

Small Business Owner's Licensing & Permit Guide

PDS

Department Application

#010

The PDS Zoning Map

Boise's zoning ordinance establishes allowed and prohibited uses for every property in the city, as well as uses that are allowed under specific conditions.

Please Visit the Site [PDS Zoning Map](#) to make sure you can meet the zoning requirements for a business.

Starting a Small Business

Small businesses are an important part of our community's financial health, but opening a small business is a significant investment of financial and personal resources. The City of Boise wants to assist you through the regulatory process to ensure your business has a positive impact on the community/neighborhood, is safe to occupy, and opens as quickly as possible.

This guide provides an overview of the various regulatory requirements necessary to open your business. Since each business and its proposed location are unique, it is important to note that this is a general overview and there will be variations among projects.

Prior to Purchasing a Building or Signing a Lease

Ask the leasing agent or current building owner to provide information on the status of the building or tenant space, including a copy of the existing Certificate of Occupancy (CO) and copies of the existing building plans. The existing conditions will determine the requirements for opening your business.

Zoning: Contact the Planning & Zoning Division for confirmation the proposed use is allowed under the current zone and is permitted on the site in accordance with the Boise City Zoning Ordinance (for example, compliance with parking requirements). Call (208)608-7100.

Certificate of Occupancy: Determine the previous occupancy use and verify that a Certificate of Occupancy was issued. Compare the previous use of the tenant space with the use of the new business. If the proposed use is a change in occupancy or a CO was not issued for the existing use, consult the building department to determine what upgrades the site may need. Call (208)608-7070.

Site and Building Plans: It will be helpful if the current building owner/leasing company provides copies of previously approved site plans and building plans. If revised or new plans are required during the review process, having the existing plans will save time and reduce cost.

If the current building owner/leasing agent cannot provide plans, please contact or visit the Records Center located in the Planning & Development Services (PDS) Department, 2nd floor of Downtown City Hall, 150 N Capitol Blvd. (208) 608-7062.

Planning/Zoning Approval

PDS's **Planning & Zoning Division** reviews the land use permitted by the current zone, the type of proposed business and any proposed signage. Any exterior changes to buildings located in a historic or design review district require planning approval.

Home Office/Business: A Home Occupation permit is required to operate a business in your home. The business cannot bring an abnormal amount of pedestrian or automotive traffic to your home or change the character of the dwelling. Contact a planner to review the additional requirements for a home occupation. Call (208) 608-7100.

New Building/Building Addition: If you're constructing a new building or addition, an engineer and architect must develop plans for review. Before the engineer and architect begin design work, the existing zoning should be evaluated for the proposed use. In addition, the engineer/architect should contact Boise's Public Works Department to coordinate water/sewer design issues.

Existing Building: The Planning & Zoning Division determines the type of approval required for your project (i.e. Zoning Certificate, Design Review, Conditional Use Permit, Special Exception, Variance, or Rezone) based on the property/building's existing zoning.

Signage: The Planning Division regulates the design, placement and maintenance of signs. Signs also require a Building Permit. A business must have a current Certificate of Occupancy, or an application filed to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy, prior to the issuance of the proposed signage permits.

Building Division Approval

Check with the PDS **Plan Review Division** to determine if an Idaho licensed architect, professional engineer or contractor must prepare the design/plans. Call (208) 608-7070.

Building permit information and applications are available online at pds.cityofboise.org.

New Building/Addition: An application and building plans must be submitted for review and approval. If the building has a fire suppression system and/or fire alarm system, the Fire Division will review and approve the fire protection plans. Separate fire protection permits will be required.

Existing Tenant Space:

- **With Change of Use:** A Tenant Improvement application must be submitted for review and approval. Tenant spaces with a change of use must be brought into compliance with the current adopted codes and a new Certificate of Occupancy must be issued. If the fire suppression system and/or fire alarm system are being installed or altered, the Fire Division will review and approve the fire protection plans. Separate fire protection permits will be required.
- **Without Change of Use:** If your business is going into a building or tenant space that was occupied by a similar business (within the same "occupancy group"), and no work is proposed, you must submit a Commercial Occupancy Evaluation Request Application to the Plan Review Division. Building and fire safety inspections will be conducted to determine if any work is being done that requires a permit, or if there are any safety deficiencies that must be met. Once any safety deficiencies are mitigated, a new Certificate of Occupancy will be issued.

