

NEW REQUIREMENT: Increased Ceiling Heights for Sidewalk Sheds

Local Law 47 of 2025 (LL47), which took effect on August 15, 2025, increases the required clear ceiling height for a sidewalk shed.

Sidewalk sheds for which construction documents are submitted on or after August 15, 2025 must be provided with a minimum clear ceiling height of 12 feet, unless otherwise specified by the registered design professional (RDP) in accordance with the outlined provisions of LL47. Sidewalk sheds for which construction documents were submitted before August 15, 2025 do not have to be modified to increase the minimum clear ceiling height of the shed.

Background

Section 3307.6.4.7 of the New York City Building Code previously required sidewalk sheds to have a minimum clear ceiling height of 8 feet. LL47 of 2025 amends this section to establish a new minimum clear ceiling height of 12 feet.

Sidewalk Shed Lighting

Sidewalk sheds are required to be illuminated in accordance with Section 3307.6.4.8 of the New York City Building Code. Sidewalk shed lights that extend no more than 8 inches below the level of the deck are excluded from the clear ceiling height measurement.

Sidewalk Shed Bracing

Sidewalk sheds must be designed to meet the load requirements of Section 3307.6.4.2 of the New York City Building Code. Bracing perpendicular to the length of the sidewalk and installed at least 8 feet above the level of the sidewalk is excluded from the clear ceiling height measurement. Bracing parallel to the length of the sidewalk is excluded from the clear ceiling height measurement.

No Interference with Required Light or Air

Where providing a minimum clear ceiling height of 12 feet will interfere with required light and air for building occupants, LL47 authorizes the sidewalk shed clear ceiling height to be between 12 feet and 8 feet. This allowance extends to adjoining buildings where the shed is required to extend 5 feet or 20 feet over the public sidewalk in front of the adjoining building in accordance with Section 3307.6.3 of the New York City Building Code.

Examples of ways a sidewalk shed could interfere with required light and air for occupants of a building include, but are not limited to:

- Sidewalk shed decking placed directly in front of a window or air conditioning unit;
- Sidewalk shed decking placed in such a manner it blocks an air intake/exhaust vent;
- Legs or bracing placed in such a manner it prevents the installation of a window air conditioning unit in an openable window; or
- Legs or bracing placed in such a manner it blocks an air intake/exhaust vent.

Where the RDP who prepares or supervises the preparation of the sidewalk shed design drawings filed for the sidewalk shed permit application makes a site specific determination that the installation of a sidewalk shed with a minimum clear ceiling height of 12 feet will interfere with required light and air for building occupants, the RDP shall include a note stating that compliance with the minimum clear ceiling height requirement will interfere with light and air. The drawings must also clearly indicate the minimum clear ceiling height for the sidewalk shed to be installed at the site.

No Interference with Required Egress

Sidewalk sheds must not block points of egress from a building. This requirement extends to adjoining buildings where the shed is required to extend 5 feet or 20 feet over the public sidewalk in front of the adjoining building in accordance with Section 3307.6.3 of the New York City Building Code.

Examples of blocking points of egress from a building include, but are not limited to, placing a sidewalk shed in such a manner that it interferes with the use of a fire escape by interfering with the ability of a person to lower a fire escape ladder/retractable stairs and traverse down the fire escape.

Section 3307.6.3 of the New York City Building Code requires sidewalk shed decking to be provided over public sidewalks, as well as walkways and pathways within the property line of the site, when they remain open to the public. Decking must be modified or omitted to the extent necessary to allow a person to lower fire escape ladder/retractable stairs and traverse down the fire escape. However, decking must still be provided beneath the lowest fire escape balcony to avoid creating conditions where debris may fall through any area not necessary for the lowering of the fire escape ladder/retractable stairs and traversing down the fire escape.

Where providing a minimum clear ceiling height of 12 feet will block points of egress from a building, including preventing placing sidewalk shed decking beneath the lowest fire escape balcony, LL47 authorizes the sidewalk shed clear ceiling height to be between 12 feet and 8 feet.

Where the RDP who prepares or supervises the preparation of the sidewalk shed design drawings filed for the sidewalk shed permit application makes a site specific determination that the installation of a sidewalk shed with a clear ceiling height of 12 feet at the site will block egress for building occupants, the sidewalk shed design drawings filed for the sidewalk shed permit application shall provide a note from the RDP that the RDP has determined same. The drawings must clearly indicate the minimum clear ceiling height for the sidewalk shed to be installed at the site.