

## PENALTIES

Violation of Article 5.3 of the Public Works Code and/or permit conditions can result in enforcement and corrective action, which may incur fines.

Fines of \$100 to \$500 per violation shall be assessed for the following common violations:

- No Display Merchandise Permit
- Permit not available and/or displayed in public view
- Display area exceeds permitted area
- Display items block egress or fire escape
- Display items at roadway/curbside
- Unclean or unmaintained display/sidewalk/gutter
- Display items are not same as in the store
- Display is in the public right of way during non-permitted hours



**San Francisco Public Works**  
**Street-Use and Mapping**  
49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 300  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
Phone: (628) 271-2000

**San Francisco Public Works**  
**Permit Center**  
49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 200  
**Processing Hours:** Please visit  
<https://sf.gov/location/permit-center>  
for operating hours of the Permit Center.

- Closed on official holidays



Contact 311 for service requests



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REVISION DATE: 10.04.2021

# Display Merchandise

Guidelines for displaying merchandise  
in sidewalk locations



Public Works Code Article 5.3 and Public Works Order No. 166,458 regulate the display of food and nonfood items on the sidewalks in the public right of way where allowed by the Planning Code.



[www.sfpublishworks.org](http://www.sfpublishworks.org)

## 1. WHAT IS A DISPLAY MERCHANDISE PERMIT?

In order to enhance the viability of retail establishments in commercial districts, the City has established a permit process through Public Works that allows retail business owners to display some of their merchandise on a portion of the sidewalk fronting their business. To balance safety and accessibility with community engagement and commercial prosperity, the City has established a revocable street-use permit: the Display Merchandise Permit.

## 2. HOW DO I APPLY FOR A DISPLAY MERCHANDISE PERMIT?

To submit an application, you may visit the online Shared Spaces application portal at [sf.gov/shared-spaces](https://sf.gov/shared-spaces).

- A site plan showing:
  - ▶ Entrances to business and nearby buildings
  - ▶ Extension of property lines to street
  - ▶ Sidewalk width
  - ▶ Any obstructions within 15 feet of display area
  - ▶ Width and depth of occupied area
  - ▶ Fire department connections and fire escapes
  - ▶ Material and dimensions of stands or racks in occupied area

- An itemized list of the merchandise/merchandise types intended to be displayed.
- Certificate of Insurance compliant with Public Works requirements.
- Current San Francisco Business Registration Certificate.

## 3. WHAT RESTRICTIONS ARE IN PLACE?

- A.** Display merchandise only can be placed on the sidewalk in front of the permitted retail establishment.
- B.** Merchandise displayed in the sidewalk area shall be representative of the merchandise displayed inside the retail establishment.
- C.** Monetary transactions shall occur only within the retail establishment.
- D.** Display of raw meat/fish, cut fruit, dried fruit and shelled nuts is not allowed in the sidewalk area.
- E.** All display stands must be removed from sidewalk in accordance with the approved hours of operation.
- F.** When feasible, the sidewalk in front of the business must be wide enough to allow for a minimum of 8 feet wide unobstructed pedestrian through path of travel around the proposed display

area. In cases where an eight-foot path of travel is not feasible due to the sidewalk width or obstructions on the sidewalk, a narrower pedestrian path of travel as low as six feet may be considered on a case by case basis.

**G.** Deliveries are not allowed in the sidewalk area after 10 a.m.

**H.** No garbage may be stored on any portion of the sidewalk, except for tightly closed garbage receptacles placed after 6 p.m. the day before pickup.

**I.** Placement of merchandise must not interfere with curb ramps, building entrances, driveways, Fire Department connections or access to any fire escape.

**J.** Placement of display merchandise on the sidewalk must meet all federal, state and local laws and regulations.

**K.** The top of the display must be at least 30 inches above the sidewalk and no more than 46 inches above the sidewalk.

**L.** The display must be within the business frontage and extend no more than two feet in depth from the property line.

**M.** Fruit and vegetable displays must be protected by an awning compliant with the Department of Public Health Code.

**N.** Displays must be constructed of materials that are smooth, nonabsorbent and cleanable.

## 4. WHAT ARE THE PERMIT HOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES?

**A.** Permit holder is responsible for ensuring all displays and merchandise are within the approved area at all times.

**B.** Permit holder shall maintain the storefront, exterior walls, sidewalk and gutter in clean conditions at all times. Sidewalk shall be washed daily in locations with food displays.

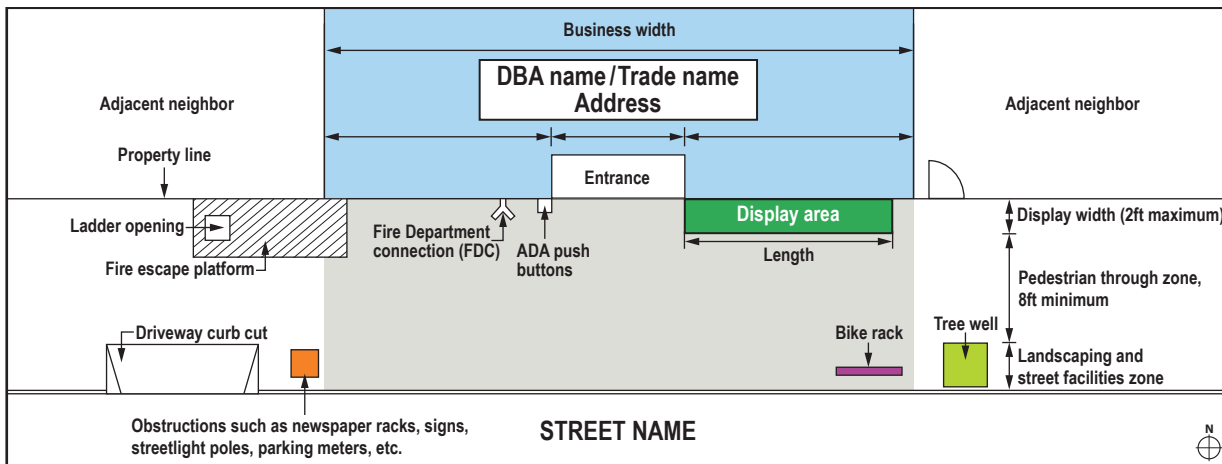
**C.** Sidewalk areas may not be painted, landscaped or altered in any way without prior approval from Public Works.

**D.** Permit holder must have continuous liability insurance compliant with Public Works requirements.

**E.** Permit holder must display a copy of the permit in public view during business hours.

**F.** Permit holder must request a renewal no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date of existing permit.

**G.** Permit holder is required to comply with the applicable rules and regulations of the Department of Public Health.



Sample diagram for standard merchandise display (not to scale)



**VIOLATION:** Exceeding permissible use



**VIOLATION:** Unsafe condition