

STARTING A BUSINESS IN COQUITLAM? BUYING OR LEASING A BUILDING?



Starting a business is a major undertaking and there are a number of resources available to assist you with that process. Buying or leasing a building or premises and getting a business licence are just two of the many steps to complete. This handout includes details of the important things to consider and review when you are starting a business in Coquitlam and prior to completing a purchase of sale or lease agreement.

1 ZONES - Verify your business will be located in the correct zone.

Before you begin looking for a site, contact Development Planning to determine which zone or zones are appropriate for your business.

BE SURE TO VERIFY THAT YOUR BUSINESS IS ALLOWED TO OPERATE IN THE ZONE IT IS LOCATED BEFORE YOU SIGN A LEASE OR PURCHASE A PROPERTY!

2 MEETING PROVINCIAL CODES - Verify that all building improvements and renovations were permitted.

Modifications to a structure, including electrical, plumbing or heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) work must meet the British Columbia Building Code, Plumbing Code and Fire Code. You should confirm with your leasing or real estate agent that renovations were completed to meet these code requirements and within required building and/or plumbing permits.

3 PERMITS - If you are planning to renovate or build an addition to an existing building, find out if you need a Building, Plumbing or Fire Sprinkler Permit.

Permits are required for the removal, installation and/or relocation of interior walls, doorways and windows. As mentioned above, please note that any previous work completed without permits will require a subsequent permit and may require alterations to meet appropriate Building and Plumbing Code requirements. A fire sprinkler permit is also required if you are making alterations to an existing system.

HOME-BASED BUSINESSES

Home-based businesses are an important part of the City's economy, however the City needs to ensure that neighbourhood character and livability is maintained where home-based businesses are conducted. As a result, there are limitations on the operation of a home-based business or accessory home occupation. Please contact Development Planning for more information prior to obtaining any licenses or permits.



4

SIGNAGE - confirm what type of sign(s) you can install and the type of sign permits required.

Before designing, purchasing or installing any signs, check with Development Planning to ensure that they will be permitted. There are limitations on the size and types of signs you can install. A sign permit is required for any sign placed on a property or installed on a building exterior. You will also be required to remove any previously installed signs that do not meet the City's Sign Bylaw requirements or obtain additional sign permit(s) for signs which do meet the Bylaw requirements but were installed without a sign permit.



5

Other Agencies

Depending on the type of business you are operating in Coquitlam, you may require other permits or licences that are not regulated by the City of Coquitlam. Examples include liquor licences and health licences. It is important to be aware of these requirements as they are in place to protect the safety and health of you, your customers and the general public. Research what other approvals, permits or certificates you may require from other agencies, including but not limited to the following.

BC Safety Authority

You may need an operating permit from the Safety Authority if you are operating high voltage electrical equipment, hot water boilers, steam boilers, pressure vessels, or air conditioning and refrigeration systems, or if you are dispensing propane, natural gas or hydrogen.

Coquitlam Safety Authority Office

Unit 24, 2773 Barnet Highway, Coquitlam V3B 1C2
P: 604-927-2041
W: safetyauthority.ca
E: coquitlam@safetyauthority.ca

Motor Vehicle Sales Authority

Any person, partnership or company planning to sell or lease motor vehicles to retail consumers in BC must apply to become a licensed motor dealer. Dealership requirements are available by contacting the Motor Vehicle Sales Authority.

Motor Vehicle Sales Authority of BC

Suite 208 - 5455 152 Street, Surrey, BC, V3S 5A5
P: 604-575-7253 | 1-866-400-3529 (toll free)
E: licensing@mvsabc.com

Fraser Health

Some business operations will require approval from Fraser Health. Some of these business types include:

- Restaurants, cafes, grocery stores, and other businesses that handle food and beverages;
- Personal and beauty care services, such as hair cutting, estheticians, skin care, nail care, and tanning salons; and
- All programs and facilities providing care to three or more children.

Tri-Cities Health Protection Office

Suite 300, 205 Newport Drive, Port Moody, BC V3H 5C9
P: 604-949-7700
W: fraserhealth.ca

Liquor Control and Licensing Branch

If you sell or serve alcohol, you must obtain a license from Liquor Control and Licensing, a branch of the B.C. Ministry of Justice.

Liquor Licensing Help Desk

P: 1-866-209-2111 (toll free)
E: lclb.lclb@gov.bc.ca



Once you have confirmed and completed the steps on the previous page you can:

1. **Apply for a Building and/or Plumbing Permit** for any renovations you are planning. Applications can be submitted at the Building Permits Counter, Main Floor, City Hall.
2. **Apply for a Business License** at the Business License Counter, Main Floor, City Hall.
3. **Apply for a Sign Permit** at the Development Planning Counter, Main Floor, City Hall.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a zone?

