

# Calvert County

## Sign Design Guidelines

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## A. Purpose

These guidelines supplement and support the Calvert County Sign Regulations. They are separated from regulations for the express purpose of making clear distinction between regulations, which have the power of enforceable law, and the elements of design which are flexible. While sign elements subject to regulations tend to be measurable and quantifiable (such as size and setback), and include concerns relating to public safety, guidelines address aesthetic concerns, giving room for opinion and discussion. Guidelines thus are intended to give applicants a sense of desired outcomes, in support of the look and feel of a general community vision.

Staff at Community Planning and Building is available to assist with any design questions or challenges you may experience. Please contact us at 410/535-1600, extension 2356 for assistance.

## B. General to All Signs

1. In addition to text, decorative and artistic elements are permitted and encouraged.
2. Signs should strive to be simple and legible. Symbols, logos, and graphic images can add interest and enhance the message, but should be kept to a minimum for legibility.

## C. General to All Freestanding Signs

1. Freestanding signs should complement the building to which they relate in terms of style, colors, proportion, and scale.
2. Individual signs on a freestanding base should be uniform in design. Uniformity is defined as:
  - (a) having the same or similar proportions or dimensions;
  - (b) having the same or similar background colors; and/or
  - (c) being of the same material.
3. Colors should be limited to three: a primary color to provide a neutral background, contrasting color for text, and a highlight. Logos as a feature within a sign are exempted from any color limitation.
4. Font choice should emphasize legibility. Sans serif is preferred but serif and script may be appropriate if legibility is retained. No more than two fonts should be used on any sign.
5. Signs may be of any shape.
6. Sign materials may be constructed of any durable material. Metal, composite, or wood are preferred. Plywood is not suggested.
7. Downward or gooseneck lighting is preferred. If upward orientation is needed, lighting must comply with §6-8.02.J of the Calvert County Sign Regulations.

#### D. Building Signs (Permanent)

1. Building signs are defined as being attached to the façade, roof, window, door, or other element of a building.
2. Building signs include the following: projecting, wall, awning, canopy, and individual channeled letters.
3. General to all building signs
  - a. Building signs should complement the building(s) to which they relate in terms of style, colors, proportion, and scale.
  - b. Multiple signs on the same building should be uniform in design. Uniformity is defined as:
    - (I) having the same or similar proportions or dimensions;
    - (II) having the same or similar background colors; and/or
    - (III) being of the same material.
4. Every building sign should be designed as an integrated architectural element of the building.
5. Signs should not obstruct architectural features of the building.
6. Colors should be limited to three: a neutral background color, contrasting color for text, and a highlight. Logos as a feature within a sign are exempted from any color limitation.
7. Font choice should emphasize legibility. Sans serif is preferred but serif and script may be appropriate if legibility is retained. No more than two fonts should be used on a sign.
8. All signs for buildings within a shopping center, office complex, commercial park, or business center are encouraged to participate in a coordinated sign program to establish specific design standards and create uniform design elements to be consistently carried throughout all tenant signs (such as color, lettering style, logo, etc).

## Examples of Sign Shapes



Round



Rectangular



Curved



Oval Projecting Sign

## Examples of Materials



Composite



Wood or Simulated Wood



Metal

## Examples of Color



# Examples of Lighting



Backlit Channel Letters



Downward Facing Gooseneck