

Starting a business?

What to consider before starting your business

Location

Choosing where to operate your business depends on if you will be a commercial-based, home-based, out-of-town or mobile business. Each business location requires land use approval.

Ownership

Understanding the details of how you want to run your business is an important step in order to determine the license and permit requirements your business will require in order to operate. For example, are you operating as a sole proprietorship, partnership or corporation?

Business activity

Understanding the details of how you want to run your business will help determine the license and permit requirements. For example, as a home-based business, how many client visits to the home per week will you anticipate? Or as a restaurant, do you intend to prohibit minors at any time?

Construction needs

A building permit may be required for a new business or a business changing ownership, even if there is no construction planned as part of the development permit process. Upgrades may be necessary to comply with the Alberta Building Code and applicable health and safety standards.



What's required to operate in Calgary?

Businesses in Calgary are required to:

- Obtain land use approval for the business location
- Register with The City by obtaining a Business Identification Number and/or Business License

Some business activities require additional approvals from The City.

Why do some businesses require a license?

The City is responsible for ensuring businesses operating in Calgary are registered or licensed municipally. This ensures proper regulations and safety rules are being followed, that businesses are located appropriately and all businesses are treated fairly.

To regulate business activities within the city, bylaws define what businesses need to be licensed, what types of approvals they require and how they will be inspected to ensure the rules are followed. This provides customer protection and ensures that businesses are held to a fair operating standard.

Making changes to your business

If you already own and operate a business in Calgary, but you want to make changes, there are important requirements you should know.

Changing the space

If you are proposing to do construction to your space prior to operating, a building permit and other related trade permits will likely be required.

If you are changing addresses, make sure to notify The City to ensure the space you're moving to will allow for your business activity.

Changing ownership

Whether you are adding, removing or amalgamating ownership, there are different requirements that need to be met.

Depending on how you are operating and your location, a building permit may be required. Upgrades to the space may be necessary to bring the space into compliance with the Alberta Building Code and all applicable health and safety standards.

We can help guide you on starting and operating a business in Calgary. Visit calgary.ca/mybusiness to apply online 24/7, use our **LiveChat** or contact us at **403-268-5311** Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Supporting Calgary's businesses

We're here to reduce barriers, time and costs to enable your business success and make Calgary Canada's most business-friendly city. Learn more at calgary.ca/business

The City's Business and Local Economy team is focused on:

- Building relationships and staying connected with Calgary's business community.
- Streamlining services and reducing processes to attract and support business opportunities.
- Sharing and promoting service improvements for businesses.
- Identifying opportunities to support business innovation in Calgary.
- Equipping businesses with resources and information to strengthen their resilience.