



## MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item # 5

**Date:** August 2, 2018  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Gerald Green AICP, Executive Director  
**Subject:** **8-A-18-OA** (Sign Code Amendment)

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City of Knoxville Law Department staff have drafted an amendment to the City's sign code addressing the lighting of signs. Specifically, the proposed amendment does two things:

- It allows external (indirect) illumination of signs in the Office district as long as the light source is not visible; and
- Allows hospitals with emergency rooms to have internally illuminated signs for the emergency room.

The proposed amendments clarify the type of lighting permitted for signs in the Office district and, by allowing internal illumination of emergency room signs, will make it easier to find these facilities.

If you have any questions, comments, or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me by email at [gerald.green@knoxmpc.org](mailto:gerald.green@knoxmpc.org) or phone at 215-3758.

# MEMORANDUM

**To:** Gerald Green, MPC Executive Director  
Rob Frost, Attorney for Knoxville City Council  
Peter Ahrens, Plans Review and Inspections Department Director

**From:** Crista Cuccaro, Attorney for the City of Knoxville

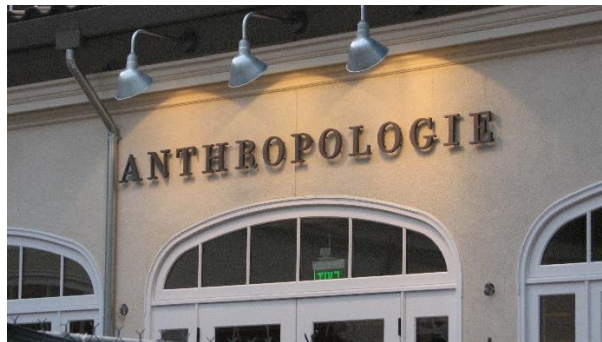
**Date:** July 31, 2018

**Re:** Requested Changes to Sign Regulations in the Office Districts

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Per the office district regulations in the previous sign ordinance for the City of Knoxville, attached as Exhibit A, indirect illumination—also known as external illumination—was allowed. Under that same regulation, direct illumination—also known as internal illumination—was prohibited.

When the new sign ordinance was adopted, external illumination was omitted inadvertently. This ordinance amendment reincorporates language allowing external illumination so long as the light source is not visible. As illustrated below, external illumination includes a spotlight onto the sign surface (top) or halo lighting (bottom).



An internally illuminated sign, where the light source is housed within a cabinet, is still not allowable under the amendment. An example of an internally illuminated sign is below.



Additionally, the amendment adds the allowance for internally illuminated signs for hospitals with an emergency room. Following the adoption of the new sign code, staff received feedback that about these types of facilities. Due to the critical nature of the care administered at emergency rooms, being able to find the facility is very important and internally illuminated signs allow for additional visibility. As drafted, in order to have internally illuminated signs, hospitals with emergency rooms in the office district must appear before the Metropolitan Planning Commission for approval of a master sign plan.

Appendix B - Zoning Regulations  
Article V, Section 10

I hereby certify that this is a true and exact copy of  
the original document on file in the Knoxville City  
Recorder's Office.

Bill Johnson, City Recorder

7-31-2018 (Date)



level.

7. In the RP-3 district where five (5) or more permitted uses are located within a common structure, one (1) business sign shall be permitted, provided that it shall not exceed one hundred (100) square feet in area and shall not exceed twelve (12) feet in height above the ground level.

The purpose of this sign is identification of the development and the principal uses within. An additional wall sign shall be permitted for each individual permitted use in accordance with the sign regulations for RP-1 and RP-2.

8. In the RP-3 district where less than five (5) permitted uses are located within a common structure, the sign regulations of RP-1 and RP-2 shall apply.
9. Billboards and other advertising signs are prohibited.
10. Signs permitted in residential districts may be indirectly illuminated, provided that no light source shall be visible from the public right-of-way or adjacent properties. Direct sign illumination is prohibited in residential districts.

D. *Office districts.* In O-1, office, medical and related services districts, and in O-2, civil and institutional districts and O-3, office park district, the following regulations shall apply:

1. For permitted residential district uses, the regulation of signs shall be the same as in the residential regulations above.
2. For public recreation uses, community facilities, and medical facilities: One (1) monument sign shall be permitted, which shall not exceed thirty-six (36) square feet in area, and shall not exceed six (6) feet in height as measured from natural or finished grade, whichever is lower. *A maximum of one (1) monument sign is permitted per lot.*
3. For other permitted principal uses in the O-1 and O-2 districts, business signs shall be permitted as follows:
  - a. One (1) monument sign shall be permitted, which shall not exceed thirty-six (36) square feet in area, and shall not exceed six (6) feet in height as measured from natural or finished grade, whichever is lower. *A maximum of one (1) monument sign is permitted per lot.*
  - b. One (1) wall sign shall be permitted for each tenant of a building. Such sign shall not exceed two (2) square feet in area, and shall not be illuminated.
4. Signs for O-3 office park districts shall be permitted as follows:
  - a. Each O-3 office park development shall be limited to one (1) monument sign on each separate street frontage, which shall not exceed thirty-six (36) square feet in



area, and shall not exceed six (6) feet in height as measured from natural or finished grade, whichever is lower.

