



Summer Curbside Patio 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 sə́lilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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Overview

The Summer Curbside Patio Design Guidelines were developed to help you plan and design a summer curbside patio that meets City requirements. These guidelines were informed by engagement with local businesses and industry representatives, permit holders and the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC).

This guide is a reference tool to support your patio application with explanations, diagrams, measurements and photo examples. Inside, you'll find information on:

- Accessibility requirements and design options to meet those requirements
- Patio design elements and accessories
- Resources to support your application

Once your application is reviewed and approved by the City, you will be provided an approved drawing with detailed instructions on where to build your curbside patio. You must follow this approved drawing and instructions.

1. Introduction to summer curbside patios

Summer curbside patios allow businesses to add customer seating outdoors in the curb lane. Curbside patios are permitted seasonally from **April 1 to October 31** each year. To build and operate a summer curbside patio, businesses require a patio permit from the City of Vancouver.

1.1 WHERE CAN A SUMMER CURBSIDE PATIO BE INSTALLED?

Summer curbside patios can be installed on **City property**, usually in front of a business in the curblane that is normally used for full-time on-street parking. If you are unsure whether you can install a summer curbside patio, please [contact the City](#).

Where curbside patios **can** be installed:



Photo 1: Patios in a curb lane

Some locations in curb lanes, however, cannot be used for patios, including but not limited to areas with bus stops, no-stopping zones, or parking with rush hour restrictions.

Where curbside patios **cannot** be installed:



Photo 2: Bus stops



Photo 3: No stopping zones



Photo 4: Rush hour restrictions

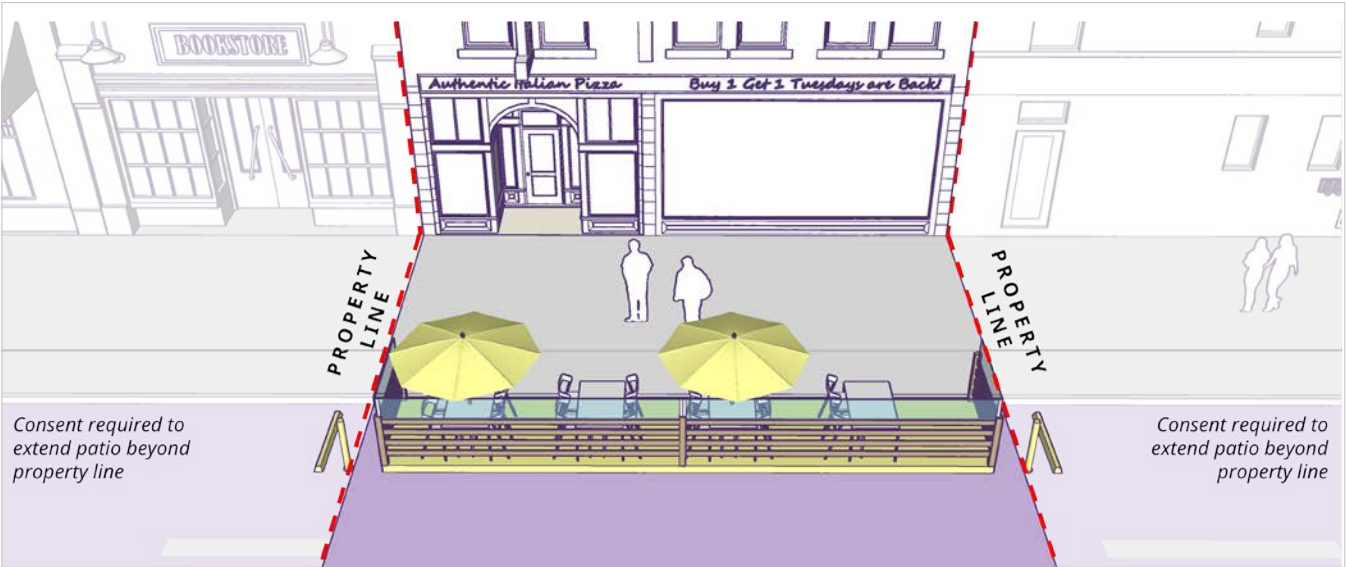


Figure 1: Patio within property line

Your curbside patio must be in front of your business, in the space between **your property lines** (see Figure 1). If you would like to extend your patio beyond your property lines, this will require **consent from your neighbour(s)**. Your patio may be able to extend in front of one neighbouring property on either or both sides. Visit the [Summer Curbside Patio webpage](#) for the Adjacent Tenant Consent Letter.

1.2 DIMENSIONS OF A CURBSIDE PATIO (PATIO FOOTPRINT)

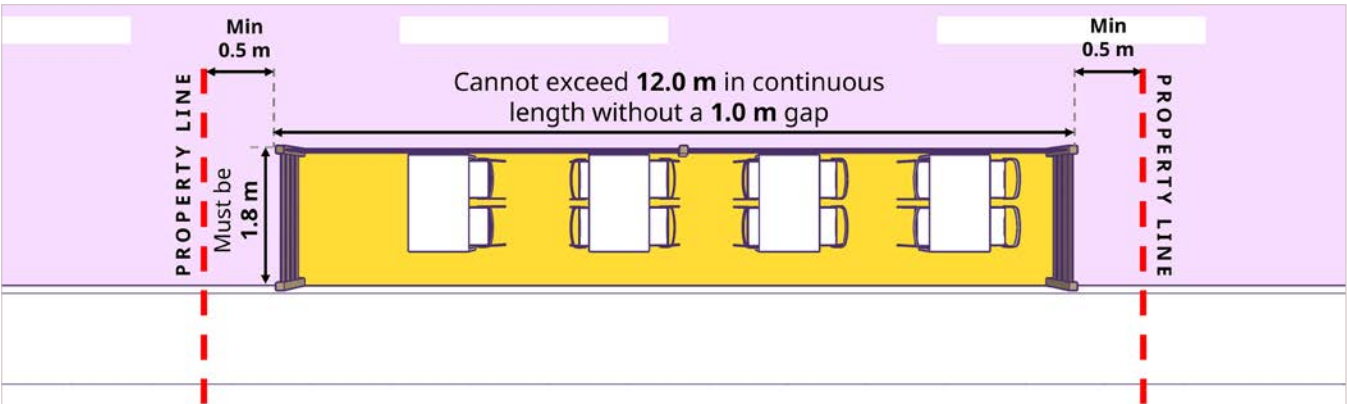


Figure 2: Dimensions of a curbside patio

- a. Patio width must be **1.8 m** from the curb (see Figure 2).
- b. Patio length varies per site conditions, but must not exceed **12.0 m** in continuous length without a **1.0 m** gap to provide emergency access from the road to the building (see Figure 2).
- c. Patio must be minimum **0.5 m** offset from your property line (see Figure 2).
- d. The patio and all its elements must be fully contained within the “patio footprint”.

i Contact us about curbside patios that span onto the sidewalk

Some locations may be feasible for a wider curbside patio that extends from the curb lane onto the front boulevard or sidewalk. This option is only permitted where site conditions allow and may not be feasible at every location. At least **2.4 m** of unobstructed sidewalk must be maintained, and utilities in the boulevard such as parking meters, trees and bike racks must be accommodated. To determine whether a patio extension onto the boulevard may be permitted at your location, please [contact the City](#).



Photo 5: Patios spanning onto sidewalk

1.3 PUBLIC REALM CLEARANCES

The public realm includes all the areas in the street that people share and use, such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and road space. Because it's a busy space with lots of users and activities, maintaining a clear pedestrian path and traffic sightlines around patios is important for safety.

The public realm also includes elements such as fire hydrants, fire department connections (FDC), in-ground utilities, trees, and other features that keep the City functioning and public spaces welcoming. Patios must leave enough space, or “clearances”, to safely fit into the public realm.

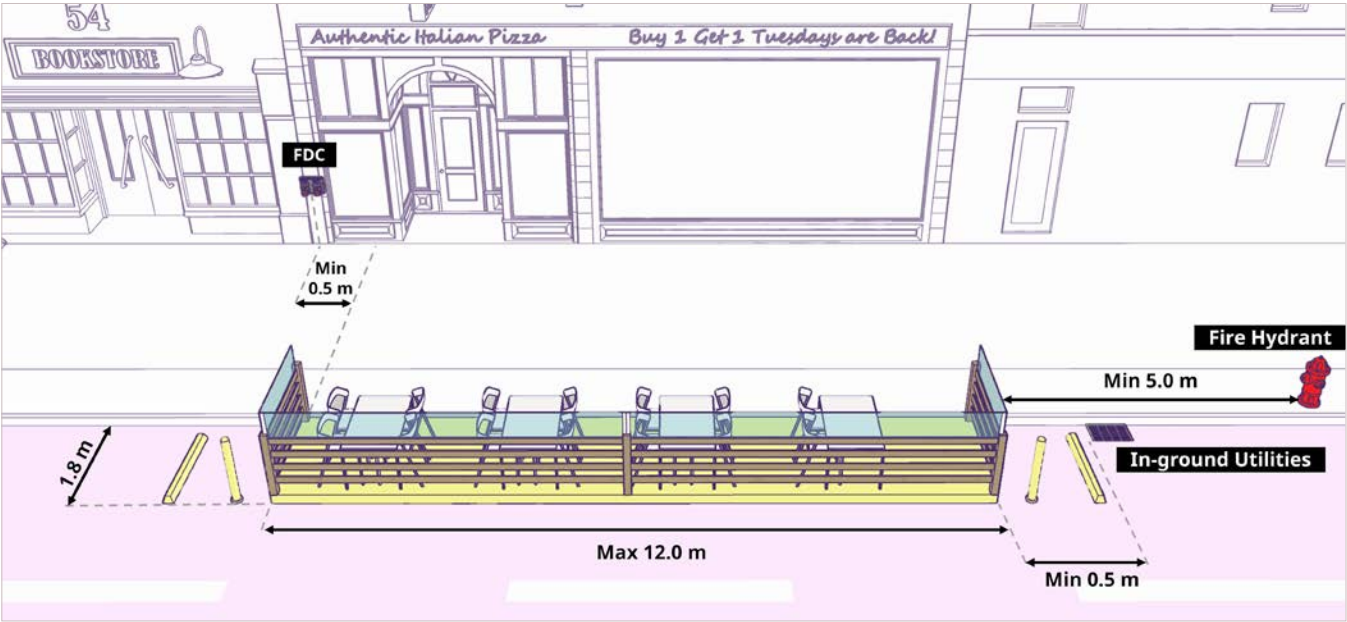


Figure 3: Curbside patio in the public realm

Public realm clearance guidelines:

- a. A minimum **5.0 m** clearance from fire hydrants (see *Figure 3*).
- b. A minimum **0.5 m** clearance on both sides of the FDC, measured from the centre point of the FDC (see *Figure 3*).
- c. A minimum **0.5 m** clearance from in-ground utilities, such as maintenance holes, catch basins, water valves, etc (see *Figure 3*).

- d. If there is no existing “no stopping anytime” regulation sign, a minimum **6.0 m** from a street corner, measured from the nearest edge of the closest sidewalk on the intersecting street is required (see *Figure 4*).



Figure 4: Clearance from a street corner

- e. A minimum **1.5 m** from a driveway (see *Figure 5*).

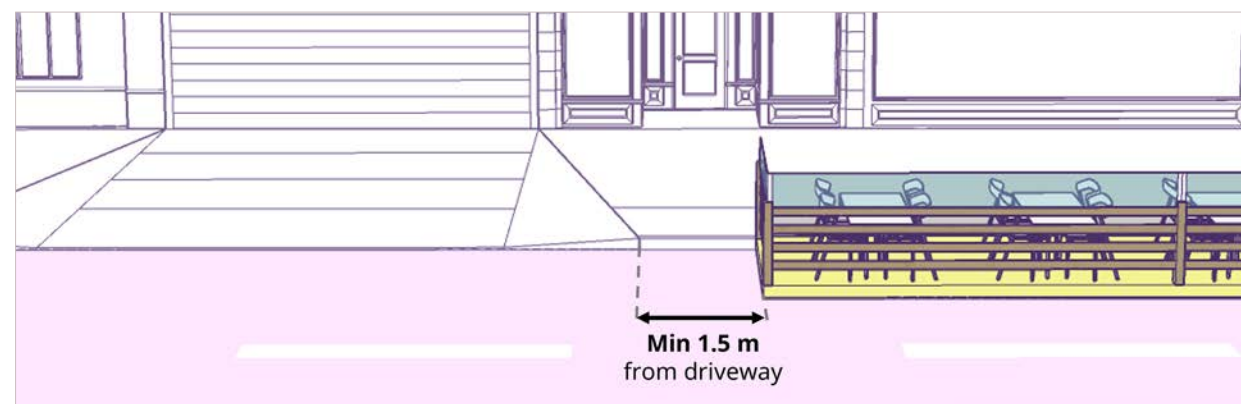


Figure 5: Clearance from a driveway

- f. A minimum **1.5 m** from a laneway (see *Figure 6*).

