

Arapahoe County Land Development Code

PART 1 ZONING REGULATIONS

SECTION 3700 SIGN REGULATIONS

1-3701 INTENT

- This Section is designed to provide regulations for the erection and maintenance of signs. The general objectives of these regulations are to enhance the health, safety, welfare and convenience of the public and to achieve the following:
- To promote the safety of persons and property by providing that signs not create a hazard due to collapse, fire, collision, decay or abandonment, and do not create traffic hazards by confusing or distracting motorists, by impairing the driver's ability to see pedestrians, obstacles or other vehicles, or to read traffic signs.
- To promote the efficient communication of sign messages which provide information most needed and sought by the public, and to ensure that persons exposed to signs are not overwhelmed by the number of messages presented and are able to exercise freedom of choice to observe or ignore said messages according to the observer's purpose.
- To protect the public welfare and to enhance the appearance and economic value of the landscape by providing that scenic views are protected. In addition, signage shall not create a nuisance to persons using the public right-of-way, and shall not create a nuisance to occupancy of adjacent and contiguous property by their brightness, size, or height.
- To serve as general guidelines for the administration of signs through the Planned Unit Development process on rezoning and/or Final Development Plan applications.

1-3702 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1-3702.01

- A sign permit shall be required from the PWD Building Division for all signs exceeding six (6) square feet in area, unless otherwise exempted by regulations within this Section. In addition, a sign permit shall be required at any time the sign area is increased, if the increase is allowable within the zone district in which the sign is located.

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1-3702.02

- Freestanding identification signs permitted in this Section shall be allowed within the required setback, but in no event closer than ten feet (10') to a public right-of-way line.

1-3702.03

- Freestanding signs permitted by these regulations shall be no taller than six (6) feet to the top of the sign structure, unless otherwise permitted.

1-3702.04

- All requests for a sign permit shall be accompanied by a drawing which is fully dimensioned, showing the sign structure and message, and a site plan showing the location, setbacks, height and sign area of all proposed and existing signage.

1-3702.05

- Sign permit fees shall be established by the Board of County Commissioners and paid to the PWD Building Division.

1-3702.06

- Planned Unit Developments (P.U.D.'s): Signs within P.U.D.'s shall comply with the provisions set forth within the Preliminary and/or Final Development Plan for the parcel, as approved and/or amended by the Board of County Commissioners. However, these Sign Regulations shall govern where said Preliminary and/or Final Development Plans do not address provisions required by these regulations (i.e., permits, prohibited signs, definitions, etc.).

1-3702.07

- These regulations recognize other regulations pertaining to signage (i.e., State of Colorado, Department of Highways, "Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Outdoor Advertising," effective January 1, 1984, and as may be amended). Where any provision of these regulations cover the same subject matter as other regulations, the more restrictive regulation shall apply.

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1-3702.08

- Sign Area Measurement

1-3702.08.01

- Area to be measured. The structure or bracing of a sign shall be omitted from the measurement unless such structure or bracing is made part of the message or face of the sign. Where a sign has two display faces placed back to back the area of only one face shall be included in determining the area of the sign. This would include awning signs.

1-3702.08.02

- Sign with backing. The area of all signs with backing or a background, material or otherwise, that is part of the overall sign display shall be measured by determining the sum of the areas creating the smallest single perimeter enclosing the display surface or face of the sign including the frame, backing, face plates, nonstructural trim or other component parts if not used for support.

1-3702.08.03

- Signs without backing. The area of all signs without backing or a background, material or otherwise, that is part of the overall sign display shall be measured by determining the sum of the areas creating the smallest single perimeter enclosing the limits of each letter, word, written representation (including any series of letters), emblems, logos or figures of similar character including the frame, face plates, nonstructural trim or other component parts if not used for support.

1-3702.08.04

- All other signs or combinations thereof: the area of any sign having parts both with and without backing shall be measured by determining the total area constituting the smallest single perimeter enclosing the limits of either of the following combinations: 1) the display surface or face of the sign including all frames, backing, face plates, nonstructural trim, or 2) other component parts not otherwise used.

