

Business Licenses & Permits Overview

Depending on your industry and location, your LLC may need one or more licenses or permits to operate legally. This overview will help you understand what to look for, how to research requirements, and avoid costly mistakes.

Why Licenses & Permits Matter

- Protect your business from fines or forced shutdowns.
- Build credibility with clients, vendors, and financial institutions.
- Ensure compliance with state, county, and city regulations.

Types of Licenses You May Need

- General business license (city or county level).
- Professional or occupational license (e.g., cosmetology, legal, real estate).
- Health department permit (for food-related businesses).
- Home occupation permit (if operating from home).
- Sales tax/reseller license (if selling goods).
- Federal licenses (for certain regulated industries like aviation, firearms, broadcasting).

Where to Start

- Visit your state's Secretary of State or Department of Business website.
- Use the SBA's license tool: <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/launch-your-business/apply-licenses-permits>
- Contact your city or county clerk's office for local license requirements.
- Look up your industry's specific requirements at both the state and federal level.

License & Permit Research Checklist

- ☐ Identify your business activity and NAICS code.
- ☐ Look up your city and county licensing requirements.
- ☐ Search your state's Department of Licensing or Secretary of State portal.
- ☐ Check if you need a resale certificate or sales tax ID.
- ☐ Determine if any federal agencies regulate your industry.
- ☐ Contact relevant departments to verify application steps and costs.
- ☐ Save copies of all approved licenses and keep them updated.

FAQ: Business Licensing

Q: Do all LLCs need a business license?

A: Not all, but many do. Even home-based businesses often require a local license.

Q: What if I'm just doing consulting or coaching?

A: You may still need a general business license from your city or county.

Q: Can I operate while waiting for a license?

A: It depends on your state/city. Some allow it, others do not — verify first.

Q: How much do licenses cost?

A: Fees range from \$25 to \$500+ depending on your state, industry, and location.

Q: Where do I keep my licenses?

A: Digitally store them in your MPW Vault and print a copy for your business files.

This resource is intended for general educational purposes. Please consult your city, county, and state business authorities to verify exact licensing requirements for your location and industry.