



2011 CITY OF
UNION CITY

SIGN
ORDINANCE



11-1405 Signs. (Updated 9/18/12 per Ordinance No. 114-13)
The following regulations shall apply:

- A. Interference with Traffic: Signs shall comply with the following regulations in order to preclude interference with traffic or traffic control:
 - 1. No sign shall be erected or maintained in any form or at any location where it may obstruct or in any way interfere with the view of or be confused with any authorized traffic control device.
 - 2. No sign shall be placed in or project into any public right-of-way except publicly owned traffic control signs and signs specifically exempted in the B-3 (Central Business) district.
 - 3. No signs shall contain or make use of any word, phrase, symbol, shape, form or character in such manner as to interfere with, mislead, or confuse traffic.
 - 4. Any light used for illumination and not an integral part of the sign shall be so arranged as to reflect light away from streets.

- B. Sign Illumination: Signs shall comply with the following regulations in order to preclude any adverse effects on residential districts.
 - 1. Flashing or intermittent or animated illumination is prohibited within one hundred and fifty (150) feet of any residential district.
 - 2. All directly illuminated signs are prohibited within fifty (50) feet of any residential district.
 - 3. Any light used for illumination shall be so arranged as to reflect light away from any adjoining residential districts.
 - 4. Signs that use flashing, intermittent, or animated illumination must display images that are complete in themselves, without continuation in content to the next image or message, or to any other sign.
 - 5. No sign shall be brighter than is necessary for clear and adequate visibility and shall not exceed a maximum of 5,000 nits during the day and 500 nits during nighttime hours.
 - 6. Illumination must not be so brilliant, as to cause glare or otherwise impair the vision of an automobile driver or result in a nuisance to an automobile driver.
 - 7. Illumination must not be so brilliant, as to interfere with the effectiveness of an official traffic sign, device, or signal.

8. Signs that utilize Light Emitting Diodes (LED) must be equipped with both a dimmer and a photocell that automatically adjusts the display's intensity, according to natural ambient light.
 9. Images and messages displayed shall remain static for a minimum of eight (8) seconds, with a maximum change time of two (2) seconds.
- C. Location (Setbacks): Signs shall comply with the following setback requirements:
1. All signs shall conform to the side and rear yard requirements for the zone in which located.
 2. No sign shall be erected closer than fifty (50) feet to any residential district.
 3. Front yard setbacks for all on-site signs shall be ten (10) feet.
 4. Front yard setbacks for all off-site signs shall be the front yard setback requirement of the district in which located.
- D. Height: Signs shall comply with height requirements by district as follows:
1. Signs in any residential zone shall be no higher than ten (10) feet.
 2. Signs in H-M (Hospital-Medical), B-1 (Local Business), and B-3 (Central Business) districts shall be no higher than twenty (20) feet.
 3. Signs in all other business zones not mentioned above, and all industrial zones, shall be no higher than forty (40) feet.
- E. Signs Permitted in Zoning Districts: Signs shall be permitted in zoning districts as follows, except as modified by subsection (6) and (7) of this section, per lot or parcel:
1. Residential Districts: One on-site sign for permitted non-residential uses, except for home occupations. Such signs shall not exceed twelve (12) square feet in area, except that churches may have a sign no greater than thirty-two (32) square feet in area. Any sign illumination shall be non-flashing, non-animated and indirect illumination and shall not be an integral part of the sign, and shall be so arranged as not to direct or reflect light toward adjoining premises and streets.
 2. H-M (Hospital-Medical) and B-1 (Local Business) Districts: Two on-site signs as follows:
 - (a) One free standing sign not to exceed one square foot per foot of road frontage to a maximum of one hundred (100) square feet in area.

