

Article 10

Sign Standards



Amendments:

Article 10 revised through City of Columbus Ord. #21-2018, effective 7.23.18, and Bartholomew County Ord. #6-2018, effective 7.23.18.



Intent:

The intent of these sign regulations is to (1) implement the comprehensive plan policy recommendations related to signs and community character, (2) provide for public safety and the general welfare of the community, and (3) provide for context-appropriate methods of communication that support both the economic growth of the community and the free expression of thought. These sign regulations are intended to advance comprehensive plan goals and policies related to the desired character of the community as a whole and its unique neighborhoods, commercial centers, and other areas; to ensure that all aspects of the built environment are in scale with their surroundings; to balance the overall attractiveness of the community with the need for businesses, organizations, and citizens alike to communicate; and to ensure that signs in the various districts of the community are compatible with expected street, sidewalk, and property characteristics. These sign regulations are also intended to avoid potential hazards to motorists and pedestrians, to provide for adequate wayfinding by the public, to preserve and enhance property values, and to provide equal opportunities for the owners and users of all similarly situated properties to communicate effectively.

10 Sign Standards

General Sign Standards

These general sign standards apply to all zoning districts.

- AGRICULTURAL (A)
- SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (S)
- MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (T/M)
- COMMERCIAL (C)
- PUBLIC / SEMI-PUBLIC (P)
- INDUSTRIAL (I)

Amendments:

Section 10(B) revised per City Ord. 40, 2019 (10.15.19) & County Ord. 6, 2019 (10.14.19)

- A. General Requirements:** Each property is permitted signs as defined and allowed by this Article. All other signs shall be prohibited. Except as otherwise provided in this Article, it shall be unlawful for any person to erect, construct, enlarge, or move any sign without first obtaining a sign permit.
1. Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted as prohibiting a non-commercial message from being displayed on any permitted sign.
 2. Temporary non-commercial message signs, as provided by Section 10(E)(3), shall be permitted in all zoning districts, including on properties subject to a Planned Unit Development or Site Development Plan, where those approvals exclude specific allowances for such signs.
- B. Sign Illumination and Brightness:** Sign illumination and brightness shall meet the requirements of Section 9.4(D).
- C. Permitted Primary Permanent and Temporary Signs:** Permitted permanent and temporary signs, for which a permit shall be required, shall be as specified by the Permitted Signs Table (Table 10.1).

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D. **Supplemental Permanent Signs:** Supplemental permanent signs, in addition to those specified by Table 10.1, shall be permitted as described below. A sign permit shall be required.

1. **Properties with Agricultural Uses:** Properties on which an agricultural use is the primary use shall be permitted one supplemental free-standing sign not to exceed 32 square feet in area or 10 feet in height. Such sign shall be setback a minimum of 5 feet from all side and rear property lines.
2. **All Properties with Buildings:** All properties shall be permitted one supplemental wall sign per building, with a maximum of one located on each building. Such signs on properties on which an agricultural use or single or two-family dwelling is the primary use shall be limited to a maximum of 2 square feet in area each. Signs on properties on which the primary use is anything other than an agricultural use or single or two-family dwelling shall be limited to a maximum of 4 square feet in area each.
3. **Properties with Vehicle Entrance(s):** Properties on which the primary use is anything other than an agricultural use or single or two-family dwelling with a vehicle entrance from a public street or road shall be permitted supplemental free-standing signs as described below. All such signs shall be located within 15 feet of the intersection of the vehicle entrance with the public street or road right-of-way, except where a larger separation distance is necessary for the sign to comply with the intersection sight visibility requirements of Section 7.3(D)(5).
 - a. **Manufactured Home Park or Multi-family Use:** Properties on which a manufactured home park or apartment complex is the primary use shall be permitted two supplemental free-standing signs for each vehicle entrance to the property from a public street or road. Each sign shall be limited to a maximum of 32 square feet in area and a maximum of 6 feet in height.
 - b. **Public/Semi-Public, Commercial, or Industrial Use:** Properties on which a Public/Semi-Public, Commercial, or Industrial use is the primary use shall be permitted one supplemental free-standing sign for each vehicle entrance to the property from a public street or road. Each sign shall be limited to a maximum of 6 square feet in area and 4 feet in height.



