

**LEIGHTON TOWNSHIP  
ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN  
(Ordinance No. 2025-12-11)**

At a regular meeting of the Township Board for Leighton Township held on December 11, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Township offices, the following Ordinance was offered for adoption by Township Board Member Hooker and was seconded by Township Board Member Bonnema:

**AN ORDINANCE TO REGULATE CAMPING TRAILERS  
AND SIMILAR ITEMS AND TO PROVIDE PENALTIES FOR  
THE VIOLATION OF SUCH REGULATIONS.**

THE TOWNSHIP OF LEIGHTON (“Township”) ORDAINS:

**Section 1. Short Title.**

This Ordinance shall be known and may be cited and referred to as the “Leighton Township Camping Trailer Ordinance,” and shall hereinafter be referred to as the “Ordinance.”

**Section 2. Purpose and Intent.**

This Ordinance is intended to protect the health, safety and general welfare of the residents, property owners, inhabitants and citizens within the Township of Leighton, to protect property values within the Township, to enhance the scenic beauty of the Township and its neighborhoods, to provide an aesthetically pleasing environment in which to live and work by regulating the use and storage of camping trailers, and to provide penalties for the violation of this Ordinance.

Leighton Township does hereby find that the improper placement, storage, use and accumulation of camping trailers and similar items can be a public nuisance; constitutes an attractive nuisance to children and endangers their safety; decreases property values due to their sometimes poor aesthetic nature; interferes with the scenic beauty of the Township; can promote vandalism; and can be unsafe.

**Section 3. Definition.**

For purposes of this Ordinance, “Camper” shall mean any camping trailer, recreational vehicle (also called an “RV”), tent, “fifth wheeler,” motor home, pop-up trailer, or any vehicle or item designed, constructed or utilized for camping, sleeping overnight or temporary habitation.

**Section 4. Regulations for campers.**

- (a) For the time period from May 1 through November 1 (inclusive) of any calendar year, each lawful lot or parcel within the Township may have present outdoors at the same time no more than the following on site used for camping or overnight stays:
  - Two tents; or
  - Two campers; or
  - Both up to two (2) tents and two (2) campers.
- (b) Camping on a particular lot or parcel within a dwelling thereon shall not occur for more than fourteen (14) days during a calendar year for a lot under one acre in size and no more than thirty (30) days for a lot of one acre or larger. Camping on a lot or parcel without a dwelling thereon shall be limited to 14 days per calendar year.
- (c) All campers must be removed from the lot or parcel involved during the time period from November 2 through the next April 30 (inclusive) unless stored within a fully enclosed lawful building.
- (d) All campers that are designed as being street legal for travel must display a valid and current registration plate on its exterior for the vehicle at all times.
- (e) Quiet hours shall be observed between the hours of 11 p.m. at night and 7 a.m. the next morning.

- (f) All campers must be kept in good working condition and repair at all times.
- (g) All campers must be kept in a sanitary condition at all times.
- (h) All campers shall meet all zoning setback requirements for buildings. In addition, all campers must be kept a minimum of 50 feet away from the ordinary high water mark of any lake, stream or river and at least 20 feet from any dwelling on adjoining properties.
- (i) Upon the end of camping, all equipment and supplies must be removed.
- (j) Garbage and refuse must be kept in sanitary containers and periodically removed from the lot or parcel involved and lawfully disposed of off-site.
- (k) Areas used for camping shall be kept in a neat, orderly, clean and sanitary condition at all times.
- (l) Septic waste shall be properly and lawfully disposed of off-site.
- (m) Electric poles are not allowed on a lot or parcel for camping use or purposes unless the lot or parcel has a fully habitable lawful dwelling thereon.
- (n) Campfires shall be contained by a fire ring.
- (o) A burning permit shall be obtained beforehand when required by the Township Fire Department.
- (p) No campfire shall be used so as to constitute a nuisance or hazard to the occupants of neighboring or nearby properties due to the size or location of the fire, excessive smoke or noxious items being burned.
- (q) Camping activities shall not occur so as to be a nuisance to the occupants of adjoining or nearby properties.

- (r) No campers shall be used as a permanent dwelling or for habitation except as expressly otherwise allowed pursuant to this Ordinance.
- (s) No accessory structure, building or addition may be attached to, built over or added onto a camper. Such prohibited items include, but are not limited to, roof-overs, storage sheds, additions, decks and concrete paths.
- (t) No camper or camp site shall be rented or leased (except where allowed in a lawful campground).
- (u) No camper shall be connected to a water well or a sanitary sewer system.
- (v) A minimum of two (2) off street parking spaces shall be provided for every camper.
- (w) Every camper shall meet all Allegan County regulations and requirements.

