A Helpful Guide to
PORTLAND STREET ARTIST RULES & REGULATIONS

Revised April 2017
WHAT IS A STREET ARTIST?
A person on city property who is creating artwork or selling their own original artwork.

DO I NEED A PERMIT OR LICENSE?
No. Unless you want to set up during a city designated festival.

Street artists are required to follow rules and regulations for public safety and ease of commerce.

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A STREET ARTIST AND A STREET GOODS VENDOR?
A street artist can ONLY sell their original artwork.

A street goods vendor is not restricted to selling original artwork, they can resell items purchased elsewhere.

A street goods vendor is only allowed to sell at a festival or permitted event. A special license is required from the City’s Business Licensing Office.

CAN STREET ARTISTS SET UP ANYWHERE?
No. There are designated places.

WHAT PLACES ARE OFF-LIMITS?
+ Any area that either blocks vehicles or pedestrians from being able to move freely; jeopardizing safety; or otherwise inconveniences the public.

+ City-designated festivals, sidewalk sales, Farmer’s Markets, or other city authorized festivals/events without permission of the festival/event organizer.

+ Any area that blocks an entrance or exit from private property.

+ Public school grounds without authorization as a school function.

+ Any area that does not allow four feet of pedestrian passage behind your customer.

+ Private property (need permission from property owner).

WHAT’S THE FOUR FOOT RULE?
Make sure that when you are sitting at your table and you have a customer, you leave four feet of open space to allow pedestrians to move freely behind your customer.

WHAT ABOUT DISPLAYS?
The footprint of the artist’s entire display, including rack, table, and chair cannot be greater than 12 sq. ft. except at the Waterfront Marketplace, which can be no greater than 25 sq. ft.

All displays need to be free-standing.

You cannot use benches, monuments, or public structures to display artwork.

No vending from blankets or the ground, including sidewalks, squares, plazas, etc.

OK, SO STREET ARTISTS CANNOT BE IN THE WEDNESDAY FARMER’S MARKET IN MONUMENT SQUARE, BUT THEY CAN BE NEAR IT. WHAT ARE THOSE RULES?
There must be four feet of space between your customers and the closest farmer’s market set up.

Street artists can only be located within the sidewalk portion of Monument Square. This area is defined as the area between the edge of the buildings located on the square that house such businesses as David’s and the Public Market House and the parallel row of light poles located approximately 15 feet from the building.

You cannot be in Monument Way or the side of Monument Square that abuts Federal Street.

HOW ABOUT THE SATURDAY FARMER’S MARKET IN DEERING OAKS? CAN I SET UP THERE?
In order to preserve trees and grass and prevent soil compaction, street artists may set up on any sidewalk or the paved area around the bandstand that is at least eight feet wide, leaving at least four feet open for pedestrian passage on pavement.

WHAT ABOUT THE NEW WATERFRONT MARKETPLACE OUTSIDE OCEAN GATEWAY?
In this area of Ocean Gateway, street artists are allowed on days that 1,000+ passenger cruise ships are in port. Street Artists may set up in the green space between the Ocean Gateway queuing lanes and the sidewalk along Thames Street. To make the area as safe as possible on busy cruise ship days, no street artists are allowed on the water side of Thames St., in front of Ocean Gateway, or on the water side of Commercial Street from India St. to Dana St.
The footprint of the artist’s entire display, including rack, table, and chair cannot be greater than 12 square feet, with the exception of the Waterfront Marketplace which cannot be greater than 25 square feet. To calculate total square feet, multiply the length times the width.

Example:

- Four feet of space for pedestrians
- Customer

12 Square Feet Includes:
- Artist
- Display rack/table
- Chair

To view the official City of Portland Rules and Regulations for street artists, see portlandmaine.gov/150/Business-Licensing

QUESTIONS?
To report potential violations, call 207.874.8703 or email buildinginspections@portlandmaine.gov

For questions about rules, contact the City’s Business Licensing Office at 207.874.8557 or email bl@portlandmaine.gov
FARMERS MARKET DAYS
Please observe the Four Foot Rule between street lamps and buildings.

- Off-limits area
- Set-up is permitted provided you comply with the Four Foot Rule
- Sidewalk
- Streetlamps
- Buildings

NON–FARMERS MARKETS DAYS
The whole space is available while observing the Four Foot Rule unless conflicting with a permitted event or festival.
For the Deering Oaks Farmer’s Market the Four Foot Rule is five feet.

Set-up is permitted provided you comply with the Four Foot Rule on a sidewalk at least eight feet wide, or the paved area around the bandstand.
Street Vending Allowed on cruise ship days with over 1,000 passengers. Vendors will set up on the grass far enough off the trails and walkways to avoid customers standing on the pavement and will respect licensees. Vendors are allowed to put up a secured canopy, no larger than 5’x5’ in size.

Sidewalk