

**SECTION 19**  
**SIGNS**

19.1 General. All Signs in all Districts in the Town of Old Lyme shall conform to the following standards and, except as may be otherwise provided for in this Section 19, no sign shall be established, constructed, reconstructed, Enlarged, Extended, moved or Altered unless and until an application for a Zoning Permit has been approved by the Zoning Enforcement Officer. The following Signs and no others shall be permitted and all permitted Signs shall conform to the provisions hereinafter specified. These provisions are deemed to be minimum requirements, and subject to any additional conditions or limitations that may be imposed by the Zoning Commission in connection with the approval of a Site Development Plan or a Special Permit. [From former Section 42.1, amended effective 7-3-95 and effective 3-7-08.]

19.2 Purpose. It is the purpose of this Section 19:

19.2.1 To insure against the placement of Signs which are of such size, height or character, are so located or illuminated, or are so numerous as to be inconsistent with the public health, general welfare or safety of the community; and

19.2.2 To prevent the placement of Signs for commercial purposes which are detrimental to property values and the orderly development of land in the Town; and

19.2.3 To protect, preserve, and enhance the historic character of the Town of Old Lyme as a traditional New England community.

[From former Section 42.2, amended effective 7-3-95 and effective 3-7-08.]

19.3 Definitions. See the definition of terms in Section 3, Definitions, of these Regulations. [From former Section 42.3, amended effective 7-3-95 and effective 3-7-08.]

19.4 Standards – All Zoning Districts. The following standards apply to Signs in all zoning Districts:

19.4.1 Signs on Buildings or Lots. Any Identification Sign affixed to a Building, including Wall Signs or Overhanging Signs, shall only identify the enterprise located on the interior side of the wall upon which the Identification Sign is located. Free-Standing Signs shall only identify the enterprise(s) located on the Lot on which such Sign is located. [From former Section 42.4.1 and 42.4.2, amended effective 7-3-95 and effective 3-7-08.]

19.4.2 Location of Signs. The following rules govern the placement of Signs:

- a. Roof Signs are prohibited, and no Sign shall be located on the slope of a mansard facade nor extend above the top of the wall of a Building or the top of the face of any overhang or marquee to which it is affixed.

- b. All Wall Signs shall be affixed to and be mounted parallel with either a wall of the Building or the face of an overhang or marquee projecting from the Building and shall not project more than twenty-four (24) inches from the wall of the building. Wall Signs may project into the area required for Yards, however, no part of the Sign or any of its supporting structure shall be closer than five (5) feet from any Street or Property Line except for temporary signs permitted under Paragraph 19.4.8.
- c. All Overhanging Signs shall hang at a ninety (90) or forty-five (45) degree angle from the front or side of the Building.
- d. No Sign shall project over or hang over any sidewalk, driveway, walkway, roadway, parking area, or access way, except that Overhanging Signs may project not more than twenty-four (24) inches into such sidewalk, driveway, walkway, roadway, parking area, or access way, provided that such projection does not occur within eight (8) feet vertical clearance of the ground.
- f. No Free-Standing Sign shall be located within or hang over the right-of-way of any Street.

[Preceding from former Section 42.4.2, amended effective 7-3-95 and 3-7-08.]

19.4.3 Height of Free-Standing Signs. Neither the top of any Free-Standing Sign nor the top of any structure supporting such a Sign shall be higher than 10 feet above the Grade measured vertically. Grade shall be measured from the existing natural Grade prior to site grading. [From former Section 42.4.2, amended effective 7-3-95]

19.4.4 Measurement of Sign Area. Any Sign may be double-faced and, when a double-faced Sign is a Free-Standing Sign, only one (1) Sign Face shall be counted in determining conformity to Sign Area. [From former Section 42.4.2, amended effective 7-3-95 and 3-7-08]

19.4.5 Motion and Illumination. The following rules govern motion and illumination of Signs:

- a. Illuminated Signs shall be limited to:
  - i. Indirectly Illuminated Signs; and
  - ii. Directly Illuminated Signs shall be limited to (1) illuminated letters against an opaque background; or “channel letters” in which the light source is concealed within the rear of an opaque letter, which letter is illuminated it by silhouette against a non-illuminating background surface. Exposed lamp signs, luminous tube signs,

and plastic or glass covered internally illuminated signs and letters are prohibited.