- (b) One fascia sign not to exceed one square foot per foot of frontage of the principal building to a maximum of fifty (50) square feet in area.
3. B-3 (Central Business) Districts. Up to three on-site signs as follows:
- (a) In situations where at least a 10 foot front yard setback exists, one free standing sign not to exceed one square foot per foot of frontage of the principal building to a maximum of fifty (50) square feet in area.
 - (b) In situations where a free standing sign is not permitted or a free standing sign is not constructed, one projecting sign not to exceed one square foot per foot of frontage of the principal building to a maximum of fifty (50) square feet. The sign may project over a side walk right-of-way but not over a parking or traffic right-of-way.
 - (c) One wall or fascia sign not to exceed one square foot per foot of frontage of the principal building to a maximum of one hundred and fifty (150) square feet. Wall or fascia signs shall be placed flat against the wall of a building or designed as a part of an architectural feature thereof.
 - (d) In situations where a sidewalk canopy exists, each tenant will be permitted one under canopy sign with a surface area not to exceed six (6) square feet. There shall be a minimum clearance of eight (8) feet from the bottom of the sign to the sidewalk surface. The sign shall be mounted as much as possible at right angle perpendicular to the principal building.
4. Other Business Districts and Industrial Districts. Three permanent on-site signs as follows:
- (a) One (1) free-standing sign not to exceed one (1) square foot of road frontage to a maximum of one hundred and fifty (150) square feet.
 - (b) One ground sign not to exceed a maximum of fifty (50) square feet of area. Ground signs shall be permanently anchored and be no more than ten (10) feet in height.
 - (c) Wall or fascia signs not to exceed the following area total:
 - (1) for front face of building setting back less than 100 feet from a fronting street right-of-way, two (2) square feet of sign area per lineal foot of the front face of the building or portion of building occupied;

- (2) for front face of building setting back 100 feet or more from a fronting street right-of-way, three (3) square feet of sign area per lineal foot of the front face of the building or portion of building occupied.
- (3) for facings of buildings not fronting on a public street, two (2) square feet of sign area per lineal foot of the facing of the building in which the sign will be located.

The front face of a building is that surface of a building which faces a front lot line by no greater an angle than 45 degree off of a line parallel to the front lot line. The measurement of lineal footage of the front face shall be along the ground base of the building. For corner lots, the two front faces of a building shall be considered separately. For portions of a building occupied by a separate business, such business having also an identifiable claim on a portion of the front face of the building, such portion of the front face shall be considered separately for each such business. For buildings such as malls where a business orients internally to the building, and where a business has no identifiable claim on the front face of the building, the front face of the building shall be considered as a unit with the facia sign allocation to each business being an internal matter of building management within the total area of facia signs allowed to the building.

- (d) For lots without street frontage, signs meeting the criteria specified in sections (a) and (b) of this section may be allowed on a permanent easement, provided that the following criteria is met:
 - (1) The easement on which the sign(s) are placed must have street frontage and must be adjacent to the property lacking in street frontage.
 - (2) Written permission to place said signs must be obtained from the owner of the property on which the sign easement is placed and submitted to the building official at the time that a sign permit is requested.

F. Off-site Signs. Off-site signs shall be permitted as follows:

1. Off-site Identification Signs. Off-site identification signs for churches and schools shall be permitted in all zoning districts provided that they do not exceed two (2) square feet in area.

2. Off-site Identification and Directory Signs. Off-site identification and directory signs shall be permitted in P-M (Planned Industrial) and P-B (Planned Business) districts, and shall:
 - (a) be no greater in area than one hundred (100) square feet;
 - (b) have top of sign no higher than twenty (20) feet from natural ground level;
 - (c) be located only within the P-M or P-B zone in which the related integrated planned development is located;
 - (d) be oriented to expressway or arterial roads, as identified in the Comprehensive Plan, and be located at the intersections of such expressways or arterial roads with roads providing access to the integrated planned development;
 - (e) be located more than one hundred (100) feet from any other sign which is oriented to an expressway or arterial road and at the same time related to the integrated planned development or any of its component industries or businesses;
 - (f) be located more than one hundred (100) feet from any on-site sign related to the integrated planned development or any of its component industries or businesses;
 - (g) list the identifying name of the integrated planned development, followed by the names of industries and/or businesses located in the development;
 - (h) be illuminated by non-flashing, non-animated, indirect illumination and be so arranged as to reflect light away from residential zones, lots and streets.

