or electrical codes adopted by the county.
 - b. Any sign that, in the opinion of the commission, does or will constitute a safety hazard.
 - c. Signs that revolve, or are animated, or that utilize movement or apparent movement, or utilize lights or illumination that flash, move rotate, scintillate, blink, flicker, or vary in intensity or color to attract the attention of the public when such attraction creates an unsafe condition for motorists or pedestrians, except for time-temperature-date signs.
 - d. Signs or sign structures that interfere in any way with free use of any fire escape, emergency exit, or standpipe.
 - e. Signs that resemble any official sign, symbol or marker erected by any government agency, or that by reason of position, shape or color would conflict with the proper functioning of any traffic sign or signal, or be of a size, location, movement, content, color, or illumination that may be reasonably confused with or construed as, or conceal, a traffic-control device.
 - f. Signs that obstruct, or substantially interfere with, the vision of pedestrians, cyclists or motorists traveling on or entering or exiting public streets.
 - g. Non-governmental sign that use the words "stop", "look". "danger", or any similar word, phrase or symbol when such sign presents or implies the need or requirement of stopping or the existence of danger, or which is a copy or imitation of official signs.
 - h. Signs, within ten (10) feet of public right-of-way or one hundred (100) feet of any public road intersection, that contain red or green lights that might be confused with traffic control lights.
 - i. Signs, and any associated lighting, that are of such intensity or brilliance as to cause glare or impair the vision of any motorist or pedestrian using or entering a public way, or that are a hazard or a nuisance to occupants of any property because of glare or other characteristics. A source of light of more than seventy-five (75) watts that can be seen

directly by an oncoming motorists is presumed to cause glare or impair the vision of such motorist.

- j. Signs that contain any lighting or control mechanism that causes unreasonable interference with radio, television or other commercial signals.
- k. Signs placed in public rights-of-way by non-governmental entities without specific approval pursuant to F.S. ch. 337.407, and signs or supporting structures located in or over the rights-of-way of any federal, state or county road except as provided by law.
- l. No sign may be erected so that by its location, color, size, shape, nature, or message it would tend to obstruct the view of or be confused with official traffic signs or other signs erected by governmental agencies.
- m. Signs placed on private property without the property owner's consent.

(3) Exemptions. Signage located on elevated water tanks are exempt from these provisions.

(Ord. No. 2015-17, § 3(Exh. A), 9-22-15)

Sec. 13-591. - Design standards.

(a) Computation of sign face area.

- (1) Face delineated. The face area of a sign shall be computed by using the entire area within the single, continuous, rectilinear perimeter of not more than eight (8) straight lines, or a circle or an ellipse, enclosing the extreme limits of the writing, representation, emblem, or other display, together with any material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or structure against which it is placed. Face area does not include supporting framework or bracing that is clearly incidental to the display itself.
- (2) Multi-sections or multi-faces.
 - a. If the sign consists of more than one (1) section or module, all of the area, including that between sections or modules, shall be included in the computation of the sign face area.
 - b. Ground signs consisting of two (2) faces shall be considered one face for purposes of this section so long as the two (2) faces are at no point separated by a distance that exceeds five (5) feet.

(b) Sign setback requirements.

- (1) Temporary signs. There are no setback requirements for temporary signs provided their location does not create any hazards to motorists or pedestrians; however, no temporary sign shall encroach on any public right-of-way or on adjoining property without specific authorization.
- (2) Permanent signs.
 - a. On-site.
 - 1. Ground signs. A permanent ground sign, and any part of its supporting structure, shall be designed and located as follows:
 - a) Height is limited to thirty-five (35) feet for on-site ground signs, unless within the CH or CR zoning districts.
 - b) From any public road right-of-way line ten (10) feet, or one-half (0.5) foot for every foot in height (measured from natural ground at base of sign to highest point of sign face or structure), whichever is greater, except that no sign need be set back more than the building setback required for the property on which it is located. Exempt from this requirement are signs used exclusively for

development identification, such as subdivision names, when specifically approved by the authority.

