City of Pittsburgh
SIDEWALK CAFE APPROVALS

WHAT ARE THE GENERAL REQUIREMENTS?

Sidewalk cafes must directly abut the facade of a functioning restaurant with a valid retail food license and an occupancy permit. They must be located on a sidewalk large enough to accommodate the cafe plus a 5 foot pedestrian access way.

WHAT ARE THE OPERATIONAL STANDARDS?

- Operation must be during the normal business hours, but no earlier than 7 AM and no later than 2 AM.
- Furnishings must be kept in a state of good repair and in a clean and safe condition at all times.
- Furnishings and rope and stanchion must be off the sidewalk by close of business, but no later than 2 AM each day.
- Permittees are bound by all applicable rules for alcohol and tobacco consumption, including State statutes and City ordinances.
- The sidewalk surface in the sidewalk cafe area shall be maintained in good repair.
- Sanitary cleaning of the sidewalk cafe dining area before, during, and after food service is required.
- On-site copies of the PLI Certificate of Occupancy for a sidewalk cafe and the certified site plan must be maintained. Both shall be presented on request from an enforcement official from Public Safety, DPW, PLI or other authorized representative of the City. The DPW sidewalk cafe permit shall be displayed in the front window, clearly visible from the street.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE ON MY SITE PLAN?

Plans must be on 11" x 17" or smaller paper, be stamped by an architect or engineer and clearly identify:

- Property identification, including restaurant address, parcel number, adjacent streets, contact information and scale of drawing;
- Location and width of existing restaurant storefront;
- Square footage of the encroachment and cafe;
- Entries and exits to restaurant storefront;
- Entries and exits to sidewalk cafe;
- Layout of tables and chairs;
- Dimensions of the barrier system (including height) and the passageway/aisle clearances; and
- Other obstructions, including light poles, traffic signal poles, fire hydrants, utility structures, bike racks, parking meters, street trees and street signs.

ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS?

An application for a sidewalk cafe with 4 or fewer seats and no more than 2 seats per table is exempt from the standards of 911.04.A.68. This type of sidewalk cafe must be accessory to a primary use with a valid Certificate of Occupancy for Restaurant or Retail Sales and Services for coffee shop/cafe use only and must follow the application process described in this handout.

WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS OF 911.04.A.68?

These standards apply to all sidewalk cafes except as noted in the exceptions.

- The sidewalk cafe is limited to the width of the frontage of the restaurant which it directly abuts.
- The portion of the right-of-way to be used may be no greater than one-half of the space measured between the outside face of the curb and the property line.
- A 5-foot minimum unobstructed pedestrian passageway must be provided between the curb and the cafe.
- No obstruction shall be placed within 18 inches of the face of any curb, or within 5 feet of any fire exit, fire hydrant, or building corner.
- The sidewalk cafe may only include movable tables and chairs to be used by customers.
- No standing room, music, service equipment, signage, cashier stations, or trash receptacles may be in the sidewalk cafe area or on the sidewalk.
- The sidewalk cafe area shall be separated from the designated pedestrian passageway by a removable rope and stanchion surronding the perimeter.
- The height of the barrier must be approximately 3 feet and removed when the cafe is closed. Any holes in the sidewalk shall be capped when the barrier is not in place.
- The barrier should be high quality. Plastic is discouraged.

WHAT ADDITIONAL STANDARDS APPLY?

These standards apply to all sidewalk cafes.

- Sidewalk cafes must be the same elevation as the public sidewalk. Prohibited coverings include paint, carpeting and turf.
- Federal accessibility standards must be met.
- One table must be ADA compliant.

WHO REVIEWS THE APPLICATION?

Applications for sidewalk cafes are reviewed by the Department of Public Works, the Division of Zoning and Development Review, and the Department of Permits, Licenses and Inspections. Annual renewals are needed from DPW only. Zoning and PLI only need to review again if the layout changes.

TURN PAGE FOR APPLICATION PROCESS →

LEGAL DISCLAIMER: *This handout should not be used as a substitute for applicable law, including the City of Pittsburgh Zoning Code. The applicant is responsible for compliance with all applicable legal requirements, whether or not addressed in this handout.*

SIDEWALK CAFE CHECKLIST

APPLICATION PROCESS

1 Public Works, 611 2nd Street, Pittsburgh, 7 AM - 3 PM, 412-255-2765

Contact Public Works to obtain the necessary paperwork and verify minimum sidewalk width. Then, develop a site plan, complete the paperwork and make the application to Public Works. It is helpful to call in advance and set up a time to come in. The following documentation and payment is required:

- ☐ Site plan (see opposite page) drawn to scale and stamped by a registered architect or engineer.
- ☐ Photograph of the cafe frontage and description of outdoor furniture, including dimensions and catalog specs if known.
- ☐ Pre-printed Acceptance Form signed by the Property Owner acknowledging the conditions and requirements.
- ☐ Undated Check or Money Order for $150 plus $1 for each sq ft of cafe area, payable to Treasurer, City of Pittsburgh. Certificate from proprietor's insurance naming the City as coinsured with minimum amounts of $100,000 to $300,000 for Public Liability and $50,000 for Property.

Public Works will conduct a field check to verify the accuracy of the site plan.

2 Zoning Office, 200 Ross Street, 3rd Floor, Pittsburgh, 8 AM - 3 PM, 412-255-2241

After the paperwork is verified by Public Works, the application is marked accepted. Proceed to Zoning, where the site plan will be reviewed for dimensional compliance, the occupancy permit will be verified, and the proposed rope and stanchion device is evaluated. The following documentation is required:

- ☐ Accepted Application from Public Works including the Inter-Departmental Approval Form.
- ☐ Site plan (see opposite page) drawn to scale and stamped by a registered architect or engineer.
- ☐ Image of Rope and Stanchion Device. Photo or catalog/web image acceptable.

3 PLI, 200 Ross Street, 3rd Floor, Pittsburgh, 8 AM - 3 PM, 412-255-2181

If approved, Zoning will issue a voucher and stamp the site plan as approved. Proceed to the Department of Permits, Licenses and Inspections (PLI) with the required documentation listed below. PLI will verify there are no violations on the restaurant parcel and then examine the plan for compliance with accessibility standards and the building code. The following documentation and payment is required:

- ☐ Accepted Application from Public Works including the Inter-Departmental Approval Form.
- ☐ Voucher and site plan approved by Zoning Office.
- ☐ Site plan (see opposite page) drawn to scale and stamped by a registered architect or engineer.
- ☐ Check or Money Order for the fee, Payable to Treasurer, City of Pittsburgh.

PLI will contact the applicant to schedule an inspection of the cafe. At this time, the cafe is to be set up by the applicant but may not legally be in use, until all approvals are given.

4 Public Works, 611 2nd Street, Pittsburgh, 7 AM - 3 PM, 412-255-2765

Once the above steps are completed, the applicant must return all the approved paperwork to Public Works including the Inter-Departmental Approval Form. The Director of Public Works will then submit the application to the appropriate City Councilmember. The City Councilmember shall acknowledge, in writing, having reviewed the sidewalk cafe application, prior to issuance of the permit.

The Director of Public Works notifies the applicant of the City's decision. If approved, the sidewalk cafe permit is issued by the Department of Public Works. A Department of Public Works representative demarcates the margins of the approved sidewalk cafe on the sidewalk.

An occupancy permit is issued by PLI and mailed to the applicant.

Please note that this document is intended to guide the applicant through the sidewalk cafe approval process. Please refer to Pittsburgh Code sections 416.08 and 911.04.A.68 for complete requirements.