



Outdoor Eating and Drinking Guidelines

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COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the local and state public health orders reducing indoor seating capacity, new temporary outdoor seating provisions have been established. Outdoor eating and drinking is one way to create safe physical distancing seating and help maximize customer capacity.

OUTDOOR EATING AND DRINKING

Restaurants, cafes, delis or food service uses that have regular indoor seating can add or expand outdoors by following the standards in El Cajon Municipal Code (ECMC) section 17.225.090 <http://qcode.us/codes/elcajon/?view=desktop&topic=17-17-225-17-225-090>. Operating under these standards requires no permit.

Outdoor Seating Standards

- Outdoor seating area cannot exceed indoor seating area
- Maintain a minimum four (4) foot wide access in a direct and straight path to the building entrance clear and unimpeded for ingress and egress.
- Maintain a minimum four (4) foot wide sidewalk for general pedestrian circulation adjacent to the use.
- Maintain a minimum fifteen (15) foot radius from street corner intersections, measured from the back of the curb.
- The location and use of the outdoor seating area shall not obstruct the movement of pedestrians, goods or vehicles; required parking spaces; driveways or parking aisles; entrances; legal signs; utilities or other improvements. When located adjacent to parking spaces, driveways or parking lot aisles, a physical barrier such as curb or railing shall be provided.
- The outdoor seating area shall be located proximate to the business providing the seating, such as adjacent to the building or within courtyards. Outdoor seating areas shall not reduce, be located within, or damage any required landscaped area.
- Furnishings shall be strictly limited to chairs, benches and tables, and single pole table umbrellas designed for outdoor use. All furnishings and barriers shall be maintained free of appendages or conditions that pose a hazard to pedestrians and vehicles. Table center and freestanding umbrellas are permitted.

TEMPORARY OUTDOOR EATING AND DRINKING

A Temporary Use Permit is available for outdoor eating and drinking if the standards in ECMC section 17.225.090 cannot be met or to expand existing and permitted outdoor seating. This process is also available to breweries, tasting rooms and bars. A Temporary Use Permit can be submitted online at www.cityofelcajon.us/PACO. The application requires the property owner's signature and a diagram showing the location of the outdoor area and identifying tables and safety features. Fees have been temporarily waived.

Outdoor seating options should create safe seating arrangements, use temporary physical barriers and should not remove ADA parking spaces. Please note, businesses shall not be permitted to expand beyond its pre-Covid-19 seating capacity.

Once a Temporary Use Permit is submitted, please allow 2-3 business days for review. Temporary outdoor seating areas must be removed upon the expiration of local or state health orders.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I have outdoor seating?

Regular outdoor seating is permitted within patios adjacent to the business. Temporary seating can be permitted with a Temporary Use Permit in those areas as well as within parking lots or other underutilized spaces.

Can I use the public sidewalk for outdoor seating?

At this time a Temporary Use Permit is not available, however the City Council will be considering this issue at a future meeting.

Who can I talk to if I have questions?

Please contact Planning at planning@cityofelcajon.us or 619.441.1742