

Planning and Zoning Code- Section 48

*Online version is NOT official, it is only for use as a reference.
Official copies can be viewed or purchased at the
Department of Planning, Conservation, and Development.*

[Return to Zoning Code- Table of Contents](#)

SECTION 48 SIGNS

48.00 General Requirements: The following regulations and standards are established to assure compatibility of signs with surrounding land usage, to conserve property values in all zones, and to strengthen the economy of the City. All signs hereafter erected or maintained, except official traffic and street signs, shall conform to the provisions of this section.

The standards in this section are minimum requirements; significant consideration should be made to meet the design guidelines.

48.01 Design Guidelines:

In general signs should be constructed of high quality materials. Signs should be designed for a specific site in order to enhance the aesthetics of the business while improving the quality of its surroundings.

- a) Signs should be integrated into the design of the building.
- b) Placement of signs should consider all architectural features of the building façade as to improve the overall appearance of a building.
- c) Signs should be pedestrian oriented. Signs should be able to communicate its message in the simplest way possible. Pedestrians should be able to easily read a sign due to the choice of colors, fonts, textures and materials.
- d) Illumination should be as subtle as possible and used only when necessary for lettering and logos. There should be as little excess lighting as possible, background areas should be opaque.

48.02 General Regulations:

48.02.01 Review: All new signage shall be reviewed by the Design Review and Preservation Board to ensure conformance to the regulations set forth in Chapter 48 of the Zoning Code as amended, the Middletown Design Guidelines, as amended and the Middletown Signage Illumination Guidelines, as amended.

48.02.02 Maintenance: All signs and components thereof shall be kept in good repair and in a safe, neat, clean and attractive condition.

48.02.03 On-Site Advertising: All signs shall be related to business or organization located on the premises. The sign shall be located within the parcel's property lines.

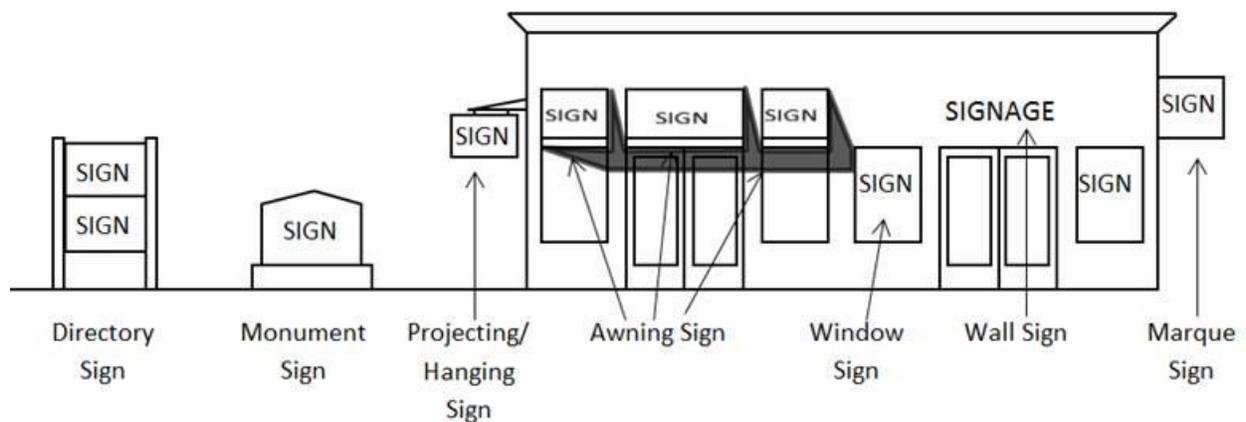
48.02.04 Non-Existing Businesses: Any sign which no longer advertises a bonafide business conducted, product sold or activity or campaign being conducted shall be taken down and removed by the owner, agent or person having the beneficial use of the building, structure or lot upon which such signs may be found within thirty (30) days of such cessation.

Upon failure to comply within the time specified, the Building Inspector is hereby authorized to order removal of such sign, within twenty one (21) days of a written notification, and expense incident thereto shall be paid by the owner of the building, structure or lot to which such sign is attached.

