

News Article DDOT/Public Space Operations Project Steel Plate Compliance Initiative

The Districts Department of Transportation (DDOT), Public Space Operation Project (PSOP) has taken the lead to enforce proper permitting and placement of steel plates in the District's Right-of-Way (ROW). The PSOP team is responsible for the management, permitting and oversight of private use and occupancy of the ROW. DDOT's mission is to develop and maintain a safe, cohesive, and sustainable transportation system that delivers efficient, affordable and convenient ways to move people and goods throughout the city.

In the spirit of those efforts the PSOP team has taken a close look at the unsafe and dangerous problems associated with improper placement and maintenance of steel plates. PSOP understands firsthand the numerous effects of ineffective and improper placement of steel plates in our city streets. Improperly placed steel plates create several problems for District citizens, whether it's the noise that stems from flapping plates when vehicles drive over them, to the damage to cars that drive over them, to the reduction in vehicle speed when motorists encounter them, to the eyesore plates create, marring the streetscape of our beautiful city.



Enforcement is based on DC Municipal Regulation Section 24-3403.7, which governs excavations in the ROW. That section requires persons who have excavated the ROW to follow DDOT Standard Specifications for Highways and Structures, 2009 Ed. (the "Blue Book"). Section 616.19 governs Steel Protection Plates. The guidelines give a heightened level of accountability to our citizens, visitors (tourist) and vehicular traffic. Those standards state:

(616.19) Steel Protection Plate

"Description; Work consist of furnishing, maintaining and relocating, if required steel plates at the job site. Plates shall be used to protect open excavated areas, pot holes and areas where fresh concrete has been placed, all as specified in the [Public Space Permit] and/or as directed. Steel plates shall be used to protect these areas for no longer than five (5) calendar days. Hot Mix Asphalt or High Performance Cold Mix, as defined in Section 819 [of the Blue Book], shall be placed, compacted around the plate, and feathered to meet the existing pavement. Each

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plate shall be fastened to the pavement with four spikes. Unless otherwise specified in the [Public Space Permit], each plate shall be a minimum of 1 inch thick and of a suitable size to adequately protect the area. Work also includes removal of the plate from the job site when no longer required. Plates shall be clearly marked with the name and contact information of the owner and user of the plate. The mark shall be either on the plate itself, or within twelve [inches] (12") of the edge of the plate."



Fee Implementation

Another key element to effectively enforce proper steel plate installation starts with the permitting process; this creates a tracking system identifying approved plating throughout the city. The tracking system then serves as a tool for accountability. The steel plate application can only be applied for if the applicant has an excavation-related construction permit for the ROW. The tracking or permit number for that permit is required when applying for a steel plate permit. These applications can be filed on-line at <https://tops.ddot.dc.gov>. There is a fee associated with the steel plate permit. The steel plate fee is based on the total number of plates, the length of time they are in the roadway and the time of year. The use of steel plates during the winter months of November through March is discouraged and thus costs more. Below is a chart showing the steel plate fees:

Winter: November through March	First 5 Days	Next 5 Days	Each Subsequent 5 Days
Steel Plate Fee (each)	\$0.00	\$600.00	\$900.00

Summer: April through October	First 5 Days	Next 5 Days	Each Subsequent 5 Days
Steel Plate Fee (each)	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$450.00

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Enforcement

DDOT and PSOP are committed to encouraging compliance with requirements for occupying the ROW. From online permitting to outreach efforts, DDOT provides many ways for companies to be educated and comply with the regulatory requirements. In addition to these tools it also has options to enforce those requirements. When violations occur PSOP can take several steps to enforce compliance. Stop Work Orders, written warnings, and Notices of Violations are just a few of the important enforcement venues PSOP uses to ensure a safe and efficient ROW.

Violations Guidelines

Violations will be monitored and governed under Title 24 Public Space and Safety of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (DCMR).

Improper site protection (24 DCMR 3403.5)(Standard Specifications for Infraction Highways and Structures § 105.09)	\$500 per occurrence, per day
Improper housekeeping (24 DCMR 3403.5) (Standard Specifications for Highways and Structures § 103.01	\$1,000 per trench, per day
Failure to complete restoration by Permit expiration (24 DCMR 3404.3)	\$1,000 per trench, per day
Non-compliance with 24-hour repair notice to make safe (24 DCMR 3404.7) 24 DCMR 3403.5) (Standard Specifications for Highways and Structures § 415, 506, 715, and 716)	\$ 2,500 per day
Non-compliance with 3-day corrective Repair notice (24 DCMR 3404.8)	\$ 2,500 per day
Failure to comply with Standard Specifications (24 DCMR 3403.5)	1st violation w/in a 3-year period, \$ 250 2nd violation w/in a 3-year period, \$ 500 3rd violation w/in a 3-year period, \$ 1,000

Conclusion

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PSOP is committed to making improvements in outreach, processes, and compliance. We will continuously inform the public of updates and findings regarding making the compliance initiative a success. The goal of the initiative reflects DDOT's mission to achieve an exceptional quality of life in the nation's capital through safe and sustainable travel practices. Any questions regarding the compliance initiative can be directed to Elliott Garret, Chief of Inspections and Juan Amaya, Public Space Permit Office manager.