

# WEATHER PROTECTION EQUIPMENT FOR OUTDOOR TEMPORARY PERMITS

Updated November 20, 2020

## Weather Protection Equipment

Permittees are allowed to add weather protection equipment, such as umbrellas, canopies, and heaters, within their approved footprint for the duration of the Safe Start program. You must, however, follow the guidelines detailed below.

**Important:** You may need to obtain additional approvals or permits to add winter weather equipment, such as [Seattle Fire Department \(SFD\) permits](#), [Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections \(SDCI\) permits](#), or [Historic/Landmark District approvals](#).

All outdoor spaces must follow all [Washington State](#) and [King County Public Health Safe Start guidance for retailers, restaurants, taverns, breweries, wineries, and distilleries](#).

## Options for Weather Protection

Allowed weather protection equipment includes umbrellas, tents/canopies with ground support legs, and canopies that are attached to and supported by a building.

## General Requirements (refer to Figure 1)

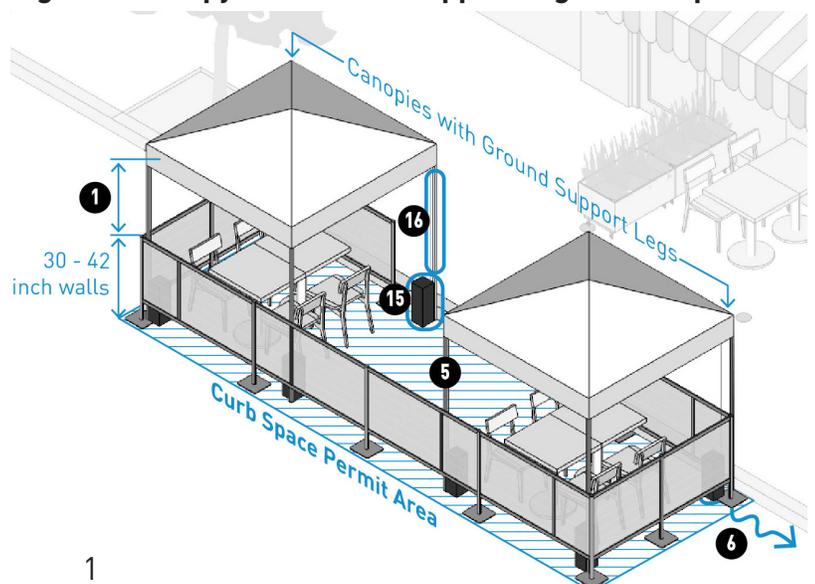
1. To provide for adequate sight distance, weather protection must provide visual clearance between 30 inches and 8 feet (except for narrow support poles), within 30 feet of an intersection or 20 feet from a legal crosswalk or driveway.  
*Note: Existing fencing up to 42 inches is allowed if already approved by your permit.*
2. Provide a minimum 8 feet of vertical clearance for weather protection over the sidewalk and visual clearance identified in item 1 above. Outside of these areas, make sure winter weather equipment complies with [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) minimums for height.
3. All parts of weather protection must fit within the approved footprint, with some exceptions as identified in this document. If you want to place weather protection equipment that is larger than your footprint, you must apply for an amendment (see last section).

4. Weather protection located in the furniture zone (see Figure 3) may not be closer than 18 inches to a curb face unless there is already a permitted curb space use.
5. For curb space uses, equipment must be no further out than the fencing abutting the travel lane.
6. Equipment must not interfere with drainage flow at the curb line.
7. Tents/canopies as allowed under Safe Start guidance require [SFD](#) permits when they are more than 400 square feet with walls. Roof-only structures and combinations of structures exceeding 700 square feet require a permit from [SFD](#).
8. Weather protection equipment shall be installed and used in accordance with manufacturer's specifications. Permanent attachment or staking to the street or sidewalk is not allowed. Equipment should be either removed or unoccupied during periods of snow/ice accumulation or strong wind event, unless designed for full structural loading per the Seattle Building Code.
9. Advertising, besides business name and logo, is not allowed.
10. The City isn't responsible for vandalism, theft, or misuse. It is your risk to leave personal property on streets or sidewalks.

