



Business License Checklist

If you have a printed copy of this checklist, access it online to open the various links below by visiting this URL: <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/BusinessLicenseChecklist>

Please complete the items in the checklist below to obtain a Business License to operate in the City of Fairfax. All items under the same step number can be completed simultaneously. Please also view the [Business License Flowchart](#) that accompanies this checklist.

If you have questions, please contact the appropriate City department as identified below. Suite numbers indicate where in City Hall the respective Departments can be found. For general inquiries about the process, please contact the Development Review Ombudsperson: Tommy.Scibilia@fairfaxva.gov | 571-546-5115

| ✓ | Step | Item | Instructions | Department | Suite # | Phone | Email |
|---|------|--|--|----------------------|------------|--------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Apply for a Business License | Portal | Revenue | 224 | 703-385-7884 | Revenue@fairfaxva.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Apply for a Commercial Use & Occupancy Permit or Minor Home Occupation Permit ^A | Guide (CUO) Guide (MHO) | Zoning | 207 | 703-385-7820 | Zoning@fairfaxva.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Apply for a Building Permit ^B | Guide | Code | 208 | 703-385-7830 | CodeAdministration@fairfaxva.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Receive Fairfax County Health Department Approval (restaurants only) ^C | Webpage | County | See note C | 703-246-2201 | hdehd@fairfaxcounty.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Apply for Trade Permits ^B | Guide | Code | 208 | 703-385-7830 | CodeAdministration@fairfaxva.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Apply for a Zoning Permit ^D | Guide | Zoning | 207 | 703-385-7820 | Zoning@fairfaxva.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Apply for BAR Approval ^E | Guide | Zoning | 207 | 703-385-7820 | Zoning@fairfaxva.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | Pass Building and Trade Inspections ^B | Webpage | Code | 208 | 703-385-7830 | CodeAdministration@fairfaxva.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | Pass Fire Prevention Code (FPC) Inspection ^F | Webpage | Code | 208 | 703-385-7830 | CodeAdministration@fairfaxva.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | Pass Fire Marshal Use Inspection ^F | Webpage | Code | 208 | 703-385-7830 | CodeAdministration@fairfaxva.gov |
| ** Receive Business License and Commercial Use & Occupancy Permit ** | | | | | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | Apply for a Sign Permit (optional) | Guide | Zoning | 207 | 703-385-7820 | Zoning@fairfaxva.gov |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | Request a Ribbon Cutting (optional) | Webpage | Economic Development | See note G | 703-293-1631 | Contact@fairfaxcityecondev.org |

Notes:

- The linked guide is for Commercial Use & Occupancy Permits, which are required for most commercial and retail business uses. Minor Home Occupations, such as home-based business offices, home kitchen production for commercial sales, or limited student instruction require a type of Zoning Permit called a Residential Accessory Use Permit for a Minor Home Occupation. Apply for this on the [Permit Portal \(www.fairfaxva.gov/onlinepermits\)](http://www.fairfaxva.gov/onlinepermits). More intensive home-based businesses may require a Special Use Permit. Contact Zoning for more info. In-home daycares have a distinct set of requirements. There are separate checklists for those depending on the number of children being cared for: [4 or fewer children](#) or [5-12 children](#).
- Building and Trade Permits are not always required. Construction or a change in use can necessitate the need for a permit. For more information or if you have questions, visit our [Permit FAQs page](#) or contact Code Administration with the info provided above.
- New restaurants and modifications to existing restaurants are required to pass a Fairfax County Health Department plan review. Plans stamped by the County must be uploaded to the Building Permit record on the Permit Portal before the City will issue your permit. For questions on the County's review process, visit the [County's website](#). The County's Health Department inspections are handled separately from the City's building, trade, and Fire Marshal Inspections.
- A Zoning Permit is not always needed. It is typically required if a Building Permit is needed for construction. If a Zoning Permit is needed, you will be contacted by staff following submission of your Building Permit.
- Architectural approval is required if you plan to make exterior improvements to your business that are visible from public places. This approval must be secured before a Zoning Permit can be issued. If your business is located in the Old Town Fairfax Historic District, or the surrounding Transition District, signage must also be approved. The [Zoning Map](#) delineates these overlay districts.
- You will be contacted by Code Administration if FPC or Use inspections are needed. For more information on when these inspections are required, visit our [Inspections Info page](#).
- Fairfax City Economic Development (FCED) is not located in City Hall. They are located in the WillowWood Plaza office complex at 10300 Eaton Place, suite 235.