

The following information has been taken from the Charter & Code of the City of Rochester:

§ 39-311. Signs.

A. Definitions and general provisions. See Zoning Code, Chapter 120, for definitions and general provisions regarding signs. [Amended 11-19-2002 by Ord. No. 2002-354; 10-21-2003 by Ord. No. 2003-341]

B. Materials and construction. Signs not exceeding 12 square feet in area may be constructed of combustible materials. All other signs shall be constructed of incombustible materials, except that all cappings, decorations, letterings and moldings may be constructed of approved combustible materials and that wall signs not exceeding 40 square feet in area and installed on buildings three stories or less in height may be constructed of approved combustible materials. All signs shall be securely supported from the building construction and structurally safe. Structural supports shall be constructed of incombustible materials, unless the Commissioner approves otherwise.

C. Projection beyond the street line. Signs shall be constructed in accordance with Chapter 104 of the Municipal Code, Streets and Street Encroachments. [Amended 6-27-1985 by Ord. No. 85-263; 10-21-2003 by Ord. No. 2003-341]

D. Structural requirements. All signs meet the requirements of the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code. [Amended 6-27-1985 by Ord. No. 85-263]

E. Roof signs. All signs to be erected on the roofs of buildings or structures shall be designed by a registered architect or a professional engineer, licensed by the State of New York. All drawings, calculations and specifications submitted must bear the signature and seal of such architect or engineer.

3] Signs shall be horizontal or vertical and flush mounted or perpendicular to the building face. Perpendicular signs shall not project more than four feet from the face of a building and shall be located a minimum of eight feet from the ground.

[4] Signs shall not exceed 12 square feet.

[5] Sign luminaires shall conform to the facade lighting.

[6] Sign graphics shall include raised or recessed copy.

(b) Business signage.

[1] A maximum of one sign per ground floor commercial user shall be permitted and shall be located no higher than the top of the first floor.

[2] The total sign area of attached business signs shall be a maximum of 0.5 square foot for every foot of building frontage.

[3] Directory signage shall be allowed at each building entrance and shall be flush mounted and a maximum six square feet.

§ 120-177. Signs.

A. Purpose. The purpose of this section is to provide standards for the regulation of the height, size, location and appearance of signs to:

- (1) Protect and enhance property values and neighborhood character;
- (2) Protect public and private investment in buildings and open spaces;
- (3) Encourage sound signing practices to aid business and provide information to the public;
- (4) Prevent excessive and confusing sign displays;
- (5) Reduce hazards to motorists and pedestrians;
- (6) Protect the public health, safety and general welfare.

B. Allowed signs. The following are allowed in any district without a certificate of zoning compliance provided they fall within any given thresholds. If the thresholds are exceeded, a certificate of zoning compliance will be required. The signs in this section shall not be subject to the provisions of [§ 120-177D](#), Permitted permanent signs for nonresidential use.

- (1) Customary holiday decorations;
- (2) One prominently displayed building address sign that is pedestrian- and automobile-oriented according to the provisions of [Chapter 61](#);

- (3) Family name signs;
- (4) Decorative flags;
- (5) No trespassing and similar signs;
- (6) Traffic control signs;
- (8) Signs, flags or emblems erected and maintained pursuant to any government function;
- (9) Decorative or architectural features of a building, except letters or trademarks;
- (10) Memorial or historic plaques, markers, monuments or tablets;
- (11) Safety signs;
- (12) Gasoline price signs attached to a gasoline dispenser and not exceeding one square foot per face;
- (13) Permanent bulletin board event signs related to places of worship and public and semipublic uses not exceeding six square feet.

C. Limited signs. The following signs are limited to two per lot without a certificate of zoning compliance:

- (1) Political signs not exceeding six square feet per side; all election signs shall be removed within 14 calendar days following the election;
- (2) Real estate signs not exceeding six square feet per side;
- (3) Nonilluminated home occupation signs attached to the dwelling and less than one square foot in area unless otherwise restricted; and
- (4) One construction or renovation sign, six square feet in size or less, erected by a contractor, engineer, architect or similar professional or business and removed at the termination of the portion of the project activity.

D. Permitted permanent signs for nonresidential uses. The following signs are permitted subject to the requirements of this chapter: [Amended 7-27-2004 by Ord. No. 2004-240]

District Permitted Signs

R-1 and R-2 1 sign attached to a sign board, if applicable, not exceeding 15 square feet in area

R-3 ,C-1, C-2, A maximum of 50 square feet of signage per lot including:
H-V, PMV, and PD

Attached signs identifying uses or services on the premises that include 0.5 square foot in area for every foot of the building frontage; and/or

1 detached sign located in the front yard not exceeding 25 square feet in size per side of sign and posted no more than 4 feet in height from the finished grade of the lot

