

Sit in open area and dine: Eateries get BMC nod for sheds

Restaurants can once again put up temporary shades for patrons to sit and dine in open areas. The civic body has issued a circular, allowing eating houses to set up monsoon sheds in service areas.

This refers to awnings that jut out of open areas where diners are served. What the civic body has allowed is shades in verandahs that can be propped up with bamboos. It serves as protection from rainwater blowing into the eating area. Approval for such sheds was scrapped after a fire broke out at a rooftop eatery at Kamala Mills in December 2017, killing 14.

Earlier the BMC used to allow retractable awnings, but the fear was that permission for the shed would be misused to make it a permanent structure. The new circular dated July 3 states that sheds can now be set up during monsoon only in the open dining space in front of eating houses. The circular, which states "permission to allow use of compulsory open spaces in front of eating houses, abutting the licensed eating house for service purpose". It adds that the apex body of restaurant owners had sought permission to put up monsoon sheds to avoid inconvenience to public from heavy rain and to avoid loss of employment to hotel staff. It also states that assistant commissioners of various civic administrative wards have to "follow guidelines scrupulously" while granting permission to put up monsoon sheds in the service area.

The guidelines state that the permission will be valid till September 30 and that the awning should not be for "compulsory marginal and rear side open spaces and terraces" of buildings. It categorically specifies that the material of which the shed is made should be fire-resistant and non-inflammable.