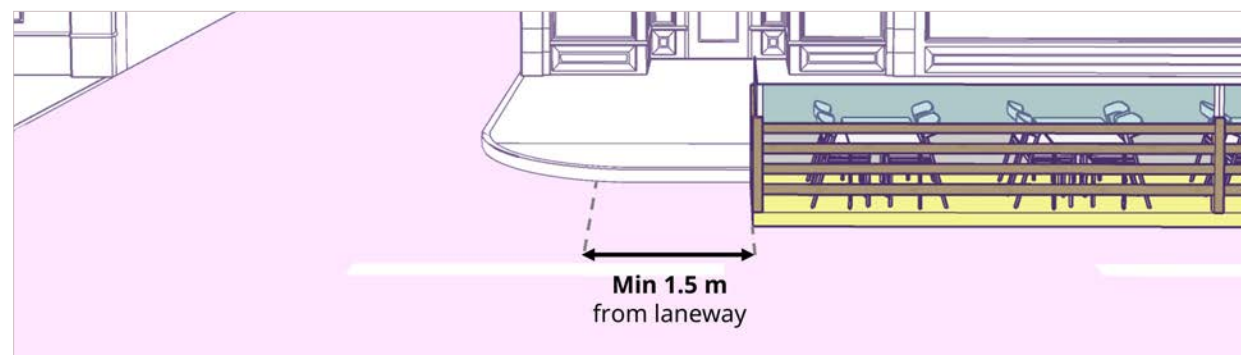


Figure 6: Clearance from a laneway

- g. A minimum **1.0 m** gap between two patios to provide emergency access from the road to the building (see *Figure 7*).

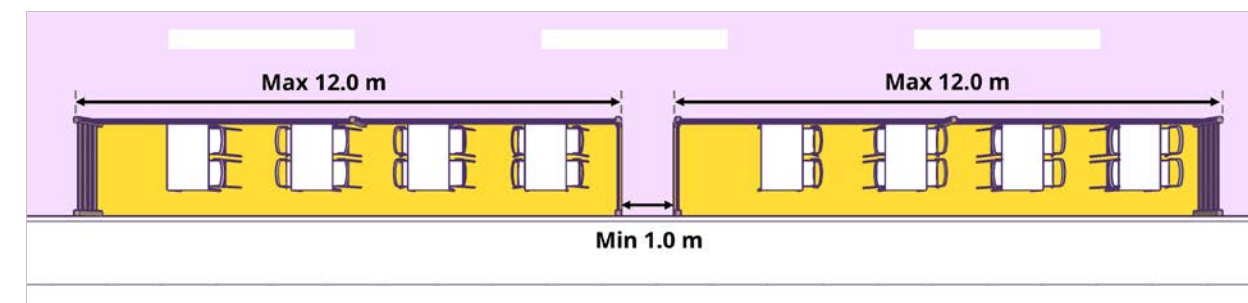


Figure 7: Gap between two patios

- h. A minimum **0.5 m** clearance from outer edge of the tree well (see *Photo 6*).
- Pruning, trimming or attaching anything to trees are not permitted.
 - Businesses may submit pruning requests for branches below **3.0 m** (10 ft) to [311 Tree Maintenance](#). If approved, all costs for trimming and pruning are the responsibility of the business.



Photo 6: Patio next to tree well

i Important: If your patio is on a street with trolley buses

When installing or removing patios around **trolley overhead infrastructure** (cables and poles used to power trolley buses), you are responsible for reviewing and following [TransLink's Trolley Overhead Limits of Approach](#). If your patio is located near trolley overhead infrastructure, [contact Translink](#) to learn about these safety requirements.

i City access to in-ground utilities

City crews must have access to in-ground utilities near your patio. You may need to temporarily remove your patio so that crews can do their work. The City will provide you advance notice. All costs for temporarily removing the patio are the responsibility of the business.

2. Making your summer curbside patio accessible

As part of the [Accessibility Strategy](#), the City is committed to making public spaces inclusive so that everyone can access and enjoy them with independence. This includes removing physical barriers and designing spaces that support the full participation of people with disabilities.

Updated accessibility requirements for all summer curbside patios include:

- Minimum one (1) accessible seating area
- An accessible path of travel from the sidewalk and entry onto the patio

This section provides design options and guidelines to help businesses meet these new accessibility requirements.



2.1 ACCESSIBLE SEATING AREA, PATH OF TRAVEL, AND ENTRY

An **accessible seating area** is where a person using any mobility device can comfortably maneuver in and out of the space. The area must be a minimum of **1.7 m x 1.7 m** and must remain free of obstructions. The surface must be firm, stable, and slip resistant.

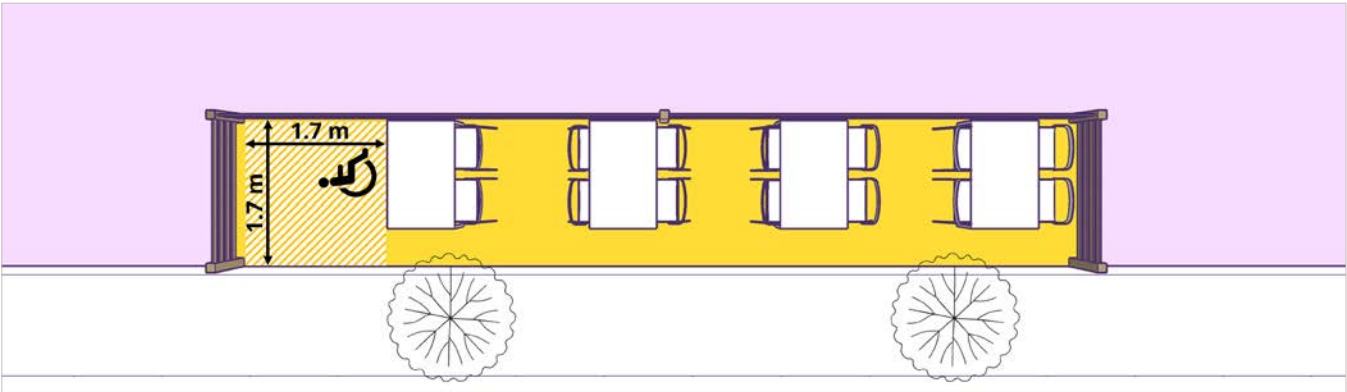


Figure 8: Accessible seating area

To ensure people using mobility devices can access the curbside patio, a minimum **1.6 m path of travel** must lead from the sidewalk to the accessible seating area. The path of travel must remain clear and unobstructed.

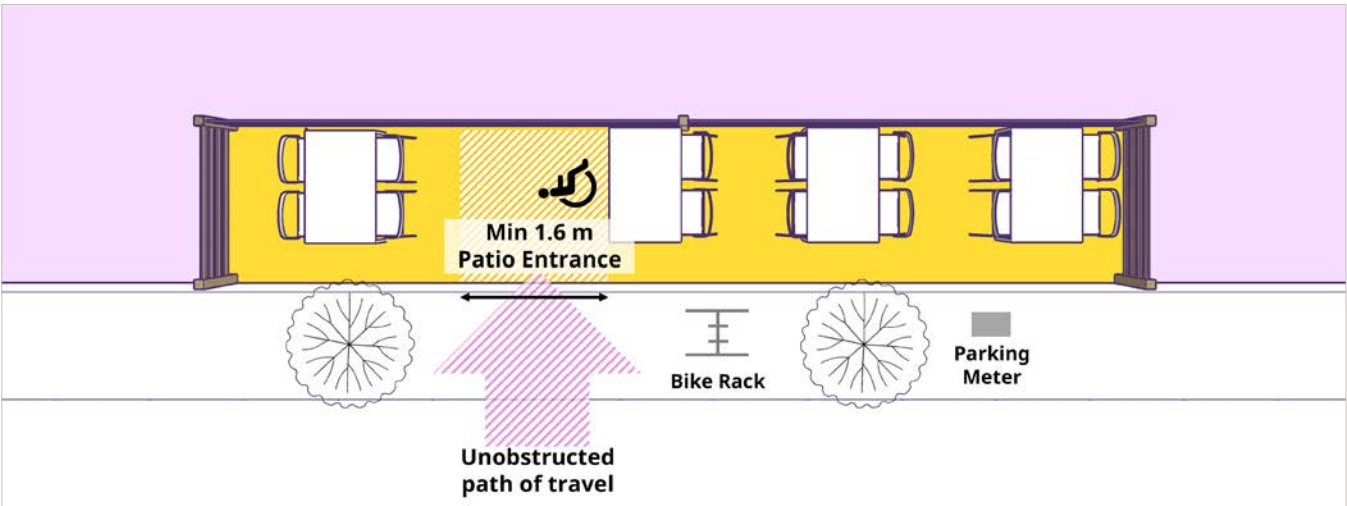


Figure 9: Path of travel and accessible patio entrance

The **accessible entry** onto the patio must be a minimum clear width of **1.6 m**.

The accessible entry must be flush with the curb, with a horizontal gap no greater than **13 mm** (½") with a vertical change no greater than **6 mm** (¼") (see *Figure 10*). Vertical separations greater than **6 mm** (¼") must be beveled with a slope not steeper than **1:2**. (see *Figure 11*).

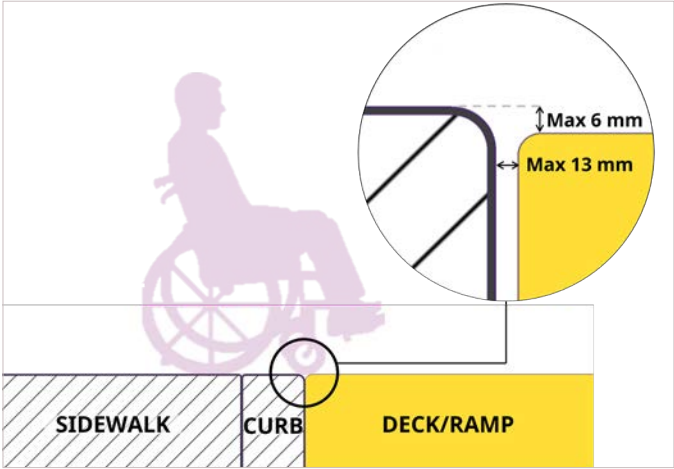


Figure 10: Curb-deck transition

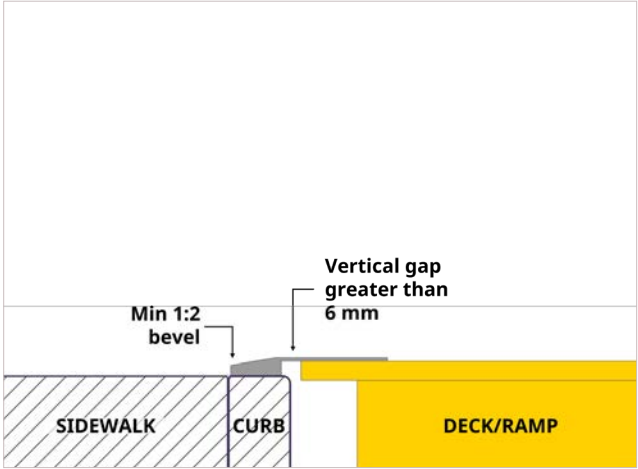


Figure 11: Vertical separations greater than 6 mm

If aisles are provided (e.g. between two rows of tables), they must maintain a minimum width of **1.1 m**.

