



OVERVIEW

Elements like sidewalk cafes, street signage and advertisement are all positive components of promoting business Downtown or in any commercial district. The DowntownDC Business Improvement District (BID) supports the use of these types of elements, however we also want to ensure that businesses are aware of the public space regulations impacting them. Public space may offer a business the opportunity to increase the number of patrons and customers on a given day. It also might add vibrancy to the area and create an inviting environment for Downtown residents and visitors. At times, however, the city's regulations cause confusion about the use of the public right-of-way (ROW) and space adjacent to a property.

Sidewalk cafés and sidewalk signage are regulated by the District Department of Transportation's Public Space Committee to enforce DCMR §24-112 and DCMR §24-2001. Businesses may not operate a sidewalk café in public space until they are issued a Sidewalk Café Permit and a Certificate of Use for a café by the Public Space Committee. Also, it is unlawful to place a freestanding sidewalk sign in public space without a permit.

WHAT PROPERTY MANAGERS CAN DO

- Use the Public Realm Design Guidelines to determine the various factors and particulars that impact the area around your property.
- Review the Downtown Streetscape Regulations for specifics on the responsibilities of properties and businesses for elements in the public space.
- Certain uses of the public space need approval from DDOT. Applications for permitted activity may be submitted through the Transportation Online Permit System (TOPS) on DDOT's website.
- Any activity in the public space may be searched and reviewed by accessing the Public Space Permit Locator on DDOT's website.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the District Department of Transportation at **(202) 673-6813** or visit **ddot.dc.gov**.

You can also contact the BID's Public Space Management Department at **(202) 661-7571**.



how2

do business in public space

BACKGROUND

Sidewalk Cafes

A permit for a café must be displayed in a location where it is visible and can be seen from the sidewalk. All rental of public space, whether for a café or other commercial use, must have an adjacent clearance and unobstructed passageway not less than 10 feet in width at all points.

- Sidewalk cafés must have 15 square feet for every seat within their seating area.
- Sidewalk cafés near street intersections must provide proper clearance from the corner or obstructions.
- Sidewalk cafés have rental fees.
- Sidewalk cafés may be enclosed for inclement weather.
- Materials of an enclosed sidewalk café must be non-combustible or fire-resistant materials, and enclosures must provide the appropriate number of exits.

Sidewalk Signage

Under sign regulations, authorized temporary sidewalk signage must meet the following standards:

- Secured during inclement weather
- Not attached to any fixture in public space or by any other method to the sidewalk
- Not larger than six square feet
- Securely displayed under normal weather conditions
- Not block or actively interfere with any portion of the pedestrian or vehicular public right of way
- Not further than three feet from the building wall during business hours
- Only one freestanding sidewalk sign per business

WHAT THE DOWNTOWNDC BID DOES

DowntownDC BID's department of Public Space Management (PSM) contributes to the quality of life in Downtown by monitoring conditions and building relationships with government agencies, utilities and property managers. PSM's goal is to address the area's five most common problems: needed sidewalk, streetlight and street repairs, and signage and traffic signal maintenance.

Additionally, PSM works to enhance Downtown's overall physical environment and the pedestrian experience by overseeing security and emergency management initiatives, and focusing on Downtown's homeless population. Together, these actions help create safe and remarkable public places in Downtown where people want to congregate and explore.

About the BID

The DowntownDC Business Improvement District (BID) is a private, nonprofit organization that works to create remarkable urban experiences. With an annual budget of more than \$10 million, the DowntownDC BID provides services and programs to property and business owners in a 138-block area who pay a self-imposed tax to enhance economic vitality. The BID consists of a Board of Directors and has 135 employees.

For more information, visit www.DowntownDC.org or follow on Twitter [@downtowndcbid](https://twitter.com/downtowndcbid).

RESOURCES

DCMR §24-112:
www.dcregs.dc.gov

DCMR §24-2001:
www.dcregs.dc.gov