Building Permit: A permit is required for any work including, but not limited to the following:

- Installation of new type one hood systems
- Any remodel to existing tenant space
- New tenant spaces
- Accessibility upgrades

Note: A permit is not required for the following:

- Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops, and similar finish work
- Non-fixed and movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches in height

Tenant Improvement: If you will be remodeling, tenant improvement plans must be submitted for review and approval. Only those portions of the building/tenant space

being renovated must be brought into compliance with the currently adopted codes. If the fire suppression system and/or fire alarm system is being installed or altered, the Fire Division will review and approve the fire protection plans. There are three Tenant Improvement levels. Staff has the discretion to determine if a project is a Minor or Major Tenant Improvement.

Contact a building plan reviewer to determine the Tenant Improvement level of the project at (208) 608-7070.

Minor Tenant Improvements: Minor tenant improvements are interior alterations to commercial spaces. There are two types of minor tenant improvement projects, Level I and Level II.

Level I: Existing Tenant Space Remodel

First review period is 5 working days or less.

- Includes offices, restaurants (with an occupant load of 49 or less), and retail sales tenants with an existing Certificate of Occupancy
- Limited scope of work
- Minor exterior work with plans previously signed and approved by PDS planning staff
- Not a historic building
- Minor structural work

Note: A Level I Tenant Improvement Permit does not include the following:

- Increase to building area
- Increase to tenant space
- Increase to occupant load
- Change of occupancy or use
- Hazardous material storage or dispensing
- Building upgrade agreement items

Level II: New Tenant Space Build Out and Existing Tenant Space Remodels

First review period is 10-14 working days or less.

- Includes new finish for offices, retail sales and storage occupancies; and limited remodel to existing offices, restaurants, retail sales and storage tenant spaces.
- Minor exterior work with plans previously signed and approved by PDS Planning Staff
- Not a historic building
- Minor structural work

Note: A Level II Tenant Improvement Permit does not include the following:

- Change of occupancy or use

- Increase to building area
- Hazardous material storage or dispensing
- Building upgrade agreement items

Major Tenant Improvements (Level III): Major Tenant improvements are alterations to commercial spaces or buildings that go beyond the scope of work outlined in the Minor Tenant Improvement Level 1 and Level II sections above. Any work noted as not included under a Level I or Level II requires a Major Tenant Improvement application. First review period is approximately 20 working days.

Permit Issuance: The contractor can obtain permits when the design/plans have been approved and permits fees have been paid. **Note:** The contractor must be registered with the State of Idaho. Go to the [Website](#) or contact the State Bureau of Occupational Licenses at (208) 344-3233.

Inspections: The types of required inspections vary, based on the scope of work. All permits must pass final inspection and a Certificate of Occupancy must be issued prior to occupying any tenant space.

Trade Permits: Trade permits may be required depending on the scope of work. The following are some of the most common instances when trade permits are required for starting a new business.

Mechanical Permits: A permit is required for mechanical work including but not limited to the following:

- Installation or modification of Type-one or Type-two hood systems
- Installation of exhaust fans
- Installation or replacement of HVAC system
- New or replacement gas lines
- Relocation of existing duct work
- Installation or relocation of kitchen appliances

Plumbing Permits: A permit is required for plumbing work including but not limited to the following:

- Installation of sinks, water closets, dishwashers, hot water heaters, floor drains or any other new plumbing fixtures or appliances
- Relocation of existing plumbing fixtures or appliances
- Installation of new water or waste piping
- Replacement of existing water or waste piping
- Installation of grease interceptor

Electrical Permits: A permit is required for electrical work including but not limited to the following:

- Installation of new lighting receptacles, outlets, or wiring
- Installation of new exhaust fans

- Installation of new service panels
- Relocation of existing lighting
- Installation of emergency lighting and illuminated exit signs

Note: An electrical permit is not required for the following:

Minor repair work, including the replacement of lamps or the connection of approved portable electrical equipment to approved permanently installed receptacles

Fire Alarm Permits: A permit is required for fire alarm work including but not limited to the following:

- Installation of new alarm systems
- Additions or modifications to existing alarm systems

Note: Moving or adding partitions may require modifications to an existing fire alarm system. Contact the Fire Alarm Plan Reviewer for verification at (208)608-7112.

