



Larimer County Temporary Outdoor Business Expansion Guidelines

Community Development Department

These guidelines are in effect for 90 days starting June 1, 2020 and are subject to change, extension or revocation depending on state and county public health orders

Businesses such as restaurants, gyms, and retail stores may want to temporarily expand operations outside to take advantage of less restrictive new state and county public health orders, and due to more restrictive occupancy loads indoors. Under non-emergency conditions, such expansion would require planning review and approval, possibly a building permit for increased occupant loads, and review and approval from the local Fire Department and County Engineering. The County aims to streamline the process so businesses can quickly move some operations outside on a temporary basis, while still ensuring safe conditions for the public and their employees.

Blocking or closing any Rights-of-Way (streets, alleys, sidewalks, fire lanes, parking lanes) for regular, daily use under these guidelines is not permitted, to protect public safety, emergency access to building(s) on the property and neighboring properties, and traffic mobility including pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchairs, and motor vehicles. Temporary right-of-way encroachments or closures are only permitted by the County in specific cases, for a limited time, and with specific requirements. For information on temporary encroachment permits, please call County Engineering at 498-5709.

No county building permit or planning review is required to temporarily set up tables, chairs or merchandise or otherwise expand your business outside on your own property, such as a parking lot or landscaped area, or on a neighboring property with written permission from that property owner, as long as your operation stays within the following guidelines. If you need to exceed these guidelines for temporary uses, please contact Planning Manager Don Threewitt at 498-7689 to apply for Rapid Site Plan Approval. Permanent changes require planning, engineering, building and/or fire department review and approval.

The following guidance must be adhered to, and no building, planning or engineering permits or approvals are required:

1. Follow all Health Dept. guidelines including table spacing, occupancy limits, symptom checks, ordering, paying, etc. Some businesses must submit a plan to the Health Dept. You can find Health checklists and submit plans at <https://www.larimer.org/health/communicable-disease/coronavirus-covid-19/variance-request-approvals-and-process>
2. Do not block any fire lanes, emergency vehicle access, fire hydrants, Fire Dept. Connections (FDCs) or other emergency equipment.
3. You may block some of your own parking spaces but leave enough useable to accommodate the numbers of guests you are allowed.
4. Leave handicap-accessible parking spaces and access aisles unblocked.
5. Maintain accessibility to and egress from outdoor spaces.

6. Maintain minimum 3' wide pedestrian access around the outdoor area, separated from vehicle lanes or emergency access lanes.
7. Set up temporary barriers to protect your customers from vehicles.
8. Avoid placing seating directly in front of incoming driveways and vehicles.
9. Set up clear temporary signage to direct traffic and pedestrian flow.
10. If you wish to serve alcoholic beverages outside, you must obtain liquor license approval from the County Clerk and Recorder.
11. If the outdoor expansion area is fenced or cordoned off, exits must be clearly demarcated.
12. For evening and nighttime operations, provide adequate lighting at all aisleways and exits in the outdoor expansion area.
13. Outdoor heating devices, open fires, tents over 400 square feet or canopies over 700 square feet need prior approval from the appropriate fire district.
14. Outdoor areas must have trash receptacles. All trash or spills must be cleaned up daily. Any discharge to the storm drain system, such as directing wash water to the storm drain, is prohibited.

Planning or Engineering review is required if you:

- Propose permanent site alterations such as pavement or new structures
- Change entrance/exit or driveways on the site
- Install permanent new signage to the site
- Permanently expand outdoor operations
- Place accessory objects, other than readily moveable tables and chairs, within the regulatory floodplain. A temporary Floodplain Development Permit from the Engineering Department is required in that case. To see if you are in a floodplain, go to the Larimer County Flood Information Locator at <https://www.larimer.org/engineering/floodplains>. For more information on floodplain limits and permit requirements, please call (970) 498-5732.

Building permits are required if you:

- Install a fence over 6' high
- Extend a patio roof or walls or make other permanent additions/alterations
- Install new electric heat or lighting circuits, which requires a state electrical permit (*after July 1 electrical permits will be issued by Larimer County*). Temporary power for lighting may be supplied by an approved outdoor extension cord from an existing electrical branch circuit, 50' maximum length and minimum 12-gauge wire size.
- Gas heaters, open fires or large tents require a Fire Department permit.