**Section 5. Camper permits.**

- (a) Campers used in compliance with the time limits of Section 4 hereof does not require a Township camping permit. However, to the extent that camping or staying in or utilizing a camper on a lot or parcel exceeds the time limits specified in Section 4 hereof, the Township Zoning Administrator may allow additional camping beyond the 30-day annual limit by issuing a camping permit for the lot or parcel involved.
- (b) A camping permit shall not allow any camper to be used for camping, overnight sleeping or use for more than an additional thirty (30) days per calendar year (for a total of up to sixty (60) days per calendar year with the allowed automatic initial 30-day camping period specified in Section 4 hereof, on a lot with a dwelling being an acre or more in size plus up to an

additional 30 days with a camping permit issued by the Zoning Administrator. Or, for a vacant parcel or lot or a parcel or lot without a dwelling or a lot or parcel under one acre in size with a dwelling, a total of 44 days per calendar year with a zoning permit issued by the Zoning Administrator).

- (c) The Zoning Administrator may attach reasonable conditions to any camping permit.
- (d) In determining whether or not to issue a camping permit (and for how long), the Zoning Administrator shall consider all of the following:
  - (i) The size of the lot or parcel involved.
  - (ii) The setback and location of the camping area from property lines.
  - (iii) The density of dwellings in the vicinity.
  - (iv) The number of campers to be utilized.
  - (v) The proximity to ponds, lakes, streams or rivers and the relative risk of injury to natural features.
- (e) Camping permits may only be issued to the owner of the lot or parcel involved who shall be fully responsible for everything that occurs pursuant to the camping use or activity.
- (f) No camping permit shall be issued to persons under 18 years of age.

**Section 6. Nuisances.**

No use or activity associated with a camper shall be a nuisance to either the occupants of adjoining or nearby properties or vehicle occupants on adjoining public roads. For purposes of this Ordinance, a nuisance can include any of the following:

- (a) Any camping use or activity that violates either this Ordinance, the Township Zoning Ordinance or any other Township ordinance.
- (b) Any camping use or activity that violates a camping permit issued pursuant to this Ordinance.
- (c) A use, structure, camper or activity that is a common law nuisance under Michigan law.
- (d) Any unsafe, unhealthy, or dangerous condition or activity.

**Section 7. Storage.**

Campers may be parked or stored outdoors on a lot or parcel with a dwelling thereon when not in use on private property within the Township, provided that all of the following requirements are met:

- (a) Such campers are not used for living or sleeping purposes during the time period that they are being stored or parked on the property.
- (b) The stored or parked camper does not constitute a nuisance to the public or a fire hazard.
- (c) The parking or storage of the camper is in compliance with the Township Zoning Ordinance and this Ordinance.
- (d) Where practicable, the camper shall be stored either inside of a lawful building or outdoors on the property so as not to be seen from any private or public road when not being actively or lawfully used.
- (e) A camper shall not be parked or stored outdoors on a vacant lot or parcel (i.e. on a lot or parcel without a lawful habitable house, dwelling or cottage thereon) for more than 90 days during any calendar year.

- (f) All sewage shall be completely removed from the tanks or reservoirs of campers if parked or stored for longer than 60 days and shall be lawfully disposed of off-site.
- (g) Campers may not be stored or kept outdoors on vacant lots (i.e. lots without dwellings) when not in lawful use.

**Section 8. Nuisance.**

The use and presence of a camping trailer in violation of this Ordinance is hereby declared to be a public nuisance *per se*.

**Section 9. Prima Facie Evidence.**

The ownership, lease, occupation, or use of land by any person, entity, firm, or corporation upon which a camping trailer is used, stored, or placed shall be *prima facie* evidence that such person, firm, entity, or corporation stored or placed camping trailer upon such land, or permitted such camping trailer to be stored, or placed upon such land.

**Section 10. Violations: Penalty, Remedies and Enforcement.**

- (a) Any activity or use of land which is commenced or conducted, or any item or structure which is kept or used in violation of any provision of this Ordinance, is hereby declared to be a nuisance *per se*. Any person who disobeys, omits, neglects or refuses to comply with any provision of this Ordinance or any lawful order, interpretation or determination of or by the Township Zoning Administrator, Ordinance Enforcement Officer or any authorized deputy sheriff issued pursuant to this Ordinance shall be in violation of this Ordinance.
- (b) A violation of this Ordinance is a municipal civil infraction, for which the fines shall be as follows:
  - (1) Not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 for the first offense.

(2) Not less than \$250 nor more than \$1,000 for the second or other subsequent offense.

For purposes of this section, “subsequent offense” means a violation of any of the provisions of this Ordinance committed by the same person within 12 months of a previous violation of the same or other provision of this Ordinance for which said person admitted responsibility or was adjudicated to be responsible. Such fines shall be levied in the discretion of the court and shall be in addition to all other costs, damages, expenses and attorney fees incurred by the Township in enforcing the ordinance. Each day that a violation occurs shall constitute a separate offense.

