



Sidewalk Café Guidelines

The following Guidelines provide standards for the design, establishment and maintenance of Sidewalk Cafés in Edmonton. The intent is to encourage the use of public spaces to advance a café culture that enhances the vitality of the street while maintaining pedestrian flow and safety standards.

The updated standards will be applied in the review of each Sidewalk Café application.

Operational Requirements and Standards

Sidewalk Cafés may operate year round in accordance with the approved Sidewalk Café Permit and accompanying Sidewalk Café licence, subject to the following conditions:

1. The Sidewalk Café Permit shall be conditional upon the business owner providing proof of liability insurance, indemnifying the City from any claims or liabilities arising from use of City property.
2. The sidewalk café area, the sidewalk access, and clear-path pedestrian thoroughfare must be clear of snow at all times.
3. Propane shall be stored outside in a secure well-ventilated area away from building openings. (Caged or non-combustible strapping may be used to secure).

Types of Sidewalk Cafés

Minor Sidewalk Café

- No more than 8 seats shall be allowed
- The Sidewalk Café area should not be enclosed by railings or fencing.
- Liquor shall not be served or taken onto the café area by guests for consumption.

- Tables and chairs, and any movable heaters placed in the café area must be taken in at the end of each business day and stored off the Sidewalk Café site, such that they do not block access to exits.
- Minor Sidewalk Cafés may be arranged in a row abutting the front property line of an existing eating or drinking establishment, or placed adjacent to the curb lane in accordance with the setback and pedestrian pathway requirements established by Transportation Services.
- A Minor Sidewalk Café is not required to have a physical barrier; a demarcated area is preferred.

Major Sidewalk Café

- More than 8 seats shall be considered
- Maximum number of persons is subject to the approved occupancy load by Fire Rescue Services
- If liquor is to be served, a Liquor Licence must be obtained from the Provincial Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission.
- Fencing or railing will be required to meet Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission requirements.
- If the Sidewalk Café is not used on a continuous basis, the Business Owner must remove all furniture, umbrellas and railings from the café area.

Boardwalk Style Major Sidewalk Café

- A Boardwalk-style Sidewalk Café is a sub-type of a Major Sidewalk Café.
- A Boardwalk-style Sidewalk Café requires the occupation of City curbside parking spaces by a platform structure to create an alternate pedestrian walkway, and is subject to contextual design and safety considerations established by Transportation Services.
- The applicant may incur additional costs associated with the removal of any City infrastructure such as parking meters, parking signage, waste receptacles, etc., to accommodate this type of Sidewalk Café.

- Boardwalk-style Sidewalk Cafés shall be permitted to operate from May to October. The boardwalk must be removed from November to April. The business owner shall arrange with Transportation Services to reinstall City infrastructure that was removed as part of the boardwalk installation.

Café Area, Location and Restrictions

1. Sidewalk Cafés will be encouraged in areas recommended in Statutory Plans, Improvement Areas and permitted in appropriate Land Use Zones.
2. Sidewalk Café Permits will be restricted to eating and drinking establishments located on the ground floor of the adjacent building.
3. The Sidewalk Café owner or applicant should take into consideration that proximity to residential uses may affect the placement of seating and the location of outdoor speakers or amplification systems in accordance with Section 90 of the Zoning Bylaw.
4. The area of any Sidewalk Café may not exceed the interior floor area of the adjacent restaurant, and should not extend onto the neighboring business frontage, unless supported by the building owner.
5. Sidewalk Cafés will not be permitted in locations which, in the opinion of Transportation Services, obstruct sightlines at an intersection, or cause any operational or safety problem on the public road rights-of-way.
6. Sidewalk Cafés are not permitted on service grates, near bus stops, commercial loading zones or pedestrian crossing areas.
7. Minimum clearance zones are required around fire hose connections located within close proximity to Sidewalk Cafés (Refer to Fire Rescue Guidelines)

Pedestrian Circulation, Access and Setbacks

1. In heavily used pedestrian areas, a Sidewalk Café should be set back a minimum of 2.5 meters from the curb, or provide a minimum of 2.5 m of unobstructed sidewalk width for pedestrian movement.

2. In lightly used pedestrian areas, the Sidewalk Café should be set back a minimum of 2.0 m from the curb, or provide a minimum of 1.5 m of unobstructed sidewalk width for pedestrian movement.
3. The Sidewalk Café must maintain a minimum 1.5 m clear path to the entrance of the restaurant or food establishment and a minimum 1.82 m clear path of pedestrian travel along the abutting Sidewalk.
4. The Sidewalk Café must ensure adequate access to adjacent fire connections (refer to Fire Rescue Services Guidelines), parking meter and trees for maintenance and servicing.
5. Sidewalk Cafés should be designed for good accessibility.

Architecture & Patio Furniture

1. The design of the overall Café should reflect the architectural character of the adjacent building and streetscape, particularly in terms of furniture style, quality of construction, materials and type of fencing selected for the area enclosure.
2. All Sidewalk Café furniture must be of a commercial grade or similar quality and type to reflect a consistent café theme.
3. Sidewalk Café furniture must be designed and arranged to allow patrons and servers to move around comfortably in the café area to access its services.
4. Table sizes and arrangement of both Minor and Major Cafés shall ensure the patio furniture is contained within the designated café area.
5. Café furniture such as tables and chairs shall not be secured to any trees, public street furniture or anchored into the pavement or special sidewalks unless allowed by the City.
6. Decks, platforms or server greeting stations may be allowed in major cafés, subject to approval by the City, and provided that they are not permanently attached to the pavement and can be removed when the patio is not in use.