- b. In addition, each tenant which has exclusive and direct access from outside a building may have one (1) wall sign. Such sign: shall not exceed twenty (20) square feet, and shall not project above the parapet wall.
5. Direct sign illumination shall be prohibited in O-1, O-2 and O-3 districts. Unless sign illumination is specifically prohibited by the regulations, signs may be indirectly illuminated, provided that no light source is visible from the public right-of-way or adjacent properties.
  6. *Reserved.*
  7. Development directory signs and project directional signs may be permitted in the O-3 office park district subject to meeting the criteria for development directory signs identified in subsection A.25. above and if approved by the metropolitan planning commission through the master signage plan procedures identified in section A.26. above.
- E. *Commercial districts.* In C, commercial and SC, shopping center districts, the following regulations shall apply:
1. Within all commercial districts business signs shall be limited to:
    - a. Locations on buildings on the parcel;
    - b. Ground signs, including portable signs;
    - c. Any other specific district requirements; and
    - d. For the purposes of this section, canopies, gasoline pumps, and drive-through order boards are considered part of the building.
    - e. Electronic message centers (EMC) legally existing on April 10, 2009. After April 10, 2009, no EMC shall be permitted in any location except:
      1. An EMC may be permitted in those areas covered by an H-1 overlay district subject to approval as required within an H-1 district.
      2. An EMC may be permitted in those areas covered by a D-1 overlay district subject to approval as required within a D-1 district.
      3. An EMC may be permitted in those specific zone districts that allow EMCs with approved design regulations or guidelines subject to approval by the appropriate regulatory body for such district.



2. A sign permit fee is required for each portable sign location in accordance with the above fee schedule.

O. *Annual inspection fees.*

1. In addition to the permit fees set forth in section M, and commencing on July 1, 1987, an annual inspection fee shall be assessed for any existing ground sign or portable sign as follows:
  - a. Signs of fifty (50) square feet and less . . . . . \$ 12.00
  - b. Signs fifty-one (51) to one hundred (100) square feet . . . . . 25.00
  - c. Signs one hundred one (101) to four hundred fifty (450) square feet . . . . . 50.00
  - d. Signs larger than four hundred fifty (450) square feet . . . . . 100.00
2. These inspection fees shall not apply to any on-premises sign owned by an organization if said organization is exempt from taxation pursuant to paragraph (3) of subsection (C) of section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 as amended, if said organization submits proof of its tax-exempt status to the sign inspector.
3. The sign inspector shall make an annual inspection of existing ground and portable signs for compliance with the provisions of zoning, electrical, and other city codes. The inspector shall attach a permanent numbered tag to each inspected sign and shall maintain records of all inspected signs.

(Ord. No. 5824, 11-8-74; Ord. No. O-74-82, § 1, 3-16-82; Ord. No. O-85-83, § 2, 5-24-83; Ord. No. O-139-85, § 1, 8-13-85; Ord. No. O-67-86, § 1(a)-(g), 5-6-86; Ord. No. O-89-95, § 1, 2-28-95; Ord. No. O-490-95, § 1, 9-28-95; Ord. No. O-407-00, § 1, 8-22-00; Ord. No. O-150-01, § 1, 5-15-01; Ord. No. O-27-02, § 1, 1-22-02; Ord. No. O-241-04, § 1, 12-7-04; Ord. No. O-238, § 1, 10-25-05; Ord. No. O-8-06, § 1, 1-17-06; Ord. No. O-176-06, § 1, 8-29-06; Ord. No. O-30-07, § 2, 2-27-07; Ord. No. O-236-07, § 1, 10-23-07; Ord. No. O-37-09, § 1, 3-24-09; Ord. No. O-57-09, § 1, 4-21-09)

**Sec. 11. Gasoline service stations.**

In addition to the requirements set forth in article IV of this ordinance, the following regulations shall apply to gasoline service stations:

A. *Setback requirements.*

1. The principal building used in conjunction with the service stations shall conform to the setback requirements for principal buildings for the district in which they are located, except as hereinafter provided.
2. Gasoline pump islands shall:

11.5.

*Office zone districts (O-1, O-2, and O-3).*

a. *Regulations for residential uses.* In office districts, regulation of signs for permitted residential uses shall be the same as for residential zone districts.

b.

*Types of signs and dimensions allowed for nonresidential uses.* In office districts, the following signs on a nonresidential parcel or lot shall be allowed, subject to the following dimensional requirements:

1.

Attached signs with a total allowed sign area not to exceed five (5) percent of the wall area of the primary building elevation(s), provided that the sign area may be used on any elevation of the building that does not face an adjacent residential zone district and that no individual sign may exceed twenty-four (24) square feet in area. Such signs shall not be ~~illuminated internally illuminated, but may be externally illuminated provided that no light source is visible from the public right-of-way or adjacent properties.~~ Hospitals with an emergency room may internally illuminate signs upon approval of a Master Sign Plan pursuant to Article VIII, Section 9 of this Code.

2.

One (1) detached sign is allowed per parcel or lot, but are limited only to monument or column signs; provided that the maximum sign area shall be thirty-six (36) square feet and the maximum height shall be six (6) feet. Such detached signs shall not be internally illuminated, but may be externally illuminated provided that no light source is visible from the public right-of-way or adjacent properties.