



Starting a Business in Fort Worth
A Certificate of Occupancy Guide for Restaurants

Opening a restaurant in the City of Fort Worth requires different permits, inspections, and licenses from the City of Fort Worth, Tarrant County, and the State of Texas. Before you apply for any permits or inspections, you must have your basic paperwork, such as:

Register your business with the Texas Secretary of State -

<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/businessstartup.shtml>

Sales Tax Certificate - <https://comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/#skip-scroll>

Food Manager's Certification -

<https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/codecompliance/consumer-health/food-business/food-manager-certification>

Food Handler's Certification -

<https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/codecompliance/consumer-health/food-business/food-manager-certification>

Assumed Name Certificate, also called a "DBA" (if operating under a different name) -

https://www.tarrantcounty.com/content/dam/main/county-clerk/Assumed_Name_Certificate_Form_-_Incorporated_Nov_2018.pdf

TABC Permit/Certification (if selling or serving alcohol) -

<https://www.tabc.texas.gov/services/tabcllicenses-permits/>

Once all required State and County Certifications/Registrations requirements are met, you can apply for associated permits through the Development Services Department located on the Lower Level of City Hall. Most permits and inspections can also be processed online through the [Acella Citizen's Access](#) portal.

The following information details obtaining Certificate of Occupancy.

Getting your Certificate of Occupancy

In accordance with Section 111 of the City of Fort Worth Administrative Code, every business with a physical location in the City of Fort Worth requires a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) permit. When you have finished your registration/licensing paperwork above, you can apply for a CO permit. [Here is some general information](#) on commercial permitting. See below for the option that best describes your proposed location.

- 1) If your proposed location was **previously a restaurant**, you will need a new CO permit for your new business. This permit is an "Occupancy Existing Ordinance". [Here is a tutorial video](#) to guide you through the process. To apply for a CO permit online, [click here](#) to register for a new account and apply for your CO permit. To apply for a CO permit in

person, [fill out this form](#) and bring to the lower level of City Hall (a customer service representative can assist you with any questions.) Inspections can be scheduled as early as the next business day after the permit application is approved. Please call 817-392-2222 or request an appointment using this [QLess](#) link to schedule.

- 2) If your proposed location was **not previously a restaurant**, you will need a [Change of Use Certificate of Occupancy Permit](#) known as an “Occupancy Change of Use”. [Here is a tutorial video](#) to guide you through the process. To apply for a Change of Use permit online, [click here](#) to register for a new account and apply for your Change of Use permit. To apply for a Change of Use permit in person, [fill out this form](#) and bring to the lower level of City Hall. [Here is a checklist](#) for your Change of Use permit. Please note: your Change of Use permit will undergo a plan review to calculate your new occupancy information. Once approved, you will be provided a copy of City-approved stamped plans and instructions to obtain your inspection documents. Once you’ve obtained your inspection documents, you may schedule inspections as early as the next business day after the permit application is approved. Please call 817-392-2222 or request an appointment using this [QLess](#) link to schedule.
- 3) If you are **remodeling in addition to relocating to a space that was already a restaurant**, you will need two (2) separate permits, [click here for a checklist](#).
 - a. First, submit a [Commercial Remodel Permit](#) application and items requested on the checklist to Development Services either in person or online, [click here](#). [Here is a tutorial video](#). Please note this permit will undergo a plan review. Once approved, you will be provided a copy of City-approved stamped plans and instructions to obtain your inspection documents. Once you’ve obtained your inspection documents, you may schedule as early as early as the next business day after the permit application is approved. Please call 817-392-2222 or request an appointment using this [QLess](#) link to schedule.
 - b. After the Commercial Remodel Permit is approved, a new CO permit (“Occupancy Existing Ordinance”) will be required. Please refer to number 2 above for the CO permit.

If you need more assistance or have questions, please contact Development Services directly:

Contact Information

Jasmin Correa
Project Facilitator, Small Business Liaison
Development Services - Project Facilitation Office
817-392- 2883

Fort Worth City Hall

200 Texas Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102

If you would like to request an appointment to discuss the Certificate of Occupancy, you may do so using the [QLess](#) link.

NOTE: Be sure to comply with any and all city, county, state, federal, and other regulations related to starting your business. Below is a helpful list, but always consult with a professional. There may be other requirements for your business not specifically listed here.

Additional Resources

Health Permit - <https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/code-compliance/consumer-health>

Fire Permit - <https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/fire/services/bureau>

Backflow Inspection - <https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/water/backflow>

Grease Trap Permit - <https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/water/wastewater/grease-traps>

Per the Water Department Installation Policy and Design Criteria, section 6.15.1, pre-treatment facilities should be designed and installed in accordance with the City of Fort Worth Guidance Document for Sizing and Installation of Grease Traps and Interceptors, [Guidance for Sizing and Installation of Grease Traps and Interceptors](#). If these requirements cannot be met, then please contact Pre-treatment Services for additional information, pretreatment@FortWorthTexas.gov or 817-392-5809.