

This guide details **building and fire permit requirements** for restaurants and bars that have added outdoor dining space under the city’s temporary program for these expansions. For program information, public health requirements, street closures, liquor licensing, and other details, please download the complete [Program FAQs](#).

To **request a street occupancy permit** for a patio expansion, please view this [how-to video](#).

Quickly winterizing an outdoor patio without permits

If being erected on a temporary basis (180 days or less):

- Tents 200 square feet and under in size do not need permits.
- Other structures (including greenhouses and personal domes) under 120 square feet in size do not need permits.

“Tents” are any structure, enclosure or shelter – with or without sidewalls – made of fabric or other pliable materials. Other material types (made of glass, having a steel base, etc.) are not considered a tent.

Permits are not needed for lights and heat plugged into an outdoor electrical outlet.

Building and fire permits

Table 1 (continued on page 2) summarizes which permits are needed for common installations.

Table 1: Installations that require permits

	Operational permit (Denver Fire Dept.)	Commercial construction permit (2-day plan review)	Electrical quick permit (no plan review)	Electrical permit (2-day plan review)	Mechanical/ plumbing permit (2-day plan review)
Structures under 120 sq. ft.	<i>No permits necessary</i>				
Tents 200 sq. ft. and under	<i>No permits necessary</i>				
Tents over 200 sq. ft.*	✓				
Raised decks		✓			
Fences, barriers or partitions over 5’ 9” in height		✓			
Patio coverings and structures 120 sq. ft. or more		✓			
Building-mounted awnings/structures		✓			
Plug-in lights or electric heat			<i>No permits necessary</i>		
Gas-fired temporary heating	✓				
Natural gas heaters tied into the building’s utilities			✓		✓
Electrical installations of 20 amps or less			✓		
Electrical installations of circuits over 20 amps**				✓	
Generators				✓	



- * Tents over 400 square feet will require a more extensive review and permitting from Denver Fire.
- ** Electric heaters that are hard-wired into the building's utilities will generally be over 20 amps.

Tents

Tents that are over 200 sq. ft. can be used with an operational permit from the Denver Fire Department.

If you are purchasing a tent, please make sure the manufacturer's information confirms the tent meets NFPA 701's flame propagation testing requirements for flammability. Also make sure to check the tent manufacturer's specifications for how much snow the tent can withstand. If the snow load on the tent in winter exceeds this amount, the tent will need to be cleared of snow or it cannot be occupied on those days.

Tents/canopies cannot impede access, egress or Fire Department connections (FDC). Tents/canopies can only be erected for a maximum of 180 days in a 12-month period per the fire code. Extensions may be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Outdoor Heating

Participating businesses that want to heat their outdoor spaces can do so by utilizing propane heaters or heaters that connect to their building's electricity or natural gas. Please note that all outdoor heating requires a Flammable Operational permit from the Denver Fire Department.

Propane heat

Propane heaters can be used with an operational permit from the Denver Fire Department. Due to safety risks, Denver Fire does not allow propane or gas-fired heating sources under tents or canopies; however, temporary propane heaters can be placed outside of the tent to blow hot air into the tented area.

Connecting into the building's utilities

Alternatively, electric or natural gas heaters connected to the building's utilities from the existing restaurant can be used. Community Planning and Development will require electrical and/or plumbing permits if you are connecting to the building's utilities. Instructions for a fast, two-day review and permit are on page 6.

How to apply for a Flammable Operational permit from Denver Fire

Use this application for...

- Tents over 200 square feet
- Temporary propane or gas heat

Questions?

Contact Denver Fire Department

Ryan Balows
ryan.balows@denvergov.org

Brett Marine
brett.marine@denvergov.org

Or firecodequestions@denvergov.org

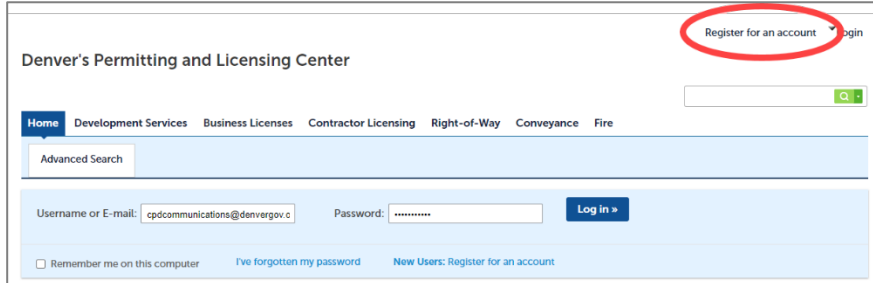
Applications must include a site map identifying the specifics below:

Description of work: Clearly identify as **PATIO EXPANSION/TEMP HEATING/TENT/LPG**

1. Site plan/layout showing location of tent, heaters, LPG.
2. Exact number and size of tents/canopy with documented total square feet.
3. The number of temporary heaters to be used along with the MAKE and MODEL of heaters.
4. Fuel source (i.e. LPG, natural gas). For propane, a MAX of one (1) 420 lb. cylinder or four (4) 100 lb. cylinders will be permitted. Additional 20 lb. cylinders will be allowed for use by mushroom heaters with a 1 for 1 exchange. (i.e. 5 mushroom heaters would allow for (10) 20 lb. cylinders. One for use/one for exchange)
5. Mushroom heaters are prohibited for use under any tent. Minimum 5 ft. rule applied for canopies.
6. Final approval will be verified through site inspection.
7. All patio expansion permits will be issued on an annual basis. You will need to apply for a new permit once it expires.

To apply...

1. Go to denvergov.org/epermits and click “**Enter e-permits.**”
2. First-time e-permits users will need to create an account.