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1-3702.09

- Illumination and Color. Signs shall be internally illuminated. If this is not possible, the source of illumination shall be shielded and shall not cause glare on adjacent properties. Top of Building Signs located on office and industrial buildings shall not be illuminated after 10 p.m. or before 6 a.m. No red color or red illuminated Top of Building Sign is permitted.

1-3702.10

- Public right-of-way. All signs erected in public rights-of-way by a public agency which control or direct the traveling public shall be exempt from the provision of these Regulations.

1-3702.11

- Maintenance. Signs and sign structures shall be maintained by their owners at all times in a state of good repair, with all braces, bolts, clips, supporting frame and fastenings free from deterioration, insect infestation, rot, rust, or loosening. Signs shall be able to safely withstand the maximum wind pressure for the area in which they are located. The County Building Inspector shall have the authority to order the repair, alteration, or removal of a sign or sign structure which constitutes a hazard to life or property. In the event that such a sign has not been removed, altered, or repaired within thirty (30) days after written notification from the Director of PWD or a designated representative, or the County Zoning Administrator or a designated representative, the County shall have the authority to remove said sign or structure at the expense of the owner of the premises on which the sign is located, without liability to the County.

1-3703 PERMITTED SIGNS NOT REQUIRED TO OBTAIN PERMITS

- **OFFICIAL AND LEGAL NOTICE.** Issued by any court, public body, person, or officer in performance of a public duty, or in giving any legal notice, including state and federal flags.

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- **INTERIOR SIGN.** Within an activity and/or structure and not visible from a public right-of-way or adjacent property.
- **MEMORIAL TABLET OR PLAQUE.** Installed by an historical agency, including cornerstones for buildings.
- **DIRECTIONAL, WARNING, OR INFORMATION SIGN OR STRUCTURE.** Required or authorized by law or by federal, state, county or city authority.
- **BUILDING IDENTIFICATION SIGN.** Used to identify individual residences/businesses and not exceeding two (2) square feet.
- **POLITICAL SIGN.** Temporary sign relating to public election that does not exceed six (6) square feet in area; provided that such sign shall not be posted more than forty-five (45) days prior to the election to which the sign relates, and shall be removed within fifteen (15) days after the election to which the sign relates.
- **PROFESSIONAL NAME PLATE SIGN.** Not more than two (2) square feet in area, which is fastened directly to the building and does not project more than six inches (6") perpendicular to the structure to which it is fastened.
- **DECORATIVE SIGN.** Clearly incidental and customary and commonly associated with any national, local, or religious holiday; provided that such sign shall be displayed for a period of not more than sixty (60) consecutive days nor more than sixty (60) days in any one year.
- **BULLETIN BOARD.** Not over twenty (20) square feet in area and not over six feet (6') in height for public, charitable or religious institutions where the same is located on the exterior areas or premises of said institutions.
- **GARAGE SALE SIGN.** No greater than six (6) square feet shall be permitted to be posted only on private property. Such signs shall not be posted on utility poles and/or public rights-of-way.

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- **DIRECTIONAL SIGN.** For construction traffic within an approved subdivision or P.U.D. for the purpose of separating normal auto traffic from construction vehicles.