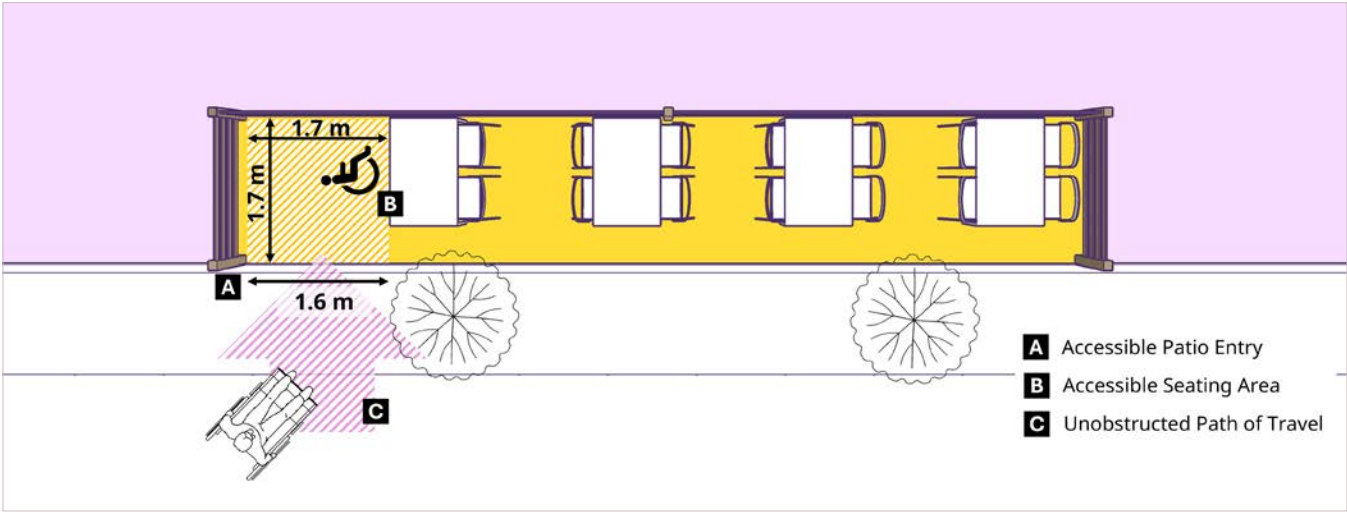


Figure 12: Summary of accessibility requirements for summer curbside patios

i Learn more about accessible seating area and path of travel in the [Vancouver Building By-Law](#) (VBBL).

2.2 DECKS AND RAMPS

Decks provide a flush, accessible entry onto the patio from the sidewalk. On sloped sites, the deck may not be level with the sidewalk for the full length of the patio.

All decks must meet these guidelines:

- Provide an accessible seating area, path of travel, and accessible entry per “2.1 Accessible seating area, path of travel, and entry” on page 13.
- Openings and gaps in the deck surface must be no more than **13 mm** (½") to ensure a smooth and even surface (see *Figure 13*).

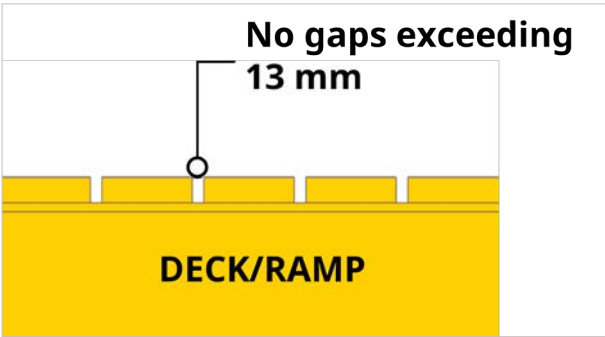


Figure 13: Openings in deck surface

- The deck surface must be level, firm, stable and slip resistant.
- Decks must not be anchored, bolted, or glued to the street or sidewalk.
- Alterations or changes to public property are prohibited.
 - For example: covering road surfaces and sidewalks with carpeting or astroturf is not allowed.
- A drainage channel must be provided to allow water to flow to the catch basin. This will prevent water from pooling and debris from building up. See “2.4 Drainage Requirements” on page 23.

There are **four** different options to make your curbside patio accessible:

- Option A: Full deck
- Option B: Partial deck
- Option C: Terraced deck
- Option D: Ramps

i **Exemptions for decks under 0.6 m (2 ft) in height**

- Decks under **0.6 m** (2ft) in height are exempt from professional drawings and schedules sealed by an Engineer or Architect.
- Decks that are over **0.6 m** (2 ft) in height are subject to additional requirements and review time – please [contact the City](#) for more information.

2.2.1 Option A: Full deck

A full deck spans the entire curbside patio footprint, creating one continuous surface, and must follow the guidelines for all decks listed in “2.2 Decks and ramps” on page 15.

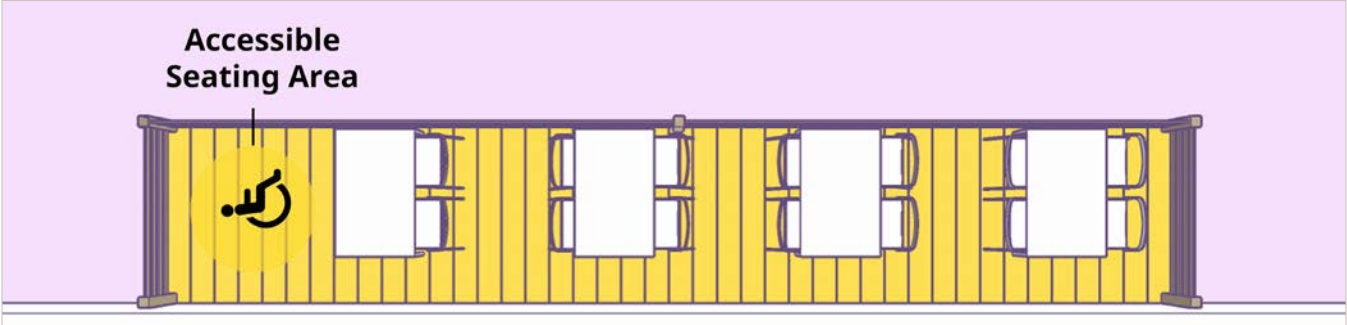


Figure 14: Full deck (Plan view)



Figure 15: Full deck (Front view)

2.2.2 Option B: Partial deck

A partial deck accommodates for the accessible seating area, path of travel and entry onto your curbside patio without having to build the full length of the footprint. Partial decks must follow the guidelines for all decks listed in “2.2 Decks and ramps” on page 15.



Figure 16: Partial deck (Plan view)

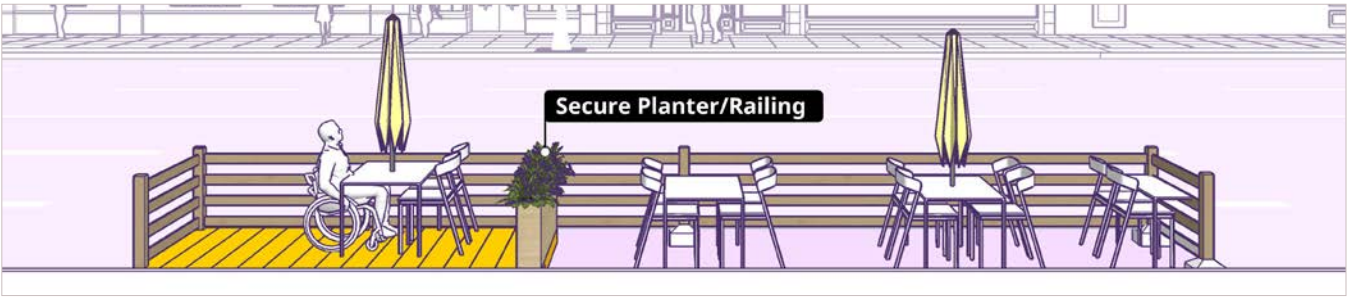


Figure 17: Partial deck (Front view)

Additional guidelines for partial decks:

- a. Must be large enough to accommodate accessibility requirements.
- b. For safety reasons, the transition from the partial deck to the roadway must have a secured railing or planter for its full width (see Figure 16 and Figure 17).

2.2.3 Option C: Terraced deck

Terraced decking for your curbside patio may be used to accommodate sloped sites. This design helps keep the overall structure height within safe limits. These decks must follow the guidelines for all decks listed in “2.2 Decks and ramps” on page 15.



Figure 18: Terraced deck

Additional guidelines for terraced decks:

- a. For safety, the transition between each level must have a secured railing or planter for the full width of the deck (see Figure 18).
- b. The deck should not be more than **0.6 m** (2 ft) above the roadway surface at its highest point (see Figure 18). For sites on steep slopes that may require decks higher than **0.6 m** (2 ft), contact the City for more information.
- c. For safety, any exposed edges along the sidewalk over **18 cm** in height requires a railing or planter; exposed edges under **18 cm** in height require a contrast strip (see Figure 19).

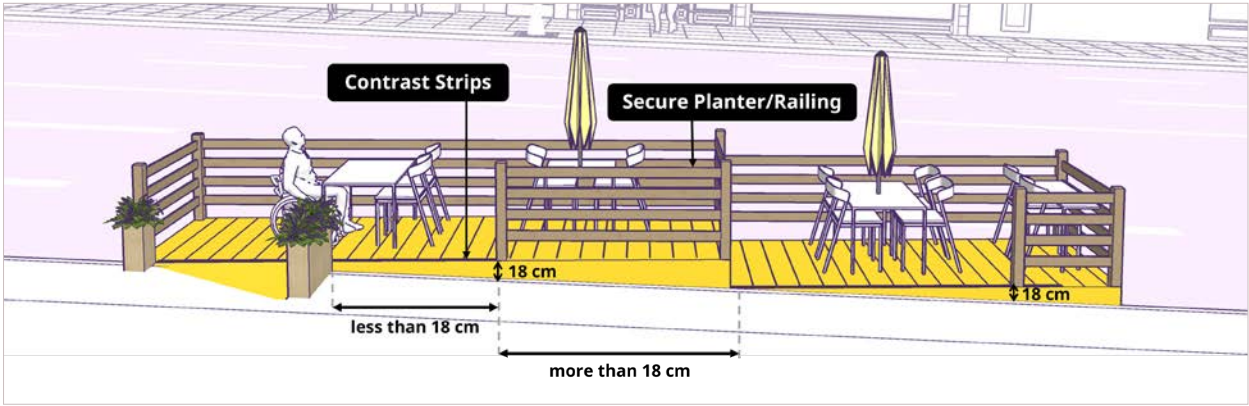


Figure 19: Terraced deck with exposed edges along the sidewalk

- d. You may provide a short ramp from the sidewalk to the accessible seating area.
 - The ramp/entrance must be at minimum **1.6 m** wide (see Figure 19).
 - The slope must not be steeper than **1:20**. If the ramp is steeper than **1:20**, a handrail is required (see Figure 20).
 - To ensure the short ramp does not become a tripping hazard, planters between **0.75 m** and **1.0 m** in height are required on either side (see Figure 20).
 - A contrast strip must be provided at the top and bottom of the ramp (see Figure 20).

