

# Seattle Permits

— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

## Temporary Use Permits in Seattle

Updated August 1, 2019

There are several types of temporary use permits allowed under the Seattle Land Use Code. These permits allow you to conduct temporary activities (i.e., uses) on your property that are not already approved by permit. Temporary use permits can be approved for activities not normally allowed in your zone. Under the Land Use Code, “use” means “the purpose for which land or a structure is designed, built, arranged, intended, occupied, maintained, or leased,” including uses without a structure, such as open storage.

If your project involves a temporary use that needs a temporary structure, please read Tip 306, *Temporary Structures in Seattle*.

### TYPES OF TEMPORARY USE PERMITS

Our temporary use permit decisions are classified into different categories based on the amount of discretion allowed under the Land Use Code (Section 23.42.040) and the level of impact associated with each decision. “Type I” decisions require discretion, but are non-appealable. “Type II” decisions require discretion and public notice and are appealable to the City Hearing Examiner.

For some uses and some structures you will need Fire Department review, environmental review (SEPA), or Special Events Committee review. If your property is within 200 feet of a shoreline, you need to be aware that we do not allow temporary uses in the Shoreline District.

Examples of Type I and Type II projects are:

#### Type I

- Temporary uses for four weeks or less
- Renewal of most types of temporary use permits for up to six months

- Temporary relocation of police and fire stations for 12 months or less
- Temporary uses that occur intermittently (e.g., weekly farmers markets) for up to one year, as long as they occur no more than two days per week and do not build a permanent structure

#### Type II

- Temporary uses for more than four weeks, up to six months
- A boat-building shelter, with no permanent structure, for up to one year
- Uses and facilities to construct a light rail transit system for so long as is necessary to support construction of the system

### DECISION CRITERIA

SDCI can make a decision on a Type I temporary use up to four weeks or a Type II temporary use up to six months for a use not otherwise allowed if all of the following are met:

- The proposal meets the intent of the Land Use Code
- There is no permanent structure
- The use does not pose a life, safety, or property threat

For boat building shelters, the following regulations also apply:

- The boat shelter is for personal (noncommercial) use
- The revocable permit is for one year; SDCI may grant one-year extensions for up to four years (for a total of five years);
- The structure must be sturdy enough to withstand difficult weather conditions
- SDCI may limit height, size, location, and external structural to reduce possible adverse impacts



If you need a temporary use permit for a light rail transit facility, read Section 23.42.040 in the Land Use Code.

## PLANS REQUIRED

Plans should meet required size and scale as described in Tip 106, *General Standards for Plans and Drawings*. As the intent of the plans is to clearly describe the existing and proposed development, **ALL plans should show EXISTING conditions and emphasize PROPOSED changes.**

**SITE PLAN**—All applications require a detailed site plan requirements of Tip 103, *Site Plan Requirements*, and 103A, *Site Plan Guidelines*.

Other plans that may be required or may be helpful include:

**ELEVATION PLANS**—Provide elevation views of structures showing height dimensions from existing or finished grade (whichever is lower) to the top of walls and all roof ridge lines.

**FLOOR PLAN(S)**—Provide floor plans showing the use of all floor area.

**VICINITY MAP**—A vicinity map is required for all applications for institutions showing the distance in feet to all other institutions within 600 feet. A vicinity map for other conditional use applications in single-family and multifamily zones is optional.

**LANDSCAPING AND SCREENING PLANS**—The placement of landscaping may enhance the compatibility of the proposed development with the residential scale and character of the surrounding area. The quantity and location of landscaping and screening may also specifically support a proposed project in meeting noise control requirements and parking quantity and location. The quantity, placement and maintenance of landscaping is regulated by the Land Use Code and Director's Rule 10-2011.

**TOPOGRAPHIC MAP**—A topographic map per the requirements of Tip 103B, *ECA Site Plan Requirements*, will be required when the application includes construction components and is subject to the standards for environmentally critical areas (25.09). Under conditions other than those stated above, the topographic map is optional. However, it may provide useful information to meet specific conditions or requirements, especially with regard to requested waivers and modification.

**PARKING LOCATION AND ACCESS**—Provide information on parking location and vehicular access to the site on the site plan or on a separate drawing. Calcula-

tions of required parking spaces and proposed spaces should be provided on the plans.

## FEE INFORMATION

A fee will be charged for the review based on the number of hours to review the application. The cost for the first hour is collected at the time of application. Any additional fees will be collected when the permit is issued. Once the analysis begins on an application, the fee is non-refundable. See [www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-\(a-z\)/fees](http://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-(a-z)/fees) for more information.

Questions regarding fees should be directed to a land use planner at the Applicant Services Center.

## APPLY FOR YOUR PERMIT

1. **Get coaching:** For assistance with specific Land Use Code questions related to your application, you can meet with a land use planner at the counter in the ASC.
2. **Prepare for an appointment:** In order to schedule an intake appointment, you must have completed a Preliminary Application online and a Pre-Application Site Visit (be sure to select the authorization checkbox). You will receive a record number and a report from the site inspector.
3. **Schedule an appointment:** You need to schedule an appointment in order to submit your application. You can schedule your appointment through the Seattle Services Portal at <https://cosaccela.seattle.gov/Portal/>.
4. **Submit your application:** Submit your permit application online through the Seattle Services Portal. Be sure to:
  - Complete the attached shoreline permit application form and upload it as a separate document to the Seattle Services Portal.
  - Prepare and upload an electronic plan set as indicated above.
5. **Submit SEPA documents:** If environmental review is required under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) (see Tip 208, *When Environmental Review is Required in Seattle*), the SEPA component must be reviewed in conjunction with the review of the permit application (Section 23.76.010D of the Land Use Code). Upload a signed and completed SEPA checklist to the portal.

## REVIEW AND ISSUANCE

### Type I

We usually make a decision on Type 1 permits in less than 30 days. We issue the permit online. Please check the Seattle Services Portal for updates to your application.

### Type II

We usually make a decision on Type II permits, except for light rail temporary uses, in approximately 4 months. We issue the permit on line. Please check the Seattle Services Portal for updates to your application.

## CLOSING OUT YOUR TEMPORARY PERMIT

You must return your site to pre-existing conditions. An SDCI inspector will confirm whether you have met this criteria.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

To learn more about the environmental (SEPA) review process, contact a land use planner in the ASC or use our Q&A service ([web6.seattle.gov/dpd/LUQnA/?Type=1](http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/LUQnA/?Type=1)).

## Access to Information

Links to electronic versions of SDCI publications are available on our website at [www.seattle.gov/sdci](http://www.seattle.gov/sdci). Paper copies are available from our Public Resource Center, located on the 20th floor of Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 Fifth Ave. in downtown Seattle, (206) 684-8467.