

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND  
Legislative Session 2008, Legislative Day No. 17

Bill No. 106-08

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Mr. Kevin Kamenetz, Chairman

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By the County Council, October 6, 2008

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A BILL  
ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Changeable Copy Signs

FOR the purpose of amending the County's sign regulations to further regulate changeable copy signs; providing definitions; permitting changeable copy signs in certain locations and under certain conditions and subject to certain restrictions; prohibiting certain signs; and generally relating to the regulation of changeable copy signs.

BY repealing and re-enacting, with amendments

Sections 450.2C.2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, 450.3, definition of Illumination, 450.4.1., 450.6.A.8, 450.6.B.3, and 450.6.C.3  
Baltimore County Zoning Regulations, as amended

BY adding

Sections 450.3, definitions, 450.5.B.10 and 11, 450.6A.9, 450.7.B. 3 and 4, 450.7.C.7, and ~~450.8D.4.d. and e.~~ 450.8.d.6.  
Baltimore County Zoning Regulations, as amended

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EXPLANATION:           CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.  
                                  [Brackets] indicate matter stricken from existing law.  
                                  ~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from bill.  
                                  Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

1 MARYLAND, that Sections 450.2C.2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, 450.3, definition of Illumination,  
2 450.4.1., 450.6.A.8, 450.6.B.3, and 450.6.C.3 of the Baltimore County Zoning Regulations, as amended,  
3 be and they are hereby repealed and re-enacted, with amendments, to read as follows:

4 Section 450  
5 Signs

6 450.2 Organization and applicability.

7 C. Exemptions. The requirements of Section 450 do not apply to the following:

8 2. Merchandise displayed for customers and temporary signs incidental to the display of  
9 seasonal merchandise, provided that each sign has a maximum area of two square feet, six square feet  
10 for a garden center, a maximum height of 15 feet in OR-1, OR-2, O.T., S-E, B.L., B.M., B.R., M.R.,  
11 M.L.R., M.L., M.H., C.B. and B.L.R. Zones and eight feet in any other zone, and is intended to provide  
12 information to customers on the premises PROVIDED IT ADHERES TO SECTION 450.6.A..

13 3. A sign consisting solely of words, [or] symbols OR CHARACTERS not more than one  
14 inch in height.

15 4. A sign integral to accessory self-service machinery, including, but not limited to, gasoline  
16 pumps, automatic banking tellers, vending machines and newspaper boxes, IF THE SIGN DOES NOT  
17 DISPLAY FLASHING, BLINKING, STROBING OR SCROLLING.

18 8. Except in the case of an enterprise or joint identification sign, a sign displaying a "street  
19 address," as that term is defined in Section 450.3, provided that the sign's copy is no more than four  
20 inches high in a residential zone and no more than eight inches high in a nonresidential zone, IF THE  
21 SIGN DOES NOT DISPLAY FLASHING, BLINKING, STROBING OR SCROLLING.

22 9. An enterprise or joint identification sign consisting solely of a "street address," provided  
23 that the sign does not exceed the maximum area permitted for the sign's class in that zone, IF THE SIGN  
24 DOES NOT DISPLAY FLASHING, BLINKING, STROBING OR SCROLLING.

1           10.    The part of an enterprise or joint identification sign comprising the "street address,"  
2 provided that it does not exceed 30% of the sign's area, IF THE SIGN DOES NOT DISPLAY  
3 FLASHING, BLINKING, STROBING OR SCROLLING..

4           12.    A temporary window sign, IF THE SIGN DOES NOT DISPLAY FLASHING,  
5 BLINKING, STROBING OR SCROLLING.

6 450.3 General sign definitions. Unless otherwise provided, the following words, as used in Section 450,  
7 are defined as follows:

8           ILLUMINATION -- The use of artificial light emanating from a sign, or directed at a sign from  
9 one or more sources external to the sign face, which makes the sign visible or more readily legible during  
10 DAYLIGHT AND non-daylight hours.