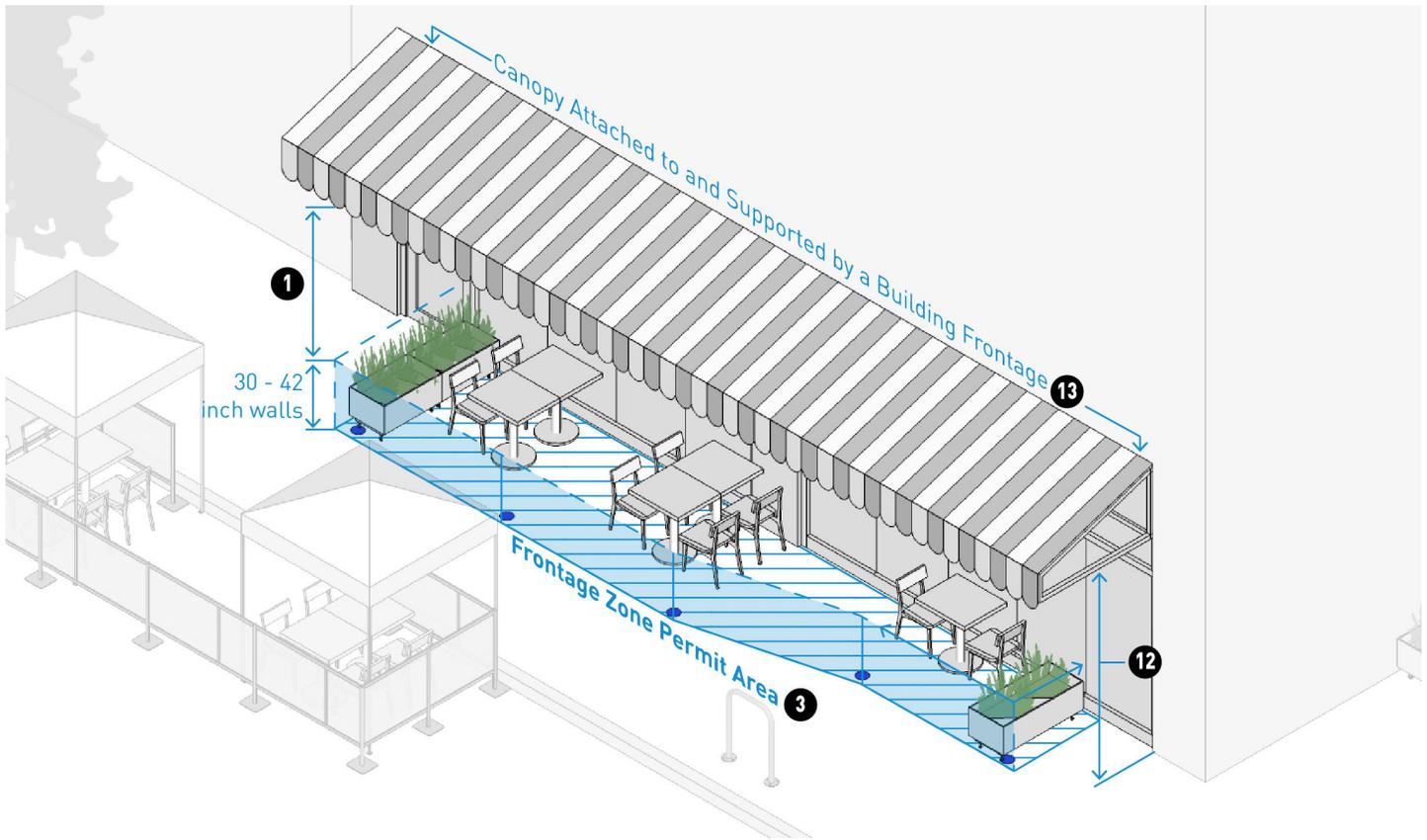
## Canopies with Ground Support Legs (refer to Figure 1)

11. Support posts on the sidewalk may extend up to edge of the approved footprint but may not intrude into the pedestrian clear path.

