



innovative by nature

## **COVID Special Event Permit Frequently Asked Questions**

**Contact:**  
Building Department  
248.656.4615

Planning & Economic Development Department  
248.656.4660

[www.rochesterhills.org/coronavirusbusiness](http://www.rochesterhills.org/coronavirusbusiness)



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## **The City of Rochester Hills values your business!**

An attractive, progressive, financially stable community maintains a healthy mix of businesses. Rochester Hills is fortunate to have businesses of all sizes, offering valuable products, services and creating jobs. In times like this, there is little that local government can control, but we can do our best to minimize the process of ensuring safe establishments for employees and customers alike. This new COVID Special Event Permit is one way we are responding to business needs.

### ***We are in unprecedented times and time is of the essence, why do I need to apply for permits to modify my business operations to address COVID-19 guidelines and executive orders?***

The City is doing everything it can to help our businesses get back up and running. We have created a special temporary COVID Special Event Permit that eliminates fees and allows an expedited review process to get your business up and running as easily and quickly as possible while still ensuring the safety of the community.

### ***What is the difference between COVID-19 temporary modifications and regular permitted business modifications?***

The City has passed temporary measures to provide some relief and flexibility to businesses as you reopen. Some of these measures include waived or capped permit fees, extended duration for temporary/outdoor events, relief from some ordinance requirements including parking and sign standards, and expedited review process. Please see [www.rochesterhills.org/coronavirusbusiness](http://www.rochesterhills.org/coronavirusbusiness) for more information. These regulations are applicable to businesses that need to modify your operations as a result of COVID, If you would like to pursue permanent modifications to your business, such as an outdoor seating area that you expect to have beyond 2020, you still need to go through the regular review process.

## ***Who do I need to coordinate with to start the process?***

Contact the Building Department at 248-656-4615 and they will get you in touch with the Ordinance Inspector in your area. They will be able to walk you through the process. Also, if you are located within a shopping center, office, or other multi-tenant building, you will need to get the permission of your landlord to ensure there is adequate access, parking, and separation between multiple businesses.

## ***What do I need to submit to get a COVID Special Event Permit?***

The Building Department has developed a COVID Special Event permit Checklist that is attached to this document. It will help you understand what is needed. You can also call the Building Department at 248-656-4615 and one of our customer service staff will get you in touch with the Ordinance Inspector in your area. They can answer any questions you may have, walk you through the process, and even provide an aerial view of your property to assist in your submittal.

## ***How long will it take to get a COVID Special Event Permit?***

The Building Department has developed an expedited review process that will allow your application for a COVID Special Event permit to be reviewed within 48 hours. We may need to get back to you with some questions or concerns, but our goal is to be able to process your request within 48 hours.

## ***Can I change or remove some of the physical characteristics of my property, such as landscaping, parking/loading areas, walkways, etc.. to accommodate my new outside operations?***

The answer is yes; however any proposed changes needs to be reviewed and approved by the City to ensure that the changes don't negatively affect surrounding properties and uses, and that the site still operates in a safe manner for everyone who would need to visit the site including employees, customers, people of all abilities, and emergency workers.

## ***I would like to create a curbside pickup area to allow customers to receive merchandise in their car. What do I need to do?***

If you would like to convert existing parking areas on the site's property into curbside pickup spaces, please just identify that spaces with appropriate signage. If you are looking to designate an area that was previously used for something other than parking, please provide your proposal to the City for review as part of the COVID Special Event Permit at no charge.

## ***Where do I find my business establishment's allowable capacity per my Rochester Hills certificate of occupancy?***

If you have indoor seating you should have a maximum occupant load sign located in the seating area of your building. If you are not able to locate that sign please provide us with the current number of seating you have in your establishment.

## ***During these COVID times, who determines how many people I can physically have within my business establishment?***

The Governor's executive orders related to social distancing and the maximum amount of indoor seating will determine how many people you can have in your establishment. You can visit the states website at [www.Michigan.gov](http://www.Michigan.gov) for the most recent executive orders related to indoor seating and occupancy. Please remember that these requirements can change at any time based on the latest order issued by the Governor.

## ***If I expand my operations to outside/exterior off the building, does this allow me to service additional customers beyond my calculated capacity?***

The goal of the City's COVID Special Event Permit is to allow businesses to get back up and running up to previously capacity. So if your business could accommodate 100 people before COVID, any changes you make to get your business back up and running should be designed to still accommodate 100 people.

***To meet guidelines of social distancing of my customers and employees, I would like to move some of my operations outside, is that possible?***

Yes, that may be possible depending on where you are proposing to relocate outside and what you are proposing to do. As part of the COVID Special Event Permit review process, the City will review your proposal to make sure what you are proposing meets all applicable Building Codes, Fire Codes, and parking needs and does not create any negative impacts on surrounding uses.