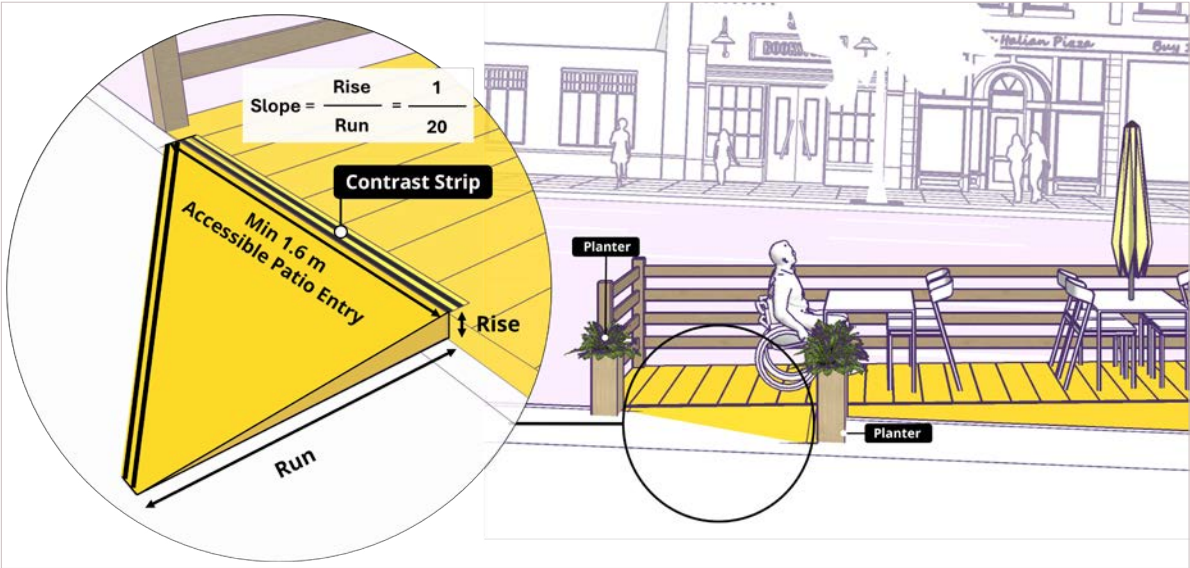


Figure 20: Short ramp onto a terraced deck



Photo 7: Short ramp onto patio

2.2.4 Option D: Ramps

Ramps are also an option for meeting the accessibility requirements but will impact the available seating area on your patio. All ramps must comply with [Vancouver Building Bylaw](#) “3.8.3.5. Ramps and Stairs”.

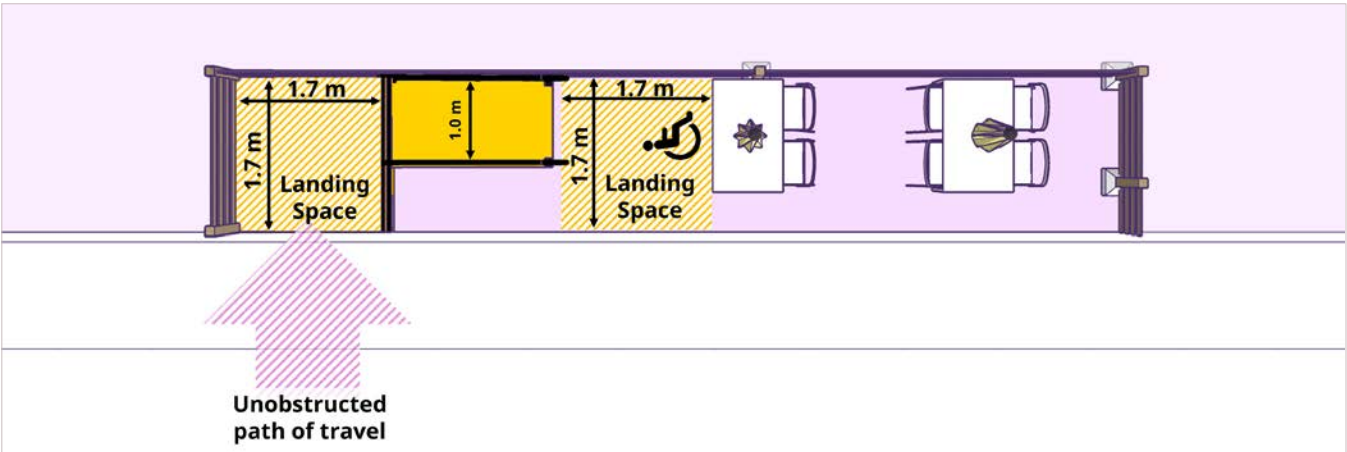


Figure 21: Ramp (Plan view)

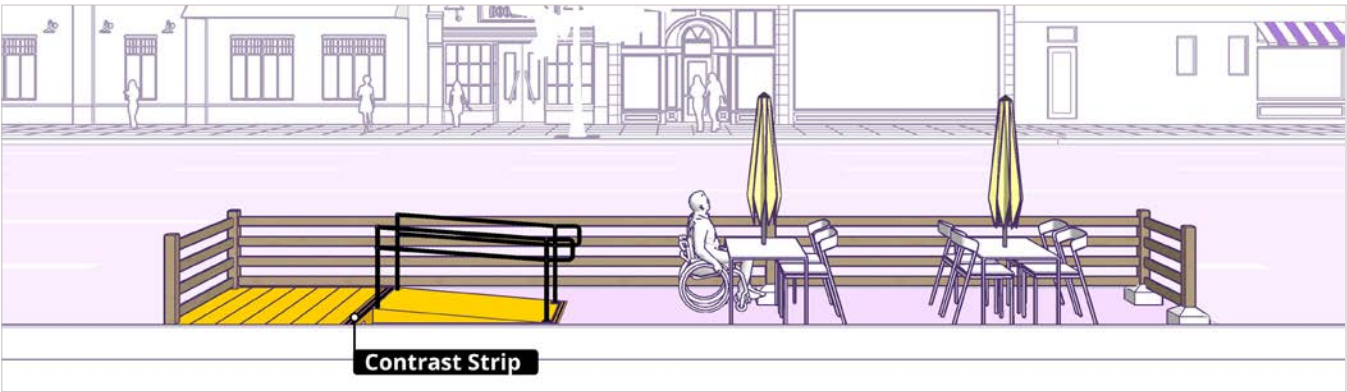


Figure 22: Ramp (Front view)

Guidelines for ramps:

- a. The landing space at the top of the ramp must be flush with the curb with a horizontal gap no greater than **13 mm** (½”) or a vertical level change no greater than **6 mm** (¼”), and a cross-slope no greater than **1:50**.
- b. The landing space at the top of the ramp must be at least **1.7 m x 1.7 m** with a minimum entry width of **1.6 m** from the sidewalk (see Figure 21).
- c. The minimum width of the ramp is **1.0 m** (inclusive of handrails on each side) (see Figure 21). Handrails shall not project more than **100 mm** into the width of the ramp from each side.
- d. The landing space at the bottom of the ramp must also be at least **1.7 m x 1.7 m**. (see Figure 21).

- e. A minimum of one accessible seating area must be provided (the accessible seating area can also be the bottom landing of the ramp).
- f. Ramp and landing surfaces must be firm, stable, slip-resistant .
- g. Ramps must not be anchored, bolted, or glued to the road or sidewalk.
- h. Ramp length varies per site conditions, but the slope of the ramp must not exceed **1:12** (see Figure 23).
- i. A contrast strip must be provided at the top and bottom of the ramp (see Figure 23).

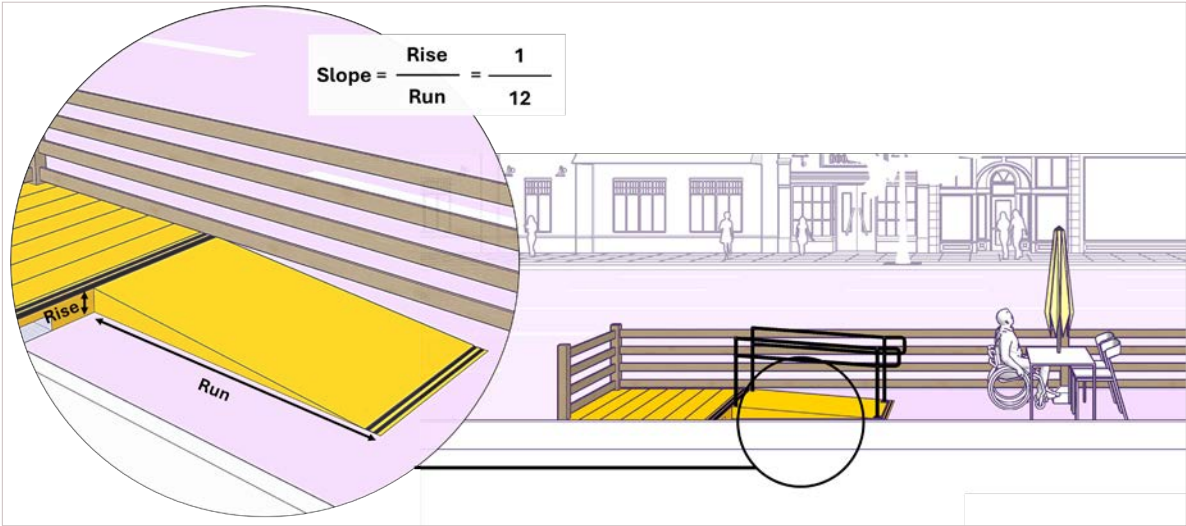


Figure 23: Ramp slope

Guidelines for ramp handrails:

- a. Height of the ramp handrails must be between **865 mm** and **965 mm** (see Figure 24).
- b. Handrail must extend at least **300 mm** at the bottom of the ramp, but only **100 mm** of this extension can be within the landing space at the bottom of the ramp (see Figure 24).

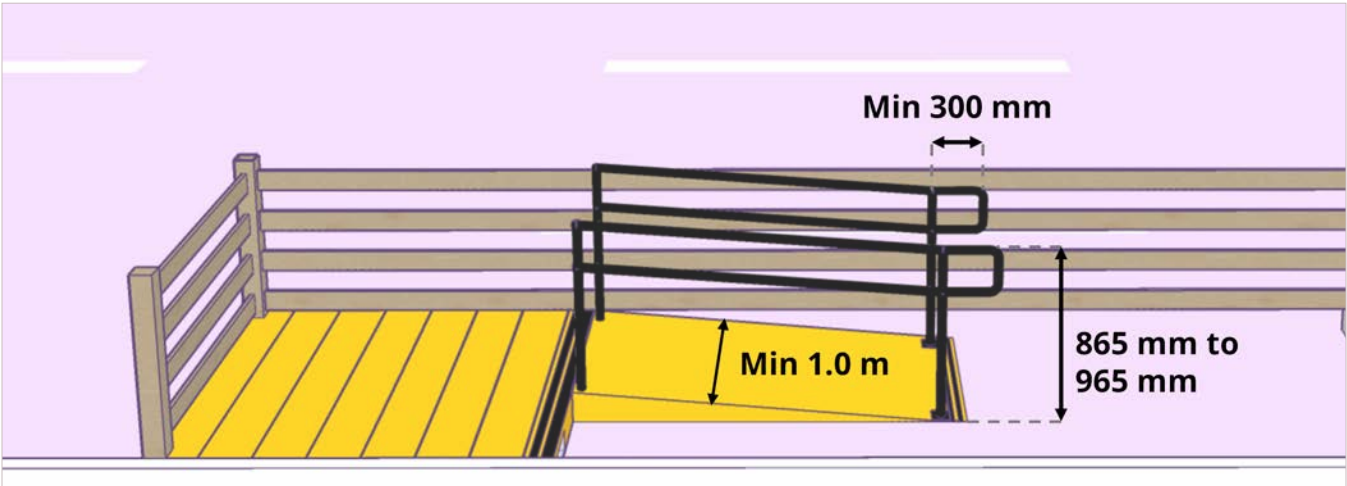


Figure 24: Ramp handrails

i For more information on accessible ramps, stairs, and handrails, please refer to the [Vancouver Building By-Law](#) (VBBL):

- 3.8.3.5. Ramps and Stairs
- 3.4.6.5. Handrails

i **Contact us if you are facing challenging site conditions**

Sometimes, the existing conditions at a site make it challenging for businesses to meet program guidelines for summer curbside patios.

For example:

- **Steep slope:** A patio may be located on a steep slope that needs a deck over **0.6 m** (2 ft) in height.
- **Green boulevard:** A patio may be located beside a sidewalk with softscape (i.e. grass), may have additional challenged in creating an accessible path of travel (see *Photo 9*).
- Features such as trees, streetlamps, and poles, may make it difficult to maintain the minimum **1.6 m** clear width for an accessible entry (see *Photo 10*).

If your patio location has challenging site conditions, please [contact the City](#) to learn about possible options. Note that your permit application may have additional requirements and take more time for review.



Photo 8: Patios on a steep slope



Photo 9: Patio Adjacent to softscape



Photo 10: Patio adjacent to tree well

2.4 DRAINAGE REQUIREMENTS

A drainage channel must be provided to allow water to flow to the catch basin. This will prevent water from pooling and debris from building up in the street. As a permit holder, you are responsible for always keeping this channel clear and unobstructed.

