

Winston-Salem Sign Ordinance

Amortization and Electronic Message Provisions

Courtesy Letters

Dear Property/Business Owner:

In 2007, the Winston-Salem City Council adopted revisions to the on-premise sign regulations that apply within the city limits. These regulations are found in Chapter B, Section 3-2.1 (A) through (I) of the *Unified Development Ordinances*, found online at www.inspectnet.org. The changes from 2007 most significantly affect what are called “ground signs” (signs on a pole or base typically placed near the front of the property identifying the establishment). The regulations for these signs specify the maximum height and size of the signs, and these maximums vary depending on the zoning district, the use, and the number of signs.

For most of the commercial zoning districts along major streets in Winston-Salem, the regulation changes enacted in 2007 call for ground signs that are shorter and smaller than the previous maximum height or size. These changes became applicable on July 1, 2007 for all newly permitted on-premise signs. Since that date, 975 new or replacement signs complying with these new requirements have been permitted and installed, and even more signs installed before 2007 already conform with these new requirements. For signs erected prior to July 1, 2007 which are larger or taller than the new requirements, the City Council incorporated a 15 year grace period for sign owners to get more useful life from these signs before they have to come into conformance. **This means that by June 30, 2022, existing on-premise signs that do not conform to the regulations adopted in 2007 must be brought into compliance.**

Our staff has done a preliminary survey of these signs across the City, and we want to give advance notice several years ahead of time to those property or business owners with signs that appear to need changes, so they can plan ahead. **Your sign appears to be one of those that would need changes by June 30, 2022 in order to conform with the applicable standards for height and/or size and/or number.** We encourage you to look at the ordinance online, check the enclosed general guide, and/or call our office at 336-747-7456 for more specific assistance to your situation to determine what would need to change in regard to your sign(s). Our local sign companies have also been aware of the ordinance requirements and can help. As we get closer to the deadline, we will update our information and follow up with those who have not yet made changes to their nonconforming signs.

Thank you for what you do to contribute to our economy and our community. Please let us know if we can assist you in understanding the signage changes that will be needed.

Background concerning changes to the sign ordinance

Amortization date/deadline

Next steps/contact information

Noncompliant Signs

- ▶ 733 signs deemed noncompliant after 2017 inventory*
 - ▶ 36 permits issued to date
 - ▶ 16 inspected and approved

* Does not include signs brought into compliance prior to 2017

WARD	COMPLIANT	NONCOMPLIANT	TOTAL
East	208	48 (19%)	256
Northeast	309	100 (24%)	409
North	272	58 (18%)	330
Northwest	268	93 (26%)	361
West	128	35 (21%)	163
Southwest	447	218 (33%)	665
South	241	108 (31%)	349
Southeast	236	73 (24%)	309
TOTAL	2,109	733 (26%)	2,842

	Electronic Messages Allowed?	Changes	Brightness	Other provisions
Asheville	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once every 4 hours (outside Central Business District) Once every 6 seconds (inside Central Business District) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5,000 nits (day) 500 nits (night) Must be installed with dimmer control responsive to ambient light conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No more than 50 percent of a sign face can contain an electronic message No electronic messages within 100 feet of a residential zoning district Only static messages allowed (no flashing, scrolling, animation, etc.)
Charlotte	Yes	Once every 8 seconds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5,000 nits (day) 500 nits (night) Must be installed with ambient light meter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No more than 50 percent of a sign face can contain an electronic message Only static messages allowed (no flashing, scrolling, animation, etc.)
Durham	Yes	No more than 8 changes per day	No interference with traffic safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed only in nonresidential districts and for houses of worship No more than 50 percent of a sign face can contain an electronic message Only static messages allowed (no flashing, scrolling, animation, etc.)
Greensboro	Yes	Varies by district/use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 seconds (central business, industrial, Airport Overlay) 1 minute (mixed-use, religious assembly) 6 hours (residential) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not exceed 1 foot-candle above ambient lighting conditions, measured from the property line or street right-of-way Must be equipped with automatic dimmers that respond to ambient conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No more than 50 percent of a sign face can contain an electronic message (outside central business areas) No more than 75 percent of a sign face can contain an electronic message within the central business area
High Point	Yes	Once every 8 seconds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5,000 nits (day) 500 nits (night) Must be installed with dimmer control responsive to ambient light conditions 	Additional standards may apply, based on the zoning district
Raleigh	Yes	No more than 4 changes per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No more than 0.5 foot-candle, measured at the property line shared with a residential property No more than 2 foot-candles, measured at the street right-of-way Cannot exceed 10 foot-candles, measured 10 feet from the sign 	No more than 50 percent of a sign face can contain an electronic message
Winston-Salem	Yes	Once every 2 hours	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic messages can be incorporated into signs or comprise the entire sign 1 electronic message type (attached or freestanding) per site Size limit for attached signs Area bonus for freestanding signs less than 6 feet in height

Options

- ▶ Modify amortization provisions
- ▶ Modify change rate provisions for electronic messages
- ▶ Add provisions regulating brightness of electronic messages
- ▶ Modify some provisions or leave the ordinance unchanged