



Town of Westport  
Planning and Zoning Commission  
Town Hall, 110 Myrtle Avenue  
Westport, CT 06880  
Tel: 203-341-1030 Fax: 203-454-6145  
[www.westportct.gov](http://www.westportct.gov)

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## OUTDOOR DINING FAQ

### PROCESS

1. What's the process for seeking approval for outdoor dining?

Please complete the Outdoor Dining Application which you can find [here](#) and submit to [PandZ@westportct.gov](mailto:PandZ@westportct.gov) ATTN: Mary Young, Planning & Zoning Director, who will circulate to other Town Departments, as applicable. There are no fees for this application.

2. Do I need to hire an architect or engineer?

There is no need to hire any outside consultants. The application is very simple and you can use a drawing made by hand, old plans or even a printout from Google Maps to indicate where you would like to locate your outdoor dining area. Please indicate dimensions of the outdoor area proposed, size of any tents proposed, etc.

3. What's the timeline?

Once your application is determined to be complete by the Zoning Office, you will receive a response informing you that your application has been approved, amended or denied within 10 business days. If you do not receive a response within 10 days then your application is deemed approved.

4. Can I appeal if denied?

Yes. You may appeal to the Planning & Zoning Commission which will discuss your appeal at its next scheduled meeting.

5. Do I have to apply even if I already have an approved outdoor dining area from the town?

Yes. Even if you already have an approved outdoor patio, you must complete the application to ensure the patio meets current State and Local requirements.

## OUTDOOR DINING GUIDELINES

1. Where can I put the outdoor dining area?

The outdoor dining can be located anywhere that meets fire, police and health requirements. This means it can potentially go in your parking lot or even in the parking lot of a nearby or adjacent building, as long as the owner of that property agrees. It can even potentially be located within the setbacks as long as you are sensitive to neighboring uses, especially any residential uses adjacent or nearby. Your proposed plan will be carefully and quickly reviewed by the Zoning Office.

2. If I put the outdoor dining in my parking lot, where will people park?

If you intend to use part or all of your parking lot for outdoor dining, you must ensure there is parking nearby for both patrons and your employees. Please include this information in your application.

3. Can I create a combined outdoor eating area with some other restaurants in my same building or area?

Yes. Please feel free to collaborate on a plan with your neighboring restaurants.

4. What if there is a town-owned lot, park or street nearby that would be helpful for me to utilize for outdoor dining? Can I request that a street be closed?

Yes. You can request permission to utilize town owned property on the application, including sidewalks, streets, parks and parking lots. These requests will be evaluated by the local Traffic Authority in addition to the police and fire departments. As this process may take longer than 10 days, consider making this an alternative request. You are not limited to making one request.

5. Am I required to build a platform for the outdoor dining tables to sit on?

No. There is no requirement to build a platform as long as your seating meets ADA requirements.

6. Am I required to provide a tent, awning or umbrellas or can the outdoor dining be uncovered?

There is no requirement to provide covered outdoor dining. The outdoor dining can be open to the air.

### SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/COVID-19

1. Do I need any state approvals to open?

Yes. You must self-certify with the State before opening and before the Zoning Office may approve your application. [Here](#) is the link for the application.

2. How big of a dining area am I permitted to create? Is it the physical size of the area or occupancy that matters or both?

You can potentially serve up to 50% of the number of patrons typically accommodated at your restaurant pre-Covid. However, all state and local social distancing rules must be observed and the police, fire and health departments must approve of the outdoor dining area's size, configuration and location.

3. How apart must tables be located?

Seating and tables must be arranged to maintain at least 6 feet of distance between customers. You must ensure tables are at least 6+ ft apart. If customers are sitting in booths or seating is fixed, groups of customers must still be 6+ ft apart. This may require keeping some booths or seats empty. Distance shall be measured from the closest chair at one table to the closest chair at another table.

4. Where should hand washing or sanitizing stations be set up? What should be provided?

Hand sanitizer shall be made available at entrance points and common areas.

5. Can patrons utilize the bathrooms inside my restaurant?

Yes. However, they must put their mask on before leaving the table. Management should keep in mind there is a requirement to install visual social distancing markers to encourage customers to remain 6 ft apart (e.g., the entrance to the restaurant, lines to be seated, lines to make payments, lines to use the restroom)

6. Are patrons required to wear masks when they are not eating/drinking?

Customers are required to bring and wear masks or cloth face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth unless doing so would be contrary to his or her health or safety due to a medical condition or when eating in the restaurant. The masks should also be worn while entering and/or leaving the facility, or leaving the table to use the restroom.

7. Are staff required to wear masks at all times?

Yes, all employees are required to wear a facemask or other cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth, unless doing so would be contrary to his or her health or safety due to medical conditions. Employees may utilize their own cloth face covering instead of that provided by their employer if they choose. Additionally, gloves are required for table servers, and they must be replaced frequently. Gloves and eye protection are required when using cleaning chemicals. Kitchen workers shall follow FDA guidelines on use of gloves where appropriate.

8. If a patron isn't complying with health standards, i.e. not wearing a mask or standing too close to a different table, how should we handle this?

We are all in this together! The complainant should ask to speak to the manager or establishment owner on-site who should immediately ask the patron to comply with the safety protocols or leave. If compliance is not obtained restaurant patrons, employees, and/or owners can contact the Westport Police non-emergency line to report any issue by calling 203-341-6000.

9. Are restaurants required to seat only parties with reservations? Are restaurants required to keep a log of everyone for potential contact tracing?

It is strongly recommended that you require patrons to reserve tables in advance to assist with any necessary contact tracing and to minimize having people waiting for tables. In the event a patron or employee becomes ill, contact tracing will be facilitated by strong record keeping. It is recommended that you keep a log of all walk-in customers for this reason as well.

10. Can restaurants create a designated waiting area?

No. Restaurant should take the contact information of people waiting to eat and should call or text the patrons when their table is ready. You may not designate a waiting area and your staff should actively discourage patrons from waiting at the restaurant to be seated.

11. How frequently must the bathrooms be sanitized and is there a recommended sanitizing solution or product?

Bathrooms should be cleaned frequently, implementing use of a cleaning log for tracking.

Sanitizing solutions and/or products need to follow federal guidelines (CDC, EPA) on what specific products to use and how:

- Use products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2 and that are appropriate for the surface. Prior to wiping the surface, allow the disinfectant to sit for the necessary contact time recommended by the manufacturer. Train staff on proper cleaning procedures to ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants.
- Disinfectants are irritants and sensitizers, and they should be used cautiously.
- Avoid all food contact surfaces when using disinfectants; these surfaces should be sanitized instead.
- Clean and disinfect common areas, high transit areas, and frequently touched surfaces on an ongoing basis (at least daily) and more frequently if used more often. Clean and disinfect shared objects after each use including but not limited to: (i) entrances and exits, (ii) payment devices (e.g., PIN pad) and (iii) chairs.

Please see the more details regarding the Governor's Re-Open Connecticut standards [here](#).