3. Off-site Signs (Billboards): Billboards shall be permitted in M-1 (Light-Industrial) Districts, and M-2 (Heavy-Industrial) Districts subject to the following:
 - (a) A billboard shall be located not less than fifty (50) feet distance from any structure in which fifty percent (50%) or more of the floor space is used for dwelling purposes.
 - (b) A billboard shall be at least seven hundred (700) feet distance from any other billboard on the same side of the street.
 - (c) A billboard shall not have one sign above another sign.

- (d) Total surface area of a billboard shall be no greater than three hundred (300) square feet.
4. Off-site Bench Signs. Bench signs shall be permitted in all business and industrial districts except the B-1 (Local Business) district, subject to the following:
- (a) Sign area per bench shall be no greater than twelve (12) square feet.
 - (b) The height of the bench shall be no greater than forty-four (44) inches, including the bench back.
 - (c) Benches with signs shall be placed with backs parallel to and up against the wall of the principal building, provided that no bench sign shall be allowed against a wall of the principal building where such wall is within ten (10) feet of the property line, except that this section shall not apply to the Obion County Court House.
- G. Temporary Signs Permitted in any District. The following temporary signs are permitted in any district subject to a uniform ten (10) foot setback:
- 1. One (1) temporary on-site "For Sale" or "For Rent" sign not to exceed six (6) square feet in area. "For Sale" signs must be removed from the property on the date of formal closing of the property's transaction or on the date the owner agrees to take the property off the market.
 - 2. Temporary off-site "For Sale" directory signs, which must be removed upon the sale of the advertised property or upon the property no longer being for sale.
 - 3. Four (4) temporary off-site auction signs advertising the sale of property, provided that the signs shall be no greater than twenty-four (24) square feet in area, and the signs shall be set up no more than 18 days prior to the date of auction and shall be removed within three days following the date of the auction.
 - 4. One (1) temporary sign for promotion of a real estate subdivision, provided that the sign shall be located on the subdivision premises, be no greater than one hundred (100) square feet in area, and that the sign shall not be lighted by flashing or intermittent illumination.
 - 5. One temporary on-site sign for identification of builder, contractor, architect, engineer, or other agent for a lot under development, provided that the sign shall not exceed one hundred (100) square feet in area and be placed on the lot premises only for the duration of the construction.

6. Five (5) temporary signs for special events of public interest, each not exceeding twenty-four (24) square feet in area, subject to one sign being placed upon the site of the event not more than thirty (30) days prior to the event, and four signs which may be placed off-site for a period not exceeding ten (10) days prior to the special event. All such signs shall be taken down within five (5) days of the ending of the special event.
 7. Temporary political or campaign signs on behalf of candidates for public office, referenda, or other electoral measures, provided that such signs shall be erected no earlier than forty-five (45) days prior to the related election or balloting and shall be removed within five (5) days following the related election or ballot, and provided that no sign shall be located within or over a public right-of-way.
 8. Temporary off-site signs in public recreational areas, subject to rules and regulations as set by the City Council of Union City, Tennessee.
- H. Temporary Announcements of Special Events - Light Emitting Diode (LED) signs may, at their discretion, temporarily advertise off-site special events to be held in the community by governmental, civic, religious, or similar organizations.
- I. Prohibited Temporary Signs - Temporary signs which emanate light either by means of exposed tubing or lamps on its surface or by means of illumination transmitted through the sign faces, and is designed so that it is capable of moving or being moved from one location to another and signed on a temporary basis.
- J. Off-street Parking Signs. Signs required for off-street parking, showing entrances and exists, or designating no parking or handicapped parking areas, are permitted, such signs to be no larger than four (4) square feet in area and one sign defining the conditions of use of such off-street parking is permitted, such sign to be no larger than twelve (12) square feet. All permitted off-street parking signs shall be no higher than six (6) feet in height and set back a minimum of ten feet, except that signs no higher than thirty (30) inches above pavement grade are permitted up to the right-of-way line.