- b. Light emanating from or used for illumination shall not be intense or glaring.
- d. The light source for Indirectly Illuminated Signs shall be shielded or directed so as not to be visible to persons traveling on nearby Streets and so as to minimize sky glow and avoid trespass lighting on adjacent properties.
- e. Colored lights shall not be used for Indirectly Illuminated Signs.
- f. Illuminated Signs used in connection with a business establishment shall not be lit during the hours between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. unless the establishment is legally open for business.
- g. Flashing Signs, strobe lights, Moving Signs (including, but not limited to, banners, posters, pennants, ribbons, streamers, spinners, strings of lights and similar devices), Roof Signs, and Sky Signs, are prohibited except to the extent expressly permitted by this Section.
- h. Continuous strip lighting of Buildings and other Structures Lots is prohibited, except as seasonal decoration in November and December.

[Preceding from former Section 42.4.5, amended effective 7-3-95 and 3-7-08.]

19.4.6 Obstructions. No Sign shall be located or maintained so as to be a hazard to traffic or pedestrians, to obstruct any door, window, ventilation system or fire escape or exit, or to cause any other hazard to the public health and safety. [From former Section 42.4.6, amended effective 7-3-95.]

19.4.7 Portable Signs. Portable Signs shall be prohibited in all Districts except as specifically permitted by this Section 19 in Commercial Districts.

- a. Said Sign shall not exceed 3 feet in width and 5 feet in height. The Sign Area of said Sign shall not exceed 12 square feet. Said Sign may be double-faced and, for the purpose of area computation, only one Sign Face shall be counted in determining conformity with the area requirements of this paragraph.
- b. Only one Portable Sign shall be allowed per Lot, except that if the Lot has more than 400 feet of Street frontage in the District, then one additional Portable Sign shall be permitted.

- c. Said Sign shall describe or display only current factual information concerning present activities (including retail sales or services) on the subject Lot.
- d. Said Sign shall not be attached to the ground and shall not extend into the Street Line or sidewalk on said Lot. It also shall not impede sight lines or ingress and egress to said Lot.

[Preceding from former Section 42.4.7, amended effective 7-3-95 and 3-7-08.]

19.4.8 Temporary Signs. Temporary Signs shall be permitted in the zoning Districts specified below subject to the requirements and restrictions on Signs set forth in this Section 19.4.8:

- a. No zoning permit shall be required for the following Signs:
  - i. In Commercial, Industrial and Business Districts only, Temporary Signs may be attached to the inside of a window or placed so as to be seen primarily through a window subject to the restriction that the combined area of such Signs shall not exceed 40% of the area of the window to which they are attached or through which they may be seen; provided, however, that in determining the permissible size of such Signs there shall not be taken into account any signs determined to be exempt under this Section 19. Such Signs shall not remain in place for more than 30 days without being changed.
  - ii. In all zoning Districts, there may be posted on premises which are for sale or rent, one (1) Temporary Sign so stating which is not illuminated and does not exceed six (6) square feet in area.
  - iii. In all zoning Districts, there may be posted on property that is undergoing land development one (1) Temporary Sign so indicating which is not illuminated and does not exceed 12 square feet in area.
  - iv. In all zoning Districts, there may be posted on property where construction, repair or remodeling is in progress one (1) Temporary Sign which is not illuminated and does not exceed 12 square feet in area identifying any one or more of the architects, designers, engineers, construction managers, building contractors or major subcontractors engaged in the project.
  - v. In all zoning Districts, banners, pennants and flags giving notice of events sponsored by governmental units, schools or non-profit organizations may be displayed on the property where the event is

to take place during a period beginning 30 days before the start of such an event and ending 72 hours after the close of the event.