Amendments:

*Section 10(D)(1) revised per
City Ord. 40, 2019 (10.15.19)
& County Ord. 6, 2019
(10.14.19)*



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Amendments:

*Section 10(E) revised per
City Ord. 40, 2019 (10.15.19)
& County Ord. 6, 2019
(10.14.19)*

4. Properties Included in a Major Subdivision Preliminary Plat: Properties included within the area of a Major Subdivision Preliminary Plat (as defined by the applicable Subdivision Control Ordinance) and located adjacent to the intersection of a street or road internal to that subdivision plat and a public street or road located beyond that subdivision plat shall be permitted 1 supplemental free-standing sign. Such signs shall be limited to a maximum of 32 square feet in area and a maximum of 6 feet in height. All such signs shall be located within 15 feet of the intersection of the street rights-of-way, except where a larger separation distance is necessary for the sign to comply with the intersection sight visibility requirements of Section 7.3(D)(5).

E. **Supplemental Temporary Signs:** Supplemental temporary signs, in addition to those specified by Table 10.1 shall be permitted as described below. A sign permit shall not be required.

1. Construction Sites: Properties on which construction activity is occurring, and has received the necessary permits and approvals, shall be permitted one supplemental sign per public street or road frontage, with a maximum of one located along each frontage. Such signs shall be setback a minimum of 5 feet from all side and rear property lines and shall meet the following requirements.

a. *Single and Two-Family Residential Uses:* Such signs on properties on which a single or two-family dwelling is the primary use shall be limited to a maximum area of 6 square feet each. Such signs shall be limited to a maximum height of 6 feet if freestanding, or may be affixed to the wall of a structure.

b. *All Other Uses:* Such signs on properties on which the primary use is anything other than a single or two-family dwelling shall be limited to a maximum area of 32 square feet each. Such signs shall be limited to a maximum height of 10 feet if freestanding, or may be affixed to the wall of a structure. This shall include any development area consisting of multiple lots, including single and two-family residential lots, for which construction related to the development as a whole is occurring, provided that the calculation of the number of signs permitted shall be based on the perimeter of the development and shall exclude any internal streets.

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2. **Properties for Sale or Lease:** Properties that are for sale or lease shall be permitted one supplemental sign per street frontage, with a maximum of one sign located along each frontage. Such signs shall be setback a minimum of 5 feet from all side and rear property lines-and shall meet the following requirements:
 - a. *Single and Two-Family Residential Uses:* Such signs on properties on which a single or two-family dwelling is the primary use shall be limited to a maximum area of 6 square feet each. Such signs shall be limited to a maximum height of 6 feet if freestanding, or may be affixed to the wall of a structure.
 - b. *All Other Uses:* Such signs on properties on which the primary use is anything other than a single or two-family dwelling shall be limited to a maximum area of 32 square feet each. Such signs shall be limited to a maximum height of 10 feet if freestanding, or may be affixed to the wall of a structure.
 3. **Non-commercial Messages:** An unlimited number of supplemental signs displaying a non-commercial message shall be permitted as described below. All such signs shall be located a minimum of 5 feet from any side or rear property line. These signs shall be permitted in addition to any other signs allowed by this Article.
 - a. *Single and Two-Family Residential Uses:* Such signs on properties on which a single or two-family dwelling is the primary use shall be limited to a maximum area of 6 square feet each. Such signs shall be limited to a maximum height of 6 feet if freestanding, or may be affixed to the wall of a structure.
 - b. *All Other Uses:* Such signs on properties on which the primary use is anything other than a single or two-family dwelling shall be limited to a maximum area of 32 square feet each. Such signs shall be limited to a maximum height of 10 feet if freestanding, or may be affixed to the wall of a structure.
- F. **Prohibited Sign Features:** Signs with the following features are prohibited in all zoning districts for the purpose of ensuring the safety of the travelling public by minimizing potential distractions and confusion.
1. **Animation:** Signs shall not flash, change copy or image more often than once every 6 seconds, or move or have the appearance of movement, except as expressly permitted in this Article.
 2. **Imitation of Traffic Control Devices:** Signs shall not by color, location or design resemble or conflicts with traffic control devices.