Figure 1: Canopy with Ground Support Legs | Curb Space



**Figure 2: Canopies with Ground Supported Legs | Frontage Zone**



**Canopies Attached to and Supported by a Building Frontage (refer to Figure 2)**

- 12. May extend over the pedestrian clear zone or other parts of sidewalk if there is eight feet of vertical clearance, including support arms
- 13. Check with the SDCI to see if a building permit is required for the building attachment

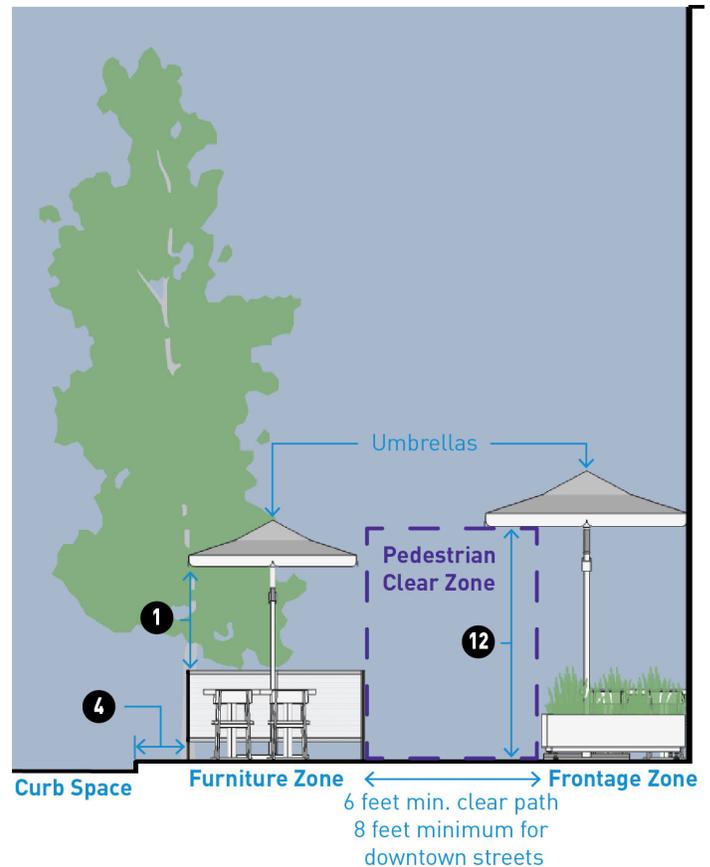
**Umbrellas (refer to Figure 3)**

- 14. Umbrellas on the sidewalk may extend outside of the approved footprint if the umbrella is at least 8 feet where it is over the sidewalk.

**Canopy Weights**

- 15. The minimum weight shall be 40 pounds per leg unless a greater weight is recommended by the manufacturer. Weights that are specially made for securing canopies can be purchased or created with sandbags or concrete. Two gallons of concrete or 3.5 gallons of sand weighs approximately 40 pounds.
- 16. We recommend that weights are strapped to the bottom of each ground support leg and tethered via a bungee to the top corners of the canopy, this reduces the likelihood of damage to the structure during strong gusts.

**Figure 3: Umbrellas | Frontage and Furniture Zone**



## Options for Providing Heat and Lighting

### General Heater Requirements

- Heaters may not interfere with sight distance near intersections, crosswalks, and driveways.
- Heaters within 30 feet of an intersection or 20 feet from a crosswalk / driveway must provide 8 feet of vertical clearance (not including narrow post portion of heater) or be less than 30 inches tall.
- For spaces without fencing, heaters must be located so that pedestrians cannot make accidental contact.

### Propane, Diesel, or other Open Flame Heaters

- Require a permit from the [SFD](#).
- May not be placed below any type of cover including umbrellas, awnings, canopies, roofs, etc.
- Must be placed at least 5 feet from buildings, exits, tents, and any combustibles.
- May not be closer than 1 foot to fencing within curb space (if the fencing is combustible, the setback is 5 feet).
- If placed within curb spaces, must have vehicular protection (such as jersey barriers) as required by [SFD](#).

### Electric Heaters

- Do not require a SFD permit.
- Are allowed underneath umbrellas, awnings, canopies, and roofs.
- Work best in frontage zone spaces (abutting the building). Minimize the use of extension cords. If necessary, electrical cords may cross the pedestrian clear zone if installed under ADA compliant cord protector ramp (see [CAM 2119](#) for examples) or over the sidewalk as long as they are secure and 10 feet above the sidewalk grade. Also follow [SFD guidance](#) for proper use of extension cords.
- Are recommended to be placed at least 5 feet from combustible materials and must be situated at least one foot from fencing.