DEFINITIONS

11-1342. Sign. Any device designed to inform, or attract the attention of persons not on the premises on which the sign is located, provided, however, that the following shall not be included in this definition for the purposes of application of the regulations herein.

- A. Signs not exceeding one square foot in area and bearing only property numbers, post box numbers, names of occupants of premises, or other identification of premises not having commercial connotations;
- B. Flags and insignias of any government except when displayed in connection with commercial promotion;
- C. Legal notices; identification, information, or directional signs erected or required by governmental bodies;
- D. Integral decorative or architectural features of buildings, except letters, trademarks, moving parts, and moving lights; and
- E. Signs directing and guiding traffic and parking on private property, but bearing no advertising matter, provided that applicable height, visibility, and setback requirements are met, except as required by Section 11-1405.

11-1343. Signs, Number and Surface Area and duration of. For the purpose of determining number of signs, a sign is a single display surface or a single display device containing elements organized, related and composed to form a unit. Where matter is displayed in a random manner without organized relationship of elements, each element is considered to be a sign.

The surface area of a sign includes the entire surface area within a regular geometric form or combinations of geometric forms comprising all of the display area of the sign, including all of the elements of the matter displayed. Only one side of a two sided sign having display areas back-to-back constitutes the surface area of a sign for the purpose of these regulations, with the larger of the surface areas of the two sides being considered for regulatory purposes of maximum area.

Temporary sign is any sign which is permitted to stand for less than one year or which is permitted to stand only for the duration of a specific event or activity.

11-1344. Sign, On-Site. A sign relating in its subject matter to the premises on which it is located, or to products, accommodations, services, or activities on the premises. The following are distinct types of on-site signs for regulatory purposes:

Free Standing Sign. A sign that is mounted on a free standing pole or other support so that the bottom edge of the sign face is six feet or more above grade.

Ground Sign. A sign that is permanently mounted or anchored to the ground and of a height no greater than six feet including any structural elements.

Wall or Facia Sign. A sign fastened to or painted on the wall of a principal building or structure in such a manner that the wall becomes the supporting structure for, or forms the background surface of the sign, and which does not project more than 12 inches from such building or structure. The total area of a wall or facia sign is defined by a boundary composed of the upper edge of the top line of any sign element, the bottom edge of the bottom line of any sign element, and the two outside edges of the side lines of any sign element, or the total perimeter formed by connecting the farthest projections of an irregular sign element. A sign element is either a sign border, a letter or letters, a word or words, a phrase, a sentence, or a figure. For defining area boundary, a sign border takes precedence over interior elements, a sentence takes precedence over individual word or phrase elements, a phrase takes precedence over word elements, and a word takes precedence over individual letter elements. If there are multiple areas that can reasonably be considered as separate, the sign area is the sum of separate areas computed individually.

Temporary Sign. A sign as defined under Section 11-1338.

11-1345. Sign, Off-Site. A sign that advertises goods, products, services or facilities or activities which are not located on the parcel containing the sign, or that directs persons to a location different from the parcel containing the sign. The following are distinct types of off-site signs for regulatory purposes:

identification and directory sign - an off-site sign which identifies generally an integrally planned industrial and/or business development area and contains a list or directory of names of industries and/or businesses which are located within the integrally planned development area.

billboard - an off-site sign which has a surface area greater than twenty-four (24) square feet but less than or equal to three hundred (300) square feet, excluding identification and directory signs as defined above;

bench sign - an off-site sign of no greater than twelve (12) square feet in area which is attached to a bench;

sign in public recreational areas - a temporary off-site sign of no greater than twenty-four (24) square feet which is attached to outfield fences of baseball or softball field in public recreational areas.