48.02.05 Visibility: The exposed back of every outdoor advertising sign shall be effectively shielded from view from a public street by: an adjacent building; other substantial facing on the same structure of comparable size; or by the painting of such exposed back by the sign owner in a neutral color. Unless topographically impractical, new or rebuilt outdoor advertising ground structures shall be of the cantilever type to lessen possibility of unsightly "A" frame construction.

48.02.06 Placement: No sign shall be located in such a manner as to obstruct the light and vision of a window, nor extend above the roof, parapet line of the building or above a marquee face to which the sign is attached.

48.03 Requirements of specific types of signs:



Regulations for number, height and area can be found in their respective tables at the end of this document.

48.03.01 Wall Signs: Wall Signs shall only promote the name and/or street number of the business on which it is located.

48.03.02 Projecting and Hanging Signs:

- a) Signs shall not project more than 48 inches from the façade of a building and may be no lower than 10 feet from the sidewalk or gradient
- b) Hanging signs must be securely fastened.

48.03.03 Ground/Free Standing Signs: Ground/Free Standing Signs shall only promote the name and/or street number of the business or businesses which are located on the property.

- 1) If a free standing sign is located on a parcel of which the primary building has multiple tenants the name of the building/plaza and street number shall be represented on the sign.
- 2) If the sign is located on a lot with a single building, the sign shall include the name of the business and street number.
 - a) Lighting: The lighting of a ground sign shall be concealed ground lighting as and shall be done so as to reduce any excess light and glare
 - b) Height: The maximum height of any ground or free standing sign shall be 10 feet from the sidewalk
 - c) Free Standing Sign Height Exception: A structure that is designed to resemble a tower, water tower, windmill, brick smoke stack, or other farm or industrial structure may be approved by the Design Review and Preservation Board, provided that the height of the entire structure is greater than 28 feet.
 - d) Free Standing signs shall not be permitted in the Central Business (B-1) zone

48.03.04 Directory Signs: The construction, placement and all other aesthetic aspects of directory signs shall meet all rules and regulations set forth in this document. Regulations can be found at the end of this document.

- a. Content:
 - 1) Directory Signs shall have the name of the plaza or shopping center of which it is located and/or the street number of which it is located
 - 2) There shall be a maximum of eight (8) individual tenants placed on the sign
 - 3) Individual tenant signs placed on the directory signs shall meet the guidelines set forth in Section
- b. Lighting: The lighting of a directory sign shall be done with concealed ground lighting as and shall be done so as to reduce any excess light and glare
- c. Placement: Directory signs located on the same side of the street shall be located a minimum of 150 feet apart.
- d. Height: The maximum height of any ground or free standing sign shall be 10 feet from the sidewalk

48.03.05 Gasoline Price Signs: Electronic or digital price signs are permitted, provided the area of this component is no greater than 35% of the freestanding sign area.

48.03.06 Commercial Zones

Zone	Number Permitted	Allowable Area	Illumination
B1	2 building signs	2 square feet per linear foot along storefront or maximum 150 square feet whichever is less.	Non- illuminated, External illumination, Internal Lettering and Logo illumination.
B2	2 building signs 1 freestanding sign per property	2 square feet per linear foot along storefront or maximum 150 square feet whichever is less. Freestanding sign shall not exceed 30% of allowed area.	Non- illuminated, External illumination, Internal Lettering and Logo illumination.
B3	2 freestanding or building signs 1 freestanding sign per property	1 square feet per linear foot along storefront or maximum 150 square feet whichever is less. Freestanding sign shall not exceed 30% of allowed area.	Non- illuminated, External illumination, Internal Lettering and Logo illumination.
NPC- Not listed on the historic inventory	2 freestanding or building signs 1 freestanding sign per property	2 square feet per linear foot along storefront or maximum 150 square feet whichever is less. Freestanding sign shall not exceed 30% of allowed area.	Non- illuminated, External illumination, Internal Lettering and Logo illumination.
NPC- Listed on the historic inventory	1 freestanding sign per property.	1 square foot per linear foot along storefront or maximum 75 square feet whichever is less.	Non- illuminated and External illumination.
MX- Not listed on the historic inventory	1 freestanding or building signs 1 freestanding sign per property	1 square foot per linear foot along storefront or maximum 150 square feet whichever is less. Freestanding sign shall not exceed 30% of allowed area.	Non- illuminated, External illumination, Internal Lettering and Logo illumination.
MX- Listed on the historic inventory	1 freestanding sign per property.	1 square foot per linear foot along storefront or maximum 75 square feet whichever is less.	Non- illuminated and External illumination.