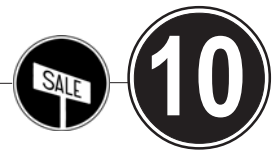
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- G. **Sign Location:** All signs, including supplemental signs, shall be located consistent with the following requirements:
1. **Setbacks:** The leading edge of a sign may be at the right-of-way of any public street or road. No freestanding sign shall be placed closer than 5 feet to any side or rear lot line.
 2. **Right-of-Way:** No sign shall be permitted to encroach into the public right-of-way unless approved by the Board of Public Works and Safety or Board of County Commissioners, as appropriate. Any signs placed entirely in the right-of-way and not affixed to structures, poles, or other supports beyond the right-of-way shall be exempt from the requirements of this Article.
 3. **Roof-mounting:** No sign shall be mounted to the roof of a structure or mounted to the wall of a structure and extend higher than that wall. In no instance shall this be interpreted as prohibiting the placement of a wall sign on a parapet wall or on the lower portion of a mansard roof, provided that the sign does not extend beyond or above those features.
 4. **Intersection Visibility:** Signs located within the intersection sight visibility triangle, as described in Section 7.3(D)(5), shall be subject to the following:
 - a. Within the sight visibility triangle no portion of the sign frame or cabinet shall be located between a height of 2½ feet and 10 feet above the centerline grades of any of the intersecting streets and drives.
 - b. No more than 2 supporting posts may be located in the sight visibility triangle. If one supporting post is used, it shall not be wider than 18 inches in diameter within the sight visibility triangle. If 2 posts are used, no single post shall be more than 12 inches in diameter within the sight visibility triangle and all posts within that triangle shall be at least 3 feet apart.
 5. **Vehicles:** Signs shall not be placed on vehicles parked on any property primarily for the purpose of displaying the sign. In no instance shall this be interpreted to prohibit any of the following when the vehicle in question is properly parked in a lawfully designated parking space:
 - a. Signs on vehicles parked for the purpose of lawfully making deliveries, sales, or service calls;
 - b. Signs on vehicles in regular commercial use in transporting persons or property;
 - c. Signs on vehicles in regular commercial use parked at the driver's residence or other locations for the driver's transportation or convenience.

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6. Off-premises Placement: Signs shall not be located on a property that is separate and distinct from the commercial establishment, product, merchandise, service or entertainment to which they are intended to draw attention. In no instance shall this be interpreted as prohibiting a non-commercial message from being displayed on any property.

H. **Sign Measurement**: All signs, including supplemental signs, shall be measured consistent with the following provisions:

1. Sign Height: The height of a sign shall be measured as the vertical distance from the highest point of the sign, including any functional or decorative supports, framework, or cabinets, to the finished grade of the ground immediately beneath the sign, including the height of any artificially constructed earthen berms.
2. Sign Area: The area of a sign shall be the smallest rectangle that will encompass the extreme limits of the writing, representation, emblem, or other display, together with any material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the backdrop or structure against which it is placed; including the frame of any cabinet, but not including any supporting posts or decorative fence or wall when the fence or wall otherwise meets the requirements of this Ordinance and is clearly incidental to the display itself.
 - a. *Multiple Faces*: The area of a sign that has 2 or more faces shall be measured by including the area of all sign faces. However, if 2 faces are placed back-to-back, are of equal size, and are no more than 2 feet apart at any point, the area of the 2 back-to-back faces shall be counted as one face. If the 2 back-to-back faces are of unequal size, the larger of the 2 sign faces shall be counted as the one face.
 - b. *Separate Signs*: Each portion of a sign display that is physically and/or visually separated from other portions shall be considered to be a separate sign. Spaces between lines of type, letters, logo elements, etc. are not to be construed as physical separations in instances where these elements form a single composition intended to be viewed as a whole. To be considered as a single sign the various elements (primary and secondary elements) and/or components (changeable copy, etc.) of freestanding signs shall not be separated from any other element or component by more than 6 inches, either horizontally or vertically, regardless of the number of poles or other supports used.
 - c. *Embedded Signs*: Signs embedded and/or incorporated as part of a mural, statue, other art display, decoration, or architectural feature shall be measured based on the area and height from ground level of the sign itself, excluding the mural, art, or architectural feature.



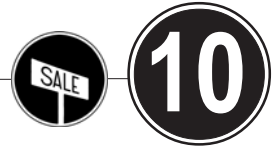
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- I. **Requirements by Sign Type:** The following development requirements shall apply to each sign type included in Table (10.1). In instances where the amount of signage permitted is determined by frontage on a public street or road and a lot or use does not have any frontage on a public street or road, and instead gains access through an access easement or private street, the amount of signage allowed shall be calculated as if there were a single street or road frontage for that lot or use. Further, in these circumstances, the area of the wall on which the primary entrance to the building or tenant space is located shall be used for the calculation of the maximum sign area.
 1. **Wall Signs:** The total wall sign area permitted shall be calculated using the area of all walls facing an adjacent street or road. The calculation shall include the area of windows, doorways and other similar features. Wall signs shall also be subject to the following:
 - a. **Multiple Ground Floor Uses:** For buildings and/or lots with multiple, separate ground floor uses, the sign area shall be determined by taking that portion of the front walls of the building applicable to each use and computing sign requirements based only on that portion of the total wall. Each ground floor use shall be considered a separate-use if each is structurally separated from adjoining uses and each has a separate entrance from the outside.
 - b. **Multi-story/Multi-user Buildings:** Multi-story buildings with separate ground and upper floor uses shall be permitted wall signs in addition to those permitted for ground floor uses. The upper floor wall area of the building facing an adjacent street or road shall be used to calculate the allowed additional sign area. Ground floor and upper floor uses shall be considered separate uses if each is structurally separated from adjoining occupants uses (excluding elevators and stair wells) and each has a separate entrance from the outside, or from a common lobby or elevator and/or stair core.
 - c. **Sign Mounting Location Requirements:** Wall signs may be located on any wall of a structure; however, wall signs allowed for a specific ground floor use shall be located on a wall that is a part of that use. That portion of the building applicable to each use shall be considered its premise for the purpose of regulating wall sign location per Section 10(G)(6). Wall signs may not extend above or beyond the wall on which they are mounted. A projecting sign used as an alternate for a wall sign and affixed to a multi-story building shall be allowed to extend, but not be located entirely, above any tenant space for which it is allowed.