TABLE OF SIGN REGULATIONS  
Baltimore County  
PERMANENT SIGNS

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Class	Structural Type	Zone or Use	Permit Required	Maximum Area/Face	Maximum No./Premises	Height	Illumination	Additional Limitations
1. CHANGEABLE COPY, meaning an on-premises sign displaying a message which may be changed periodically, manually, [or] by electric or electronic controls, OR BY ANY OTHER MEANS. CHANGEABLE COPY SIGNS INCLUDE:	(a) Wall-mounted; freestanding	Accessory to institutional structure or community building	Use	25 square feet	One	6 feet	Yes	
ANIMATED MESSAGE BOARD. A SIGN THAT USES ANY CHANGE IN PHYSICAL POSITION BY ANY MOVEMENT OR ROTATION OR WHICH GIVES THE VISUAL IMPRESSION OF SUCH MOVEMENT OR ROTATION. THIS INCLUDES THE FOREGROUND AND BACKGROUND OF THE SIGN. THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE ELECTRONICALLY GENERATED IMAGES. A TRI-VISION MESSAGE BOARD IS CONSIDERED AN ANIMATED MESSAGE BOARD.	(b) Wall-mounted; freestanding; canopy	Accessory to a stadium or similar public entertainment use	Use theatre,	150 square feet	One; two if on canopy	25 feet	Yes	
IMPRESSON OF SUCH MOVEMENT OR ROTATION. THIS INCLUDES THE FOREGROUND AND BACKGROUND OF THE SIGN. THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE ELECTRONICALLY GENERATED IMAGES. A TRI-VISION MESSAGE BOARD IS CONSIDERED AN ANIMATED MESSAGE BOARD.	(c) Wall-mounted, freestanding, canopy, ENTERPRISE WINDOW SIGN	Accessory to a planned shopping center or to any separate commercial establishment in a Business Zone	Use	See Section 450.7.B	One	25 feet	Yes	See Section 450.6.A.8
ELECTRONIC CHANGEABLE COPY (ECC). ALSO KNOWN AS ELECTRONIC MESSAGE BOARDS. A SIGN WITH A FIXED OR CHANGING DISPLAY, OR MESSAGE COMPOSED OF A SERIES OF LIGHTS, LIGHT EMITTING OR LIGHT REFLECTING ELEMENTS THAT MAY BE CHANGED THROUGH ELECTRONIC MEANS. THIS INCLUDES A VIDEO DISPLAY SIGN. AN ELECTRONIC CHANGEABLE COPY SIGN MAY ONLY HAVE A MAXIMUM								4 5 0 . 7 . B

1 FREQUENCY OF ONE  
 2 INSTANTANEOUS MESSAGE  
 3 CHANGE PER ~~HALF HOUR~~ 15 SECOND  
 4 CYCLE-- AND MAY NOT

SPECIAL REGULATIONS  
 TABLE OF SIGN REGULATIONS  
 Baltimore County  
 PERMANENT SIGNS

9	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
10		Structural	Zone	Permit	Maximum	Maximum	Height	Illumination	Additional
11		Type	or Use	Required	Area/Face	No./Premises			Limitations
12	Class								

13 DISPLAY VIDEO, FLASHING,  
 14 BLINKING, ANIMATION,  
 15 STROBING OT SCROLLING.  
 16 ONLY COMMERCIAL  
 17 MESSAGES ANCILLARY  
 18 TO THE COMMERCIAL  
 19 ACTIVITY ON ~~SIGHT~~ SITE  
 20 ARE ALLOWED.

21 MANUAL CHANGEABLE  
 22 COPY. A SIGN DESIGNED  
 23 SO THAT CHARACTERS,  
 24 LETTERS, OR  
 25 ILLUSTRATIONS ON THE  
 26 SIGN CAN BE CHANGED  
 27 OR REARRANGED  
 28 WITHOUT ALTERING  
 29 THE BACKGROUND OF  
 30 THE SIGN. THESE SIGNS  
 31 REQUIRE THE PHYSICAL  
 32 CHANGING OR  
 33 REARRANGING OF  
 34 CHARACTERS, LETTERS,  
 35 OR ILLUSTRATIONS.