TD- Not listed on the historic inventory	2 freestanding or building signs 1 freestanding sign per property	1 square foot per linear foot along storefront or maximum 150 square feet whichever is less. Freestanding sign shall not exceed 30% of allowed area.	Non- illuminated, External illumination, Internal Lettering and Logo illumination.
TD- Listed on the historic inventory	1 freestanding sign per property.	1 square foot per linear foot along storefront or maximum 75 square feet whichever is less.	Non- illuminated and External illumination.

48.03.07 Industrial Zones

Zone	Number Permitted	Allowable Area	Illumination
I1	1 freestanding or building signs 1 freestanding sign per property	1 square feet per linear foot along storefront or maximum 150 square feet whichever is less. Freestanding sign shall not exceed 30% of allowed area.	Non- illuminated and External illumination.
I2	2 freestanding or building signs 1 freestanding sign per property	1 square feet per linear foot along storefront or maximum 150 square feet whichever is less. Freestanding sign shall not exceed 30% of allowed area.	Non- illuminated and External illumination.
I3	1 freestanding or building signs 1 freestanding sign per property	2 square feet per linear foot along storefront or maximum 150 square feet whichever is less. Freestanding sign shall not exceed 30% of allowed area.	Non- illuminated, External illumination, Internal Lettering and Logo illumination.
I4	1 freestanding or building signs 1 freestanding sign per property	1 square feet per linear foot along storefront or maximum 150 square feet whichever is less. Freestanding sign shall not exceed 30% of allowed area.	Non- illuminated and External illumination.
IRA	1 freestanding or building signs 1 freestanding sign per property	2 square feet per linear foot along storefront or maximum 150 square feet whichever is less. Freestanding sign shall not exceed 30% of allowed area.	Non- illuminated, External illumination, Internal Lettering and Logo illumination.

IT	2 freestanding or building signs 1 freestanding sign per property	2 square feet per linear foot along storefront or maximum 200 square feet whichever is less. Freestanding sign shall not exceed 30% of allowed area.	Non- illuminated, External illumination, Internal Lettering and Logo illumination.
IOP	2 freestanding or building signs 1 freestanding sign per property	2 square feet per linear foot along storefront or maximum 150 square feet whichever is less. Freestanding sign shall not exceed 30% of allowed area.	Non- illuminated, External illumination, Internal Lettering and Logo illumination.
IM	2 freestanding or building signs 1 freestanding sign per property	2 square feet per linear foot along storefront or maximum 150 square feet whichever is less. Freestanding sign shall not exceed 30% of allowed area.	Non- illuminated and External illumination.

48.03.08 Residential Zones

Zone	Number Permitted	Allowable Area	Illumination
RPZ	1 building sign 1 freestanding sign per property	12 square feet	Non- illuminated or External illumination
R1	1 freestanding or building sign	12 square feet	Non- illuminated
R15	1 freestanding or building sign	12 square feet	Non- illuminated
R30	1 freestanding or building sign	12 square feet	Non- illuminated
R45	1 freestanding or building sign	12 square feet	Non- illuminated
R60	1 freestanding or building sign	12 square feet	Non- illuminated
DVD	1 freestanding or building sign	12 square feet	Non- illuminated

