Welcome to Denver!

Thank you for bringing your business to the City and County of Denver. To help facilitate getting your new business up and running and to expedite the new business approval process, the Offices of Economic Development, Excise and Licensing and Development Services have prepared this general checklist to help guide you through the various city agencies as you embark upon your new venture.

Since it is the responsibility of each new business to complete the needed approvals before it can open, this checklist will help you avoid unnecessary delays. The requirements may vary according to the type of business you intend to start or expand, but the following 11 steps are a good guide to what you will encounter.

1. **Plan Your Business**
   - Pick/develop a marketable business concept
   - Identify target market, product or service, customer group
   - Determine business location
   - Develop marketing strategy
   - Identify operational needs
   - Project start-up expenses
   - Create projected financial statements for three business years (worst case, realistic case, best case scenarios)
   - Research competition
   - Select advisors (consultant/lawyer/CPA)

   **RESOURCES:**
   - Denver Small Business Development Center — www.coloradosbdc.org
   - Counselor to America’s Small Business (SCORE) — www.scoredenver.org
   - Denver Business Assistance Center — www.denvergov.org/bac

2. **Select a Business Site and Determine Zoning and Site Permit Requirements**
   - When selecting a site, it is important to make sure the location is appropriate for your business. Among the factors to consider are the type of building, location, zoning and available parking. Consider working with a licensed contractor with expertise in these areas.

   **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**
   - Development Services
     201 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 203
     Denver, CO 80202
     www.denvergov.org/developmentservices
     720-865-2790

3. **Register Your Business Name and Structure**
   - Search for business name availability and register your business name and structure at:

     **When registering your business name:**
     - Colorado Secretary of State
       1700 Broadway, Suite 200
       Denver, CO 80202
       303-894-2200
       www.sos.state.co.us
     - Always consider tax implications and legal liability as you select the business structure that’s right for your business. While it is not required, it is recommended that you consult an attorney and/or CPA for advice as to which legal structure (sole proprietor, general partnership, etc.) best suits your needs.
Register with Tax Authorities on City, State and Federal Level

Several types of taxes may be levied on businesses including income tax, employment tax, sales tax and city business taxes. Check and register with Denver’s Treasury Division, Colorado Department of Revenue and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service to obtain the necessary tax information for your business. City: To register for city taxes, file return and manage tax accounts, visit Denver’s eTax Center at www.denvergov.org/ebac.

Denver Treasury Division
201 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 1009
Denver, CO 80202
720-913-9400

State: For state taxes and a Sales Tax ID number, visit the Colorado Business Express website, www.colorado.gov/cbe.

Federal: All forms of legal structure, except sole proprietorships with no employees, must obtain a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN). The FEIN is your federal tax ID number. For more federal tax information contact:

Internal Revenue Service
800-829-1040
www.irs.gov

Employer Responsibilities

A new set of responsibilities arise when a business hires employees. The business must register as an employer, pay additional taxes, withhold, match and submit employee withholdings, obtain workers’ compensation insurance and adhere to employee eligibility regulations. The Colorado Business Resource Guide includes a helpful section on this topic (www.coloradosbdc.org and click on “resources”).

Unemployment Insurance Requirement: Visit the Colorado Business Express website, www.colorado.gov/cbe, to register your business with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment in order to establish an unemployment insurance account.

Get Other Approvals and Permits (if Required)

Contact Development Services to find out about:

• Department of Environmental Health (DEH) approval is required when food is involved in the business or daycare. DEH approval is also required for swimming pools and spas. Fire Department approval may be required.
• The business must register as an employer, pay additional taxes, withhold, match and submit employee withholdings, obtain workers' compensation insurance and adhere to employee eligibility regulations. The Colorado Business Resource Guide includes a helpful section on this topic (www.coloradosbdc.org and click on “resources”).

Unemployment Insurance Requirement: Visit the Colorado Business Express website, www.colorado.gov/cbe, to register your business with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment in order to establish an unemployment insurance account.

A zoning permit is always required prior to receiving a building permit for a renovation (if the use in a building or commercial space is different from the previous use or if zoning approval is required for any other permit or license). A pre-application meeting is recommended. For more information, contact:

Development Services
201 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 205
Denver, CO 80222
720-865-1000 (voice) (email for zoning questions) www.denvergov.org/developmentservices

City Licenses & Permits: To determine whether your business activity requires special permits or licenses, please contact:

Denver License and Permitting
201 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 206
Denver, CO 80202
Phone: 311
www.denvergov.org/business/licensing

State Licenses & Permits: In addition to inquiring about city permits and licenses for your business activity, please check with the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies regarding state licensing requirements.

Denver Office of Economic Development
1580 Broadway, Suite 1350
Denver, CO 80202
720-913-1999
www.milehigh.com

Call for Inspections and Obtain Certificate of Occupancy

By completing these steps, you have built a strong foundation that, along with a lot of hard work and a little luck, will enable your business to thrive in the Mile High City!

Denver Office of Economic Development offers a diverse set of programs and services to assist new and expanding businesses in Denver. From small business financing to employee recruitment, Enterprise Tax Zone Credit assistance and referrals to a wide range of city programs and community resource partners, OED serves as a resource to help businesses succeed in Denver.

Open Your Business

A building permit is required if:
• There is a change of occupancy, as defined in the Denver Building Code. (If there is a change of occupancy, ADA compliance is required, which may require changes to the building.)
• The customer elects to do interior changes. (All elective work must be done to current building code.)

For more information visit www.denvergov.org/developmentservices.

Obtain a Building Permit (if Required)

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To determine whether your business activity requires special permits or licenses, please contact:

Denver License and Permitting
201 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 206
Denver, CO 80202
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