36	ENTERPRISE WINDOW	INTERIOR	BL, BM,	USE	3 SQUARE	3 WHEN		YES	450.6.A.4,
37	SIGN ANY ENTERPRISE	WALL	BR, CB,		FEET	MOUNTED			450.7.B
38	SIGN MOUNTEDON	MOUNTED	BLR, ML,			ON THE			INTERIO
39									R
40	THE INTERIOR	INTERIOR	MLR, MH,			INTERIOR			APPLIC-
41	OF AN ENCLOSED	WINDOW	MR,			OF ANY			ATION
42	STRUCTURE THAT IS	MOUNTED	EXCLUDING			FRONT			ONLY.
43	VISIBLE FROM		MULTI-			FACADE			NOT
44	THE EXTERIOR.		TENANT			WINDOW			PERM-
45			OFFICE,			OR DOOR			ITTED
46			RETAIL						TO
47			OR						BE
48			INDUS-						MOUNTED
49			TRIAL						ON ANY
50			BLDG.						WINDOW
51									OR DOOR
52									THAT IS
53									NOT A
54									FRONT
55									FACADE

1 450.6 General sign requirements.

2 A. Prohibitions. Unless otherwise provided, the following prohibitions are applicable to all signs  
3 within the scope of Section 450:

4 8. Except for an outdoor advertising sign with tri-vision, a changeable copy sign, or a  
5 thermometer, barometer, weather vane, barber pole or clock, [no] A sign may NOT display or simulate  
6 any moving part or automatically changing message, ~~AND . A CHANGEABLE COPY SIGN MAY~~  
7 NOT DISPLAY VIDEO, FLASHING, BLINKING, ANIMATION, STROBING OR SCROLLING.

8 B. Illumination. Illuminated signs are subject to the following:

9 3. Except for that portion of a changeable copy sign displaying time or temperature, all  
10 elements illuminating a sign shall operate at a constant intensity so that no sign has the appearance of  
11 movement or of being illuminated by flashing, blinking, strobing, oscillating or alternating lights. THE  
12 MESSAGE DISPLAY FOR CHANGEABLE COPY SIGNS DISPLAYING TIME OR  
13 TEMPERATURE IS RESTRICTED TO DATE, TIME AND TEMPERATURE ONLY.

14 C. Erection and maintenance.

15 3. For a lawfully erected sign, a building or use permit or a special exception is not required  
16 for changing the sign's face only, provided that this does not alter the sign's character to the extent that  
17 it is no longer permitted at its location, EXCEPT WHEN CHANGING FROM A MANUAL  
18 CHANGEABLE COPY TO AN ELECTRONIC CHANGEABLE COPY SIGN.

19 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that Sections 450.3, definitions, 450.5.B.10  
20 and 11, 450.6A.9, 450.7.B. 3 and 4, 450.7.C.7, and ~~450.8D.4.d. and e.~~ 450.8D.6 be and they are hereby

1 added to the Baltimore County Zoning Regulations, as amended, to read as follows:

2 450.3 General sign definitions. Unless otherwise provided, the following words, as used in Section  
3 450, are defined as follows:

4 ANIMATION. ANY CHANGE IN PHYSICAL POSITION BY ANY MOVEMENT OR ROTATION  
5 OR WHICH GIVES THE VISUAL IMPRESSION OF SUCH MOVEMENT OR ROTATION. THIS  
6 INCLUDES THE FOREGROUND AND BACKGROUND OF THE SIGN.

7 BACKGROUND. THAT PART OF A SIGN LYING BEHIND THE FOREGROUND.

8 BLINKING. TO ILLUMINATE INTERMITTENTLY AT A RATE OF CHANGE THAT IS LESS  
9 THAN THE ALLOWABLE FREQUENCY.

10 CHARACTER. A SYMBOL, LETTER OR NUMERAL THAT COMMUNICATES  
11 INFORMATION.

12 COLOR. A SPECIFIC COMBINATION OF HUE, SATURATION, AND LIGHTNESS OR  
13 BRIGHTNESS; A COLOR OTHER THAN AS CONTRASTED WITH BLACK, WHITE OR GRAY.

14 DISPLAY AREA. THAT PART OF THE SIGN BACKGROUND ACTIVELY INVOLVED WITH  
15 CHANGEABLE COPY.

16 FLAG. A PANEL OF FABRIC OF DISTINCTIVE DESIGN THAT IS USED AS A SYMBOL (AS  
17 OF A NATION), AS A ~~SIGNATURE~~ SIGNALING DEVICE, OR AS A DECORATION.

18 FLASHING. THE INTERMITTENT CHANGE WHETHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY TO AN  
19 ILLUMINATED SIGN, WHICH EXHIBITS A CHANGE TO THE NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL  
20 LIGHT OR COLOR EFFECTS BY ~~AN~~ ANY MEANS WHATSOEVER.