48.04 Calculations of Area and Height of Signs: The area and height shall be calculated using the following standards.

- a) For a free-standing sign or sign attached to a building, the area of the sign shall be considered to include all lettering, wording, and accompanying designs and symbols, together with the background, whether open or enclosed, on which they are displayed, but not including any supporting framework and bracing which are incidental to the display itself.
- b) For a sign painted upon or applied to a building, the area of the sign shall be considered to include all lettering, wording, and accompanying designs or symbols, together with any background of a color different from that of the building.
- c) For all signs, where a color or graphic pattern constitutes a Corporate or Brand Identification (by custom, contract or practice) as illustrated in advertising or in sign or building designs employed at multiple locations, the full extent of that background color or graphic pattern shall be calculated as part of the sign area when it is associated with any logo, lettering, or other graphic element constituting a sign.
- d) Where the sign consists of individual letters or symbols attached to or painted on a surface, wall or window, the area of the sign shall be considered to be that of the smallest rectangle or other geometric shape which encompasses all letters and symbols.
- e) Only one face of a two-sided sign shall be counted in computing the area of a sign, provided the sign faces are parallel and of equal size.
- f) The height of a sign shall be the vertical distance between the top of a sign and the mean grade of the ground adjoining that portion of the building to which the sign is attached; or that ground within ten feet of a free-standing sign.

48.05 Signage illumination: The types of signage illumination allowed for a particular sign shall be determined by the requirements set forth in sections 48.03.06, 48.03.07 and 48.03.08.

- a) The use of energy efficient lighting are recommended
- b) Signs and lighting fixtures shall be designed as to reduce glare and excess lighting

48.05.01 External Illumination requirements

- a) Light fixtures used to illuminate signs shall be placed directly above or below the sign.
- b) Lights shall be aimed directly at the signs and should employ screened, hoods or deflectors as to reduce any glare on to adjacent properties.
- c)

48.05.02 Internal Lettering and Logo Illumination requirements

- a) Signs which are internally illuminated shall only light the lettering and logos of the sign and nothing else.
- b) Backlit signs should be designed so that lettering and logos are lit against a dark opaque field

48.06 Prohibited Signs

48.06.01 Obstruction: No sign shall be attached to or obstruct any window, door, stairway or other opening intended for ingress or egress or for needed light and ventilation. Nor shall any sign be attached to any tree, fence or utility pole or be permitted to be painted directly upon the wall or roof of any building.

48.06.02 Flashing & Moving: No flashing lights, moving parts, or animated signs are permitted.

48.06.03 Changeable Copy Signs: No signs shall include digital or electronic message centers.

48.06.04 Roofs: No signs shall be attached to the roof, or painted on the roof, of any building.

48.06.05 Off-Site Advertising: All off-site advertising signs are prohibited.

48.06.06 Traffic Conflicting Signs: Signs which because of color, shape, wording, content, design, location or illumination conflict with public safety of traffic flow

48.06.07 Emission Signs: No signs shall emit a noise, smoke, or smell

48.07 Temporary Signs

The following signs shall be permitted anywhere within the City and shall not require a permit.

48.07.01 Construction Signs- Signs which identify the architects, engineers, contractors and other individuals, or firms involved with the construction, but not including any advertisement of any product, and signs announcing the character of the building enterprise for which the building is intended, during the construction period, to a maximum area of twelve (12) sq. ft. for each firm. The signs shall be removed within thirty (30) days of the beginning of the intended use of the project.

48.07.02 Real Estate Signs- Signs advertising the sale, rental or lease of the premises or part of the premises on which the signs are displayed, up to a total area of twelve (12) sq. ft. Such signs shall be removed within fourteen (14) days of the sale, rental or lease.

48.07.03 Street Banners- Temporary signs or street banners for a public event or a municipal, charitable or non-profit organization may be erected for a period not to exceed 45 days in any calendar year.

48.07.04 Temporary Wall and/or Window Signs- Signs temporarily attached or temporarily painted on a window or wall, announcing sales or special features are permitted provided they comply with the requirements set forth in 48.02, and 48.03, provided they do not exceed 33% of the window area. Temporary wall and/or window

signs shall be non-illuminated. Temporary wall and/or window signs shall be removed immediately after termination of such sale or special feature.

