



# Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

P.O. BOX 495

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Planning and Land Use Department

## Procedures & Guidelines for Commercial Signs

The purpose of the sign regulations is to control the height, location and size of signs in the community in order to ensure public safety and neighborhood compatibility, protect property values, encourage economic development and to further the general purpose of the Zoning Regulations.

This procedures and guidelines sheet is intended to give a quick overview of the sign application and approval process. For complete requirements applicants are encouraged to refer to the Simsbury Guidelines for Community Design, Section C. Signage, for general guidance. Signage proposed in Simsbury Town Center is governed by Town Center Code, Chapter 6, Section 6.4. Signage in the rest of Simsbury is governed by Simsbury Zoning Regulations, Article Ten, Section C.

A 4 step Sign Application Guideline is included with this material. However, prior to planning specific signage, you should also discuss your individual application with a member of the planning staff.

### Contacts:

Planning Department: (860) 658-3245  
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Lynn Charest, CZEO, (860) 658-3252  
Carrie Vibert, Administrative Secretary, (860) 658-3292  
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Colleen Fenn, Administrative Secretary, (860) 658-3223  
Henry Miga, Building Official, (860) 658-3235

**NOTE: It is important to know that signage permitted under the Town Center Code for properties in the Town Center area is governed by the Town Center Code, Chapter 6, Section 6.4.**

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How Do I Measure a Sign?**

The area of a sign is the smallest rectangle which includes all lettering, wording, design, or symbols together with any background which is designed as part of and obviously related to the sign.

### **Can My Sign Be Illuminated?**

Yes, if the illumination is external, and directed at the surface of the sign. Halo lit (backlit) lighting is also permitted. Please note: Internally lit and neon signs are not permitted.

### **The Existing Sign on My Property is Larger Than Currently Allowed. May I Use It?**

Yes. Any sign legally erected, as determined by the ZEO, which does not conform with current requirements can be maintained and refaced, provided the time, place and manner including height, size and location are not altered.

### **May I Advertise on Another Property?**

No. You may only advertise on the property where the business is located. Off premise signs are not permitted.

### **May I Place Signs Inside My Business Window?**

Yes. However, regulations state that window signs may not exceed 25% of the window space of the allowable square footage of tenant space. Internally lit, neon and flashing signs are not permitted.

### **Are Temporary signs Permitted?**

Yes. In much of the Town an A-frame, or "tent" signs are permitted 4 times a year for two week periods with a permit. These times periods are shorter for Town Center. NOTE: None of these signs may not be placed in the street right-of-way. Contact the Planning Department for more details and permitting procedures.

### **What kind of Sign May I Have?**

There are several types of-signs permitted In Simsbury including:

- Wall Signs - attached to the building, Projecting signs (Blade signs), Awning signs.
- Freestanding Signs - located elsewhere on the site. 1 per parcel in the Town Center Area.

All permanent signs require approval from the Simsbury Zoning Commission

### **How Much Signage Can I Have?**

For Town Center Properties, see Town Center Code, Chapter 6, Section 6.4.

For Non-Town Center Properties: Each business is permitted one (1) square foot of signage per one (1) linear foot of building frontage. (If front = 30', then 30 sq. ft. signage is allowed)

Building Frontage is considered the length of the wall of the tenant space of the building facing the street.

### **I Want To Re-Face An Existing Sign. What Do I Need To Do?**

Contact a member of the Planning Staff to determine if the existing sign has received prior approval. If It has, you may replace it in-kind, i.e. you may not change the height, size or location. Then refer to step one in the following section.

### **How Do I Apply For A New Sign?**

Approval for a new sign is a five step process as outlined below.

## SIGN APPLICATION GUIDELINES

### **Step One: Meet with Planning Staff member.**

### **Step Two: Submit Application.**

A sign plan application must be submitted. This should include the following:

- a) a fee of \$2/per square foot of signage, unless revised by new fee schedule. Note: \$180 fee for sign application.
- b) a map of the property, or at least enough of the property to clearly indicate where the sign(s) will be installed.
- c) a scaled drawing of the proposed sign(s), including proposed dimensions, colors, construction materials, lighting and landscaping.

### **Step Three: Present to Design Review Board (DRB).**

When you or your agent makes a presentation to the DRB, the presenter should begin with a brief overview. The DRB requests sufficient presentation material to be able to fully understand the design intent.

