



# OUTDOOR DINING/OUTDOOR FOOD PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

## INTRODUCTION

Title 19 – Zoning of the Riverside Municipal Code calls for the adoption of guidelines in order to encourage the creation of pleasant, usable café dining and cooking areas that visually enhance the community's contemporary as well as historic commercial environments. If you would like to enhance your dining establishment by including outdoor dining or food preparation, a series of codes, guidelines and permits will apply from various local, county and state agencies. This document identifies those regulations enforced by the City and provides the accompanying design guidelines.

Please Note: This document brings together rules and processes currently required and enforced by the City of Riverside, the County of Riverside, the South Coast Air Quality District, and the State of California, the various requirements and regulations may change over time, so it is important that you check with these agencies and follow their procedures.

## APPLICABILITY

### Dining

These requirements and guidelines govern the design and construction of all new and remodeled outdoor dining areas, both those within the public right of way and those on private property. They apply to any outdoor dining facilities adjacent to and incidental to indoor eating establishments and are subject to approval through the Design Review process.

### Food Preparation

Permanent outdoor cooking or food preparation facilities also fall under these requirements and guidelines. Such outdoor preparation of food can only occur when in conjunction with outdoor dining and is subject to approval of a Minor Conditional Use Permit process. In most cases, this may be done through a staff-level review.

## BASIC REQUIREMENTS

**(do not apply to outdoor preparation of food in association with a legally established school or assemblies of people – non-entertainment or similar use that is separately regulated)**

- Apply for Design Review (for outdoor dining; include details such as proposed colors, awnings, tables, fencing materials etc.). 19.110.050, 19.120.015
- Apply for a Minor Conditional Use Permit (for permanent food preparation facilities only). Table 19.150.020 (B)
- Apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness – Board (for properties within historic districts or on properties carrying a historic designation only).
- After approval of the necessary cases, you must apply for and obtain a building permit.
- Facilities for food preparation shall be in compliance with all requirements of the Riverside County Health Department, Police Department, Fire Department and the South Coast Air Quality Management District.
- Areas within the Right of Way – apply for an encroachment permit from the Public Works Department and verification and maintenance of liability insurance by the City's Risk Manager for any permanent fixtures (tables, umbrellas, awnings, walls, planters, light standards) in the public right of way.

## SITE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### Location

Requirements:

- The outdoor dining area shall be located in a designated dining area approved by the Zoning Administrator through the Design Review process.
- The outdoor food preparation area shall be located in an area approved by the Zoning Administrator through the Minor Conditional Use Permit process.
- All outdoor facilities shall be located so they do not pose a hazard or nuisance to pedestrians.
- Outdoor dining facilities, including food preparation, shall be in compliance with all requirements of the Riverside County Health Department, Police Department, Fire Department and the South Coast Air Quality Management District at all times.
- All the State of California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control requirements must be met for outdoor dining areas in which alcohol is served.

Guidelines:

- Outdoor food preparation facilities should be sensitive to the architectural features and general layout of the site.
- Outdoor dining and food preparation facilities should be sited to enhance the dining experience, and provide an inviting setting. Proximity to traffic, noise, and distasteful odors should be considered.

### Accessibility

Requirements:

- Disabled Persons: The Building and Safety Division will check each proposed outdoor dining area for compliance with the applicable disability access laws. Although



each site has specific issues, in general, all outdoor dining areas must be fully and equally accessible to those individuals with disabilities.

- Occupancy and Exiting: Proposed outdoor facilities will be reviewed by the Fire Department for maximum occupancy load and proper exiting requirements.

#### Guidelines:

- Accessibility issues should be a carefully considered part of the design process, rather than being an afterthought, and thus should be integrated into the overall flow and feel of the establishment.
- Any required ramping, railing or other equipment for disabled access should be integrated into the overall design of the site.

## DESIGN ELEMENTS

### Fencing

#### Requirements:

- A decorative element separating outdoor dining areas from adjacent pedestrian traffic may be provided, unless alcohol is to be served, in which case such an enclosure or a similar control measure may be required, according to the State of California Alcoholic Beverage Control Department.