- vi. In all zoning Districts, no more than eight (8) directional signs, each no larger than six (6) square feet, announcing and/or directing the public to events sponsored by governmental units, schools, or non-profit organizations may be posted on or off the property where the event takes place. Such signs shall not be erected more than 10 days before such an event begins and shall be removed within 48 hours after the end of the event.
- vii. In all zoning Districts, no more than four (4) real estate open-house signs, each no larger than six (6) square feet, may be posted on or off the property on which the open house is held no earlier than the day of the open house. Such signs must be removed within four (4) hours after the close of the open house.

b. The following signs shall require permits:

- i. In all zoning Districts, there may be posted on property that is undergoing land development one (1) temporary sign so indicating which is not illuminated and which does not exceed 32 square feet in area.
- ii. In all zoning districts, there may be placed on property where construction, repair or remodeling is in progress one (1) temporary sign which is not illuminated and which does not exceed 32 square feet in area identifying any one or more of the architects, designers, engineers, construction managers, building contractors or major subcontractors engaged in the project.
- iii. Notwithstanding the provisions of this Section, and upon written application to the Zoning Enforcement Officer, authorization for the establishment of temporary signs for periods not exceeding ten (10) consecutive days, and totaling not more than thirty (30) days in any calendar year, for the purpose of announcing special events not sponsored by governmental units, schools, or non-profit organizations may be given where: (1) the sign face does not exceed 12 square feet in area; (2) No more than one (1) such sign shall be allowed; (3) the sign shall not be illuminated or move; (4) the sign shall be no more than eight (8') feet in height; and (5) the sign shall not obstruct any driveway or street sight line(s) . Any temporary signs exceeding these limits shall require the approval of the Zoning Commission. In a Residential District, any such sign shall pertain only to a use permitted in such District. Approval of signs for special events by the Zoning Enforcement Officer does

not absolve the applicant from obtaining other permits as may be required by State and Local agencies.

- c. Unless otherwise specified in Section 19.4.8, all Temporary signs shall be erected no earlier than 30 days prior to the event to which the sign relates and must be removed no later than 72 hours after the completion of the event to which the sign relates.

[Preceding from former Section 42.4.8, amended effective 7-3-95 and 3-7-08.]

19.4.9 Exempt Signs. The following types of signs shall be exempt from regulation under this Section 19:

- a. Any sign required or authorized under State or Federal law or by the Town of Old Lyme including, but not limited to, traffic and directional signs.
- b. Any flag, pennant or insignia which is the symbol of any governmental unit or non-profit organization or which is displayed for a strictly non-commercial purpose.
- c. Posters or announcements of a governmental unit, school or non-profit organization displayed as a community service.
- d. House numbers and mailbox identifications.
- e. Bulletin boards.
- f. On any premises, one historical plaque not exceeding two (2) square feet in area.
- g. On any premises, one or more of the following, provided each such notice shall not exceed one (1) square foot in area:
  - i. a single notice announcing business hours;
  - ii. a single notice indicating acceptable credit cards;
  - iii. a single notice describing security protection;
  - iv. a single notice respecting membership in trade associations.

[Preceding from former Section 42.4.9, amended effective 7-3-95; and renumbered only effective 3-7-08.]

19.4.10 Miscellaneous. The following miscellaneous provisions shall apply.

- a. Awning Signs: Notwithstanding any other provision of this Regulation, awning signs shall be permitted in Commercial and Business Districts provided, however, that the area of said sign shall be computed as part of the total sign area for the subject building and lot.
- b. Time and temperature signs (without advertising) and with or without illumination shall be permitted in all Commercial Districts, provided that the size (sign face, height, and location) shall conform to all other applicable provisions of these Regulations and provided, however, that the area of said sign shall be computed as part of the total sign area for the subject building and lot.
- c. There shall be allowed one sign near each exit ramp of expressways and each major highway at Town Lines serving as a common directory for non-profit organizations located in Old Lyme. Sign area permitted shall not exceed 6 square feet per organization nor shall it exceed 40 square feet total area.