Fire Sprinkler Permits: A permit is required for fire sprinkler system work including but not limited to the following:

- Installation of new sprinkler system
- Modification to existing sprinkler system
- Installation of cooking hood fire suppression system

Note: Moving or adding partitions may require modifications to existing sprinkler systems. Contact the Fire Sprinkler Plan Reviewer for verification at (208)608-7110.

Erosion and Sediment Control (ESC) Permit: Building permits may require an associated ESC permit. The following are some of the most common instances when an ESC permit may be required for starting a new business

- Saw cutting of concrete floors or masonry walls
- New concrete landings, sidewalks or patios
- Exterior stucco work
- Exterior trenching

Contact the Erosion Sediment Control Department with any questions at (208) 794-8996. You can also visit the Erosion and Sediment Control [Site](#).

Public Works Department: The Public Works Department reviews applications for sewer rating fee assessments, dumpster locations and grease interceptor requirements. Contact the Planning & Zoning Division for con-3900.

Ada County Highway District: Ada County Highway District (ACHD) approval is required for drive-up windows and any work performed in the right-of-way. Impact fees

may be assessed for an expansion of the building area or change of use. Contact ACHD at (208) 387-8170.

Ada County Licensing: Licenses are required for some uses including serving liquor, beer or wine; catering; vehicle escort and solicitor/peddler. Contact Ada County at (208) 287-6840.

State Alcohol & Beverage Control (ABC): Idaho State Beer, Wine and Liquor licensing. Contact ABD at (208) 884-7060.

Central District Health (CDH): A License for food service is required prior to obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy. Contact CDH at (208)327-7499 or visit the site [here](#).

City Clerk Business Licensing

The City Clerk's Office requires business licenses for some businesses and services, including but not limited to the following:

- Alcohol Beverage
- Sidewalk Café
- Massage Therapist
- Temporary Merchant
- Special Events
- Eating & Drinking
- Childcare
- Pawn Broker
- Taxi
- Patrol Service

For a complete list and application information, go to cityclerk.cityofboise.org/licensing or call (208) 384-3710.

Business License Timeline: Assuming the application has all the required license prerequisites, most City business licenses can be issued within 30 days. Purchasing a bond and/or insurance from an insurance company may be required prior to submitting the application. Business licenses must be renewed prior to the license expiring. Some types of business licenses require a background check; since these licenses often take longer to process, the application should be submitted 45-60 days in advance. Some licenses can be granted on a provisional status if the applicant can prove they have been a resident of Idaho for the last five years prior to application submittal.

Business License Fees: The fees for licensing vary depending upon the license type and any additional requirements, such as background checks, FBI fingerprints, processing fees, etc. The City Clerk License Fee Schedule lists the most current fees.

Contact the City Clerk's office at (208) 384-3710 to verify fee amounts.

register with the Secretary of State's Office. Call (208) 334-2300 for information.

State Business License/Occupational Licensing: A special state business license may be required under some circumstances. Usually only professionals (i.e. CPA's, doctors, contractors, etc.) need a state business license. A license is required for alcohol sales. Contact the State at (208) 884-7060.

Federal Employers Tax I.D. Number: Every person without a previous tax number who pays wages to one or more employees or is required to file any federal reports must apply for a tax number on Form SS-4 with the IRS. Contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040.

State of Idaho Tax Commission: Every person or business selling product in Idaho should check with the State Tax Commission concerning their obligation to collect sales tax.

Contact Information:

(208)334-7660 | (800) 972-7660 | tax.idaho.gov

[Link to additional contact information and tips for business owners - PDS Form #009](#)

State and Federal Requirements

Business Name Registration: All persons/partners doing business in Idaho under an assumed business name must