



CHAPTER 136
ARTICLE 2 - POWERS AND DUTIES OF DEPARTMENT AND BOARD OF TRANSPORTATION

N.C.G.S. § 136-32.

Regulation of signs.

SOURCE General Statutes of North Carolina, as published by the General Assembly	LAST AMENDMENT IN THIS TEXT S.L. 2025-47, s. 15(a) — seventeenth act in the lineage	RETRIEVED 21 September 2026, 02:00 UTC	SOURCE FINGERPRINT a13d43f357e3605119e779cb - 147c87fc9e3d5d1363ab8b2d - a62e74ee3fc17d19
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§ 136-32(a) Commercial Signs. - No unauthorized person shall erect or maintain upon any highway any warning or direction sign, marker, signal or light or imitation of any of - ficial sign, marker, signal or light erected under the provisions of G.S. 136-30, except in cases of emergency. No person shall erect or maintain upon any highway any traffic or highway sign or signal bearing thereon any commercial or political advertising, except as provided in subsections (b) through (e) of this section: Provided, nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the erection or maintenance of signs, markers, or signals bearing thereon the name of an organization authorized to erect the same by the Department of Transportation or by any local authority referred to in G.S. 136-31. Any person who shall violate any of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. The Department of Transportation may remove any signs erected without authority or allowed to remain beyond the deadline established in subsections (b) and (b1) of this section.

§ 136-32(b) Compliant Political Signs Permitted. - During the period beginning on the 30th day before the beginning date of early voting under G.S. 163-166.40 and ending on the 10th day after the primary or election day, persons may place political signs in the right-of-way of the State highway system as provided in this section. Signs must be placed in compliance with subsection (d) of this section and must be removed by the end of the period prescribed in this subsection. Any political sign remaining in the right-of-way of the State highway system more than 30 days after the end of the period prescribed in this subsection shall be deemed unlawfully placed and abandoned property, and a person may remove and dispose of such political sign without penalty. The Department of Transportation shall not schedule mowing in any right-of-way

in which the placement of political signs is permitted under this section during the period prescribed in this subsection.

§ 136-32(b1)

Compliant Farm Signs Permitted. - During a farm's seasonal operation, persons may place farm signs in the right-of-way of the State highway system as provided in this section. Signs must be placed in compliance with subsection (d) of this section and must be removed by the end of the farm's season. Any farm sign remaining in the right-of-way of the State highway system more than 30 days after the end of the period prescribed in this subsection shall be deemed unlawfully placed and abandoned property, and a person may remove and dispose of the farm sign without penalty.

§ 136-32(c)

Definitions. - For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

- (1) **Farm.** - Any property that is used for a bona fide farm purpose as provided in G.S. 106-581.1.
- (2) **Farm sign.** - A sign that advertises a farm, products grown, raised, or produced on a farm, or services provided on a farm; or that provides customers with directions to a farm.
- (3) **Political sign.** - Any sign that advocates for political action. The term does not include a commercial sign.

§ 136-32(d)

Sign Placement. - The permittee must obtain the permission of any property owner of a residence, business, or religious institution fronting the right-of-way where a sign would be erected. Signs must be placed in accordance with the following:

- (1) No sign shall be permitted in the right-of-way of a fully controlled access highway.
- (2) No sign shall be closer than three feet from the edge of the pavement of the road.
- (3) No sign shall obscure motorist visibility at an intersection.
- (4) No sign shall be higher than 42 inches above the edge of the pavement of the road.
- (5) No sign shall be larger than 864 square inches.
- (6) No sign shall obscure or replace another sign.

§ 136-32(e)

Penalties for Unlawful Removal of Signs. - It is a Class 3 misdemeanor for a person to steal, deface, vandalize, or unlawfully remove a political sign that is lawfully placed under this section.

§ 136-32(f)

Application Within Municipalities. - Pursuant to Article 8 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, a city may by ordinance prohibit or regulate the placement of political signs on rights-of-way of streets located within the corporate limits of a municipality and maintained by the municipality. Any such ordinance shall provide that any political sign that remains in a right-of-way of streets located within the corporate limits of a municipality and maintained by the municipality more than 30 days after the end of the period prescribed in the ordinance is to be deemed unlawfully placed and abandoned property, and a person may remove and dispose of such political sign without penalty. In the absence of an ordinance prohibiting or regulating the placement of political signs on the rights-of-way of streets located within a municipality and maintained by the municipality, the provisions of subsections (b) through (e) of this section shall apply.

