



Director's Rule 12-2020

Applicant: City of Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections	Page 1 of 6	Supersedes:
	Publication:	Effective:
Subject: Residential Loading Standards for Downtown and South Lake Union Urban Centers, and Design Standards for all Loading Berths	Code and Section Reference: Seattle Municipal Code 23.54.035 - Loading Berth Requirements and Space Standards	
	Type of Rule: Code Interpretation	
	Ordinance Authority: SMC 3.06.040	
Index: City of Seattle Land Use Code	Approved	Date
	_____/_____/_____ Nathan Torgelson, Director, SDCI	

PURPOSE

This Director's Rule is intended to help ensure that new buildings provide adequate space for loading berth functions, and these spaces are designed to function as intended. Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 23.54.035 regulates the quantity and design standards for loading berths within the City.

BACKGROUND

There is limited right-of-way (ROW) space available to devote to loading. Rapid increases in e-commerce deliveries and shared mobility services are increasing the demand for the use of public streets and alleys for delivery of persons and goods. Loading berth requirements should provide for adequate loading space for new development on development sites.

Only 13% of buildings within Seattle's core (the Downtown, Uptown, and South Lake Union Urban Centers) have off-street loading facilities, according to the University of Washington's

Urban Freight Lab (*"The Final 50 Feet of the Urban Goods Delivery System, Executive Summary,"* pg. 10, 2017). This contributes to competition for on-street loading zones and alleys for deliveries and similar services. On-street and alley loading also competes with other ROW uses such as bicycle and transit lanes, landscaping, pedestrian space, parklets, and on-street vehicle parking.

This Director's Rule addresses two topics:

Section A: Residential Loading Berth Standards

Subsection 23.54.035.A.1 and Table A establishes the minimum number of off-street loading berths for specific uses, but Table A does not list residential uses. Subsection 23.54.035.A.2 authorizes the Director to determine the loading berth requirements for uses not listed in Table A.

Based on a careful review of development types and likely generation of delivery vehicles, this Director's Rule establishes a loading berth requirement for certain residential uses in the Downtown Urban Center and the South Lake Union Urban Center, and also outlines the process for an applicant to present evidence to SDCI that demonstrates an exception to this standard is warranted in the application of this rule.

Section B: Design Standards for Loading Berths

Subsection 23.54.035.C includes specific size standards for required loading berths. However, the subsection does not account for the design considerations needed for usable loading berth spaces. This Director's Rule establishes standards for:

1. Access to Loading Berths
2. Independent Access for Each Loading Berth
3. No Encroachment of Loading Berth Space
4. Area of Loading Berths to Remain Unobstructed

RULE

A. Residential Loading Berth Standards

To address increasing traffic congestion due to loading activity in areas densely zoned for commercial and residential uses in the central core of Seattle:

- Residential development with 100 or more dwelling units located on a site that contains at least 10,000 square feet in lot area in the Downtown Urban Center and the South Lake Union Urban Center shall provide one loading berth. This loading berth shall be required in addition to other loading berths required per subsection 23.54.035.A, and shall meet the dimensional requirements for Low Demand Uses according to subsection 23.54.035.C.
- If applicants believe that their proposal will not result in increased traffic congestion due to loading activity that occurs on streets or alleys, applicants may provide

analysis to demonstrate to the Director this added loading berth is not needed to meet the demands of the proposal. The analysis should be prepared by a transportation consultant and should include the number of anticipated residential deliveries per day, including those for food delivery and online commerce, in an average month. The Director will review this material and make a determination on this requirement.

The requirements of this section do not apply to projects vested before the effective date of the Director's Rule.

Note: For other residential uses not readily described as a discrete number of units, including nursing homes and congregate residences, each sleeping unit (functionally equivalent to bedrooms) is counted as one-half of a dwelling unit.

B. Design Standards for Loading Berths

All loading berths shall comply with the following standards:

1. Access to Loading Berths

A truck turning diagram shall be provided for each loading berth. The truck turning diagram shall demonstrate feasible loading berth access can occur within the physical constraints of adjacent right-of-way dimensions, buildings, and fixed physical impediments. The Director may approve another access configuration after consultation with the Director of Transportation.

2. Independent Access for Each Loading Berth

Loading berths shall be designed so that each loading berth can be independently accessed and simultaneously operate. Loading berths shall not overlap, and each berth shall be accessible even if other berths are in use. A truck turning diagram shall demonstrate that loading berth access paths do not conflict with a parked truck in an adjacent berth. Refer to subsection 23.54.035.C.

3. No Encroachment of Loading Berth Space

Design loading berths so that loading vehicles do not extend beyond property lines into ROW, required ROW improvement setback, or ROW dedication. Refer to Sections 23.53.015, 23.53.020, 23.53.030, and 23.54.035.

4. Area of Loading Berths to Remain Unobstructed

No obstructions can be located within the loading berth area that would restrict the use of this space for loading. Obstructions, whether permanent or temporary, such as bollards, storage of materials, or components of the building such as door swings, pipes, ducts, electrical boxes, or similar features shall not be located within the three-dimensional volume of the loading berth pursuant to subsection 23.54.035.C. The Director may allow

temporary staging of solid waste in a loading berth area if a loading berth management plan is approved by the Director after consultation with the Director of Transportation.

For purposes of this Rule, the following definitions apply:

“Staging” means intermediate placement of garbage, recycling and compostable materials in a location separate from a solid waste storage area, in preparation for collection by solid waste vehicles. Either on private property or within the ROW.

“Solid waste storage area” means a location for keeping, maintaining, or storing garbage, recycling or compostable materials from the time of disposal until the time of staging and collection.