All land in the City is assigned a zone under the City's Zoning Bylaw. The zone on a property determines what uses are allowed, the dimensional requirements for lots, the height of buildings and how far they can be setback from a property boundary. The zone also determines the maximum density of buildings on a property and is typically measured as a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and the maximum amount of constructed floor area (building space) in relation to the lot size.

The zoning on individual properties is identified on the City's Zoning Bylaw Maps.

When is a Development Permit required?

A Development Permit is required when exterior renovations to a building or structure that exceed \$150,000 in construction value are contemplated. [Contact the Development Planning for more information regarding the requirements for a Development Permit.](#)

When is a Building Permit required?

Building permits are required for new construction, temporary buildings and for alterations to existing construction. You should always review your building requirements with the City's Building Permits staff before starting a project.

When is a Sign Permit required?

Anyone intending to place a sign on the exterior of any building or structure, or on any property in the City, must apply for a sign permit with Development Planning. The sign permit application will be reviewed for compliance with the City's Sign Bylaw. If the proposed sign meets the Bylaw requirements, a Sign Permit will be issued to allow for installation of the proposed sign.

This requirement applies to both permanent and time-limited signs such as a sandwich board or portable sign.



I want to have outdoor display or seating areas, what is required?

You will need to confirm with Development Planning if your proposed business-use allows for outdoor display or seating. If it does, there may also be limitations on the size and location - you need to confirm these limitations.

Any permitted display and seating that is located on a public right-of-way, such as a sidewalk, will require a Sidewalk Use Permit or License of Occupation. Contact Engineering and Public Works staff for more information on the permit requirements.

BUSINESS LICENCES

The City of Coquitlam requires every person carrying on, maintaining, owning or operating within the City any profession, business, trade or occupation, to hold a valid business licence. The Business Licence must be visibly displayed on the premises. Licence holders operating a mobile business must carry the licence on his or her person while working in Coquitlam. Licences are valid for one year from the date of commencement of the business.

CITY CONTACT INFORMATION

Development Planning - Zoning Inquiries, Sign Permits, Development Permits
P: 604-927-3430
E: planninganddevelopment@coquitlam.ca

Building Permits Division - Building renovations
P: 604-927-3441
E: planninganddevelopment@coquitlam.ca

Business Licenses
P: 604-927-3085
E: businesslicenses@coquitlam.ca

Fire Services
P: 604-927-6400
E: firerescue@coquitlam.ca

Engineering and Public Works
P: 604-927-3500
E: epw@coquitlam.ca

Economic Development
P: 604-927-3442
E: economicdevelopment@coquitlam.ca



BEFORE YOU BUY OR LEASE A LOCATION

Before you secure a location for your business or decide whether you will operate a home-based business, it is vital to conduct a business name search, register your proposed company name, prepare a business plan, and secure financing. The resources on this page can assist you with these steps.

BizPal

BizPal is an online service that simplifies the business licence and other compliance regulation process for entrepreneurs, governments, and third party business service providers. BizPal is the combined efforts of the federal, provincial/territorial and participating municipal governments.
bcbizpal.ca

Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce

Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce can help grow and promote your business. Explore networking and promotional opportunities, and take advantage of their resources and benefits by becoming a member.
tricitiechamber.com

OneStop Business Registry

If your business is not registered visit the OneStop Business Registry website to get your name and company registered in BC.
bcbusinessregistry.ca

THE TRI CITIES INTERMUNICIPAL BUSINESS LICENCE

The Tri Cities Intermunicipal Business Licence is a program allowing mobile businesses based in Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam or Port Moody to obtain an add-on licence and operate legally in the other two Tri Cities municipalities. Non-resident businesses based in other municipalities must still obtain non-resident business licences to operate in each Tri Cities municipality.

A mobile business is a business that has a location, shop, office, or home-base in either Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam or Port Moody and delivers its services by moving from client to client throughout the Tri Cities.

The principal municipality is the community in which the business has its location, shop, office or home base.

Disclaimer: The City disclaims any liability arising from the use of this guide, since the information is provided only as a guide for public use and convenience. If any contradiction exists between this document and relevant City Bylaws, Codes, or Policies, the text of the Bylaws, Codes, or Policies shall be the legal authority.

Planning & Development Department

3000 Guildford Way, Coquitlam, BC Canada V3B 7N2
P: 604-927-3430
E: planninganddevelopment@coquitlam.ca