Guidelines for drainage channels:

- A clear, continuous drainage channel of minimum **41 cm** wide and **10 cm** high must be provided along the curb for the full length of the deck or ramp (see *Figure 25*).
- A wire mesh with openings between **2 cm** (½") to **4 cm** (1") must be provided at both ends of the platforms to prevent debris from washing under the deck or ramp (see *Figure 25*).
- 2" x 2"** support posts may be installed along the gutter line to help support the deck. To prevent obstructing the flow of water, these support posts must be adequately spaced along the length of the deck.
 - These **2" x 2"** posts should be anchored to the underside of the deck but must not be anchored or affixed to the curb or road surface.

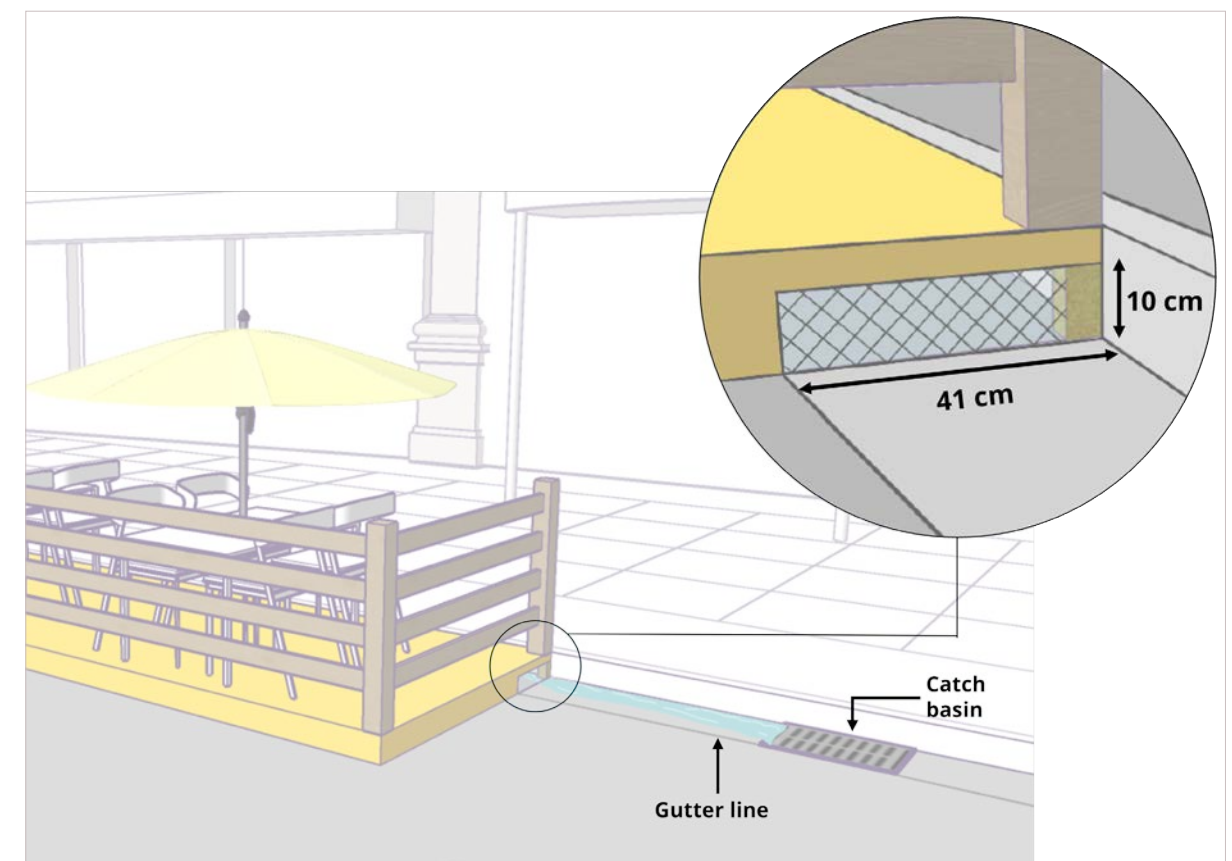
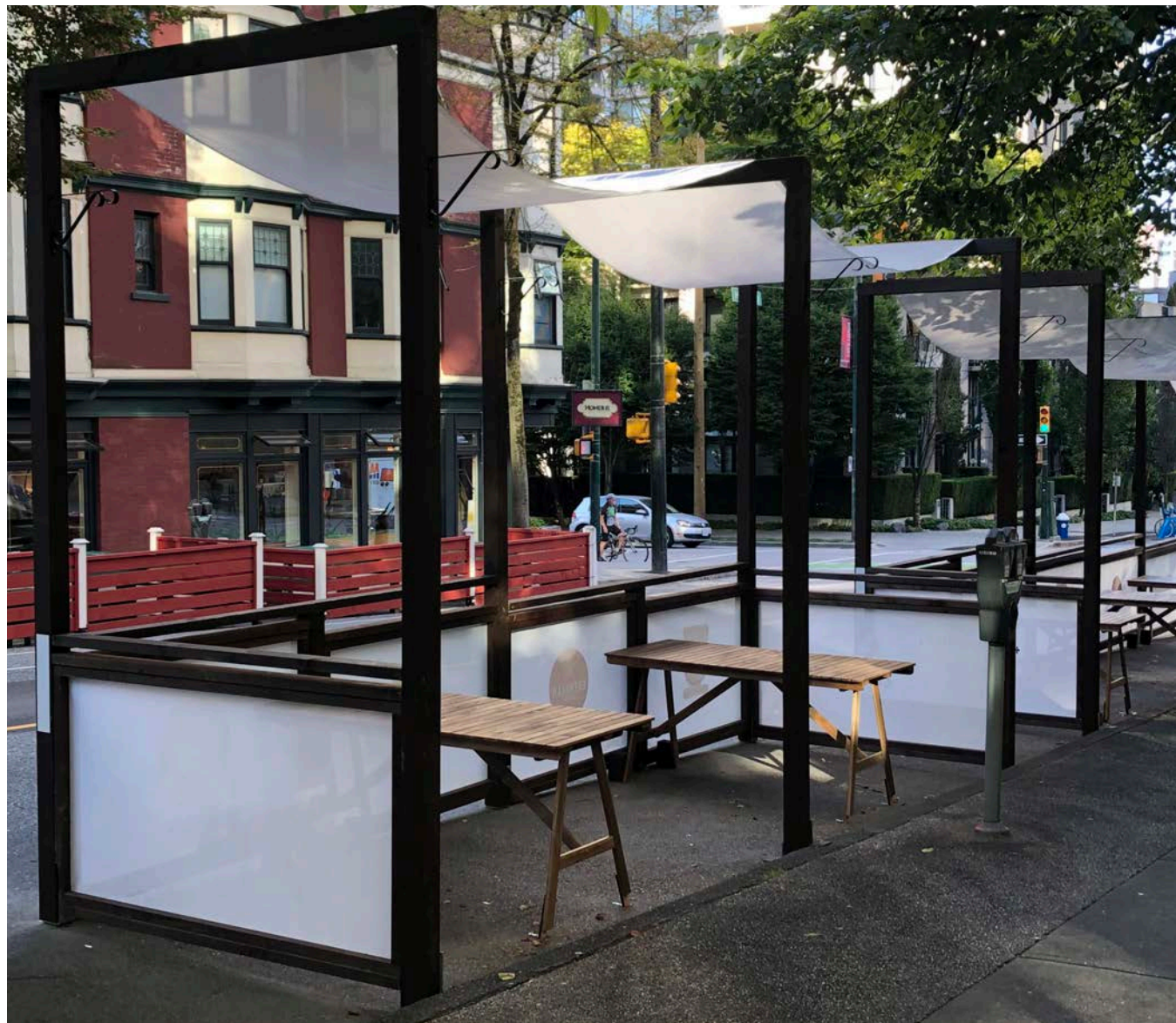


Figure 25: Drainage channels

3. Vertical structures and design elements

Businesses can add vertical features, such as open frames, and wind screens, provided they are lightweight, suitable for summer use, and meet all City requirements.

This section provides guidelines on how to build these structures while meeting City requirements.



3.1 RAILINGS

Railings (previously called protective barriers) are required around the perimeter of a curbside patio to clearly define the space for patio seating. The side along the sidewalk may remain open, if preferred (see *Figure 26*).

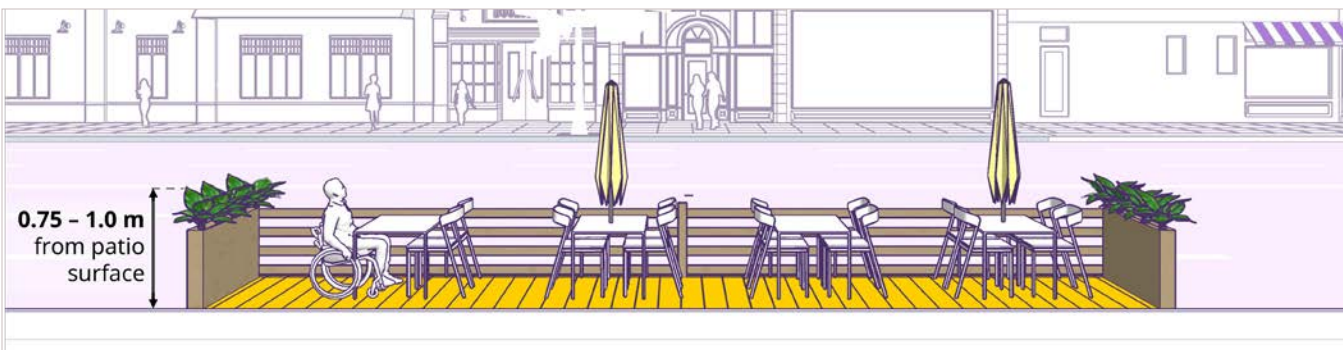


Figure 26: Railings

i **Patios licensed to serve liquor:**

Per the [Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch \(LCRB\)](#), licensees are expected to have suitable bounding to visibly define the licensed service area to patrons and staff, and enable the licensee to maintain adequate control and supervision. This expectation applies to licensed patio spaces, including those that have an open side facing the sidewalk.

Guidelines for railings:

Various designs and materials for railings may be used, including open and solid railings, fences, planters and short walls; however, the following requirements apply:

- a. Railing height must be between **0.75 m** and **1.0 m** from the patio surface (see *Figure 25*).
- b. Railings must be fully within the approved footprint of the patio.
- c. Railing must be affixed to decks and ramps; but not anchored or affixed to the curb or road surface.
- d. The top surface of a railing should be smooth and continuous (e.g. no exposed nails or materials that can cause splinters).
- e. Railings must be sturdy and stable enough to withstand pressure and weight.

- f. If using an open railing, openings and gaps must be between **0.1 m** and **0.2 m** (see *Figure 27*).

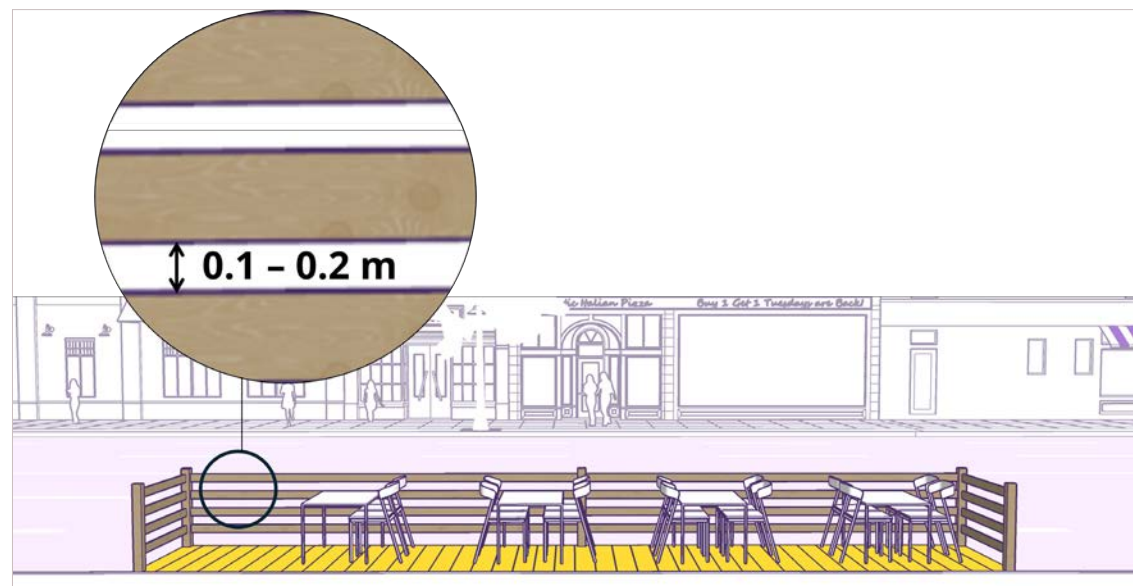


Figure 27: Opening in the railing

i Additional notes for railings:

Bollards and chain fencing are not permitted as railings as they can create hazards for people with visual impairments.