21 FOREGROUND. THAT PART OF A SIGN THAT IS NEAREST TO THE SPECTATOR AND  
22 LYING IN FRONT OF THE BACKGROUND.

1 FREQUENCY. THE RATE OF CHANGE WITHIN A GIVEN UNIT OF TIME. CHANGE REFERS  
2 TO ANY VARIATION.

3 SCROLLING. ANY MOVEMENT OF TEXT, PICTURES, OR GRAPHICS, HORIZONTALLY,  
4 VERTICALLY, OR DIAGONALLY ACROSS THE DISPLAY AREA.

5 STROBE. HIGH-INTENSITY SHORT DURATION LIGHT PULSES.

6 VIDEO. THE ABILITY TO CHANGE BOTH FOREGROUND OR BACKGROUND UTILIZING  
7 ELECTRONIC MEANS TO CHANGE LIGHT, COLOR, TEXT, SYMBOLS OR IMAGES.

8 450.5 Structural types of signs.

9 B. Structural type definitions and restrictions.

10 10. ENTERPRISE WINDOW SIGN. AN ENTERPRISE SIGN MOUNTED ON THE  
11 INTERIOR OF AN ENCLOSED STRUCTURE THAT IS VISIBLE FROM THE EXTERIOR OF  
12 THE STRUCTURE. A SIGN APPLIED OR ATTACHED TO THE EXTERIOR OF A WINDOW  
13 IS CONSIDERED TO BE A “WALL-MOUNTED” SIGN AS COVERED BY SECTION 450.5.B.9.

14 11. TIME AND TEMPERATURE SIGN. A SIGN OR PORTION THEREOF THAT  
15 DISPLAYS TIME, TEMPERATURE OR DATE ONLY. A TIME AND TEMPERATURE SIGN  
16 MAY NOT DISPLAY FLASHING, BLINKING, ANIMATION, STROBING OR SCROLLING.

17 450.6 General sign requirements.

18 A. Prohibitions. Unless otherwise provided, the following prohibitions are applicable to all signs  
19 within the scope of Section 450:

20 9. NO SIGN SHALL EMIT SOUND EXCEPT THOSE TYPES EXEMPTED IN SECTION  
21 450.2.C.11.

22 450.7 Special requirements for particular classes.

23 B. Changeable copy signs. In addition to the limitations of Section 450.4, changeable copy signs

1 accessory to a planned shopping center or any separate commercial establishment in a business zone are  
2 subject to the following:

3 3. ANIMATED SIGNS REQUIRE SPECIAL EXCEPTION APPROVAL BY THE  
4 BALTIMORE COUNTY ZONING COMMISSIONER.

5 4. ELECTRONIC CHANGEABLE COPY SIGNS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE C.R.  
6 DISTRICT OR OUTSIDE THE URBAN RURAL DEMARCATION LINE OR IN HISTORIC  
7 DISTRICTS.

8 C. Outdoor advertising signs. In addition to the limitations of Section 450.4, outdoor advertising  
9 signs are subject to the following:

10 7. EXCEPT FOR AN OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SIGN WITH TRI-VISION AS  
11 REGULATED BY SECTION 450.7.C.6, ~~NO~~ AN OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SIGN MAY NOT  
12 DISPLAY ANIMATION, VIDEO, FLASHING, BLINKING, STROBING OR SCROLLING.

13 450.8 Administration and compliance.

14 D. Abatement.

15 ~~4. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 104.1 concerning nonconforming uses, a sign~~  
16 ~~must be removed or brought into compliance with Section 450 by the 180th day after the effective date~~  
17 ~~of Bill No. 89-1997 if the sign:~~

18 6. NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 104.1 CONCERNING  
19 NONCONFORMING USES, A SIGN MUST BE REMOVED OR BROUGHT INTO COMPLIANCE  
20 WITH SECTION 450 BY THE 180<sup>TH</sup> DAY AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF BILL NO. 106-08  
21 IF THE SIGN:

22 D. IS AN ELECTRONIC CHANGEABLE COPY SIGN.

23 E. IS AN ENTERPRISE WINDOW SIGN.

24 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that this Act shall take effect 45 days after  
25 its enactment.

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