



BUSINESS LICENSES

The Planning Division reviews business license applications to ensure that the proposed use is allowed at the proposed site and complies with applicable regulations.

BUSINESSES OPERATED AT A NON-RESIDENTIAL LOCATION

When relocating an existing business in Sunnyvale, or starting a new business, please speak with the Planning Division staff to determine if the business is allowed at the proposed location. Some businesses, particularly restaurants, auto repair and recreational/educational classes, may require a Planning permit prior to opening the business. The Planning permit review process requires additional review time and fees. Applying for the business license does not guarantee approval of your business use.

In an effort to reduce the impacts of litter on the environment and reduce waste, the City has two product bans businesses should be aware of: 1) Single use plastic bags are prohibited from being used or sold at retail stores (see Ordinance No. 3001-13) and 2) Food Providers are prohibited from using polystyrene foam food containers to dispense prepared food to customers (see Ordinance No. 3005-13) For information on these ordinances or help setting up recycling, please contact Mary Lindemuth at 408.730.7484.

HOME BUSINESSES

Businesses are allowed to be operated out of a residence; however, the following requirements must be met in order to maintain the residential character of the neighborhood:

- Only person living at the residence shall work or report to work on the premises.
- The business shall be conducted within the residence and not in the yard, garage or an accessory structure.
- No sale of merchandise shall occur from the residence.
- No more than 20% of the floor area or 400 square feet of the residence, whichever is less, shall be devoted to the business. This includes storage of inventory or products (which is limited to 50 cubic feet). Storage of supplies or equipment must be compatible with residential uses.
- A Residential Name Plate of up to two square feet in area may be placed at the front wall of a residence to identify the home-based business.
- A maximum of three vehicles, related to the business, may visit the residence per day (including vehicles used by customers, vendors, or delivery services).
- The words “by appointment only” shall be included in any business advertisements that include the home address.
- External noise, odor, glare, vibration, or electrical interference detectable to neighbors is not permitted. Explosive, toxic, or flammable materials in quantities greater than allowed in residences shall not be stored on the premises.

There is no limit on the number of business operated from a residence as long as the cumulative impact does not exceed the above requirements.

REVIEW PROCESS

1. Speak with the Planning Division staff regarding your proposed business and location to determine if additional permits are required prior to opening of the business.
2. Apply for the business license and pay appropriate business tax. Home business licenses are reviewed by the Planning Division staff at the One-Stop Permit Center. Review of other business licenses may take 2-4 weeks.
3. If approved, the business license will be mailed to the business mailing address.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES

Agency	Location/Contact Information	What They Do
Santa Clara County Recorder's Office	70 S. Hedding Street 1 st Floor East Wing San Jose, CA 95110 408-299-5688	Administer the filing of fictitious name statements (DBA - doing business as) which are required when a business name is something other than the owner's name.
Santa Clara County Environmental Health Department	1555 Berger Drive, #300 San Jose, CA 95112 408-918-3400	Issue health permits for the sale of food and/or drink. Also provide information in health regulations.
Internal Revenue Service	55 S. Market Street, 3 rd Floor San Jose, CA 95112 800-829-1040 800-829-4477	Assign employer identification numbers to businesses, provide information and manage business income taxes, employee income taxes, and social security taxes.
State Board of Equalization	250 S. 2 nd Street San Jose, CA 95113 408-277-1231	Issue use tax and sales tax permits, provide resale numbers, resale permits, and diesel fuel/cigarette/hazardous waste taxes.
US Customs Service	1391 Airport Blvd. San Jose, CA 95110 408-291-7388	Provide information on import regulations, customs, duties, etc.
US Department of Commerce Bureau of Export Administration	5201 Great America Pkwy, #226 Santa Clara, CA 95054 408-748-7450	Provide information on export licenses and regulations.
Cal-OSHA	2010 N. First Street, #401 San Jose, CA 95131 408-452-7288	Set workplace health and safety standards.
Contractors State License Board	100 Paseo de San Antonio, #319 San Jose, CA 95113 408-277-1244	Issue licenses for contractors and investigate complaints regarding contractors.
Public Utilities Commission, San Francisco Headquarters	505 Van Ness Avenue San Francisco, CA 94102 415-703-2322	Regulate limousines and for-hire carriers engaged in interstate commerce.
Secretary of State Limited Partnership Division	1500 11 th Street, 3 rd Floor Sacramento, CA 95814 916-653-3365	Manage filings for limited partnerships.