Planters integrated into railings must not exceed **1.2 m** above the roadway surface. Foliage above this height must be reasonably open and transparent to maintain traffic sightlines.

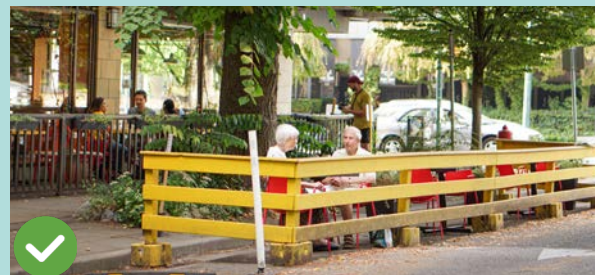


Photo 11: Simple railing



Photo 12: Railing with planters



Photo 13: Railing with large opening



Photo 14: Railing lacking structural integrity

3.2 WINDSCREENS

Windscreens are vertical extensions made of transparent materials that are installed on top of railings. They may provide additional comfort for patio users.

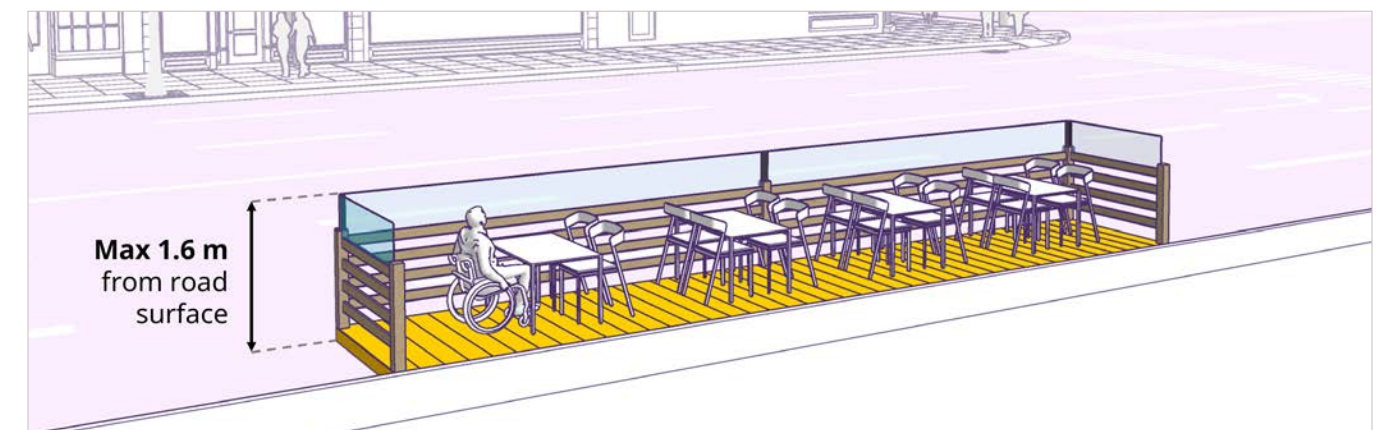


Figure 28: Windscreens

Guidelines for windscreens

- The height of windscreens and the railing together must not exceed **1.6 m** from the road surface, and must not extend beyond the patio footprint (see *Figure 28*).
- Materials must be shatter-proof and durable, such as plexiglass or equivalent. Glass is not permitted.
- Materials must be transparent, non-reflective, and flat to preserve traffic sightlines.
 - Businesses are responsible for maintaining the windscreen so that it remains transparent.
- Must be securely attached or affixed to the patio's railings for safety and stability, and be designed to withstand inclement weather such as high wind.

What windscreens **can** look like:



Photo 15: Transparent and flat windscreen

What windscreens **cannot** look like:



Photo 16: Windscreen is not a flat surface

3.3 POSTS AND OPEN FRAMES

Posts and open frames are vertical structures that can be added to patios to better define the dining space and/or support elements such as lighting, accessories, and lightweight overhead covers. Frames must remain lightweight and open, must not obstruct traffic sightlines, and must not be enclosed with walls or full-height panels or screens.

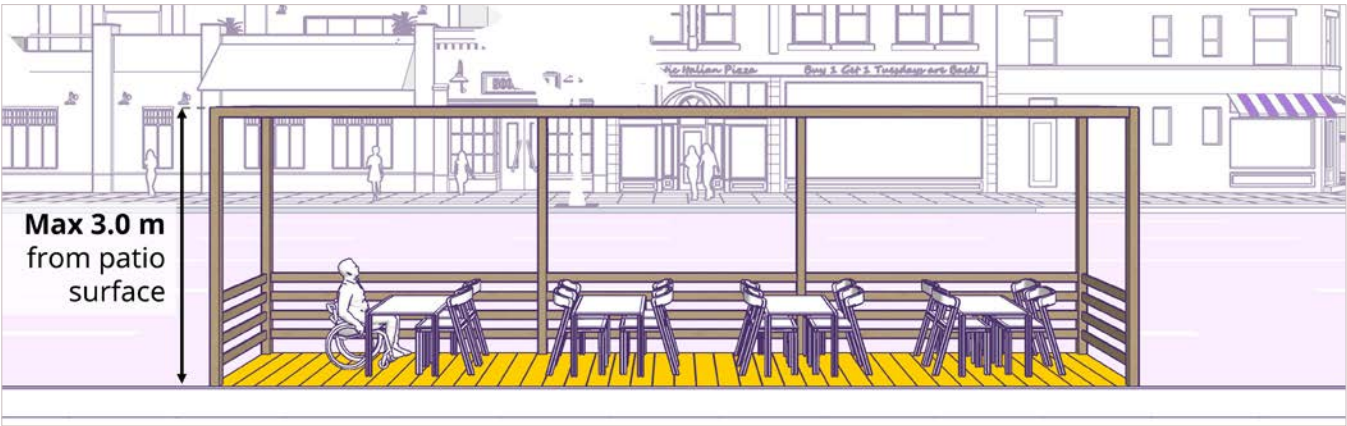


Figure 29: Posts and open frames

Guidelines for posts and open frames

- a. The height of any post or frame must not exceed **3.0 m** from the patio surface (see Figure 29).
- b. Must not interfere with overhead public utilities (e.g. street light pole, hydro poles) or trees.
- c. Must maintain clear traffic sightlines between **1.2 m** to **2.1 m** from the road surface (see Figure 30).

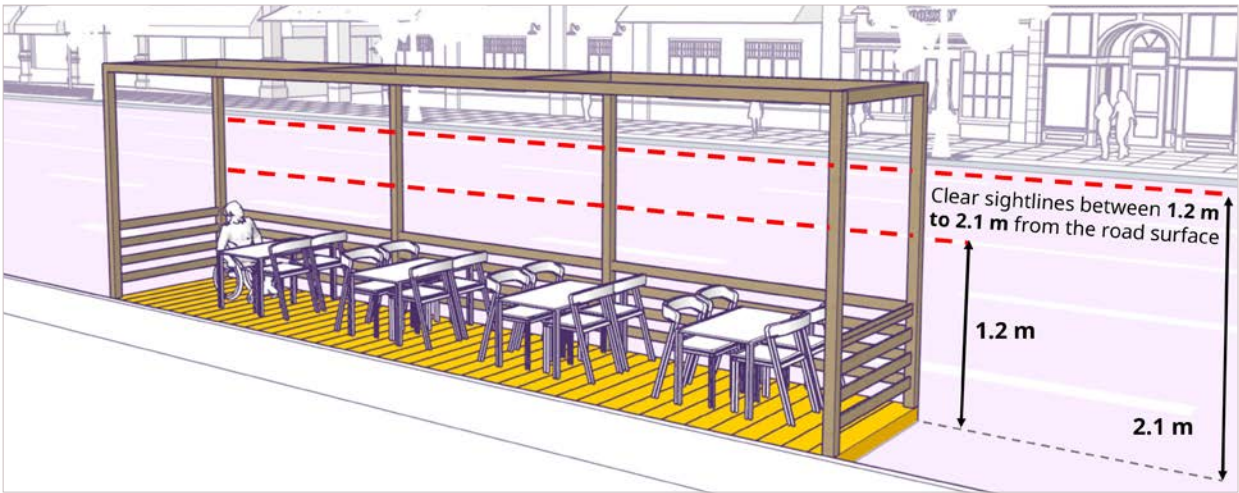


Figure 30: Clear sightlines

- d. Must be structurally sound and able to withstand pressure and weight, or inclement weather such as high wind.
- e. Must be securely attached to the deck and/or integrated into the railing; but not anchored or affixed to the curb or road surface.
- f. Heavy objects that create a point load must not be attached or suspended from a post or frame – including speakers, televisions, and heaters.

What posts and open frames **can** look like:



Photo 17: Permitted posts and frames



Photo 18: Permitted posts and frames

What posts and open frames **cannot** look like:



Photo 19: Fully enclosed posts and frames not permitted



Photo 20: Fully enclosed structures not permitted

3.4 OVERHEAD COVERS

Overhead covers can provide additional weather protection and comfort for patio users. For summer curbside patios, overhead covers must be summer-appropriate, meaning they should be lightweight and made from flexible materials such as textiles. Approved types of overhead covers include:

- Single-post umbrellas
- Cantilevered umbrellas
- Single-pitch or dual-pitch cover
- Shade sails
- Canopy-style

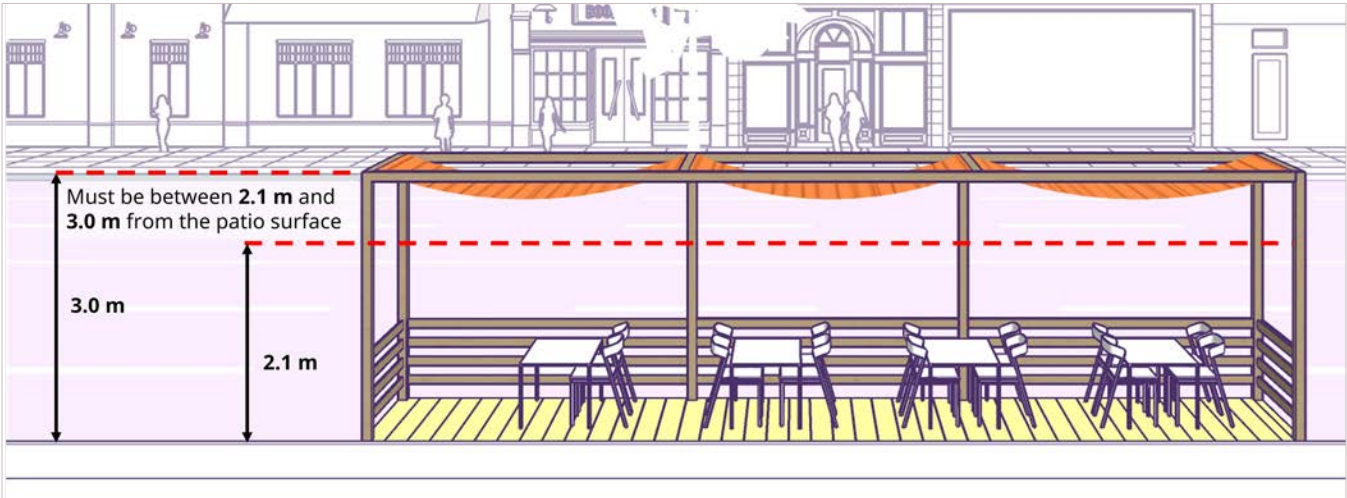


Figure 31: Overhead covers

3.4.1 Guidelines for overhead covers

- Must not extend past the approved patio footprint (not over the sidewalk or into the roadway).
- Must be securely attached for safety and stability (e.g. must be designed to withstand inclement weather such as high wind).
- Must be made of lightweight and flexible materials only, such as textiles. If constructed of combustible materials, covers must conform to fire resistance requirements in:
 - CAN/ULC-S109 "Flame Tests of Flame-Resistant Fabrics and Films"
 - NFPA 701 "Standard Method of Fire Tests for Flame Propagation of Textiles and Films"
- Must be between **2.1 m** and **3.0 m** in height from the patio surface to maintain clear traffic sightlines. (see Figure 31).
- Must not block view of traffic signs.
- Must not interfere with overhead public utilities or trees.
- Must not be connected to or supported by the building.