***I would like to hold a scheduled temporary event outside on my property, such as a movie night, employee picnic or other gathering of people. What do I need to do?***

This would be considered a regular Special Event and would go through the normal permit process. The normal review time for these events is 7-10 days. You can call the Building Department at 248-656-4615 and one of our customer service staff will get you in touch with the Ordinance Inspector in your area. They can answer any questions you may have, walk you through the process.

***Can the City help direct me to other programs and resources that can help with other business needs (loans, workforce, marketing, procurement, relocation, business planning, etc)?***

YES! Most definitely. The City maintains a special department - just to help your business succeed. The Planning and Economic Development Department has a team of professionals that will talk with you about your business plans, what areas you need assistance with and help you gain access to any programs and resources available. Feel free to contact Pamela Valentik, Economic Development Manager at [valentikp@rochesterhills.org](mailto:valentikp@rochesterhills.org) (248.841.2577).

# TEMPORARY SIGNS

## ***What exactly are temporary signs?***

Temporary signs are just that...signs that are not meant to be permanent. These are usually banners announcing special events, or a change in operation. Examples of temporary signs include signs such as "Now Open", "Order Online", "Curbside pickup", "We're open for carryout orders" or "Expanded Hours"

## ***What are the fees for temporary signs?***

Great news! The City has waived the fees traditionally associated with temporary signs through the end of 2020!

## ***Is there a review by the City required for COVID temporary signs?***

More great news – no! We just ask that the signs meet the "COVID Temporary Sign Installation Guide" attached to this document. The maximum size, area and allowable locations are noted in the guide. If you have any questions you can call the Building Department at 248-656-4615 and one of our customer service staff will get you in touch with the Ordinance Inspector in your area. They can walk you through the guide and help you with any questions you may have. Please remember temporary signs are not allowed in the right-of-way. That is generally the area between the main road and the pathway. Our Ordinance Inspectors will be monitoring the area to verify your signs are installed in the allowable locations and within the size and area requirements of the guide so we can keep our business looking as nice as possible during this challenging time.

## ***Who can help me develop the perfect sign to direct customers to my business?***

Yes, the perfect sign is exactly what you need that will quickly get the attention of people passing by. Unfortunately, City staff is not trained to design and construct business signs but there are many businesses (right here in our community) that specialize in the sign business. Check out the business directory on the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce's website at [www.rrc-mi.com](http://www.rrc-mi.com)

## OUTDOOR DINING

### ***Does the outdoor seating area need to be enclosed, and if so, with what?***

If your outdoor seating area will involve the consumption of alcohol it must be enclosed by a barrier to define the area where alcohol consumption is allowed. Also if the outdoor seating area is located near drive lanes, the area must be separated by a continuous barrier to prevent patrons from walking into the traffic lanes.

### ***Can we put up tents or other temporary structures like dining igloos to accommodate outdoor seating?***

It depends. As part of the review process, the City will review your proposal to ensure it meets applicable Zoning, Building and Fire Codes in order to keep employees and customers safe. You will need to provide the details of the proposed temporary structure along with the location, how it will be used, and the interior layout of any table and chairs. Please see the "COVID Special Event Permit Checklist" attached for more details.

### ***Can we incorporate lighting and heaters to the temporary outdoor seating area?***

Any lighting or heaters will need to be reviewed to ensure they meet applicable Building and Fire Codes in order to keep employees and customers safe.

### ***My customers are enjoying my new outdoor seating and I want to extend it beyond the season, can I do that?***

If you would like to pursue permanent modifications to your business, such as an outdoor seating area that you expect to have beyond 2020, you still need to go through the regular review process.

## **OUTDOOR SALES, SERVICES, OFFICE & OTHER USES**

***I already have a permit for outdoor sales but I would like to expand that permitted area, is that possible?***

If you submit your proposal to the City as part of the COVID Special Event Permit we can review the additional area at no charge to determine if it would be allowable.

***I have a(n):***

- 1. Personal services business (salon, medical, pet services, fitness, etc) and I'd like to set up a temporary work station outdoors***
- 2. Office or industrial business and I'd like to set up some of my operation (storage, work space, employee areas, etc) outdoors***

***is that possible?***

These requests will be evaluated on a case by case basis. Please review the attached "COVID Special Event Permit Checklist" and submit your application with the appropriate information. You will also need to indicate how you propose to control any possible negative impacts on surrounding businesses. As part of the review process, the City will review your proposal to make sure what you are proposing meets all applicable Zoning, Building and Fire Codes and does not create any negative impacts on surrounding uses. If you have any questions you can call the Building Department at 248-656-4615 and one of our customer service staff will get you in touch with the Ordinance Inspector in your area. They can answer any questions you may have, walk you through the process, and even provide an aerial view of your property to assist in your submittal.