



Debris Box & Storage Container Placement Guidelines

PUBLIC WORKS

Engineering Services Division

pwecips@cityofpaloalto.org – 650.329.2151 – Inspection: 650.496.6929

The following are guidelines for the placement of debris and roll-off boxes and storage containers delivered to residential properties and placed in the public right-of-way.

Placement location

Placement of the above facilities in the City right-of-way can cause negative impacts in the neighborhood, including visibility and safety hazards to the public. Therefore, these facilities are required to be placed on private property, such as the driveway. If the property owner can demonstrate, and the Public Works' Inspector confirms, that the facility cannot be placed on private property for reasons other than convenience, such as no driveway exists or tree branches overhang the driveway, an Encroachment Permit may be issued by the Public Works Department, Engineering Division (PWE) to place the facility in the right-of-way.

Permit required for placement in city right-of-way

If the placement of the above facilities must be in the city right-of-way (on the street next to the curb), an approved Encroachment Permit must be obtained by the property owner prior to ordering the container. The container company should confirm that there is an approved permit that allows placement of the facility in the right-of-way.

How long can I keep the container on the street?

1. Up to four weeks for a dumpster/debris box. A four week extension can be applied for and may be granted by PWE on a case-by-case basis.
2. Up to one week for a storage container that contains household goods to facilitate a move, termite tenting, etc. Construction materials and tool storage containers are not allowed in the right-of-way under any circumstances. A one week extension may be granted by PWE on a case-by-case basis.

What is necessary for obtaining an Encroachment Permit?

The placement of the above facilities in the City right-of-way requires an approved Encroachment Permit issued by the PWE. Below are items to be submitted with the permit application:

1. A signed Encroachment Permit application must be submitted. Forms are available at the City of Palo Alto Development Center, 285 Hamilton Avenue, or at: <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Public-Works/Engineering-Services/Forms-and-Permits>. The application includes a "hold harmless" clause and a waiver of liability in favor of the City of Palo Alto for the permitted encroachment.
2. A sketch showing the subject and adjacent properties. The sketch needs to show driveways for the properties, street trees, fire hydrants, signage, and utility vaults near the proposed location of the container.
3. If and when an Encroachment Permit is issued, a permit fee will be collected. Please see the current Municipal Fee Schedule under Development Services - Public Works – Encroachment Permit – Dumpster/Container.

Where can a container be located? Where not?

1. The container must be located in front of the property. If the container cannot be located in front of the property and needs to be located in front of another property, a signed consent must be provided from the tenant of that property.
2. In areas of the City where no curb exists, the container must be placed completely on the paved portion of the street.

3. The container may not be placed*:
 - a. in a no-parking, loading or other time-limited zone, or in a handicap parking space
 - b. within 6 feet from any driveway (including your own)
 - c. in a location where PWE determines that visibility is impaired for either vehicular, bicycle or pedestrian traffic
 - d. in a location that blocks a bike lane
 - e. in a location that blocks a bus stop
 - f. within 15 feet from a crosswalk or crossing area, marked or unmarked
 - g. within 15 feet from a fire hydrant
 - h. where it obstructs regulatory signage
 - i. in a location where it may cause damage to City street trees
 - j. in any location that interferes with an adjacent property owner's full and safe access to the public right-of-way
 - k. on streets with two-way traffic and parking on both sides that are less than 36 feet wide, measured from curb face to curb face

**This list is not all-inclusive and other factors or circumstances may be considered by PWE when reviewing an Encroachment Permit application.*

Maintenance of facility

The Permittee is responsible to maintain the encroaching container in a safe condition and good appearance to the satisfaction of the City. Repair of any damage to the public infrastructure (street, curb, street tree, etc.) by the placement of the container is the responsibility of the Permittee. The issuance of a separate "Street Work Permit" by PWE may be necessary to perform any required repairs.

What other requirements are there for container placement?

1. The container must have a legible serial number that is visible. Adjacent to this number, a weather-protected copy of the issued Encroachment Permit must be posted.
2. The container must have reflectors at each corner. The Permittee is responsible to ensure that these are provided on the container when it is delivered and are maintained throughout the time that the container occupies the right-of-way.