The screenshot shows the Denver's Permitting and Licensing Center website. At the top right, there are two links: "Register for an account" and "Login". The "Register for an account" link is circled in red. Below the navigation bar, there is a search bar and a login form with fields for "Username or E-mail" (containing "cpdcommunications@denvergov.c") and "Password". A "Log in »" button is next to the password field. At the bottom of the login form, there are three links: "Remember me on this computer", "I've forgotten my password", and "New Users: Register for an account".

3. Once you have signed in, select “Apply New Permit” under Fire.



Denver's Permitting and Licensing Center

Screenshot of Denver's Permitting and Licensing Center homepage. The 'Fire' tab is selected in the navigation bar. Under the 'Fire' service card, the 'Apply New Permit' link is circled in red with an arrow pointing to it.

- 4. When prompted to "Select a Record Type," open the drop-down arrow next to "fire prevention" and select "Fire Prevention Flammable Operational Permit." Click continue and follow the prompts to complete the application.

Denver's Permitting and Licensing Center

Screenshot of the 'Select a Record Type' page. The 'Fire Prevention' dropdown is expanded, and 'Fire Prevention Flammable Operational Permit' is selected. A red arrow points to the selection. Below the list, the 'Continue Application' button is highlighted with a red arrow pointing to it.

For more information about the permitting process, visit the Fire Department's [Temporary Patio Expansion Permit](#) webpage.

How to apply for building and mechanical, electrical, or plumbing permits

Building plans submitted for review must be prepared and signed by licensed architects and engineers. Visit denvergov.org/buildingcode for a [step-by-step guide on electronic signatures](#) before you apply for permits.

The city strives to average a two-day review time for permits issued under this program. Some projects may take longer depending on the scope and complexity of the installation.

Use this application for...

- Construction
- Permanent connections to existing utilities

To apply...

1. Go to denvergov.org/epermits and click “**Enter e-permits.**”
2. First-time e-permits users will need to create an account.

Questions?

Commercial construction:

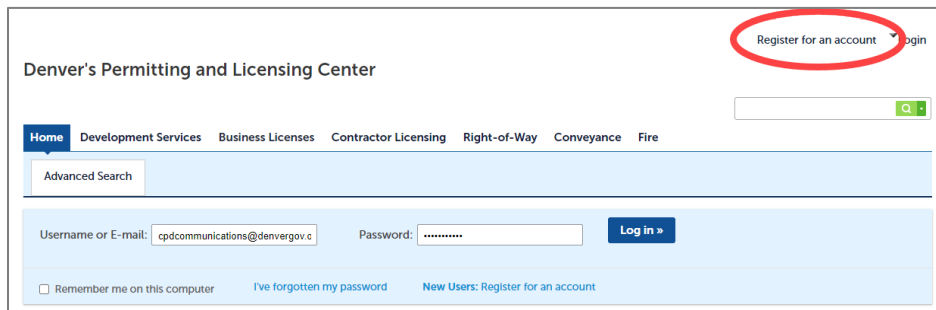
ArchStruc.Review@denvergov.org

Electrical:

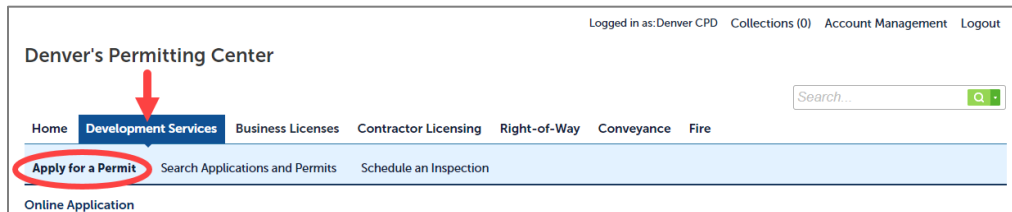
Electrical.Review@denvergov.org

Mechanical and plumbing:

MechPlumb.Review@denvergov.org



3. Once you have signed in, select the **Development Services tab** and then “apply for a permit.”



4. Follow the prompts. When prompted to select a permit type, choose **"Building Log"** for any permit type requiring plan review (includes two-day commercial construction, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical permits). For electrical permits that do not need plan review (under 20 amps), select "electrical permit" under "Quick Permits."
5. When prompted to enter a "description of work," write **"temporary outdoor expansion program"** and select the "Commercial Walk Through Project" checkbox in order to receive the fast, two-day review time.
6. After your permit is issued and you have completed the work, it must be inspected. Visit denvergov.org/buildinginspections for instructions on how to schedule an inspection.

Select a Permit Type :

- ▼ **Quick Permits**
 - Boiler and AC Permit
 - Electrical Permit
 - Mechanical Permit
 - Plumbing Permit
 - Roofing and Siding Permit
- ▼ **Submit Building Plans for Review**
 - Administrative Modifications
 - Building Log

Step 3: Project Details > Project Information

Description of Work

* Please detail the type and extent of work to be done under this permit.

Description of Work:

"Temporary Outdoor Expansion Program"

Will be installing a 450 sq. ft. tent with electric heat

[spell check](#)

The outdoor expansion program for restaurants and bars is a temporary program, and the review/permitting requirements in this guide reflect the temporary nature of the installation. The primary concern for the temporary permits is safety. If you wish to apply for permits to make any of these installations permanent, many other standard requirements, including zoning, parking, energy code requirements, and professional design and engineering for new occupancy loads, will likely have an effect. Projects that desire to keep these installations at the end of the temporary program should plan for approximately 3-4 months of design, review, and permitting.

Visit denvergov.org/restaurantpermits for an online permitting guide for permanent patios, remodels, and more.