48.07.05 Public Hearing Notice- Notice of any public hearing for any reason authorized by this code shall be given as required by the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended. Additionally, the applicant shall cause to be posted a sign or signs and written notice to be given notifying the public of a public hearing related to an application for all such hearings. The signs and the written notice shall be the responsibility of the applicant and posted subject to the following conditions:

- a) The sign shall be posted seven (7) calendar days prior to the day of the public hearing, Eight (8) days if the seventh day is a holiday) and shall not be removed by the applicant until the hearing is closed;
- b) The sign shall be firmly secured to the ground or structure to prevent vandalism and shall be along the most visible portion of road frontage. The sign shall be erected in a manner so as to be visible to traffic moving in both directions and be perpendicular to the roadway, except in the case of signs at the end of cul-de-sacs. If there is more than one frontage of the parcel on an improved street or street, one sign for each frontage shall be posted; (Section amended effective 7/15/2001)
- c) The composition of the sign shall be of a durable material (wood or metal) forty (40) inches by forty (40) inches in size painted white with black lettering having a minimum height of four (4) inches with a letter stroke of one (1) inch;
- d) The signs shall state the following

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

FOR

(TYPE OF USE)

AT 7PM IN THE

(LOCATION)

ON (DATE OF HEARING)

FOR INFO: 860-638-4840

- e) The Zoning Enforcement Officer shall file a report with the Commission that the sign was observed in place in accordance with the above;

- f) An applicant who fails to display the sign shall be required to withdraw and file a new application and fee;
- g) The sign shall be taken down one (1) week after the public hearing is closed;
- h) Any sign not removed shall be ordered to be removed by the Zoning Enforcement Officer, who is authorized to rescind and revoke any approval for noncompliance;
- i) Applications shall include a list, prepared by the applicant, of the names and mailing addresses of the owners of all parcels of land included within the application and abutting the subject property as shown on the recent records on file in the City Tax Assessor's office (or the actual owners of record if otherwise known by the applicant). If a condominium project abuts such property, the applicant shall list the owners of such units which abut such property directly and the condominium association (all owners not required). The applicant shall mail notification of said pending application to at least one (1) owner of each property not more than fifteen (15) days or less than ten (10) days before the public hearing, by transmitting the text of the public hearing notice as provided by the Commission;
- j) Evidence of such mailing, in the form of United States Post Office Certificates of Mailing, shall be submitted to the Planning Office along with the above said list of property owners, not less than five (5) calendar days prior to the hearing date. Failure to comply with any of the procedures required herein, shall be deemed valid basis for denial of the subject request; and
- k) These requirements shall apply to any amendment proposed by the Commission unless the proposal would require the mailing of greater than fifty (50) certified letters or the posting of more than two (2) signs. (Section amended effective 10/1/96)

48.08 Exempt Signs

48.08.01 Public Signs- Signs of a non-commercial nature and in the public interest erected by, or on the order of, a public officer in the performance of his public duty, such as safety signs, danger signs, trespassing signs, traffic signs, memorial plaques, signs of historical interest and the like.

48.08.02 Institutional Signs- Signs setting forth the name or any simple announcement for any public charitable, educational or religious institution located entirely within the premises of that institution, up to an area of twenty-four (24) sq. ft. Such signs may be illuminated in accordance with the regulations contained hereinafter. If building mounted, these signs shall be flat wall signs and shall not project above the roof line. If ground mounted, the top shall be no more than six (6) feet above ground level.

48.08.03 Integral Signs- Names of buildings, dates of erection, monumental citations, commemorative tablets and the like when carved into stone, concrete or similar material

or made of bronze, aluminum, or other permanent type construction and made an integral part of the structure.

48.08.04 Private Traffic Direction Signs- Signs directing traffic movement onto a premise or within a premise, not exceeding three (3) sq. ft. in area for each sign. Illumination of these signs shall be permitted in accordance with the section 48.05. Horizontal directional signs on and flush with paved areas are exempt from these standards.

48.08.05 Small Signs- Signs not exceeding two (2) sq. ft. in area, attached flat against the building, stationary and not illuminated, announcing only the same name and occupation of building tenant.

48.08.06 Rental Signs- Signs on the premises announcing rooms for rent, table board, apartment or house for rent and not exceeding four (4) sq. ft. in area.

48.08.07 Vehicle Signs- Signs on vehicles of any kind, provided the sign is painted or attached directly to the body of the original vehicle and does not project or extend beyond the original manufactured body proper of the vehicle.

Section 48 Amended effective 2/17/15