



City of Westminister Business Guide

This guide is intended as a summary of information you will need to know in order to operate a business in Westminister. This guide is provided as a public service and is not all-inclusive. Specific questions should be directed to the Business License Staff. A City of Westminister business license is a tax to help defray ongoing City costs associated with the support and maintenance for public safety services; i.e. Police, Fire, Code Enforcement and other support services. Business License requirements can be found in the Westminister Municipal Code, Section 5, on the City's website. Click on 'About Westminister', 'Municipal Code'.

City of Westminister Website:

www.westminster-ca.gov

City Business Telephone Numbers:

Business License	(714) 548-3258
Building Permits	(714) 548-3254
Planning/Zoning	(714) 548-3247
Police Permits	(714) 548-3760

Who Needs a Business License?

A license is required in order to conduct business in the City. Every business unless specifically exempted by the State, pays an annual local business tax. Business license applications and tax amounts can be obtained from the Building Division.

What Should I Do Before I Apply?

Contact the Planning Division to confirm that your business is an allowable use at your desired location. By completing the *Zoning Clearance for Business Location* form on the City's website, staff will be able to verify that your business meets the Zoning requirements and that a Conditional Use Permit or other permits from Planning are not required. You may need clearances from County and State for zoning, health and safety. Some businesses may also require a police permit. A careful review of the uses allowed and zoning requirements is very important before purchasing or leasing a property.

How Do I Obtain a Business License?

You can obtain an application from City Hall or download one from the City's website under 'Departments', 'Community Development', 'Building Division', 'Business License'. Bring the completed application to City Hall.

How Long Does It Take to Apply?

Most business licenses can be issued the same day, however, additional approvals and documents may be required prior to issuance of some business licenses. Your application must be complete and include all necessary documents. You may need to bring: A Seller's Permit, Fictitious name and Corporation papers. Some businesses may require a Certificate of Occupancy or a final inspection if you have done any construction to your space.

How Much Does It Cost?

The business license cost is based on gross receipts, estimated for the first year. The minimum business license tax starts at \$100.00 plus a license processing fee of \$137.00. Some business licenses are calculated differently (such as apartment rentals, special events, motels, vending machines, and out of town contractors).

How Often Do I Renew My License?

Business licenses are renewed annually, from the start date of your business. A courtesy notice is mailed 3 weeks before the due date, but you are responsible for renewing your license whether or not the notice is received. If the payment is received more than 30 days past the due date, a 10% per month penalty is charged. Notices of Violation and Administrative Citations may also be issued.

What Other Things May I Need?

Fictitious Name (DBA) – must be filed if you choose a business name that does not include your own last name. Contact the County Clerk’s office at (714) 834-2889, <http://ocrecorder.com> or contact your local newspaper office.

Seller’s Permit (Resale #) – required by the State Board of Equalization (BOE) if you sell merchandise. Call (949) 440-3473 or visit www.boe.ca.gov.

Health Permit – required by the County Health Agency for food handling, tattooing or body piercing. Call (714) 433-6000.

Federal Tax ID – required if you have employees, are incorporated or have a registered partnership. Call (800) 829-1040 or visit www.irs.gov.

Worker’s Compensation Insurance – required if you have employees. Contact your local insurance agent, state fund or visit www.statefundca.com.

Liquor License – required by the State Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) if you sell or serve alcohol. Contact (714) 558-4101 or visit www.abc.ca.gov.

Conditional Use Permit – required by the Planning Division for some businesses such as live entertainment, dance schools, cafes and alcohol sales.

Police Permits – certain types of business activities require a permit from the Police Department. Some examples are firearm dealers, massage, reflexology, solicitation, pawnbrokers, live entertainment and bingo. For more information call the Police Department at (714) 548-3760.

Do I Need to Display My License?

Yes, all business licenses must be posted in public view at the location of the business. For those businesses without a fixed location, the responsible party must carry the business license with them while conducting business in Westminster.

What if I Move to a New Location?

When moving to another location in the City, your business license may be transferred if in compliance with zoning requirements. Please notify us of your new address, phone number and any other changes to your business.

Can I Transfer My Business License to Someone Else?

Business licenses are not transferable from one owner to another. The new owner must apply for a business license.

Who Else Can Help Me Get Started?

U.S. Small Business Administration – provides financial resources and

workshops. Call (714) 550-7420 or visit www.sba.gov.

Service Corps of Retired Executives (S.C.O.R.E.) – provides workshops and counselors. Call (714) 550-7369 or visit www.score.org.

California Permit Assistance Center – information on local, state & federal permits. Call (714) 834-2840 or visit www.calgold.ca.gov.

Additional Resources:

Better Business Bureau	(714) 678-2685
Chamber of Commerce	(714) 898-9648
Consumer Affairs Dept	(800) 952-5210
Contractors State License	(800) 321-2752
Franchise Tax Board	(800) 852-5711