

Do I require a Business License?

If you carry out business in the Town of Smithers, you require a Business License. This includes those businesses that are located out-of-town, but operate within Town boundaries. A Business License is also required for a change in ownership, change in business location, or a business with multiple locations.

Why do I need a Business License?

Provincial laws and Town bylaws require business licenses. Business licensing ensures compliance with the regulations of the Municipality with respect to the building code, zoning bylaw, fire safety and health regulations. The intent of the regulations is to support safe and healthy development.

What should I consider before applying?

There are a few things to consider before signing a lease or moving into a building where you wish to open a business. The Development Services Department can help verify this information before you submit an application. Questions to ask include:

- ❑ Is the business use consistent with the **zoning** of the property? If the business use is not permitted, the Town will not issue you a license unless the use is lawfully non-conforming. You can either apply to have the property rezoned, apply for a temporary use permit, or look for another location.
- ❑ What **building upgrades** will be required? If you are changing the use of the building, you may be required to upgrade the building. Fire safety and accessibility are two common issues.
- ❑ Is sufficient **parking** available? If you are changing the use to one that requires more parking spaces than what exists, you will be required to provide off-street parking.
- ❑ Are other **approvals** required? Depending on the nature of your business, you may need to provide verification from other agencies, such as Northern Health or the Liquor Control and Licensing Board.

What happens after I apply?

Town staff review the application for completeness and compliance with Town bylaws. If there are no issues to be resolved, you can expect a phone call to arrange for an inspection if your business requires that clients enter your place of business. The License Inspector will inspect the premises to ensure that the health and safety requirements of the BC Building Code are met. Once this is successfully completed and all other approvals are in place, the Business License is issued.

How long will it take before I get my Business License?

It generally takes 1-2 weeks for the issuance of a Business License provided that complete and accurate information is provided.

How much does a Business License cost?

Depending on the business classification, license fees range from **\$160.00** to **\$660.00** per year. Fees are outlined in Schedule 'A' of the Business License Bylaw. Unless cancelled, you will receive a renewal invoice from the Town on an annual basis.

What happens to the Business License fees?	Funds collected from license fees go into a general operating fund. From this, the Town provides a grant to the Chamber of Commerce, who then use the funds to promote tourism and local business projects within the area.
What hours can I have my business open?	Retail businesses can have an opening and closing time between 6 am and midnight , except on holidays, as regulated under the Holiday Shopping Regulation Act. Retail businesses may remain open for the serving of customers during one special promotional event per year sponsored by a retail merchant group for a continuous period of up to 24 hours. Opening and closing times do not apply to restaurants, licensed liquor establishments, fuel sale businesses, or video stores.
Can I operate my business from home?	Certain types of businesses may operate from home. The Town's Zoning Bylaw regulates the types of business activities permitted in residential neighbourhoods, size of area used for business purposes, parking requirements, etc.
Can I put up a sign for my business?	Yes, most signs require a Sign Permit, which can be obtained from the Town Office. Depending on the location of the business, there are specifications on the sign size, number, and overall design.
Can I change the outside of the building?	Yes, altering a building may require a Building Permit and/or a Development Permit. Consult the Development Services Department before beginning any work.

For Further Information Contact:

Town of Smithers Development Services Department

1027 Aldous Street
 PO Box 879
 Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

Office Hours

Monday to Friday (except Holidays)
 8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Telephone: (250) 847-1600 Fax: (250) 847-1601

This brochure is meant for informational purposes only. Please consult the Local Government Act and its regulations, the Town of Smithers Business License Bylaw and Zoning Bylaw and other bylaws for definitive requirements and procedures. Copies of all Town bylaws are available online: www.smithers.ca.

