

Outdoor Dining Guidance

In order to provide guidance for outdoor dining accompanying Phase 3 of the Restore Illinois reopening plan, the Village of Skokie is providing rules to permit outdoor dining in support of the restaurant industry and ongoing efforts to reopen businesses.



Since Phase 3 thresholds are expected to be met on Friday, May 29th, which coincides with the end of the Governor's Stay-at-Home order, the Village of Skokie seeks to provide guidance in order to allow restaurants time to prepare for outdoor dining operations.

The primary concern for all of us is the safety of your customers and employees as we take steps to reopen. For questions regarding the requirements in this document, please email Matt Brandmeyer, Community Development Director, at matt.brandmeyer@skokie.org with "outdoor dining" in the subject line.

Applicability

Outdoor dining is permitted for eating and/or drinking establishments that serve food or beverages for on-site consumption and provided seating to accommodate customers prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes restaurants, bars, coffee and tea shops, ice cream shops, and similar business establishments.

No Permit Required

A permit and application fee are typically required for outdoor dining, but these requirements are being waived as an emergency provision in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Previously approved outdoor dining will not be required to pay this fee as part of their annual business license renewal for the current year.

Village inspectors may conduct site visits to ensure requirements are met and will contact business owners/managers for any modifications to outdoor dining operations.

If you have a special circumstance that is not accounted for in these guidelines, please email matt.brandmeyer@skokie.org.

Length of Time

Approval for outdoor dining is granted for a period of six (6) months from May 29th (November 30, 2020) unless metrics fall back to Phase 2 levels or overriding requirements are implemented.

Sale of Alcohol

The Skokie Liquor Control Commissioner will extend your existing liquor license to include the outdoor seating area prescribed in this document. Alcohol in open containers must remain within the fenced or barricaded table area and signage must be posted instructing patrons that they may not remove open containers of alcohol from said fenced or barricaded table area.

Permitted Outdoor Dining Locations

Tables and chairs may be placed within public or private pedestrian areas at or near the business provided pedestrian access remains unobstructed and ADA compliant.

Tables and chairs may be placed within parking areas and drive aisles provided the dining area is protected by temporary fencing no greater than four (4) foot in height, traffic control devices, or other barrier that will adequately protect customers. In these instances, businesses are required to provide signs directing vehicles past dining areas and shall ensure traffic does not backup into the street when entering the site.

For multi-tenant buildings, the business is required to obtain the building owner's or manager's approval prior to establishing an outdoor dining area. Businesses seeking to utilize shared parking or shared frontages for outdoor dining will be required to seek approval from affected businesses.

Outdoor dining areas shall not interfere with fire safety facilities including required fire lanes, hydrants, or hose connection points.

Consideration may be given for tables and chairs to be placed within public on-street parking areas for businesses with direct street frontage if the pedestrian area does not provide adequate space for outdoor dining operations but only upon review and approval by the Village of Skokie. To inquire about the use of public on-street parking, please email matt.brandmeyer@skokie.org.

Table Placement

Tables shall be spaced to allow for a minimum of six (6) feet of separation between occupied chairs of adjacent tables. Businesses with existing outdoor dining areas may need to block off stationary tables or seating areas, in order to achieve the 6-foot separate requirement but may expand the dining area in order to add seating capacity, provided all other requirements are met.

Outdoor Dining Rules

The following rules shall apply to outdoor dining:

1. No more than six (6) customers may be permitted to sit together as per State requirements.
2. The outdoor dining area shall be closed no later than 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday.
3. Smoking is prohibited in outdoor dining areas.
4. Adequate lighting is required for outdoor dining areas, particularly where vehicular traffic has been rerouted to accommodate outdoor dining.
5. Businesses shall be responsible for disposing of any trash generated from outdoor dining and ensure the area is well-maintained. Please be cognizant of items that may be blown by the wind.
6. Live music or electronically amplified music or sound is permitted provided sound doesn't extend past the property line.
7. Tents that are 50% open may be permitted but are subject to the issuance of a building permit. Fully enclosed tents are prohibited.
8. The outdoor dining area shall not disturb the lawful use and quiet enjoyment of nearby properties.