



Starting a Business in Victoria

Opening a new business is an exciting time and requires careful planning. Before opening your business in the City of Victoria, there are a few things you will need to know in order to ensure your opening day goes off without a hitch.

1 Register Your Business Name

In order to start a business in the Province of BC, your business will need to be registered with BC Registry Services.

Resources:

- bcbusinessregistry.ca



2 Select a location

Selecting a location is an important step in order to determine if the location is appropriate for the business. This can be done independently, with resources such as Spacelist, or through a qualified real estate agent.

Resources:

- spacelist.ca



3 Identify Zoning and Permitted Uses

The location of a business must comply with local zoning and bylaw regulations as well as the BC Building Code. Before confirming a lease agreement, it is important to ensure the location of the business is suitable. Once a location has been selected, VicMap or one of our City representatives can assist with identifying these regulations.

Steps:

1. Search your location in VicMap using the search tool
2. View the zoning associated with the subject property
3. Ensure the use of the proposed business complies with the permitted uses in the zone
4. Identify any parking requirements for the property
5. Ensure the major occupancy of the business conforms to the building code regulations

Resources:

- VicMap – victoria.ca/map
- Zoning inquiries: 250.361.0316 or zoning@victoria.ca



4 Apply for Building Permits and Sign Permits

Any alterations made to a space may require one or more permits. In addition, any exterior signage requires a sign permit. These can be obtained through the Permits and Inspections department at City Hall.

Resources:

- victoria.ca/permits
- Permit & Inspections inquiries: 250.361.0344 or permits@victoria.ca



Steps 4 and 5 can occur at the same time

5 Apply for a Business Licence

All businesses in the City of Victoria are required to obtain a business licence. Applications can be submitted online or in person at City Hall.

Resources:

- victoria.ca/business
- Business Licence inquiries: 250.361.0572 or businesslicence@victoria.ca

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Business Hub

E bizhub@victoria.ca

T 250.361.0629

Hours of Business:

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.,

Mon – Fri



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is my business located in the City of Victoria?

- Greater Victoria is comprised of 13 municipalities. Use the City of Victoria's VicMap tool to determine if your business is located in the City of Victoria.

2. What do I need to apply for a business licence?

- A registered business name with the Province of BC.
- A business address (either residential for home-based business or commercial) in the City of Victoria.
- If you are conducting a food-based business, approvals from Island Health will be required.
- If you are serving Liquor, you will be required to fill out an occupant load application and obtain a liquor licence from the BC Liquor Control and Licensing
- If you are conducting business in other municipalities within Greater Victoria, you will need to check "inter-municipal" on the application form.



3. What do I need to know regarding zoning?

- If your legal use is permitted in the zone your business will be located in. You can locate this information in the zoning bylaw which can be found when searching for your business address on VicMap. Alternatively, contact staff at the Business Hub or in Zoning.
- If there is a parking requirement.

4. What if the zoning allows for my use, but, currently has an occupancy permit for a different use?

- You will need to apply for a change of use. This can involve applying for building permits through Permits and Inspections at City Hall.

Helpful Resources:

- BC Business Registry
bcbusinessregistry.ca
- Downtown Victoria Business Association
downtownvictoria.ca
- Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce
victoriachamber.ca
- Tourism Victoria
tourismvictoria.com
- Island Health
viha.ca
- Canada Revenue Agency
cra-arc.gc.ca/bsnsss
- WorkSafe BC
worksafebc.com
- BC Trade & Invest
britishcolumbia.ca
- BC Liquor Control and Licensing
pssg.gov.bc.ca/lclb/

Every business is unique. Please visit us at the Business Hub for information to start or expand your business!

City of Victoria Contacts:

Business Hub
bizhub@victoria.ca
250.361.0629

Business Licencing
businesslicence@victoria.ca
250.361.0572

Zoning
zoning@victoria.ca
250.361.0382

Permits and Inspections
permits@victoria.ca
250.361.0344



For further information regarding the Mayor's Development Prosperity Action Plan and Victoria's six economic engines please see "Making Victoria – Unleashing Potential" on our website.

If you have questions, please visit the Business Hub at City Hall to learn more. The Business Ambassador is available to walk you through all the details of opening a business step-by-step.