



CITY OF ST. JOSEPH  
City Clerk's Office  
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St. Joseph, MI 49085  
Phone (269)983-6325  
[www.sjcity.com](http://www.sjcity.com)

# Downtown Sidewalk Amenities Temporary Encroachment FAQs

## Overview

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### What is the Sidewalk Amenities Temporary Encroachment Policy?

**Answer:** Many downtown merchants want to place temporary sidewalk amenities, such as sandwich board signs, benches, tables, and chairs, on the sidewalk (public right-of-way) in front of their business. The City has adopted a policy to allow merchants to place these temporary items in the public right-of-way to better support the health, safety, and welfare of residents, business owners, property owners, and visitors to the downtown. Please note that items such as tables, benches, and chairs must be available to the public and not limited to customers.

### When is a Permit Needed?

**Answer:** A Downtown Sidewalk Amenities Temporary Encroachment Permit is required for the placement of temporary seasonal amenities such as benches, tables, chairs, and planters on the public sidewalk. A Downtown Sidewalk Amenities Temporary Encroachment Permit is required year-round for the placement of sandwich boards.

### Who does the Sidewalk Amenities Temporary Encroachment Policy apply to?

**Answer:** This policy only applies to those businesses located within the [Downtown Development Authority District boundaries](#).

### When is the Sidewalk Amenities Temporary Encroachment Policy in effect?

**Answer:** This policy applies to sandwich boards all year. All other temporary items are allowed with a permit from April 1<sup>st</sup> through November 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Are there limitations to what I can display?

**Answer:** Yes. The Sidewalk Amenities Policy, available to review at [www.sjcity.com/DDA](http://www.sjcity.com/DDA), limits what can be placed on the public sidewalk. For instance, the sale or display of merchandise is only allowed as part of an annual sidewalk sale event, lights and flags must be displayed at a minimum clearance of 6'8", and sandwich boards are limited to height of 4 feet and width of 2 feet.

## Application

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### How do I apply for a Sidewalk Amenities Temporary Encroachment Permit?

**Answer:** Permit applications can be found on the City's website under the DDA page at [www.sjcity.com/DDA](http://www.sjcity.com/DDA) or obtained in person at City Hall.

A completed permit application consists of the application form, a site plan displaying the location and dimensions of all items that will be placed on the sidewalk, and proof of comprehensive general liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1 million per occurrence with an Endorsement naming the City of St. Joseph as additional insured.

Once complete, the application can be dropped off at City Hall or sent to the address above.

### **What is a site plan?**

**Answer:** A site plan is a drawing, no smaller than 8 1/2" x 11", that shows the width of the building, the location of entrances and exits, the dimension of the sidewalk in front of the building, the location of all public items in front of the building (such as fire hydrants, utility poles, driveways, etc.), and the proposed location of all items to be placed on the sidewalk. For more information, review the Sidewalk Amenities Policy or the sample site plan, both available to at [www.sjcity.com/DDA](http://www.sjcity.com/DDA).

### **What is the cost to apply for a Sidewalk Amenities Temporary Encroachment Permit?**

**Answer:** There is no cost to apply.

### **Do I have to apply for a new permit each year?**

**Answer:** No. Once a business owner obtains a permit, it will automatically renew for the following year. However, if a business owner wants to install items that differ from those in the approved site plan, a new permit is required. The business owner must also ensure that the required insurance policy is up to date. If the insurance policy lapses before or during the display season, the business owner must provide the City Clerk with proof of a valid insurance policy.

### **How will I know if I'm approved?**

**Answer:** Once the City determines the application meets the requirements, the City Clerk will mail the permit, with the approved site plan, to the applicant. The applicant should keep the permit with approved site plan in an easily accessible location during normal business hours.