



Starting a Business in Fort Worth A Guide to Getting Your Certificate of Occupancy (CO)

Opening a business 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/business-startup.shtml>

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

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](https://www.tarrantcounty.com/content/dam/main/county-clerk/Assumed%20Name%20Certificate%20Form%20-%20Incorporated%20Nov%202018.pdf)

Applying for an EIN - [How to Apply for an EIN | Internal Revenue Service \(irs.gov\)](https://www.irs.gov/efile)

When all required State and County Certifications/Registrations requirements are met, you can apply for associated permits through the Development Services Department’s website [Accela Citizen’s Access](#). Staff are also available via phone call (817-392-2222) or in-person at the Lower Level of City Hall to assist with online permit application questions. The following information details obtaining a 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 the same type of business you will be opening**, 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 **previously a different type of business than the one you will be opening**, 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. After the plan set is approved, you will be provided a copy of City-approved stamped plans and instructions to obtain your inspection documents. Once you have 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**, 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. After the plan set is approved, you will be provided a copy of City-approved stamped plans and instructions to obtain your inspection documents. Once you have 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.

City, County, State, Federal, and Other Regulations

It is important 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.



Resources for Restaurants

Food Manager's Certification - <https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/code-compliance/consumer-health/food-business/food-manager-certification>
Food Handler's Certification - [Food Handler/Manager Card – Welcome to the City of Fort Worth \(fortworthtexas.gov\)](https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/food-handler-manager-card)
Food Inspections - [Food Inspections – Welcome to the City of Fort Worth \(fortworthtexas.gov\)](https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/food-inspections)
TABC Permit/Certification (if selling or serving alcohol) - <https://www.tabc.texas.gov/services/tabc-licenses-permits/>
Plan Review: [Plan Review – Welcome to the City of Fort Worth \(fortworthtexas.gov\)](https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/plan-review)
Grease Trap Permit - <https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/water/wastewater/grease-traps>
Backflow Inspection - <https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/water/backflow>
Fire Permit - <https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/fire/services/bureau>
Permitting Information – Retail Food Establishments - [Permitting Information - Retail Food Establishments | Texas DSHS](https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/permitting-information-retail-food-establishments)

Resources for Hair Salons / Barber Shops

Cosmetology Salon License - [Apply for a Cosmetology Salon License | Texas.gov](https://www.texas.gov/departments/cosmetology)
Barber Shop Permit Application - [BAR016 - Barber Shop Permit Application \(texas.gov\)](https://www.texas.gov/departments/barber-shop)
Inspection Guide - [Inspections Guide for Barbering and Cosmetology \(texas.gov\)](https://www.texas.gov/departments/inspections-guide)
Online License Search Tool - [TDLR Active License Search \(texas.gov\)](https://www.texas.gov/departments/tdlr)
Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit - [Stormwater General Permit for Construction Activities - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - www.tceq.texas.gov](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting)

Resources for Gym/Fitness Centers

Health Spa Licenses: <https://www.sos.texas.gov/statdoc/faqs3000.shtml>
Health Spa Registration Application/Renewal - [Health Spa Registration Application Renewal \(state.tx.us\)](https://www.state.tx.us/hhs/healthspa)
Health Spa Surety Bond - [HEALTH SPA SURETY BOND \(state.tx.us\)](https://www.state.tx.us/hhs/healthspa)

Resources for Auto Repair Shops

Auto Repair Shops: Compliance Resources - [Auto Repair Shops: Compliance Resources - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - www.tceq.texas.gov](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting)
TCEQ Regulatory Guidance for Texas Automotive Repair Shops - [An Environmental Guide for Texas Automotive Repair Shops](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting)
Petroleum Storage Tanks Registrations - [Petroleum Storage Tanks Registrations: Am I Regulated? - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - www.tceq.texas.gov](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting)
Used Oil Recycling Program - [Used Oil Recycling Program: Am I Regulated? - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - www.tceq.texas.gov](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting)
Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit - [Stormwater General Permit for Construction Activities - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality - www.tceq.texas.gov](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting)
Grit Trap - [Grease Traps – Welcome to the City of Fort Worth \(fortworthtexas.gov\)](https://www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/grit-trap)

Contact Information



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

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
817-392-2222

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