

**Section 5.3.4 on Exterior Decorations, Flags and Signage, as of January 18, 2021, supersedes and adds to Sections 5-23 and 5-27 of First River Farms Rules and Regulations as of June 20, 2016.**

### **5.3.4 Exterior Decorations, Flags and Signage**

Decorating of home exteriors, including displaying of flags and seasonal or holiday decorations, is encouraged.

- *Seasonal decorations* may reflect one of the four seasons – Spring (March-May), Summer (June-August), Autumn (September-November) and Winter (December-February).
- *Holiday decorations* may reflect a specific day set aside by law or custom – including (but not limited to) Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Easter, 4th of July, Halloween and Thanksgiving.

#### **5.3.4.1 General:**

- a. The display of seasonal, holiday or other decorative lighting and/or decorations does not require prior approval of the HOA Board of Directors as long as such display conforms to the following rules.
- b. A door wreath and one small decorative yard flag are allowed for each home.
- c. Garden statuary (including bird baths) in the front yard is limited to two items. Statuary must be of a reasonable size, color and weight to compliment the home and the neighborhood.
- d. A maximum of four non-holiday decorative items are allowed for each house. This may include any combination of small garden flags, free standing statuary and/or pots. In addition, each house may display up to two symbolic flags as outlined in Section 5.3.4.4.
- e. All decorative lighting and decorations must be tasteful (to any reasonable person) and appropriate for all ages.
- f. Decorative items must be confined to the resident’s property and not overflow onto a neighbor’s or common property.
- g. Decorative lighting or decorations that have begun to fade, become tattered or torn, or show other signs of wear are not allowed.
- h. When removing decorative lighting and decorations, all nails, hooks and other fasteners added to the structure of the home for display purposes must also be removed.
- i. Decorative items permanently attached to the home are not considered external decorations and are not allowed.

- j. If there is a complaint or dispute regarding any signage or exterior decoration, the HOA Board of Directors will determine any appropriate corrective action. Until the Board has made its decision, the homeowner/resident may continue to display the decoration, unless there is an immediate safety concern or it is considered to be inappropriate by any reasonable person.

5.3.4.2 *Seasonal Lighting and Decorations:* Seasonal lighting and decorations may be displayed for a maximum period of 3 months. They may be added to the home and/or yard no earlier than one week prior to the start of the season and must be removed no later than one week after the season ends.

5.3.4.3 *Holiday Lighting and Decorations:*

- a. For Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanza, decorative lighting and decorations may be displayed for a maximum period of 9 weeks. They may be added to the home and/or yard no earlier than 6 weeks before the holiday and must be removed no later than 3 weeks after the holiday.
- b. For all other holidays, decorative lighting and decorations may be displayed for a maximum period of 6 weeks. They may be added to the home and/or yard no earlier than one month before the holiday and must be removed no later than 2 weeks after the holiday.
- c. Holiday lighting and decorations on display for one holiday cannot overlap with lighting and decorations for another holiday.
- d. All holiday inflatable decorations must be size-appropriate for the yard, and may not encroach on sidewalks and neighboring properties at any time.

5.3.4.4 *Symbolic Flags:*

- a. Each home may display no more than two of the following symbolic flags:
  - an official national flag (U.S. or other country),
  - an official state or territorial flag,
  - a U.S. military flag,
  - a POW/MIA flag, or
  - a school or team flag.
- b. Displayed flags may be no larger than 3 feet by 5 feet.
- c. Flags must be in good repair and properly displayed. For example, according to U.S. flag etiquette, the U.S. flag may be displayed from sunrise to sunset, or if the flag is displayed 24 hours a day, it should be properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.
- d. Each flag must be flown from a pole anchored on the home by the front door (or another location on the same level as the front door). Flagpole brackets should not be anchored in the home's trim. Exceptions to this location rule (for example, hanging flags on decks) must be approved by the HOA Board of Directors.
- e. Flagpoles in yards are not allowed.

#### 5.3.4.5 Signage:

- a. No sign of any kind shall be displayed to public view on any building, through any window or door, in any yard, or otherwise, on any lot with the following exceptions.
  1. Only one sign may be displayed on an individual property to advertise the property for sale or rent. It may be displayed through a window or on a professional sign placed in a secure manner on the property's yard. Handwritten signs are not allowed.
  2. Directional signs are allowed for the duration of an open house event for a home that is for sale. (This does not apply to rentals.) The directional signs may be displayed only on the morning of the open house and must be immediately removed when the open house function is finished for the day.
  3. One home security sign may be displayed on each side of the home.
  4. A small decal may be placed on the window of a front storm door or sidelight, or a front first floor window, to notify emergency responders that individuals with special needs and/or pets are in the home.
  5. When required by Fairfax County for a home improvement project, a copy of the building permit must be displayed in a window for the duration of the project. (Refer to Section 5.2.11 on Renovations.)
  6. One temporary sign to announce a party or other event (for example, a child's birth) may be displayed on an individual property for one day only.
  7. One support sign may be displayed on an individual property for the duration of a school fund raiser.
  8. In accordance with the HOA by-laws, signs supporting a political candidate are allowed only for the political pre-election time period (2 months prior to election day) and must be promptly removed within two days after the election is over. Signs supporting a political candidate must be on the resident's property, and may not be placed on common property.
  9. No illuminated signs are allowed.
- b. Only the HOA Board of Directors may place signs on common property. The Board of Directors may post signs on common areas for informational purposes. Homeowners and/or their real estate agents may not place signs of any type on common property, unless authorized under the provision of Section 5.3.4.5.a.2. Any other signage on any common area will be removed.
- c. The HOA Board of Directors must approve any temporary signs not described in this section.