Electric Heater



Propane Heater and Lighting

### Lighting

- Lighting is allowed but may not be overly bright or blinding to drivers.
- Battery-powered lights and amenities are preferred for curb space and furniture zone uses.
- Minimize the use of extension cords. If necessary, electrical cords may cross the pedestrian clear zone if installed under ADA compliant cord protector ramp (see [CAM 2119](#) for examples) or over the sidewalk as long as they are secure and 10 feet above the sidewalk grade.

### Have another idea? Want a custom build?

If you have other ideas than these or want to build something custom to fit your space. You'll need to submit a change request (amendment) to us. See this [Help Article](#) on how to submit changes to your permit.

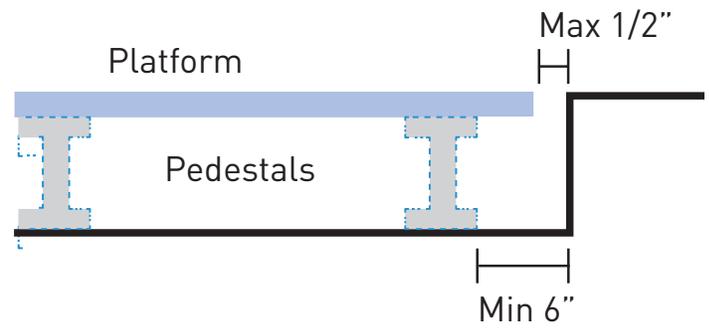
As a benefit to the business community, SDOT will review custom structures for free if we are given permission to post your approved designs to our website. These pre-approved designs will be shared so that other businesses can use them for sites with similar site conditions.

Here are some guidelines:

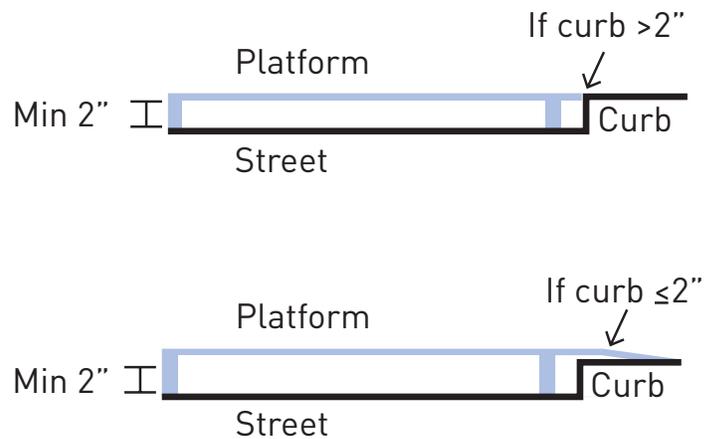
- The structure must meet all applicable requirements described in this document.
- Support posts should be as thin as possible, while still providing stability.
- Curb space uses may propose platforms if they fit within the curb space permit area.
  - In locations with parallel parking, the maximum platform width is 6 feet, measured from the curb. There must be a 1-foot setback from the edge of an adjacent bike lane or vehicle travel lane. A wider platform may be possible on streets with back-in angle parking.
  - Platforms shall not block rainwater drainage getting to the curb or flowing along the curb.

- Platforms shall not obstruct access to or ventilation of utility covers.
- Platforms shall have a freestanding structural foundation that rests on the street surface and cannot be attached to the street or sidewalk. It must be built to be easily moved.
- Platforms shall not block rainwater drainage getting to the curb or flowing along the curb. To satisfy this requirement, a pedestal support system (see Figure 4) must be used for the platform frame so that rainwater can pass underneath the entire width of the structure. There must also be a minimum 6-inch horizontal gap between the curb and the base of the frame and a minimum 2-inch vertical gap (see Figure 5) between the street surface and the bottom of the platform decking.
- The height of the deck surface should be flush with the adjacent sidewalk. A maximum horizontal gap of 1/2 inch between the curb and the deck is allowed (exceptions can be made to address ADA requirements). Slatted lumber, wood tiles, and precast concrete pavers allow rainwater to drain off the platform surface and are good choices for decking material.

**Figure 4: Drainage and Deck Gap**



**Figure 5: Vertical Drainage Gap**



With your amendment, please upload the following documents:

- Site plan
- Detailed drawings of proposed structure, if applicable
- Manufacturer's specifications, if applicable
- Structural calculations stamped by a Washington State licensed engineer or registered architect