Upon submission of a complete application, you will automatically be signed up to appear before the Design Review Board (DRB). This advisory board will provide guidance on sign design and make recommendations to the Zoning Commission.

For informal reviews materials should include but not be limited to:

- A sketch of the sign drawn to scale and location on the site.
- Samples of all proposed materials, colors, etc.
- Literature about, or pictures of , the proposed lighting fixtures and support.

You should be prepared to discuss the sign design and location, The DRB will review the sign and work with you to try to minimize any negative visual impacts and work towards enhancing the sign design and location to fit into the local environment.

For Formal presentations, the presenter should bring all the above and other materials including:

- A site plan showing the sign(s) location.
- A sign elevation drawing done to scale.
- Proposed sign content drawn to scale and using the intended lettering style.

Once this process is completed, the DRB will write a memo to the Zoning Commission with their recommendations and design comments.

### **Step Four:**

The review process by the Zoning Commission is quite similar to the DRB process. The Zoning Commission will review the sign as to compliance with the zoning regulations, and give consideration to the recommendations and design comments provided by the DRB.

### **Step Five:**

Once you have received approval from either the Planning Staff or Zoning Commission, you must apply for a building permit for the sign.

## **Fees**

Building permits are required for any new sign, and some replacement signs. Building Permit fees are \$12.26 per \$1,000.00 of estimated cost as may be amended. A Zoning Fee of \$2.00 per square foot of sign is also required as stated above. Note: Sign application fee of \$180.

The Building Department has 30 days to issue a permit. However, if your application is complete, a permit can usually be issued within 1 week. You should contact the Building Department Staff for complete requirements.

## **Freestanding Signs – Non-Town Center signs.**

One freestanding sign is permitted per parcel or property. The area for this sign must be allocated from the total allotted square footage for the business. No freestanding sign may exceed 32 sq. ft., 10 feet in height, and must have landscaping around the base. Internally lit signs are not permitted.

Additional freestanding signs may be permitted, provided adequate sq. ft. for signage remains. Such signs may require a special exception. This public hearing process reviews the true need for additional signage in order to limit sign clutter. A member of the planning staff can assist you with this process.

## **Town Center Properties – as required per Town Center Code**

Sign size, location, type and attachment as required in Town Center Code, Chapter 6, Section 6.4.

## **Unified Sign Plan**

Sites with more than one business must present a Unified Sign Plan to the Zoning Commission. New business coming onto a site with a Unified Sign Plan must conform to that plan unless the plan is officially revised by the Zoning Commission. You should confer with the Planning staff to see if a new permit is required, or if you can comply with an existing plan.

**Town of Simsbury**

**TEMPORARY BUSINESS SIGN PERMIT APPLICATION**

TEMPORARY SIGN IN LIEU OF PERMANENT SIGN \_\_\_\_\_ NO FEE

(Temporary banner to advertise business)

- + must be attached to wall of building
- + may not exceed 32 sq. ft. in area
- + may be installed for up to 90 days
- + attach a diagram of the sign, showing height, size and location

NEW BUSINESS GRAND OPENING; NEW OWNERSHIP \_\_\_\_\_ NO FEE

(Temporary freestanding or Simsbury Chamber of Commerce sign)

- + may not exceed 32 sq. ft. in area
- + may not exceed 4 feet in height
- + may be installed for up to 90 days (up to 60 days for Simsbury Chamber sign) **No sign may be placed in a Town or State right-of-way**
- + sign must not block traffic visibility, or be located within 150 feet of another similar sign
- + attach a diagram of the sign, showing height, size and location

SPECIAL SALE: BUSINESS PROMOTION, SPECIAL EVENT \_\_\_\_\_ NO FEE

(Temporary freestanding sign placed in front of business)

- + may not exceed 12 sq. ft. in area
- + may not exceed 4 feet in height
- + permitted 4 times / calendar year, in 14 day time allotments **for non-town center**; Town Center area A frame allowed for 7 days/calendar year. Special Events allowed for 30 days.
- + **may not be located in any street or road right-of-way**
- + may not be closer than 150 feet from any similar sign

PURPOSE OF SIGN/BANNER: \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

BUSINESS LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGN POSTING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ SIGN REMOVAL DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT NAME: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE/CELL: \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY PHONE (Required): \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY OWNER SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED          DENIED: Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

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APPROVAL SIGNATURE (ZONING COMPLIANCE OFFICER)      DATE

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