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2. Freestanding Signs: Freestanding signs shall also be subject to the following:
 - a. *Landscaping Requirements*: All freestanding primary signs shall be landscaped, consistent with Section 8.1(C)(5).
 - b. *Multiple Use Lot Shared Signs*: Freestanding signs for multiple use properties shall be considered as having a combination of primary and secondary elements, with each element required to be visually separated from the others by a cabinet frame, support, or other structural or decorative sign component. For the purposes of this Chapter, gas stations and associated convenience stores located on the same lot shall be considered as two separate uses when operated and branded separately.
 - c. *Freestanding Signs in the CD (Commercial: Downtown) Zoning District*: Freestanding signs in the CD (Commercial: Downtown) zoning district shall be limited to those properties that (i) exceed 2 acres in area and (ii) feature a primary structure that has a minimum front setback of at least 20 feet. The provision applies separately to each public street frontage for lots meeting the minimum size requirement, provided that the freestanding sign shall be placed on the qualifying frontage.
3. Wall and Freestanding Sign Options & Alternatives: Wall and freestanding signs shall be permitted the options and alternatives as described below.
 - a. *Awning Signs*: Awning signs shall be considered as a type of wall sign and shall count toward the total number and area of wall signs permitted by this Article. Awning signs shall be limited to those printed or sewn on awnings mounted on the facade of the primary structure. Awning signs shall not be backlit.
 - b. *Projecting Signs*: Where permitted, a projecting sign may be used as an alternate for a wall or freestanding sign. The projecting sign shall count toward the total number and area allowed for the sign type (wall or freestanding) for which the projecting sign is an alternate, up to the maximum allowed for projecting signs in the Permitted Signs Table (Table 10.1). No projecting sign shall extend further than 6 feet horizontally from the wall to which it is attached. No projecting sign, at its lowest point, shall be less than 8 feet above grade level.



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- c. *Changeable Copy Signs:* Where permitted, a changeable copy sign may be used as a portion of a wall or freestanding sign. The area of any changeable copy shall not exceed 40% of the wall or freestanding sign of which it is a part. If the total area of the wall or freestanding sign of which a changeable copy sign is a part is 50% or less of the area allowed then the changeable copy portion may be 50% of that sign.
4. Interstate Oriented Signs: All properties that are located in the CR, Regional Commercial Center zoning district and are located either (1) within 2,500 feet of the center point of the interchange at I-65 and State Road 46 or (2) within 2,500 feet and on the west side of the center point of the interchange at I-65 and State Road 58 shall be permitted an interstate oriented sign in addition to any other freestanding sign that is permitted. The sign shall be located in the rear yard. For lots without a rear yard (i.e., double frontage lots), the rear yard shall be the yard opposite the front yard adjacent to the street or road with the highest classification according to the Thoroughfare Plan.
5. Suspended Sign: No suspended sign, at its lowest point, shall be less than 8 feet above grade level.
6. Banner Signs: Banner signs may be either mounted to a wall or other vertical surface or may be freestanding. No wall-mounted banner sign shall exceed the height of the wall. No banner sign may be mounted on a roof.
7. Inflatable Signs: Inflatable signs shall be tethered to the ground and may not be located in any required parking spaces or required landscaping areas.
8. Beacon Sign: Beacon Signs, such as searchlights and other similar lights, shall not be located in any required parking spaces or required landscaping areas. Beacon signs shall be directed upward or otherwise away from any adjacent street or road.