(c) The following Township officials are authorized to enforce this Ordinance and to issue citations / tickets for the violation of provisions of this Ordinance which are hereby designated as municipal civil infractions, if they have reasonable cause to believe that an infraction has occurred, based upon personal observation or the report of a person who allegedly witnessed the infraction:

- (1) The Township Zoning Administrator.
- (2) The Township Enforcement Officer.
- (3) Any deputy of the Allegan County Sheriff’s Department.
- (4) The Township Supervisor.
- (5) The Township Building Inspector.

If a citation is based solely upon the complaint of a person who allegedly witnessed the violation, and is not based upon the personal observation of the authorized enforcing official, then the citation / ticket may nevertheless be issued if the enforcing official has reasonable cause to believe that the violation has occurred and if the Township attorney approves in writing the issuance of the citation / ticket, if such approval by the Township attorney is required by law.

The authorized Township official or other authorized official shall personally serve the citation / ticket upon the alleged violator; provided,

however, that if the municipal civil infraction involves the use or occupancy of land or a building or other structure, a copy of the citation / ticket need not be personally served upon the alleged violator but may be served upon an owner or occupant of the land, building or structure by posting a copy of the citation / ticket on the land involved or attaching a copy of the citation / ticket to the building or structure. In addition, in such a case, a copy of the citation / ticket shall be sent by first class U. S. mail to the owner of the land, building or structure at the landowner's last known address.

Citations / tickets shall require an appearance at the district court within a reasonable time after the citation / ticket has been issued.

The procedures for the admission or denial of responsibility, request for informal or formal hearings, and all other matters related to processing of citations for civil infractions shall be as provided by state law.

- (d) If the Township is involved in a lawsuit, municipal civil infraction proceeding or other court action in either the Allegan County Circuit Court or the District Court and should the Township prevail in whole or in part, then the Township shall be awarded its reasonable attorney fees and costs, including attorney fees and costs incurred by the Township leading up to the lawsuit, municipal civil infraction proceeding or other court proceeding, during the trial court or hearing proceedings in the Allegan County Circuit Court or the District Court and through any appeals.
- (e) Should any violation of this Ordinance cause damages to the owner(s) of any property adjoining the short-term rental premises (or to that property) or within 1,000-feet of the lot or parcel on which the short-term rental is occurring, then any person found guilty or responsible for a violation of this Ordinance (and for causing such damages) shall also be liable for reimbursing the owner(s) of the adjoining or nearby properties for any and all such damages and costs.
- (f) The civil fines, costs, assessments, damages and/or expenses imposed against a person found responsible for violating this Ordinance shall be paid to the

Township immediately upon entry of the court order. If any such fines, costs, interest, assessments, damages and/or expenses remain unpaid or unsatisfied after the time permitted for such payment or satisfaction, the Township may impose and record a lien upon the real property involved, to the extent permitted by law, and may enforce the lien to the extent and in the same manner as is provided by law for the enforcement of unpaid *ad valorem* real property taxes, including the inclusion of the monetary amount of such lien upon the *ad valorem* property tax roll, and the collection thereof in the same manner as *ad valorem* real property taxes are collected. The Township may also institute a one lot special assessment to collect all such monies.

- (g) In addition to issuance of a municipal civil infraction citation / ticket, the Township may also commence and enforce an action in a court of competent jurisdiction seeking injunctive, declaratory or other equitable relief to enforce or interpret any provision of this Ordinance, to require abatement of a violation and / or to seek such other relief as may be provided by law.
- (h) Any building, dwelling, structure, land division or land use or activity which is in violation of this Ordinance is declared to be a nuisance *per se*.
- (i) The remedies available to the Township under this Ordinance are cumulative and not exclusive or exclusionary.

**Section 11. Severability.**

In the event that any one or more sections, provisions, phrases, or words of this Ordinance shall be found to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not affect the validity or the enforceability of the remaining sections, provisions, phrases, or other words of this Ordinance.

**Section 12. Lawful Campgrounds**

This Ordinance shall not apply to lawful campgrounds that fully comply with the Leighton Township Zoning Ordinance.

**Section 13. Effective Date.**

The provisions of this Ordinance shall take effect upon the expiration of thirty (30) days after the date of publication of the ordinance or a summary of its provisions in accordance with the law.

The vote to approve and adopt this Ordinance was as follows:

YEAS: Hooker, Bonnema, Bultsma, Fennema, Wolbrink

NAYS: None

ABSENT/ABSTAIN: None

ORDINANCE DECLARED ADOPTED.

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of an Ordinance adopted by the Leighton Township Board at the time, date, and place as specified above pursuant to the required statutory procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

By Rachel Fennema  
Rachel Fennema  
Leighton Township Clerk