1-3704 SIGNS PROHIBITED IN ALL DISTRICTS

- **SIGNS HAVING MORE THAN TWO (2) FACES.**
- **SIGNS CONSTITUTING A TRAFFIC HAZARD.** No person shall install or maintain or cause to be installed or maintained any sign which simulates or imitates in size, color, lettering, or design any traffic sign or signal, or any other words, phrases, symbols and/or characters, in such a manner as to interfere with, mislead or confuse traffic.
- **SIGNS ON PUBLIC PROPERTY (STREET, MEDIAN, ISLAND, PARKWAY, SIDEWALK, TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGN POST, UTILITY POLE, TREE).** Signs are prohibited on any utility pole, traffic sign post, traffic signal or any other official traffic control device. Signs shall not project over or into a public right-of-way. No person except a public officer in performance of a public duty shall affix, by any means, any form of sign, on any public property or within the public right-of-way, except that bus bench and transit shelter advertising shall be permitted in conformance with these Regulations.
- **IMMORAL OR UNLAWFUL ADVERTISING.** It shall be unlawful for any person to exhibit, post or display, or cause to be exhibited, posted, or displayed upon any sign, anything of an obscene, indecent or immoral nature, or unlawful activity (as defined by the Colorado Revised Statutes, as amended).
- **SIGNS ON DOORS, WINDOWS, OR FIRE ESCAPES.** No sign shall be installed or maintained so as to prevent free ingress to or egress from any door, window or fire escape. No sign of any kind shall be attached to a stand pipe or fire escape, except those signs as required by other codes or ordinances.
- **ANIMATED OR MOVING SIGNS.** Interior and/or Exterior signs visible from a public right-of-way consisting of any moving, swinging, rotating, flashing, blinking,

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scintillating, fluctuating or otherwise animated light is prohibited. This prohibition includes Electronic Message Boards, except for time and/or temperature displays.

- **SIGNS FOR THE PURPOSE OF GENERAL OUTDOOR ADVERTISING** of products or services, or signs advertising a use, service or attraction not located in Arapahoe County, unless approved by the Board of County Commissioners.
- **VEHICLE SIGNS.** Any automobile, trailer or other vehicle used as a sign, or on which a temporary sign is placed for advertising purposes.
- **FLAGS, BANNERS** or other devices designed or allowed to wave, flap or rotate with the wind, except for flags of any government or governmental agency or any civic, charitable, religious or fraternal organization. Small company flags or banners during special events such as grand openings and close-out sales are permitted for a thirty day period.
- **SIGNS IN PROXIMITY TO UTILITY LINES.** No permit shall be issued for any sign, and no sign shall be constructed or maintained, which has less horizontal or vertical clearance from authorized communication or energized electrical power lines than that prescribed by the laws of the State of Colorado and regulations duly promulgated by agencies thereof, and not less than minimum easement widths.
- **PORTABLE SIGNS** which are not permanently affixed to any structure on the site or permanently mounted to the ground.
- **ANY SIGNS EMITTING SOUND.**
- **ROOF-MOUNTED** signs or signs which project above the highest point of the building.
- Signs attached to a building which project **PERPENDICULAR** a distance of more than eighteen inches (18") from the building.

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- Signs attached **PARALLEL** to the wall of a building, but mounted more than eighteen inches (18") from the wall.

1-3705 ON-PREMISE SIGNS

1-3705.01

- For agricultural and residential uses the following on-premise signs shall be allowed:

1-3705.01.01

- One residential building identification sign per dwelling (identifying the name and/or address of said dwelling), provided the total surface area of such sign does not exceed two (2) square feet. No permit is necessary for said signage.

1-3705.01.02

- One temporary "For Sale," "For Rent," or "For Lease" sign per dwelling, provided the total surface area of such sign does not exceed six (6) square feet, the height of the sign (including posts) does not exceed 4', and is not illuminated. Such signage shall not be required to meet minimum yard setback requirements of the zone district in which it is located, but shall not impair visibility for traffic movement. No permit is necessary for said signage.

1-3705.01.03

- Temporary "For Sale," "For Lease," or "For Rent" signs advertising a vacant parcel, provided that the total surface area of all such signs (per parcel) shall not exceed one hundred (100) square feet, nor the total surface area of any one sign exceed fifty (50) square feet.

1-3705.0.04

- In Agricultural districts only, one identification sign per permitted use, accessory use, special exception use or use by special review shall be permitted per street frontage provided the total surface area of such sign does not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet, except for home occupation signs, which are prohibited.

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1-3705.01.06

- In the A-E, A-1 and A-2 districts only, signs advertising the sale of products produced or raised on the premises are permitted provided that the total number of signs shall not exceed four (4), are not illuminated, and provided the total surface area of all such signs does not exceed one hundred (100) square feet, nor the total surface area of any one sign exceed fifty (50) square feet.