3.4.2 Guidelines for umbrellas

- Must be installed entirely within the patio footprint and must not extend over sidewalks or roadway. (see Figure 33).
- Must not be anchored directly to the sidewalk or street.
- In some locations, adjustments to umbrellas may be needed to maintain traffic sightlines.
 - For example: the patio umbrella is obstructing the view of an important traffic sign. In these instances, the City will communicate instructions to the business.

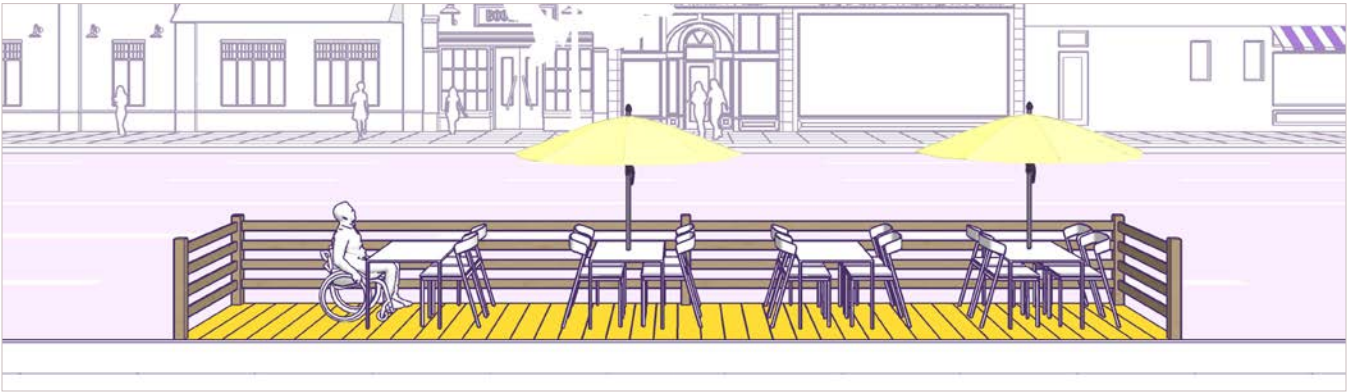


Figure 32: Umbrellas

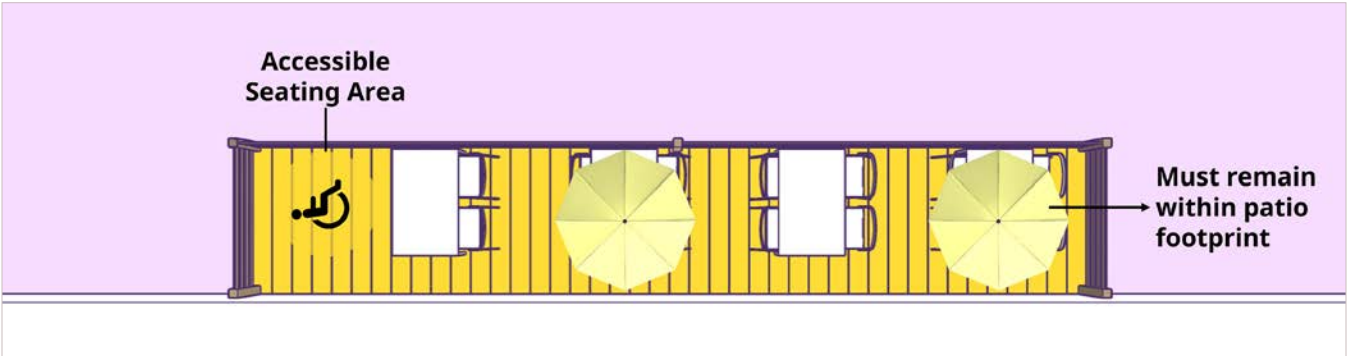


Figure 33: Umbrellas within patio footprint

What overhead covers **can** look like:



Photo 21: Cantilevered umbrellas are permitted



Photo 22: Overhead covers permitted

What overhead covers **cannot** look like:



Photo 23: Rigid roof structure are not permitted



Photo 24: Umbrella extends outside of patio footprint

i Exemptions for posts, open frames, and overhead covers

To help streamline the permit process and reduce costs, posts, open frames, and overhead covers **under 3.0 m in height** that are **reasonably lightweight** are **exempt from building permits and professional drawings from engineers and architects**. Posts and frames and overhead covers that do not meet these criteria are subject to additional requirements and review time – please [contact the City](#) for more information.

4. Accessorizing your curbside patio

Accessories such as lighting, heating, planters, and other decorative features can help create more comfortable, welcoming spaces for patrons and contribute positively to the public realm. For summer curbside patios, all accessories must be **lightweight and securely attached** to the patio structure.

This section provides guidelines on how to accessorize your patio while meeting city requirements.

i Important: To respect local residents, live entertainment, broadcasting, and amplified sound including music and speech are not permitted on your patio.



4.1 ELECTRICAL

Businesses may provide electricity from their private building to their curbside patio, subject to City approval and permitting.

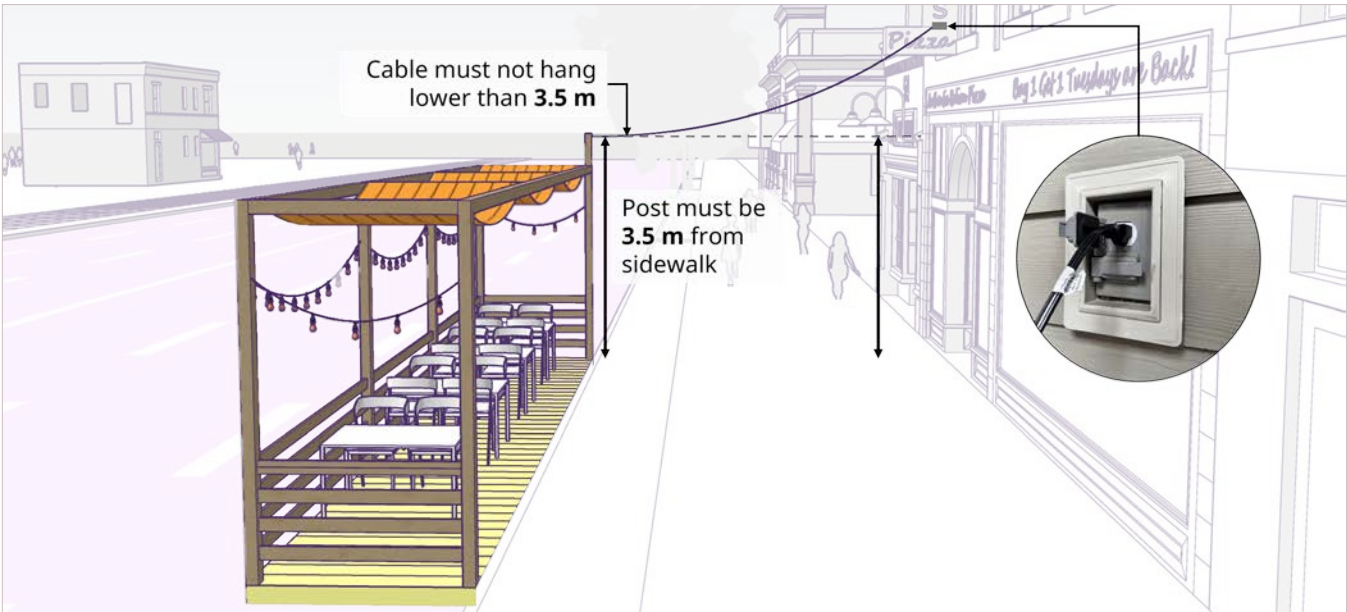


Figure 34: Electrical connections to a patio

Guidelines for electricity

- a. An Electrical Permit is required, and a licensed electrical contractor must apply for this permit and conduct the work (see [City of Vancouver Electrical Permits](#)).
- b. Electricity must be supplied from the building to the curbside patio through an overhead electrical cable that crosses over the sidewalk at a minimum height of **3.5 m** (see Figure 34).
 - One of the posts of the curbside patio may be up to **3.5 m** in height to support this overhead cable (see Figure 34).
- c. The electrical cable cannot be hardwired into the wire system of the building and must be easily detachable at the building connection from an outlet (see Figure 34).
- d. The electrical cable must not be attached to anything other than the patio (e.g. City assets such as trees, poles, existing overhead wires).
- e. Other than the overhead electrical cable, all wires in the curbside patio must remain in the footprint of the patio. Wires must be managed to prevent accessibility and tripping hazards.
- f. As an alternative to electricity provided from a building, portable power (solar or battery) is also permitted, and must be kept within the footprint of the patio. Gas or diesel generators are prohibited.

4.2 LIGHTING

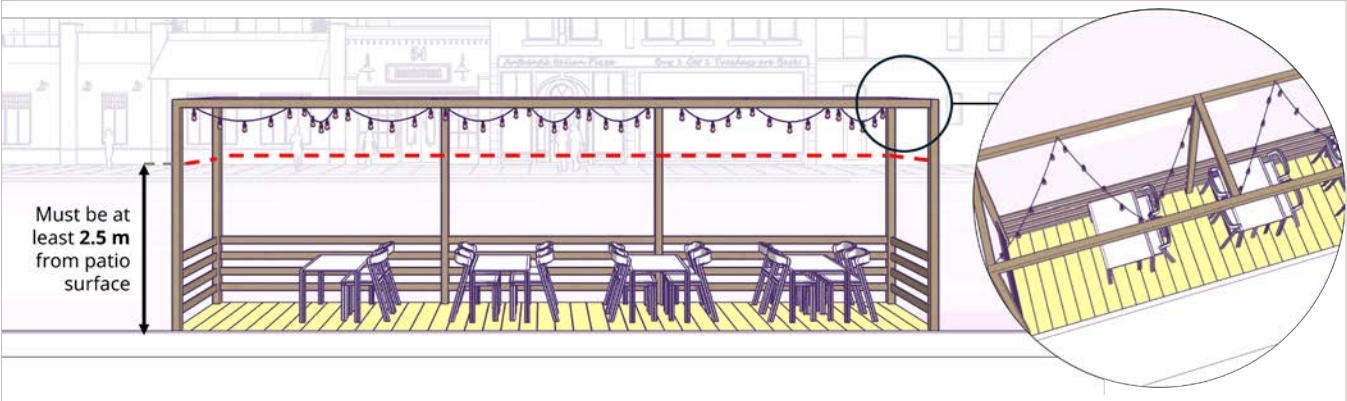


Figure 35: Lighting hanging directly above patio users

Guidelines for lighting

- a. Lighting powered through the electrical cable connection must follow “4.1 Guidelines for Electricity” on page 34.
- b. Lighting attached to the patio must be lightweight and securely attached to withstand inclement weather.
- c. Lighting hanging directly above the patio users or seating must be **at least 2.5 m** above the patio surface (see Figure 35).
 - Lighting not directly above patio seating (e.g. attached to posts or railings) may be at any height.
- d. Other lighting options may include solar or battery-operated string lights, lanterns, or table lamps.
- e. Must not distract, blind or confuse drivers. Unreasonably bright lights, flashing lights, strobes, or anything resembling traffic signals are prohibited.
- f. Lighting must remain within the patio footprint.

