

# **TOWN OF SKOWHEGAN**

## **SIGN ORDINANCE**

ADOPTED AT THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING ON  
JUNE 9, 2025

### **SECTION I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this ordinance is to provide basic guidelines for the placement of business and institutional signs within the Town of Skowhegan, promoting safety and aesthetics in a manner that respects the rights of sign owners.

### **SECTION II. AUTHORITY**

This ordinance is adopted under the authority of the Municipal Home Rule Powers as provided for in Article VIII, Part 2, Section 1 of the Constitution of the State of Maine and Title 30-A M.R.S.A., § 3001.

### **SECTION III. DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this ordinance, the following terms are defined:

**CHANGEABLE SIGN:** A sign created, designed, manufactured or modified in such a way that its message may be electronically, digitally or mechanically altered by the substitution or replacement of one display by another on any side.

**ILLUMINATED SIGN:** A sign characterized by the use of artificial light either internally, in a manner in which artificial light is projected through the signs surface, or externally.

**SIGN:** Any structure or device used to advertise or convey information about goods, services, or institutions visible from a public way.

**OFF-PREMISE SIGN:** A sign that advertises a business, service, or product not located on the same property as the sign itself, subject to regulations under the Maine Revised Statutes.

### **SECTION IV. APPLICABILITY**

This ordinance applies to signs erected for commercial or institutional purposes. It does not apply to:

- a. Signs placed in or behind windows.
- b. Temporary signs displayed for less than 60 days per year.
- c. Political campaign signs.
- d. Off-premise signs, which must comply with applicable state laws, including the Maine Traveler Information Services Act and other relevant regulations.

## **SECTION V. PERMIT REQUIRED**

A permit is required for signs over fifty (50) square feet and for illuminated signs. The permit shall be issued by the Code Enforcement Officer without a fee.

## **SECTION VI. PERMITTING PROCEDURE**

1. Applications for permits must include a brief description of the sign.
2. The Code Enforcement Officer shall approve or deny permits within ten (10) working days.
3. Signs must be erected as described in the application.

## **SECTION VII. GENERAL STANDARDS**

- a. Signs should not obstruct views from public ways.
- b. Illuminated signs should not exceed a brightness that creates a safety hazard.
- c. Off-premise signs shall comply with the regulations set forth in Title 23 M.R.S.A. § 1914 and any other applicable state statutes.

## **SECTION VIII. LOCATION AND PLACEMENT**

- a. Signs must be placed at least two (2) feet from property lines.
- b. Height restrictions for signs shall generally not exceed twenty (20) feet above ground level or five (5) feet above roof lines

## **SECTION IX. CHANGEABLE MESSAGE SIGNS**

- a. The message may change no more than once every ten (10) seconds.
- b. Lighting, illumination and animation styles should prioritize safety, should not be excessively distracting and comply with rules adopted by the Department of Transportation.

## **SECTION X. ENFORCEMENT**

1. This ordinance shall be enforced by the Code Enforcement Officer.
2. If the Code Enforcement Officer finds that any provision of this Ordinance is being violated, he shall notify by registered or certified mail the person determined to be responsible for the violation, indicating the nature of the violation and ordering the action necessary to correct it and a time limit for the correction.
3. Any person who violates any provision of this Ordinance, including but not limited to a landowner, a landowner's agent or a contractor, shall be guilty of a civil violation and shall be penalized in accordance with Title 30-A M.R.S.A, § 4452. Each day a violation is permitted to exist after notification constitutes a separate offence.
4. Signs not in compliance with this Ordinance may be removed at the discretion of the Code Enforcement Officer.
5. Any person aggrieved by a decision of the Code Enforcement Officer must apply for an appeal to the Board of Appeals within thirty (30) days from the date of written decision. The Board may increase the length of the thirty (30) day appeal period for an administrative, upon showing of good cause, for a reasonable period.

## **SECTION XI. APPEALS**

Any person aggrieved by a decision may appeal to the Town of Skowhegan Board of Appeals.

## **SECTION XII. VARIANCES.**

Any person seeking relief from any requirement of this ordinance may apply for a variance. All variance requests shall be submitted to and processed by the Town of Skowhegan Board of Appeals.

## **SECTION XIII. PENALTIES**

Minimal civil penalties may apply for violations, focusing on compliance rather than punishment.

## **SECTION XIV. SEVERABILITY**

If any section is found invalid, the remaining sections shall remain effective.

## **SECTION XV. CONFLICT WITH OTHER ORDINANCES**

More restrictive provisions in other ordinances shall take precedence.

**SECTION XVI. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This ordinance shall be effective as of the date of adoption.