

- **Sec. 13-592. - Private signs on public property.**

- (1)

Definitions. The following terms shall be understood to have the following corresponding meanings when utilized in this division:

Board: The Board of County Commissioners of Sumter County, Florida.

Private sign: A sign of any size or shape which is placed on (above ground) or in (anchored below ground) property owned by the board, including right-of-way as defined herein, which represents, advertises, or promotes any private business, commercial activity, political candidate, political position, or nonprofit organization, or which promotes any event related to the foregoing.

Right-of-way: Lands owned by Sumter County and governed by the board which abut county roads and provide a buffer between improved county roads and private property.

- (2)

Prohibition of private signs. No person shall erect or display, or cause or authorize any person or entity to erect or display, any private sign on property owned by the board or controlled by the board under a lease which through its terms requires that the board maintain said property. All private signs erected or displayed on property owned by the board or controlled by the board under a lease as described herein shall be photographed and then immediately removed and destroyed upon their discovery by agents or employees of the board. Said agents or employees of the board shall record by written log the location and appearance of the confiscated private sign(s), and process and preserve photographs as evidence for hearings before the special master as allowed herein. Signs placed by agents or employees of the board to aid in traffic control, public safety or other general governmental concerns shall not be subject to the limitations of this division. However, political or election-related private signs affiliated with an individual's candidacy for a county commission seat are governed and prohibited by this division in the same manner as any other political private sign related to a candidacy for public office.

- (3)

Exemptions. Private signs specifically licensed and approved by the board for placement on property owned or leased by the board prior to the effective date of this division, including private signs licensed for placement in Sumter County right-of-way, are exempt from the prohibitions and penalties enumerated herein. Moreover, the board may grant permits for the installation of a private sign on Sumter County property or right-of-way if there is a rational basis for the granting of the permit which furthers the interests of the health, safety and welfare of the public at large.

- (4)

Penalty. The entity or individual responsible for the placement of a private sign on property owned or leased by the board, or, in the case of private signs related to the promotion of political candidates, the candidate whose name appears on the private sign, shall be issued upon discovery and removal of a private sign on Sumter County property one (1) warning citation, served via certified mail. The person or entity shall then have fourteen (14) days to remove any additional affiliated private signs from county property. Following this fourteen-day period, any subsequently discovered private signs affiliated with that same person or entity shall result in a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00), levied by Sumter County Code Enforcement. Any appeal of such a fine shall be to the special master in the same manner as an appeal of any other code violation. The appellant may put forth any admissible evidence available which indicates that the appellant was not responsible for the placement of the private sign on county property before the special master.

(Ord. No. 2015-17, § 3(Exh. A), 9-22-15)