1-3705.01.07

- Identification signs for residential developments provided that not more than two (2) sign faces shall be allowed for each subdivision entrance from an adjacent public street, the surface area of each sign does not exceed forty (40) square feet, the maximum height of such signs shall not exceed six (6) feet, and provided that such signs shall be located so as not to impair vehicular visibility.

1-3705.01.08

- Temporary advertising signs for the sale, rental or lease of dwelling units under construction or approved to be constructed; provided that no more than one sign (maximum two faces) is located adjacent to each street abutting the subdivision and provided that the total surface area of each sign does not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet. No such sign shall remain erected after the last dwelling unit is sold, rented or leased.

1-3705.01.09

- One (1) identification sign per model home within an approved subdivision; provided that the surface area of each sign does not exceed sixteen (16) square feet. Such signage shall not be required to meet minimum yard setback requirements of the zone district in which it is located.

1-3705.02

- For non-agricultural and non-residential uses the following on-site signs shall be permitted:

1-3706 GENERAL PROVISIONS - ALL USES

1-3706.01

- Directional signs are allowed and not counted as part of the total sign area allowed per individual use or per shopping center, business, commercial, or industrial park, provided that the total surface area of each sign does not exceed ten (10) square feet and the height of such sign does not exceed six feet (6'). Directional signs shall not be required to meet minimum yard setback requirements of the district in which it is located, but shall not impair visibility for traffic movement.

1-3706.02

- One (1) temporary “For Sale,” “For Rent,” or “For Lease” sign per street frontage shall be allowed, and shall be required to meet a ten foot (10') setback from all property lines, provided that the total surface area of each sign does not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet per face (a maximum of two (2) faces are permitted for each sign) and does not impair traffic visibility.

1-3706.03

- Fascia signage letter heights. The maximum height of fascia signage letters shall be determined by measuring the distance between the nearest adjacent public right-of-way and the location of the fascia upon which the fascia sign is to be placed, at the following rate:

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Distance from R-O-W	Letter Height for signs located between the top of storefronts and the second level finish floor	Letter Height for Top of Building signs
0'-50'	12"	18"
51'-100'	18"	24"
101'-150'	24"	30"
151'-200'	30"	36"
201'-250'	36"	42"
251'-300'	42"	48"
301'+	48"	48"

1-3706.04

- Fascia Signage Maximum Sign Area and location.

The maximum allowable sign area for any fascia sign shall be measured by multiplying the permitted letter height by two-thirds the length of the fascia or building elevation upon which such sign is placed, provided, however, that no fascia sign shall exceed 200 square feet, unless otherwise stated in these regulations. In cases where a tenant has two structures, one of which is accessory, whether attached or not, only one of the structures will be permitted fascia signage when both face the same adjacent public right-of-way. One fascia sign per street frontage shall be allowed. Fascia signage, excluding logos for hotels and motels, shall not be permitted to be placed above the first floor elevation for the structure upon which it is placed. Fascia signs may be placed on commercial buildings in only two locations: (1) the space between the top of storefronts and the second finish floor and, (2) Top of Building Signs (as defined in these Regulations). Fascia signs shall not overlap or cover features of the building, such as cornices, eaves, windows, door frames, columns and other decorative elements.

1-3706.05

- Top of Building Sign Locations.

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Top of Building Signs may not be located on building elevations adjacent to residential zoned property. Top of Building Signs shall not be visible from residences located within one-half mile of the building.

1-3706.06

- Logo Signs. Logos utilized as fascia signs shall be permitted and the height of such logos shall not exceed one-and-one half (1-1/2) X the height of the allowable letter height of the fascia sign it accompanies.

1-3706.07

- Special area “theme” signs identifying large, planned residential and/or non-residential areas of the County comprising a minimum of one hundred sixty (160) acres shall be considered on a case by case basis. Application for said signs shall be through the Use by Special Review process outline in these regulations.

1-3706.08

- One (1) freestanding project identification sign per access to a public right-of-way shall be permitted which identifies a shopping center or business, commercial or industrial park only, provided such sign does not extend more than six feet (6') above ground level, and provided the total surface area does not exceed forty-eight (48) square feet per sign face (maximum two faces per sign).