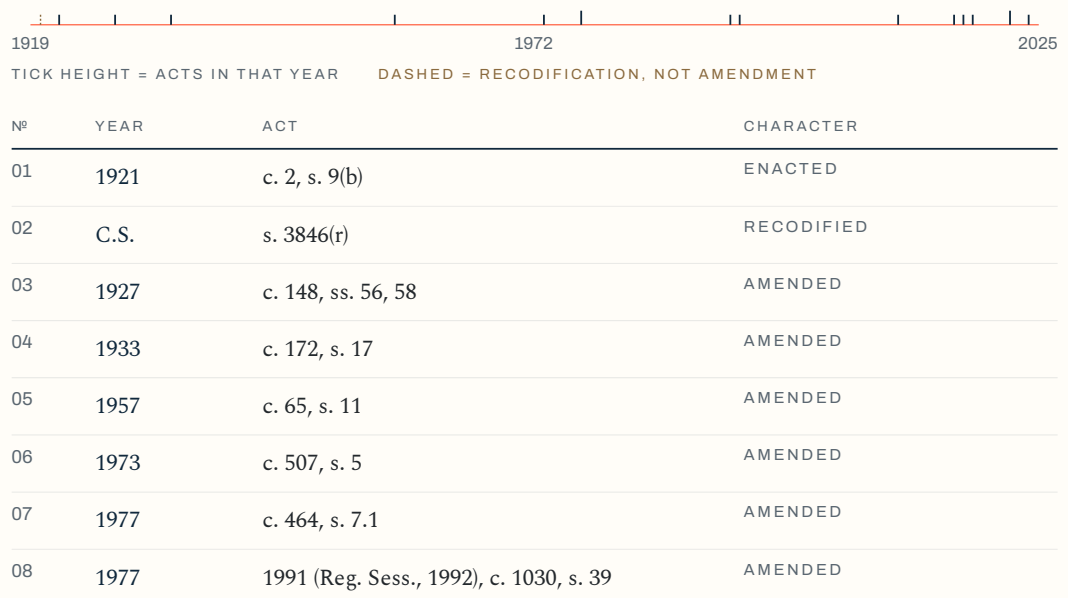
END OF SECTION TEXT

APPARATUS FOLLOWS — DERIVED, NOT ENACTED

APPARATUS I
17 ACTS

Amendment lineage

The State prints this history as a single parenthetical at the foot of the section. It is reproduced verbatim in the colophon and unpacked below in order of enactment.



09	1993	c. 539, s. 981	AMENDED
10	1994	Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c)	AMENDED
11	2011	S.L. 2011-408, s. 1	AMENDED
12	2017	S.L. 2017-6, s. 3	AMENDED
13	2018	S.L. 2018-146, ss. 3.1(a), (b), 6.1	AMENDED
14	2019	S.L. 2019-119, s. 1	AMENDED
15	2023	S.L. 2023-63, s. 2	AMENDED
16	2023	S.L. 2023-140, s. 42	AMENDED
17	2025	S.L. 2025-47, s. 15(a)	AMENDED

APPARATUS II
4 AUTHORITIES

Authorities referenced

Every G.S. cross-reference appearing in the text of this section, in order of first appearance. Nothing is characterized; the operative language is quoted from the section itself.

REFERENCE	APPEARS IN	OPERATIVE LANGUAGE IN THIS SECTION
G.S. 136-30	(a)	"light erected under the provisions of"
G.S. 136-31	(a)	"any local authority referred to in"
G.S. 163-166.40	(b)	"beginning date of early voting under"
G.S. 106-581.1	(c)(1)	"fide farm purpose as provided in"

APPARATUS III

Citation

FULL SECTION

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 136-32 (2025).

PINPOINT

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 136-32(a) (2025).

Pinpoint keys are set in the left margin of the text rather than line numbers: subsection designators are stable across editions and paper sizes, line numbers are not.

COLOPHON

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HISTORY PARENTHETICAL, AS PRINTED BY THE STATE

(1921, c. 2, s. 9(b); C.S., s. 3846(r); 1927, c. 148, ss. 56, 58; 1933, c. 172, s. 17; 1957, c. 65, s. 11; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1030, s. 39; 1993, c. 539, s. 981; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2011-408, s. 1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, ss. 3.1(a), (b), 6.1; 2019-119, s. 1; 2023-63, s. 2; 2023-140, s. 42; 2025-47, s. 15(a).)

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