R-3, C-1, C-2, H-V and PMV

E. Sign location.

- (1) Upon relocation of a business or service for reasons of an unforeseen disaster (example: due to fire), an off-site sign shall be allowed for a period of six months;
- (2) No sign shall be at any location where it interferes with or obstructs the view or free passage of pedestrian or vehicular traffic;
- (3) No sign shall be painted, placed or constructed directly on or project from a roof;
- (4) No sign shall be attached to any tree, utility pole or street appurtenances as set forth in Chapter 35 or be painted upon or otherwise affixed to any rock, ledge or other natural feature;
- (5) No detached sign shall be closer than 10 feet to a residential lot line;
- (6) Signs parallel to and attached to a building shall not be set out more than 10 inches, except in cases where the sign contains electrical components, in which case the sign shall project more than 15 inches from the building;
- (7) Any sign that projects from a building over the public right-of-way shall be located at least nine feet above grade and shall be constructed and installed in accordance with [Chapter 104](#).

F. Design standards.

- (1) Signs and awnings shall:
 - (a) Relate through their design, size and height to pedestrians and conform to the surrounding character;
 - (b) Not materially obscure architectural features or details of buildings.
- (2) Signs shall be professionally manufactured.

- (3) No more than 50% of the sign face may be covered with text or graphics.
- (4) The area of signs composed of individual letters without a background shall include the area enclosed by a series of lines joined to form a perimeter bounding all parts of the display, including all lettering, logo, graphics and trademarks.
- (5) No pennants, ribbons, streamers, sheets, spinners or other moving devices shall be allowed in the City of Rochester.
- (6) No sign shall consist of strings of lights or contain blinking, flashing, intermittent, rotating, glaring, or moving lights or other attention-attracting devices.
- (7) Any illuminated sign shall employ only lights emitting a light of constant intensity.
- (8) Internally lit signs shall be prohibited in all residential, C-1, PMV and H-V Districts.
- (9) In the C-2, C-3 and M-1 Districts, internally lit signs shall be permitted on principal and minor arterials ([as defined in Appendix 2](#)) and shall be in the form of:
 - (a) Individually mounted and illuminated channel letters made of a durable material; or
 - (b) A panel box, made of a durable material, including:
 - [1] No more than three colors;
 - [2] Raised or recessed letters;
 - [3] Encasement in a frame;
 - [4] Internal illumination that does not project lighting onto adjacent properties or interfere with the public right-of-way.
- (10) Neon window signs may be permitted in cases where they are compatible with the building's use, historic and/or architectural character.
- (11) Window signs shall not exceed 25% of the window and shall be included in the calculation of the overall signage allowed for the use.
- (12) The area of an awning or canopy that includes lettering, logo, graphics and trademarks shall be included in calculations for allowed signage.

(13) If more than one tenant is located in a building, individual signs for each will be allowed to be attached to the building as long as the total signage square footage for the development does not exceed the maximum signage for the district.

(14) In commercial or industrial buildings or plazas with three or more occupants, a shared sign is required. Kiosk sign structures are encouraged to advertise for these multi-tenant buildings and plazas.

(15) No sign shall be movable or portable unless defined as a temporary sign.

G. Maintenance of signs.

(1) Every sign shall at all times be maintained in a safe and structurally sound condition. Signs that do not comply with adequate safety standards shall be removed at the property owner's expense.

(2) Signs must be regularly maintained, including the replacement of worn parts, painting and cleaning.

(3) The full number of illuminating elements of a sign shall be kept in working condition or immediately repaired or replaced.

J. Temporary signs.

(1) Temporary or portable signs shall be used for the following purposes only:

(a) New business enterprises;

(b) Celebration of the anniversary date of a new business enterprise;

(c) Business enterprises which have lost the use of an existing sign by reason of fire or other catastrophe; and

(d) Limited activities in connection with the principal use or activity on the premises.

(2) Temporary signs may not exceed 20 square feet in size; no more than one temporary sign shall be permitted per business.

(3) Temporary sign shall be removed within 90 days and will not be renewable for 90 days except three times per year, for no more than 72 hours per occasion.

(4) Temporary signs shall comply with the location and design standards contained in this chapter.

K. Alternative sign program.

In order to provide an imaginative, effective, visually compatible plan for all signs on a property, a property owner may submit a sign program containing provisions different from the requirements in Subsection D through F listed in this section. The intent of this provision is to allow for creative responses to site-specific conditions or uses. Each such alternative sign program shall be reviewed as a special permit, in accordance with the provisions of [§ 120-192](#), except that in the case of signs in preservation districts the Preservation Board shall be responsible for approval of an alternative sign program. The applicant shall submit graphic and written information indicating why the signage does not comply with existing sign regulations in using the [alternative sign](#) program. In no case shall the regulations of this chapter pertaining to advertising signs be altered or changed through the use of the alternative sign program. [Amended 6-17-2003 by Ord. No. 2003-183]

L. Allowed sign message. Any allowed or permitted permanent sign or advertising sign authorized in this chapter may contain a noncommercial message constituting a form of expression in lieu of other copy.