1-3706.09

- One (1) directory sign per street frontage shall be permitted identifying the individual businesses within a shopping center or office or industrial park, provided that the total surface area of such sign does not exceed forty-eight (48) square feet and the sign does not exceed six feet (6') in height.

1-3706.10

- No sign shall be permitted which impairs visibility for traffic movement.

1-3707 SPECIFIC PROVISIONS - OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL USES

1-3707.01

- Single Tenant Office buildings. An office building containing a single tenant shall be allowed a maximum of three fascia signs which identifies the name and/or address of the building. The tenant shall be allowed to place more than one fascia sign on a building elevation (up to the maximum of three fascia signs), but in no event shall the total square footage of fascia signage placed on any one building elevation exceed sixty-four (64) square feet. Only one Top of Building Sign per elevation is permitted. An office building containing a single tenant shall be allowed one freestanding project identification sign per street frontage.

1-3707.02

- Multi-tenant office building. An office building containing more than one tenant shall be allowed fascia signage and freestanding project identification signage at the same rate as permitted for the single tenant office building. Only one Top of Building Sign per elevation is permitted. In addition, one directory sign per street frontage shall be permitted.

1-3708 SPECIFIC PROVISIONS - HOTEL & HOSPITAL USES

1-3708.01

- Hotels and hospitals shall be permitted a maximum of three fascia signs which identifies the name of the hotel or hospital. The total square footage of fascia signage per building elevation shall not exceed one hundred twenty (120) square feet or the square footage of the allowable letter height times one-half (1/2) the length of the building elevation containing the fascia sign, whichever is less.

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1-3708.02

- One freestanding project identification sign per street frontage shall be permitted provided that the sign does not exceed six feet (6') in height, nor forty-eight (48) square feet per face (maximum of two (2) faces per sign).

1-3709 SPECIFIC PROVISIONS - RETAIL USES

1-3709.01

- Single tenant retail buildings. A building containing one retail tenant shall be permitted a maximum of three (3) fascia signs and one freestanding identification sign. The freestanding identification sign shall not exceed six feet (6') in height, nor forty-eight (48) square feet per face (maximum of two (2) faces).

1-3709.02

- Multi-tenant retail buildings. A building containing more than one retail tenant shall be permitted one fascia sign per entrance which identifies the name of the building only. Each tenant is allowed one fascia sign per storefront facing a public and/or private right-of-way.
- If the primary entrance to a multi-tenant retail building does NOT face a public right-of-way AND if the rear of said building does NOT have an entrance but DOES face a public right-of-way, the rear fascia of the tenant's lease space may contain a fascia sign. Such fascia sign square footage shall not exceed one-half (1/2) of the size of the fascia sign located above the primary entrance to the lease space.

1-3710 SPECIFIC PROVISIONS – CMRS FACILITIES

- Commercial Mobile Radio Service Facilities (CMRS) shall be permitted only the signs allowed under 1-3703. Owners/Operators are encouraged to provide emergency maintenance response information.

1-3711 OFF-PREMISE SIGNS

1-3711.01

- Bus stop or transit shelter advertising shall be permitted in all zoning districts, and shall not be larger than the bench on which it is placed. At any officially recognized public bus or transit shelter, no more than one (1) bench or transit shelter may be placed within the public right of way following issuance of applicable County permit. However, a maximum of two (2) bus benches shall be permitted at any officially recognized public bus stop located along a designated arterial roadway. Complaints registered by adjacent property owner and/or a homeowners association may be cause for removal of the bus bench or transit shelter and/or its advertising. This paragraph does not authorize advertising on buildings or light rail stations.

1-3711.02

- Permitted in B-3, B-4, B-5, I-1 and I-2 zoning categories (subject to the Use By Special Review procedure) are off-premise signs used to identify uses or services in Arapahoe County which are oriented toward highway travelers, directional signs for emergency services, and advertising signs for real estate developments, provided that these signs meet the following criteria. The State of Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has adopted “Rules and Regulations Pertaining to Outdoor Advertising Effective January 1, 1985,” pursuant to the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S., 43-1-401 et seq., as amended). On all properties within the unincorporated portions of Arapahoe County which abut Interstate 25 (I-25) and other state highways (Highway 83, Arapahoe Road, etc.), these State Highway Regulations, to the extent that they are more restrictive, are recognized to be in full force and effect and supersede these regulations.