#### Guidelines:

- The design and materials of such elements must be complimentary to and compatible with the architectural design of the building, and should add to the visual interest of the street-scape.
- Decorative fencing and planters usually should not be over four (4) feet in height.
- Chain-link fencing, plastic or paper pennants, and/or wooden barricades are not acceptable as an enclosure element.

### Coverings

#### Requirements:

- Awning or canopy material covering an outdoor seating area may be fixed, retractable, folding, or collapsible, and may extend into the public right of way with an approved encroachment permit.
- Awnings must have noncombustible frames, but may have fire-treated combustible coverings.
- Awnings in any configuration must not obstruct the use of a required exit.
- If you wish to install an awning or canopy structure over 400 square feet over the dining area, a Fire Department permit will be required (submittal requirements are available from the Fire Department).

#### Guidelines:

- The use of vinyl awnings and/or vinyl canopy coverings is strongly discouraged.

- Texture, detailing, and color selection of coverings should blend with and compliment the design of the facility.
- In general, umbrellas and other coverings advertising specific products are discouraged.

## Signs

### Requirements:

- Identification signs are permitted as specified under Chapter 19.620 of the City Zoning Code (General Sign Provisions) except that – signs installed in conjunction with the outdoor dining area cannot be used in addition to the main identification sign.
- Directional signs are allowed by the General Sign Provisions as needed to direct pedestrian traffic, and as required by the Building and Fire Codes.

### Guidelines:

- Signs should be integrated into the site's design and architectural palette, and should be complimentary in color, material and detail.

## Lights (19.556)

### Requirements:

- The use of candles in the dining areas, a Fire Department permit will be required (submittal requirements are available from the Fire Department).

### Guidelines:

- Decorative accent lighting may be provided for the outdoor dining area, provided all necessary permits have been secured. The lighting shall compliment the design style of the main dining area, as well as the architectural style of the overall building or complex. This sensitivity is particularly important when designing lighting for historic buildings.
- Decorative lighting shall be properly shielded to prevent spill-over onto the adjoining properties or onto the right of way.
- Decorative lighting shall not include blinking or flashing lights, exposed neon tubing, or flood lights.
- The reintroduction or restoration of historic lighting fixtures is greatly encouraged, as they can lend an inviting ambiance to an establishment.
- The use of colored lighting is generally discouraged, but can be applied in a limited way when appropriate to the design of the historic architectural features of the space.

## Parking (19.580)

### Requirements:

- Parking requirements for outdoor dining areas shall apply on the same ratio as the main dining establishment.



- Parking adjacent to outdoor dining and/or outdoor food preparation areas shall comply with the requirements of the Building and Safety and the Fire Departments.

Guidelines:

- If adjacent to outdoor dining and/or food preparation areas, onsite parking should be physically separated by decorative fencing or landscaping.

## Furnishings

Requirements:

- There must be at least four (4) feet of clear passage between all furniture, fixtures and other objects and the curb or building face, depending upon the configuration of your site.

Guidelines:

- All table and chairs shall be of sturdy construction, made of good quality materials and designed to complement the character of the streetscape and surrounding built environment.
- Landscape elements such as planters or potted plants shall also compliment the character of the streetscape and surrounding buildings. Furniture and landscape design should be sensitive to the architecture of the immediate surroundings.
- Using insensitive materials such as plastic tables and chairs is discouraged for all dining areas, especially those within Historic Districts

## Contact Information

### City of Riverside

- Planning Division.....(951) 826-5371
- Building & Safety Division.....(951) 826-5697
- Fire Prevention Department.....(951) 826-5737
- Public Works Department.....(951) 826-5341

*All Located at City Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor:  
3900 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92522*

### County of Riverside

- Department of Environmental Health.....(951) 358-5316  
*4065 County Circle Drive, Riverside, CA 92503*

### South Coast Air Quality Management District

- Small Business Assistance Desk.....(909) 396-2000  
*21865 East Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765*

### State of California

#### Alcoholic Beverage Control Department

- Riverside & San Bernardino Counties.....(951) 782-4400  
*3737 Main Street Suite 900, Riverside, CA 92501*