Permitted Signs Table (Table 10.1) (page 1 of 2)

How to Use this Table

(1) Permitted and Conditional Signs: All signs labeled as permitted shall be permitted for any use in the applicable zoning district. All signs listed as conditional may be approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals in association with any conditional use in the applicable zoning district.

(2) Requirements by Sign Type: See Section 10(l) for general requirements applicable to each sign type.

(3) CD (Commercial: Downtown) Freestanding Signs: See Section 10(l)(2)(c).

Permanent Signs

Sign Type & Requirement (P - Permitted) (C - Conditional)	Zoning District																						
	AV	AP	AG	RR	RS1	RS2	RS3	RS4	RE	RT	RM	RMH	CD	CDS	CN	CO	CC	CR	P	I1	I2	I3	
Wall Sign (ground floor uses)	C	C	C		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Maximum Number (for each public street or road frontage per use)	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	2	2	
Maximum Total Area for all Wall Signs per Use (whichever is less)...	Percent of all Front Walls				15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	8%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
	Sign Area (Square Feet)				150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	200	350	200	250	350	350	150	350	350	350	350
Wall Sign (upper floor uses)													P	P	P	P	P	P					
Maximum Number (per primary structure)													1	2	1	1	2	2					
Maximum Total Area for all Upper Floor Use Wall Signs per primary structure (whichever is less)...	Percent of all Front Walls												8%	15%	10%	10%	15%	15%					
	Sign Area (Square Feet)												200	350	200	250	350	350					
Freestanding Sign (single use lot)	C	C	C		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	P(3)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Maximum Number (for each public street or road frontage per lot)	1	1	1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum Area for Each Sign (square feet)	50	50	50		50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	100	50	75	100	150	50	75	75	75	
Maximum Height (feet)	6	15	15		6	6		6	6	6	6	6	6	20	6	8	20	25	10	10	10	10	
Freestanding Sign (multiple use lot)	C	C	C		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	P(3)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Maximum Number (for each public street or road frontage per lot)	1	1	1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum Number of Elements (per sign)...	Primary				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Secondary				3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Maximum Area for Each Sign (per element)...	Primary (square feet)				50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	25	100	50	75	100	150	50	75	75	75	
	Secondary (square feet)				25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	12	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
Maximum Height (feet)	8	15	15		8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	6	20	8	8	20	25	10	10	10	10	
Interstate Oriented Sign (for uses within 2,500 feet of an interchange)																			P				
Maximum Number (per lot)																			1				
Maximum Area (square feet)																			200				
Maximum Height (feet)																			90				
Suspended Sign													P	P	P	P	P	P					
Maximum Number (per use)													1	1	1	1	1	1					
Maximum Area per Sign (square feet)													6	6	6	6	6	6					

Permanent Signs (Options & Alternates)

Sign Type & Requirement (P - Permitted) (C - Conditional)	Zoning District																							
	AV	AP	AG	RR	RS1	RS2	RS3	RS4	RE	RT	RM	RMH	CD	CDS	CN	CO	CC	CR	P	I1	I2	I3		
Awning Sign (as a type of Wall Sign)	C	C	C		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Maximum Number (for each frontage per use)	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Projecting Sign (as an alternate for a Wall or Freestanding Sign)													P	P	P	P	P	P						
Maximum Number (per primary structure)													1	1	1	1	1	1						
Maximum Area (square feet)													100	100	100	100	100	100						
Maximum Height (feet)													primary structure + 10 feet											
Changeable Copy Sign* (as a part of Primary Wall or Freestanding Sign)	C	C	C		C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Maximum Number (per use)	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
Maximum Area (square feet)	See Section 10(I)(3)(c).																							

* See Section 9.4(D) for Electronic Changeable Copy Sign brightness limitations and restrictions.

Temporary Signs

Sign Type & Requirement (P - Permitted) (C - Conditional)	Zoning District																					
	AV	AP	AG	RR	RS1	RS2	RS3	RS4	RE	RT	RM	RMH	CD	CDS	CN	CO	CC	CR	P	I1	I2	I3
Banner Sign	C	C	C		C	C	C	C	C	C	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Maximum Number (per use)	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum Area per Sign (square feet)	32	32	32		32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	32
Maximum Duration (days per calendar year)	90	90	90		90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
Inflatable Sign	C	C	C		C	C	C	C	C	C	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Maximum Number (per use)	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum Height (feet)	25	25	25		25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
Maximum Duration (days per calendar year)	12	12	12		12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Beacon Sign	C	C	C		C	C	C	C	C	C	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Maximum Number (per use)	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum Duration (days per calendar year)	12	12	12		12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12