



Storefront Seating Design Guidelines

Land Acknowledgement

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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1. Introduction to storefront seating

The Storefront Seating Design Guidelines were developed to help you plan, place, and operate storefront seating (formerly small sidewalk patio) that meets City requirements. This guide is a reference tool to support your application with explanations, diagrams, measurements and photo examples. Inside, you'll find information on:

- Design guidelines for storefront seating
- Helpful resources to support your application

Please read this guide carefully. For more detail on the application process and to apply for a permit, please visit the [Storefront Seating webpage](#).

1.1 STOREFRONT SEATING

Storefront seating provides businesses with an easy, low-cost, and low-barrier option for outdoor customer seating. The permit term for storefront seating is **May 1 to April 30**.

i **Liquor service and consumption is not permitted for storefront seating**
Learn more about [sidewalk patios](#) and [curbside patios](#) for outdoor seating options that can support liquor service.

1.2 HOURS OF OPERATION

Storefront seating is only permitted on the sidewalk during hours when the business is open and must be removed at the end of each business day. Furniture must be removed no later than 11pm or as indicated on the business license or patio permit.

1.3 WHO CAN HAVE STOREFRONT SEATING

Storefront seating is available only to ground-floor businesses and is limited to those with a valid business licence. Eligible businesses include food-service establishments (e.g. cafés and restaurants) as well as non-food-service businesses (e.g. retailers, hairdressers, pharmacies).

1.4 WHERE CAN STOREFRONT SEATING BE PLACED?

Storefront seating can be placed on the sidewalk on City property directly adjacent to your business' frontage and/or side (flankage). Outdoor seating on [private property](#) has a different process. If you are unsure where your property line is please [contact 311](#).

✓ Where storefront seating **can** be placed:



Photo 1: Table and chairs adjacent to business' frontage



Photo 2: Benches adjacent to business' frontage and side

✗ Where storefront seating **cannot** be placed:



Photo 3: Tables and chairs not against the business' frontage and obstructs the sidewalk



Photo 4: Tables and chairs not against the business' frontage

2. Guidelines for storefront seating

Sidewalks accommodate a wide range of uses and activities, including people walking, using strollers, or mobility devices. Sidewalks also have essential infrastructure such as fire hydrants, in-ground utilities, trees, bike racks, and other street furniture.

These guidelines will help you set up your storefront seating so that sidewalks remain safe, accessible and welcoming for everyone.



2.1 DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR STOREFRONT SEATING

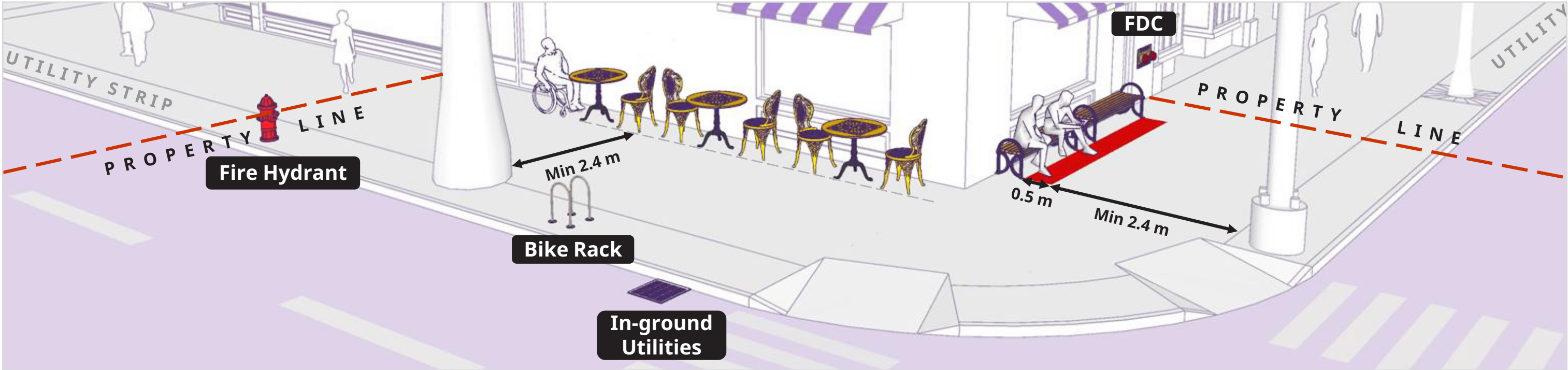


Figure 1: Storefront seating in the public realm

- a. Businesses must maintain a minimum of **2.4 m** sidewalk clearance from the storefront seating area (see Figure 1).
 - Measurements are to be taken from the edge of the table or the utility strip to the nearest obstruction (e.g. trees, bike racks, parking meters).
 - Additional sidewalk clearance may be required in areas with high volumes of pedestrians, such as intersections on busy commercial streets.
- b. Only a single row of furniture is allowed. Permitted configurations include:
 - A single row of tables with a maximum of two chairs each. A third chair is not permitted because it can't be placed against the building and can obstruct the sidewalk clearance.
 - A single row of chairs or bench(es) lined up against the building facing towards the sidewalk. The chairs and bench(es) must have with an additional **0.5 m** to accommodate the leg room for people sitting.
- c. Railings around the seating area are not permitted. Visit the Patio Program webpage to learn more about more about [sidewalk patios](#) for outdoor seating with railings.
- d. Umbrellas and standalone heaters are not permitted for storefront seating. Awnings require a [separate permit](#).

- e. All furniture must be placed against (touching) the building and:
 - Must not extend beyond the permitted business.
 - Must not be anchored or affixed to the sidewalk. Any alterations to a City sidewalk are prohibited (no glueing, drilling, etc.).
 - Must not block visibility or access to fire department connections.
 - Must not block building entrances or exits.
 - Must not block access to in-ground utilities such as maintenance hole covers, and other utilities.



Photo 5: In-ground utilities

i Maintaining a minimum **2.4 m** clearance on the sidewalk is important for accessibility.

2.2 EXAMPLES OF NON-COMPLIANT STOREFRONT SEATING



Photo 6: Standalone heaters are not permitted



Photo 7: Umbrellas and tables with more than two chairs each are not permitted



Photo 8: Affixing storefront seating is not permitted



Photo 9: All furniture must be placed against the building and cannot obstruct the sidewalk

2.3 BUSINESS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- Make sure storefront seating is located on the sidewalk on City property directly adjacent to your business' frontage and/or side.
- Obtain a City permit for storefront seating.
- Maintain the cleanliness of your storefront seating and the space around it.
- Always make sure furniture is up against (touching) the building. It's normal for furniture to move as people use it, but it is your responsibility to move it back to where it's supposed to be.
- Storefront seating is only permitted on the sidewalk during hours when the business is open, and furniture must be removed at the end of each business day. Furniture must be removed no later than 11pm or as indicated on the business license or patio permit.
- Patrons must not disturb local residents.
- Live entertainment, broadcasting, and amplified sounds including music and speech are not permitted.



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