1-3711.01.01

- Any off-premise sign shall meet the required accessory use setbacks appropriate for the zoning district in which it is located.

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1-3711.02.02

- Off-premise signs shall not extend more than six feet (6') above ground level and shall not exceed forty-eight (48) square feet in sign area per face.

1-3711.02.03

- The minimum distance between off-premise signs shall not be less than three hundred feet (300').

1-3711.02.04

- Off-premise signs shall be permitted for one (1) year, may be renewable, but shall terminate upon completion of construction of the project which it advertises.

1-3712 BILLBOARDS

1-3712.01

- Billboards, because of their size, design, visual impact along public roadways and potential interference with public safety, are permitted only in B-3, B-4, B-5, I-1 and I-2 districts, and are subject to the "Use By Special Review" procedure outlined in these Regulations, and to the following:

1-3712.02

- Billboards, proposed to be erected on property abutting right-of-way for the Interstate or State Highway system, require sign permit approval from the CDOT and the PWD Building Division, or as may be required by federal and/or state laws.

1-3712.03

- The maximum sign area permitted for a billboard shall be three hundred (300) square feet per sign face (maximum of two (2) sign faces per sign and must be placed back-to-back on the same structure), and the maximum height of any billboard shall be thirty-five feet (35') above ground level, and shall not impair traffic visibility.

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1-3712.04

- No billboard shall be located less than five hundred feet (500') of any other billboard.

1-3712.05

- No billboard shall be located within five hundred feet (500') of any residentially zoned property in any jurisdiction measured in a straight line in any direction from the nearest point on the sign structure to the residential zone boundary.

1-3713 NON-CONFORMING SIGNS

1-3713.01 GENERAL PROVISIONS

- The Intent Section describes an intended direction for the administration of signs in Arapahoe County. In order to reach those objectives, the eventual termination of signs which do not conform to these Regulations is both reasonable and desirable.

1-3713.02 CONTINUANCE OF NONCONFORMING SIGNS

- Except as provided in Paragraph I.3 below, any nonconforming sign may be continued in operation and maintained after the effective date of this Section; provided, however, that no such sign shall be changed in any manner that increases the nonconformance of such sign with the provisions of this Section; and provided that the burden of establishing a sign to be nonconforming under this Section rests entirely upon the person(s), firm, or corporation claiming a nonconforming status for a sign.

1-3713.03 TERMINATION OF NONCONFORMING SIGNS

1-3713.03.01

- Abandonment (Signs Relating to Inoperative Activities)
Signs pertaining to activities or occupants that are no longer using a property shall be removed from the premises within thirty (30) days after the associated activity or occupant has vacated the premises. Any such sign not

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removed within the required period shall constitute a nuisance and shall be subject to removal by action of the Arapahoe County Zoning Administrator.

1-3713.03.02

- Violation

Any violation of this Section and/or any pre-existing Arapahoe County sign provisions shall terminate immediately the right to maintain such sign.

1-3713.03.03

- Destruction, Damage, or Obsolescence : the right to maintain any nonconforming sign shall terminate and shall cease to exist whenever the sign sustains damage in excess of fifty percent (50%) of the replacement cost, or becomes obsolete, or substandard to the extent that the sign becomes a hazard.

1-3713.03.04

- Amortization : the right to continue the use of a legal nonconforming sign shall terminate in accordance with the following schedule:
 - Animation, fluctuation, rotation, or flashing of any sign shall cease within ninety (90) days of the effective date of this Section.
 - The use or display of banners, pennants, balloons, wind-operated signs, and other portable signs shall cease within ninety (90) days of the effective date of this Section.
 - Other Signs: Arapahoe County recognizes a reasonable and proper amortization period of five (5) years from the date that said sign is made non-conforming by Regulations adopted by the County.