

Review of Toronto's Street Vending & Artists By-laws – Attachment 3

Summary of Rules for Vendors and Artists

2014 Review of Street Vending Bylaws

In 2014, City Council adopted a new city-wide street vending bylaw which expanded street food vending in Toronto and implemented five key measures to:

- 1) Permit mobile food trucks to operate temporarily in parking spaces on major and minor arterial roads
- 2) Permit mobile ice cream trucks to operate for up to 30 minutes on local and residential streets (was 10 minutes previously)
- 3) Permit stationary food carts to operate at designated spaces on the sidewalk
- 4) Lift restrictions on vending in licensed commercial parking lots to allow vendors to operate on all private property, subject to zoning bylaws
- 5) Maintain opportunities for vendors on City-run property and at special events

While some food vending opportunities were expanded in the review, a moratorium was placed on non-food vendors on sidewalks, building on a 2002 moratorium on food vending on sidewalks downtown, due to high vendor concentrations.

In 2015, staff conducted a one-year update of the new bylaw and additional changes were approved by City Council, including an expansion of the designated area for sidewalk vending, the creation of 6 month and 9 month permit types for mobile food and ice cream vendors, and changing the limit for vending on the same block within a 24-hour period from 3 hours to 5 hours.

Current Regulations

Many conditions of operation for the different types of street vendors and artists in Toronto – below is snapshot of some of those rules. Street vendors include food and ice cream trucks, sidewalk vendors (e.g. hot dog carts) traveling vendors, and others selling items on streets or sidewalks. Artists include buskers, sidewalk artists and portrait artists. At all times, vendors and buskers need to follow all traffic and parking rules. In most cases, vendors and buskers cannot operate in city parks, unless they have permission from Parks & Recreation.

Sidewalk Vending

Sidewalk vending is typically a cart stationed on a fixed spot on the sidewalk (e.g. hot dog stand)

- Needs a *licence* and a *permit* to operate on a public sidewalk
- Needs a public health check (to get a licence) if serving food
- Location: Vendor applies for a single fixed location on a sidewalk that:
 - does not cause an obstruction, leaves 2.5m for pedestrians, and is no more than 2.32 square metres in area
 - is at least 25 metres away from a school, place of worship, or similar establishment selling a similar item
- Since 2002 there has been a moratorium on sidewalk vending downtown, which means no new applications are permitted in the downtown core.
 - This includes a moratorium on non-food vending as well.
 - As a result, the number of unique sidewalk vendors operating in the downtown core as decreased from 134 in 2002 to 47 by the end of 2025.
 - While there is no moratorium on sidewalk vending outside the downtown core, most vendors operate in the downtown core due to higher food traffic and concentration of tourists.

Licence / Permit Fees, before taxes:

- Licence renewal: \$337.03
- Permit: \$3,257.00 (minor road); \$5,987.98 (major road)

Food Trucks (Motorized Street Vending)

Food trucks typically operate on private property, designated spaces in curblanes or in pay-by-plate street parking spaces in Toronto.

- All food trucks need a Motorized Refreshment Vehicle *licence* to operate in Toronto

- This can be obtained by a Public Health check, submitting relevant documentation, and compliance with vehicle size/safety requirements
- To operate on public streets, a *permit* is also required:
 - R55 'Legacy' Curblane Permit which allows vending in designated / assigned spaces
 - R54 'Mobile Food Vending Permit' which allows vending in pay-and-display parking locations, as long as:
 - the space is at least 30m from an eating establishment, school, or place of worship
 - there are no more than 2 vendors on the same block at any given time
 - they are not vending for more than 5 hours on the same block

Licence / Permit Fees, before taxes:

- Licence renewal: \$936.45
- R54: Permit: \$6,631.34 for 12 months (also available for 6 and 9 months pro-rated)
- R55 Permit: \$5,652 (average depending on type and location)

Ice Cream Trucks

Ice cream trucks can operate on residential streets, selling ice cream.

- Trucks need a Motorized Refreshment Vehicle *licence* to operate in Toronto
 - This can be obtained by a Public Health check and compliance with vehicle size/safety requirements (e.g. hot running water, etc.)
- Ice cream vendors also need a permit that allows them to:
 - Vend on local and residential streets in all parts of the city for up to 30 minutes at a time on one street, as long as they are at least 30m from a school.

Licence / Permit Fees, before taxes: Licence: \$936.45

- Licence renewal: \$936.45
- Permit: \$687.39 for 12 months (also available for 6 and 9 months pro-rated)

Buskers

A busker or sidewalk performer requires a permit to play music or perform for voluntary donations in the street. Examples of buskers include musicians, singers, jugglers, and mimes.

- Cannot use 'amplified sound' (e.g. Amplifiers, speakers), as well as additional noise restrictions in some areas of the city (e.g. around Dundas square)

- Cannot obstruct building entrance or exit, display window, driveway, transit stop, fire hose
- Must maintain 3 m of passable space around performance, 9 m from intersection, 50 m from musician if also a musical busker

Licence / Permit Fees, before taxes:

- Permit: \$47.58 annually

Portrait Artists

A portrait artist is someone who makes and sells portraits on-site, on a sidewalk. They can make and sell portraits, art, and caricatures from a workstation.

- Portrait artists set up at a work station, which includes essentials like chairs, a portfolio, waste receptacle, and art supplies
- Cannot cause an obstruction and must maintain 2.5m of passable space

Permit Fees (2025):

- Permit: \$47.58 annually

Hawkers / Pedlars

Hawkers/pedlars are mobile salespeople who sell goods, such as souvenirs, clothing, packaged goods, or provide services, such as knife sharpening and shoe shining.

- This licence type is for people to make a sale, then move along.
- Hawkers / Pedlars should not cause obstructions and cannot stop within 30m of a school, park or public dock where ferries discharge passengers

Licence / Permit Fees:

- Licence: \$955.92 (motor vehicle or push cart) and \$370.08 (on foot)

Note: This document provides a summary of selected rules from Toronto Municipal Code Chapters 740, 545, and 313. It is intended for general information only and should not be relied on as a fully accurate, complete or authoritative version of the by-laws.