- c) From side and rear property lines five (5) feet, or two-tenths (0.2) foot for every foot in height (measured from natural ground at base of sign to highest point of sign face or structure), whichever is greater, except that no sign need be set back more than the building setback required for the property on which it is located.
2. Building signs. Building signs shall meet the same setback requirements as ground signs except that those painted on or attached flat against a wall of a legally permitted structure are permitted regardless of setback.
- b. Off-site.
 1. Ground signs. A permanent ground sign, and any part of its supporting structure, shall be designed and located as follows:
 - a) Height is limited to thirty-five (35) feet for off-site ground signs, unless within the CH or CR zoning districts.
 - b) From any public road right-of-way line fifteen (15) feet.
 - c) From side and rear property lines ten (10) feet.
 - (3) From edge of pavement. Notwithstanding subsections (1) and (2), no sign more than three (3) feet above ground level shall be placed within fifteen (15) feet of the edge-of-pavement of an outside travel lane of a public road when such sign interferes with the sight distance requirements of applicable regulations.
 - (c) Sign illumination and signs containing lights. Unless otherwise prohibited by this section, signs may be illuminated if such lighting directed toward a sign is shielded so that it illuminates only the face of the sign and does not shine directly into a public right-of-way, so as to cause glare and impair vision, or residential premises.
 - (d) Sign construction.
 - (1) Construction. In addition to compliance with all applicable building codes, freestanding signs shall be securely fastened to the ground or to some other substantial supportive structure so that there is virtually no danger that either the sign or the supportive structure may be moved by the wind or other forces of nature and cause injury to persons or property.
 - (e) Other regulations. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, all signs shall comply with the requirements of F.S. ch. 479, (and all state regulations promulgated thereunder), regarding outdoor advertising, including, but not limited to, zoning, spacing and size requirements. County roads shall be treated the same as state roads for purposes of this section.

(Ord. No. 2015-17, § 3(Exh. A), 9-22-15)

Sec. 13-592. - Private signs on public property.

- (1) Definitions. The following terms shall be understood to have the following corresponding meanings when utilized in this division:

Board: The Board of County Commissioners of Sumter County, Florida.

Private sign: A sign of any size or shape which is placed on (above ground) or in (anchored below ground) property owned by the board, including right-of-way as defined herein, which represents, advertises, or promotes any private business, commercial activity, political candidate, political position, or nonprofit organization, or which promotes any event related to the foregoing.

Right-of-way: Lands owned by Sumter County and governed by the board which abut county roads and provide a buffer between improved county roads and private property.

- (2) Prohibition of private signs. No person shall erect or display, or cause or authorize any person or entity to erect or display, any private sign on property owned by the board or controlled by the board under a lease which through its terms requires that the board maintain said property. All private signs erected or displayed on property owned by the board or controlled by the board under a lease as described herein shall be photographed and then immediately removed and destroyed upon their discovery by agents or employees of the board. Said agents or employees of the board shall record by written log the location and appearance of the confiscated private sign(s), and process and preserve photographs as evidence for hearings before the special master as allowed herein. Signs placed by agents or employees of the board to aid in traffic control, public safety or other general governmental concerns shall not be subject to the limitations of this division. However, political or election-related private signs affiliated with an individual's candidacy for a county commission seat are governed and prohibited by this division in the same manner as any other political private sign related to a candidacy for public office.
- (3) Exemptions. Private signs specifically licensed and approved by the board for placement on property owned or leased by the board prior to the effective date of this division, including private signs licensed for placement in Sumter County right-of-way, are exempt from the prohibitions and penalties enumerated herein. Moreover, the board may grant permits for the installation of a private sign on Sumter County property or right-of-way if there is a rational basis for the granting of the permit which furthers the interests of the health, safety and welfare of the public at large.
- (4) Penalty. The entity or individual responsible for the placement of a private sign on property owned or leased by the board, or, in the case of private signs related to the promotion of political candidates, the candidate whose name appears on the private sign, shall be issued upon discovery and removal of a private sign on Sumter County property one (1) warning citation, served via certified mail. The person or entity shall then have fourteen (14) days to remove any additional affiliated private signs from county property. Following this fourteen-day period, any subsequently discovered private signs affiliated with that same person or entity shall result in a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00), levied by Sumter County Code Enforcement. Any appeal of such a fine shall be to the special master in the same manner as an appeal of any other code violation. The appellant may put forth any admissible evidence available which indicates that the appellant was not responsible for the placement of the private sign on county property before the special master.

(Ord. No. 2015-17, § 3(Exh. A), 9-22-15)

Secs. 13-593—13-599. - Reserved.