

FILE NO.

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Police Code- Prohibiting Obstructing Sidewalks Adjacent to White Zones]

Ordinance amending the San Francisco Police Code by adding section 65 to prohibit obstructing sidewalks adjacent to white colored curb zones and establish exceptions to the prohibition; and adopting environmental findings.

(Amendment of the Whole dated 6/19/12)

Existing Law

Existing law prohibits impeding pedestrians on a sidewalk, but does not otherwise address obstructing the sidewalk adjacent to a passenger loading zone (“white zone”).

Amendments to Current Law

This legislation would add a new section to the Police Code that would make it an offense to obstruct access to a white zone curb or the adjacent sidewalk between the curb and the back edge of the sidewalk by placing any objects, materials, substances or personal property on the sidewalk. This prohibition would apply during the hours that the white zone is restricted to passenger loading and unloading. A violation of the prohibition would be punishable as an infraction, with a fine not to exceed \$100 for the first violation, \$200 for a second violation occurring within a year, and up to \$500 for a third or any subsequent violation within a year of the first violation. The prohibition would not apply to government buildings, with the exception of public schools and health care facilities, that are used for governmental purposes. In addition, the legislation provides a number of exceptions from the prohibition, including for example, property and equipment placed on the sidewalk by governmental entities and public utilities, and activities authorized by a permit. The Amendment of the Whole deletes an amendment approved in committee that would have created an additional exception for owners or tenants of fronting premises to place property in the in the restricted area for the purpose of providing information about access to the premises.

Background Information

Many areas of San Francisco, and particularly commercial areas, experience high levels of traffic congestion and limited on-street parking. By reducing the need for motorists to circle blocks or to double-park, white zones serve an important role in reducing congestion, improving vehicular and pedestrian safety and reducing motor vehicle emissions.