

Successfully Navigating Outdoor Dining During Covid-19

Planning & Development Services

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Opening Thoughts

- Staff understands the need and importance of having flexibility to have outdoor dining to meet the challenges brought on by Covid-19
- We will try to find a way to make your idea work if we can ensure it reasonably satisfies Code requirements; core life/safety issues must be met
- Good judgement and wise planning are keys to having flexibility in outdoor dining options
- Information is subject to change as new orders are issued

How do structures/enclosures like igloos/bubbles impact indoor occupancy numbers?

They do not affect total occupancy numbers. For example, if your “Occupant Load” was 100, but the governor’s order allows 50% of that you could have 50 people. If the order also stated that you could only have 20 people inside at any time then you could use approved outdoor dining to handle whatever portion of that remaining 30 people your approved outdoor dining allowed.

If igloos/bubbles are considered to be density units, how many units per square foot are businesses allowed to have?

The first limiting factor is the formula from question 1. The next consideration is the size of each tent or igloo, minimum aisle walking space between each unit (44"), having 5% accessible units having a 5' turnaround in front of the door and a 36" wide door.

Are there any setback requirements for outdoor enclosures/structures?

Tents cannot block entrance or egress paths from buildings. Placing them on City sidewalks/streets would require approval from the City. They also have to meet specific flame spread requirements or be 10' from a property line.

Does the number of outdoor igloos/bubbles impact outdoor parking capacity? Can bubbles/igloos be placed in parking areas?

Staff is willing to offer flexibility with respect to parking requirements impacted by the placement of temporary igloos/bubbles. The number placed in parking areas will be somewhat self-limiting.

Can igloos/bubbles be placed on sidewalks or in rear parking spaces?

For placement on City sidewalks, permission would need to be obtained and adequate sidewalk width (4-5') for pedestrians would need to be maintained. Please use caution in placing igloos/bubbles in parking areas so as not to potentially place folks in vehicular paths of travel or maneuvering areas.

Are there specific materials that need to be used to construct overhead outdoor space?

Yes, there are both size and materials restrictions and we will be prepared to offer some vendors who specialize in code compliant products, and will work with you to find ways the code works for you, or in some cases may exempt you from some permitting requirements.

Do we need to provide additional restrooms to accommodate increased outdoor seating?

As long as the total issued "Occupant Load" is not exceeded (see ex. in Question 1) and all patrons have access (regular and handicapped) to the originally provided number of restrooms, no additional capacity is needed.

Will the rules be relaxed within reason to ensure businesses can make money despite state mandates?

Staff is willing to offer as much flexibility as possible within our established building and zoning codes to help businesses navigate the pandemic. Our ability to offer flexibility will be limited in areas of the Code that specifically focus on life/safety issues.

Other Remaining Items

- Application of regulations to restaurants vs. bars/breweries, etc
- Best practices/regulations for cleaning and sanitizing igloos and bubbles
- Recommended list of products for outdoor dining that are Code-compliant
- Requirements for outdoor heating

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