What lighting **can** look like:

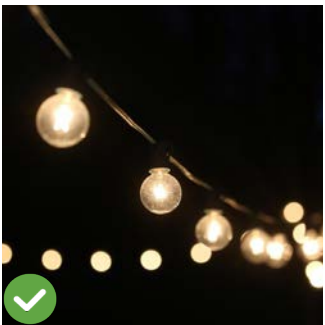


Photo 25: Simple string lights permitted

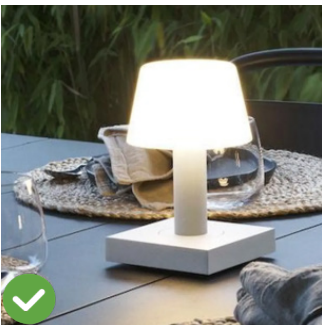


Photo 26: Portable table lamp permitted

What lighting **cannot** look like:

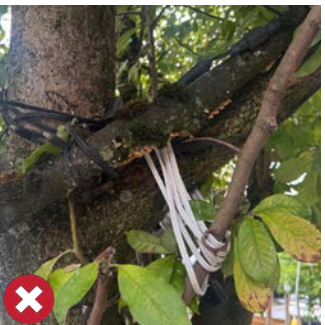


Photo 27: Electrical cable must not be attached to tree

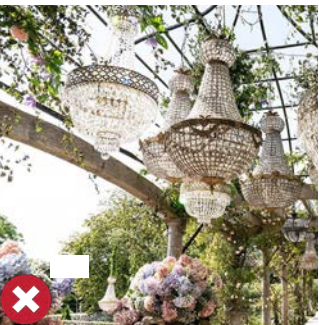


Photo 28: Lighting attached to the patio must be lightweight

4.3 HEATERS

Guidelines for heaters

Portable heating devices, including propane heaters and electrical heaters, are allowed within curbside patios, subject to the following requirements:

- a. Heaters powered through the electrical cable connection must follow guidelines for electricity under “4.1 Electrical” on page 34.
- b. Must be **at least 1.6 m** tall to prevent tripping hazards.
- c. Must be installed and operated following the manufacturer’s requirements.
- d. Portable heating devices must not be placed under or near umbrellas or trees.
- e. Must not be stored on the patio overnight; must be brought inside daily at close of business.
 - Propane tanks must be caged and locked in a vented outdoor structure on **private property** in compliance with BC Gas Safety Regulation.
- f. Must be a standalone or portable unit. Open flames are prohibited (e.g. fire pit, fire tables).
- g. Must not be attached to the patio structure.

What heaters **can** look like:



Photo 29: Standalone heater permitted

What heaters **cannot** look like:



Photo 30: Heater is too low to the ground

4.4 PLANTERS AND OTHER PLANT ACCESSORIES

Businesses may choose to add standing planters, hanging baskets, or planters integrated into railings to their summer curbside patios.

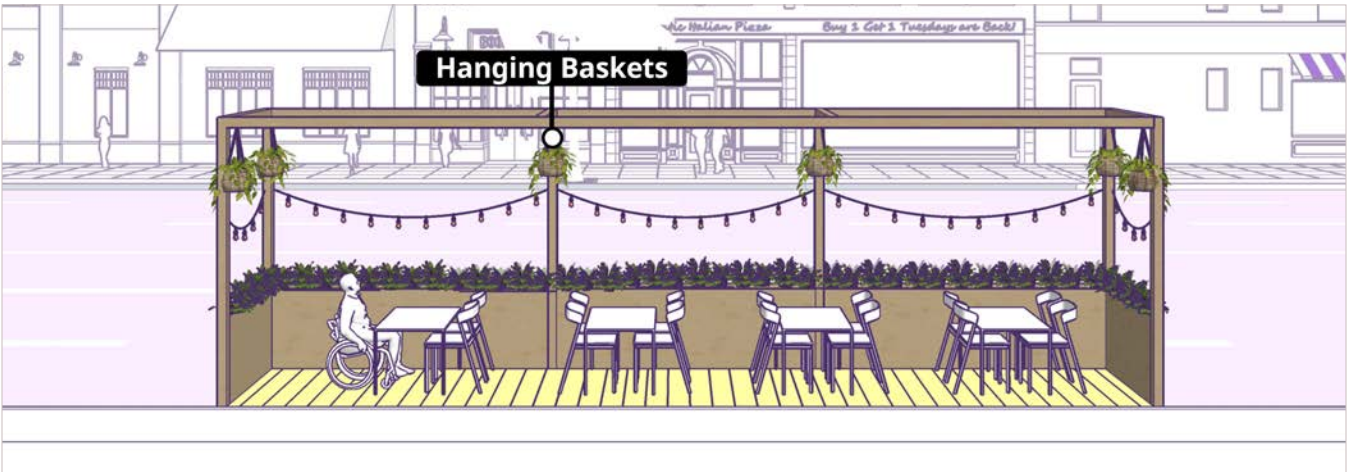


Figure 36: Planters

Guidelines for planters and other plant accessories

- a. All plants and planters must remain within the patio footprint. No part of the planters shall extend into the sidewalk or roadway.
- b. In some locations, the City may provide specific instructions for businesses to adjust or remove their plants or planters to preserve traffic sightlines.
- c. All planters and hanging baskets must be secured so they cannot shift, fall, or be blown into the patio, roadway, or sidewalk.
- d. Standing planters, or planters integrated into railings, the height of the planters must be between **0.75 m** and **1.0 m** from the patio surface.
 - Foliage above this height must be reasonably open and transparent to maintain traffic sightlines.
 - Dense foliage such as hedges cannot extend beyond **1.2 m** in height.
- e. Hanging baskets should be a reasonable size and weight, and be spaced to not obstruct traffic sightlines.

4.5 PUBLIC REALM BEAUTIFICATION (BIA-LED)

In some instances, there may be opportunities to beautify the public realm around the curbside patio through the Business Improvement Area (BIA). These BIA-led opportunities could include placing a planter behind the City-installed concrete barrier protecting the patio, or painting the concrete barrier itself. Speak with your local BIA to contact the City for next steps and approval.



Photo 31: Planter behind concrete barrier



Photo 32: Painted concrete barrier

5. Managing public realm is a shared responsibility

Managing the public realm is a shared responsibility between businesses and the City. Patios are one of many uses and features in the City’s streets, and it is important to balance these uses to ensure everyone can enjoy and move around in the public realm.

The following section provides an overview on the roles and responsibilities of patio permit holders and the City.

5.1 BUSINESS’ RESPONSIBILITIES

Businesses have a responsibility to ensure their patio does not create challenges or conflicts for other uses in the public realm. Businesses must:

- Apply for a permit to ensure a curbside patio can be safely located on the street.
- Build and operate their patio according to the guidelines and permit terms and conditions.
- Maintain the patio and surrounding area to ensure a positive experience for patio users, pedestrians, and neighbours.

The following are key **Terms and Conditions** for curbside patios. For more details, please refer to the patio permit or the [Summer Curbside Patio webpage](#).

- Patios can only be used for customer seating and service. Patios cannot be used for storage or outdoor cooking.
- Live entertainment, broadcasting, and amplified sound including music and speech are not permitted on patios.
- No part of the patio or accessories shall be anchored, bolted, or glued to the street or sidewalk. Alterations or changes to public property are prohibited.
- The patio and all its features must be fully contained within the approved patio footprint.
- Any changes or alterations to an approved patio footprint or structure require City review and approval.

- Curbside patios must be designed so they can be removed within 24 hours notice, at the permit holder’s expense, to accommodate public works such as construction, utility maintenance, or sidewalk repair.
- Permit holders must fully remove their summer curbside patio by November 1 each year, and are responsible for restoring the public property to its original condition.

5.2 TRAFFIC SAFETY MEASURES

Curbside patios have particular safety considerations due to their location in the roadway. Traffic safety measures are installed by the City to protect patio users, drivers, and cyclists. The City reviews each location each year to determine the correct placement of traffic safety measures.

Upon issuing the patio permit, the City provides each business with a drawing and detailed instructions on how to build their curbside patio with the correct clearances from these traffic safety measures. **It is important to install your curbside patio according to the approved drawing.**

Common traffic safety measures for curbside patios include concrete barriers, wheel stops and bollards, and object markers:

- **Concrete barriers** guide vehicles away from the curb to reduce the risk of conflict with curbside patios, and are typically required on busy streets (e.g. arterial streets), near intersections and bus stops. Concrete barriers are installed before a patio is built. **It is important to wait until the barrier is installed before you build your patio.**
- **Wheel stops and bollards** are placed at the ends of curbside patios to help protect them from vehicles. Reflective **object markers** improve the visibility of patios, especially at night or in poor weather. These safety elements are installed after the patio is built. **It is important to notify the City when the patio has been installed** so these traffic safety measures may be installed in a timely manner.



Photo 33: Concrete barrier



Photo 34: Wheel stop, bollard, and object marker

5.3 EXAMPLES OF NON-COMPLIANT PATIOS



Photo 35: Curbside patios with inadequate drainage



Photo 36: Patio covering in-ground utilities



Photo 37: Patio extends beyond concrete barrier



Photo 38: Does not meet minimum clearance of FDC

6. What to expect when you apply for a permit

To build and operate a summer curbside patio, you will need an issued permit from the City. This section provides a general overview of what to expect when you apply for a permit for a summer curbside patio. Visit the [Summer Curbside Patio webpage](#) for more details on this process and to apply for a permit.



6.1 APPLYING FOR A NEW SUMMER CURBSIDE PATIO

- 1 Gather and complete the required documents including the Declaration Form.
- 2 Create online account, apply for your curbside patio, and pay the application fee.
- 3 City reviews your proposed patio footprint for feasibility and safety.
- 4 Pay the permit fee.
- 5 Once the patio permit is issued, you will be provided with an approved drawing with detailed instructions. You must follow this approved drawing when building your patio.

You must notify us when you have completed building your patio. We will inspect the patio to verify that it is installed in the appropriate location and is safe and accessible. If any accessibility and safety issues are identified, be prepared to resolve them as quickly as possible.
- 6 The summer curbside patio permit expires each year on October 31. Permit holders must remove their patios by this date and restore the space to its original condition.
- 7 Every year, you will be notified by the City if you would like to renew the permit.
- 8

6.2 RENEWING THE SUMMER CURBSIDE PATIO PERMIT

If you had a summer curbside patio permit in the previous year, you will receive an automatic email notification from the City in March to renew the permit.

Renewals are only available if you are not making any changes to the size of your patio's footprint. **If you are making changes to the footprint, you will need to submit a new application.**

Option 1: If you are renewing **without making modifications** to meet the new requirements and/or adding design elements this year.

- 1

Log into your online account.
- 2

Provide us with the required documents including the new Declaration Form.
- 3

Pay permit fees.

Option 2: If you are renewing and **making modifications** to meet the new requirements and/or adding design elements this year.

- 1

Log into your online account.
- 2

Provide us with the required documents including the new Declaration Form.
- 3

Pay permit fees.
- 4

Once the patio permit is issued, you will be provided with an approved drawing with detailed instructions. You must follow this approved drawing when building your patio.
- 5

You must notify us when you have completed building your patio. We will inspect the patio to verify that it is installed in the appropriate location and is safe and accessible. If any accessibility and safety issues are identified, be prepared to resolve them as quickly as possible.

7. Resources

1. [Accessibility Standards Canada](#) (CSA)
2. [British Columbia Building Code](#) (BCBC)
3. [Vancouver Building By-Law](#) (VBBL)
4. [Electrical Permit](#)
5. [Temporary Occupancy Permit \(TO-Permit\)](#)
6. TransLink [Limits of Approach](#) around overhead trolley infrastructure



Contact Us

Email us at patios@vancouver.ca

Visit our website at vancouver.ca/doing-business/curbside-patio-permit.aspx

Location - by appointment only

5th Floor

507 West Broadway

Vancouver, BC V5Z 0B4

Hours

Monday to Friday

9am to 4pm



507 West Broadway
Vancouver, British Columbia
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