[Preceding from former Section 42.4.10, amended effective 7-3-95 and 3-7-08.]

19.4.11 Prohibited Signs. The following types of signs are prohibited in all zoning districts:

- a. Any sign so designed and so oriented as to be primarily visible from Interstate No. 95.
- b. Any sign attached to any tree, fence or utility pole and any sign painted directly upon the roof of any building.
- c. Any vehicle or trailer exhibiting any sign and parked in such a location and manner as to indicate that such vehicle is being used for the basic purpose of advertising products sold or directing people to a business or activity located on or near the place where such vehicle is parked.
- d. Any sign painted on the roof of a building.
- e. Portable Signs, such as “A-frame” signs and “Sandwich” signs, except as may be specifically permitted by this Section 19 as “temporary signs” in Section 19.4.8.
- f. Advertising Signs, also known as “Billboards.” See Section 6.1.27 of these Regulations.
- g. Flashing Signs.

- h. Moving Signs.
- i. Roof Signs.
- j. Sky Signs.

[Preceding from former Section 42.4.11 and Section 10.1, amended effective 7-3-95 and 3-7-08.]

19.4.12 Removal of Signs. Any sign advertising, identifying or calling attention to the use of property shall be removed therefrom within 30 days after the discontinuance of such use unless such discontinuance is temporary, in which case such use shall either be resumed no later than six (6) months after such discontinuance or such sign shall be removed within such six (6) month period.

[From former Section 42.4.12, amended effective 7-3-95; and renumbered only effective 3-7-08.]

19.5 Standards – Residence or Rural Districts. In addition to the sign prohibitions and restrictions set forth in the preceding paragraphs, the following standards shall apply to signs in Residence and Rural Districts.

19.5.1 Permitted Signs and Their Sizes. Signs in Residence and Rural Districts are limited to the signs listed below in this Section 19.5.1. A sign of a type listed in items a. through b. below may be installed without a sign permit.

- a. On each premises, one (1) sign, not exceeding two (2) square feet in area, identifying the occupant of the premises including any professional or business office or customary home occupation conducted in a dwelling unit.
- b. On private premises, signs intended primarily as warning or traffic signs with no advertising thereon and not exceeding two (2) square feet in area.
- c. At each entrance to a residential development containing one or more multiple dwellings, a planned residential cluster of dwelling units, or a residential subdivision, one (1) sign, not exceeding 12 square feet in area, giving the name of the development.
- d. On property containing one or more multiple dwellings or a farm, church, school or other non-residential facility or use permitted in the zoning district, one (1) sign, not exceeding 12 square feet in area, identifying the facility or use.

- e. Temporary signs to the extent permitted under Paragraph 19.4.8. of this Section 19.

[From former Section 42.5, Renumbered only Effective 3-7-08]

19.5.2 Signs in the Sound View Village District. Recognizing that the Sound View Village District consists of a mix of residential and commercial uses, the following shall apply: Any Use other than a Single Family Dwelling shall be governed by the Sign requirements of Section 19.6.2 below; and Single Family Dwellings shall be governed by the Sign requirements of Section 19.5.1 above; provided however, that the size, number, height and other requirements of Section 19.5.1 shall be deemed to be maximums, and all signs shall be subject to the design requirements of Section 5.13 of these Regulations.

[Preceding Section added effective 4-1-09.]

19.6 Standards – Commercial, Industrial Business and Sound View Village Districts. In addition to the preceding paragraphs of this Section, the following additional standards shall apply to signs in Commercial, Industrial and Business Districts:

19.6.1 Permitted Signs and Their Sizes:

- a. Wall Signs attached to one (1) wall of a building, excluding Overhanging Signs, may have a total area up to, but not exceeding, twenty percent (20%) of the surface area of such wall or 60 square feet, whichever is smaller. Signs attached to any second wall of any such building shall not exceed five percent (5%) of the area of such second wall or 15 square feet, whichever is smaller. No portion of a wall affected by this Section in excess of twelve (12) feet in height above ground level shall be included in the computation of the maximum sign area for such wall. On lots which have road frontage on more than one (1) street, and where a building on said lot has exterior walls facing more than one (1) street, the five percent (5%) area requirement recited above may be increased to not more than ten percent (10%), or 60 square feet, whichever is smaller, for the side of the building facing such additional street.
- b. The total area of Overhanging Signs shall not exceed 10% of the area of the wall upon which they are mounted, or 60 square feet, whichever is the smaller area. No single Overhanging sign shall exceed 10 square feet in area.
- c. On any lot there may be only one (1) Free-Standing sign; provided, however, that for lots having multiple occupancies one (1) additional Free-Standing Directory Sign may be maintained at a

principal access way to such lot identifying the occupants with lettering of uniform size. On a single lot, duplicate directory signs may be maintained at other access points only if such access point is at least 300 feet distance from the nearest other access point having a Directory Sign.

- d. No free-standing Sign, including a Directory Sign, shall have an area greater than 32 square feet, nor a height greater than 10 feet.
- e. Any insignia, logo, icon, trademark, or picture shall be included within the calculation of Sign Area.

[Preceding from former Section 42.6, amended effective 7-3-95, 8-1-97, and 3-7-08.]

19.7 Applications for Sign Permits. In accordance with Section 13A and 13B of these Regulations, any application for Site Development Plan or Special Permit shall include all information concerning Signs. Any amendment to the Signs approved by the Zoning Commission (or, under prior Regulations, the Planning Commission) in connection with the Site Development Plan or Special Permit shall require an application for an amendment to such approval to the Zoning Commission. Such amendments to a Special Permit shall require a public hearing in accordance with Section 13B of these Regulations. Only for sites that have not been approved by the Zoning Commission (or the Planning Commission under prior Regulations) as a Site Development Plan or Special Permit, applications for sign permits shall be made to the Zoning Enforcement Officer on forms provided by or acceptable to the Zoning Commission and shall contain or be accompanied by the following information and drawings:

- 19.7.1 Name and address of the owner of the property or premises where the Sign is to be installed and of the applicant if someone else.
- 19.7.2 Drawing to scale of the proposed Sign showing its Sign Area, height, details of construction and location on the lot or building where it is to be placed.
- 19.7.3 Drawing showing the location and size of existing Signs presently on the same Lot or Premises.
- 19.7.4 Details concerning the method of illumination of the Sign, if any; designation of any moving parts, flashing lights, changeable text, or physical features; such other information as the Zoning Enforcement Officer may require in order to determine compliance with these Regulations.

[Preceding from former Section 42.7, amended effective 7-3-95 and 3-7-08.]

19.8 Applications for Temporary Sign Permits. Applications for Temporary Sign permits, in addition to providing the information and drawings required by the immediately preceding paragraph 19.7, shall include the following data:

19.8.1. The dates of the start and end of the period during which the Sign or Signs are to be displayed.

19.8.2. The name and address of the person responsible for posting and removing the Sign or Signs.

[Preceding from former Section 42.8, amended effective 7-3-95 and renumbered only effective 3-7-08.]

19.9 Signs Within the Historic District. Signs located within the Old Lyme Historic District No. 1, in addition to being subject to these Zoning Regulations, are, as respects their style, material, number, size and location, under the control of the Old Lyme Historical District Commission as provided for in Section 7-47d. of the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut. All such signs must comply with the Commission's policy respecting Signs and are subject to its criteria for the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness with respect thereto. [From former Section 42.9, amended effective 7-3-95 and renumbered only effective 3-7-08.]

19.10 Special Permits and Site Development Plans. Provisions respecting signs which may be imposed in connection with a Special Permit or approval of a Site Development Plan are in addition to the provisions of this Section 13. [From former Section 42.9, amended effective 7-3-95 and renumbered only effective 3-7-08.]

[Preceding from former Section 42 , revised effective 7-3-95, 8-1-97, and 3-7-08, except as otherwise noted.]

Rev. February 20, 2008 to measure sign height from existing grade.