



Permit & Development Center

809 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202 | (414) 286-8211 | milwaukee.gov/permits | DevelopmentCenterInfo@milwaukee.gov

A Special Privilege allows long-term occupancy or installation and maintenance of privately owned improvements in the public right-of-way. Some common activities or improvements that require Special Privilege approval when located in the public way are entry canopies, raised planters, handicapped pedestrian ramps and direct sales.

The City automatically permits some private uses of public right-of-way. In most cases, however, a Special Privilege is required. The Milwaukee Common Council gives final approval of Special Privilege applications.

Special Privileges are primarily intended for already improved property. New developments should generally be designed so as not to extend into the public right-of-way.

The Special Privilege approval process is initiated by filing a "Petition for Special Privilege" form with the City Clerk License Division. An application fee of \$250 is charged to cover public notice costs. The application is then "introduced" to the Common Council and referred to both the Council's Public Improvements Committee and the Department of Public Works for review. The applicant is encouraged to attend the Public Improvements Committee hearing to respond to questions.

The Special Privilege process can be completed in about three months, assuming timely submission of all required information. The Public Works department and/or the Milwaukee Development Center will issue permits upon:

1. Approval by the Common Council of the Special Privilege application
2. The applicant's filing of a surety bond (generally in an amount of \$1,000 to \$10,000)
3. Submission of a Certificate of Insurance indicating that the City has been named an insured party. (Minimum coverages of \$25,000 personal liability, \$50,000 personal liability (multiple parties), and \$10,000 property damage are typically required.)

Finally, there is an annual fee for a Special Privilege. The fee is based upon the value of the abutting private property and the amount of public right-of-way being utilized. In general, the greater the per square foot value of the abutting land and the more public right-of-way being used, the greater the annual fee. This fee is payable in July of each year. The bond, insurance requirement, and annual fee remain in effect for the life of the Special Privilege.

Owner/tenants who may need a Special Privilege should contact the Department of Public Works City Engineer's Office, (414) 286- 2454, as soon as concepts are developed. Staff will be happy to assist, as possible, to assure timely processing of the Special Privilege application.