Landscaping, Fencing & Materials

1. Sidewalk Cafés should be designed to have an open appearance with a defined edge, such as a railing, fence, a row of planters or pots, or a painted line.
2. The Sidewalk Café owner is encouraged to use planters, flower boxes and landscaping elements to enhance the café atmosphere as well as to define the café boundary. Plastic plants and ornamental trees are not permitted.
3. Owners of Sidewalk Cafés located adjacent to the curb will be responsible for protecting and maintaining street trees and guards within the café area.
4. For Major Sidewalk Cafés, railings or fences are required to show the extent of the café area, establish setbacks from the curb, pedestrian pathway and other restrictions, and to meet the requirements of the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission if alcohol is to be served within the café area.
5. Railings or fences should not be more than 1.2 m in height and be generally transparent to allow for visibility and security.
6. Subject to the approval of Transportation Services, railings or fences may be secured into a concrete sidewalk, provided that the railing or fence is designed by an engineer with anchoring methods approved by the City prior to construction of the fence.
7. Structural requirements for Boardwalk structures shall be subject to consultation with Transportation Services.

Canopy, Awnings & Umbrellas

1. Awnings, Canopies and Umbrellas may be used to provide shade and weather protection for the Sidewalk Café. Materials and colours should coordinate with the surrounding buildings and contribute to the character of the streetscape.
2. A retractable or permanent awning or canopy affixed to the adjacent building require a separate Development and Building Permit.
3. Umbrellas should be designed specifically for market commercial or outdoor use and made of non-combustible material.

4. Umbrellas must be contained entirely within the Licenced Café area and must have a minimum 2.1 m in clearance in height from grade to aid in circulation.

Lighting & Signage

1. Lighting and signage for the café area should be designed to contribute to the appearance and ambiance of the café, as well as improve its safety and security as an urban gathering place.
2. Overhead lighting levels should be low enough, and directed downward into the café area, to reduce light impact on adjacent properties or pedestrians.
3. Power cables or strings of lights should not be exposed or strung over the pedestrian path to avoid creating tripping or electrical hazards.
4. A-frame signs may be permitted within the café area in locations that should not obstruct pedestrian movement.
5. Not more than one menu board, whether electronic or chalk board, will be permitted for each café. The menu board should be located preferably at the entrance to the café and be clearly visible from the sidewalk.
6. Proprietary logo/signature or name of the café/restaurant may appear on awnings and umbrellas. General advertising, including banner signs, is not permitted within the Sidewalk Café area or on the railings.

Liability Insurance, Heating & Smoking

1. The Applicant is required to maintain Liability Insurance as a condition of the Sidewalk Café Licence (minimum of \$2,000,000 coverage). Minor Cafés may add coverage under the existing Business Licence.
2. Commercial grade heating, including radiant heating, propane, natural gas or other heating elements may be installed, but must be operated in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. The heating unit must be located and used so that it is not a hazard to Sidewalk Café patrons or pedestrians.
3. Fire service connections and/or hydrants must be unobstructed and accessible at all times. Refer to Fire Rescue Guidelines.
4. Smoking is prohibited in all Sidewalk Café areas and nearby public places.

Obligations, Performance and Enforcement

1. The applicant or business owner is expected to maintain the Café area and furniture in a clean and hygienic manner, and secure or store the Café furniture when not in use outside the hours of business operation.
2. The permit holder is responsible to notify Transportation Services to facilitate the removal of any City infrastructure 30 days prior to the installation of any boardwalk structure.
3. The permit holder shall ensure that pedestrian access and the sidewalk surface in the café area are free of snow in the winter months.
4. At the termination of the Sidewalk Café Permit or Licence, the applicant must return the café area to its pre-approved condition as outlined in the Licence of Occupancy requirements.
5. Restaurants which default in the performance of any of the obligations of the Sidewalk Café Permit will be cited and given time to rectify the problem. If the problem persists, the Permit may be terminated and enforcement measures initiated by Transportation Services to rectify the problem at the owner's expense.
6. Sidewalk Cafés operating on public road rights-of-way without a valid Sidewalk Café Permit will be subject to various forms of enforcement by the City. Enforcement measures can include a verbal warning from authorized City personnel, a tag being issued for obstructing a highway without a permit, and/or removal of the obstructions (including tables, chairs, decks, or any other item placed on the road right-of-way).
7. Traffic Operations reserves authority over the road right-of-way and when required will exercise this right to request removal of Sidewalk Cafe area due to safety, construction, or community needs. We will work with proprietors to establish a Sidewalk Cafe area subject to safe pedestrian movements and setbacks from travel lanes.
8. If Traffic Operations has safety objections, the Sidewalk Cafe will not be installed or will issue removal notice within 24 hours when conflicts are identified. Emergencies may necessitate faster removal times as required by

Traffic Operations, Emergency Services or the City Manager's Office. Under these situations, care will be taken for removal of infrastructure, but the City will not be held liable for damages to Sidewalk Cafe Licence infrastructure added to the road right-of-way by the proprietor.