



CITY OF EL CAJON

Business License Application

Frequently Asked Questions

❖ What is a business license?

A business license is a tax imposed on businesses, trades, professions, callings and occupations for conducting business in El Cajon. The El Cajon Municipal Code requires a license to conduct business within the city limits of El Cajon, even if the physical office is located outside city limits. The tax pays for street maintenance, police and fire protection, and other City services that benefit businesses and the general public.

❖ Who is required to have a City of El Cajon business license?

Anyone who conducts business within El Cajon city limits or is based in El Cajon must obtain a business license and pay the business license tax on or before the date the business commences.

❖ How do I obtain a Business License?

The most convenient and fastest way to apply for a new business license is using the online filing method. The business license application form and other related instructions can also be downloaded or filled out online and printed for signature. The completed application and payment of the business license tax can be submitted in person or by mail to the Finance Department, located at the El Cajon City Hall, 200 Civic Center Way, El Cajon, CA, 92020.

❖ How do I calculate my Business License Tax?

The business license tax depends on the business location and/or type of business. Please refer to the Tax Rates Table to calculate the business license tax due. If you need assistance determining the tax due, call 619-441-1668, Option 1.

❖ How do I check my application status?

After review and approval by the appropriate departments, the City will mail your business license certificate. To check the status of your application, call 619-441-1668, Option 1.

❖ If my application is denied, do I get a refund of the business license tax payment?

The business license tax is enacted solely to raise revenue for municipal purposes and is not intended for regulation. Fees and taxes collected are not refundable.

❖ Are there any restrictions on where I do business?

Every business must abide by the City's zoning requirements. Before signing any lease or rental agreement, please contact the City's Planning Division at (619) 441-1742 to make sure your business activity is appropriate for the area's current zoning designation and that it will not require a public hearing or special permits.

❖ Do I need a license if I run a business out of my home?

Yes, a home-based business requires a business license and must comply with local zoning. Please contact the City's Planning Division at (619) 441-1742 to make sure your business activity is appropriate to be operated out of your home.

❖ Does El Cajon regulate business signage?

Check with the City's Planning Division at (619) 441-1742 before using or installing any type of sign, flag, banner, even balloons. Permanent and temporary signs require review and approval prior to issuance of permits and installations.



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❖ **What if I have more than one business location?**

Businesses with multiple locations within the City limits must obtain a separate business license for each location.

❖ **What if I have multiple business types at the same location?**

A separate business license must be obtained for each type of business operated at the same location

❖ **I conduct business in several cities. Can I get one license for all cities?**

No, each city has its own business license requirements, fees, and taxes. Check with the appropriate city for its rules and regulations.

❖ **I am paid on a 1099 basis, not as a W2 employee. Do I need a business license?**

Yes, if you are not paid as an employee, you are considered an independent contractor and are required to have a business license.

❖ **I just purchased an existing business. Can I use the previous owner's license?**

As a new owner, you need to apply for a business license to cover the business operations under your ownership. Business licenses are not transferrable.

❖ **What if I want to move the business?**

Always check with the City's Planning Division to verify that the new location is zoned properly for the intended use and whether a Use Permit or another type of approval is required. You must also submit a Business License-Change of Location form to update your location information.

❖ **Will the City notify me when it is time to renew my license?**

The City mails renewal notices to businesses as a courtesy; however, it is your responsibility to renew your business license in a timely manner even if the renewal notice is not received. Annual renewals are due January 1 and there is a 30-day grace period. If your payment was received after January 31, penalties will be assessed.

❖ **What if I close or sell the business?**

Business licenses are not automatically canceled. Written notification is required from the owner in the event of a closure or sale. The date the business was closed or sold must be provided, and the name of the new owner, if applicable.

❖ **Does a non-profit organization need a business license?**

City of El Cajon does not require non-profit organizations to obtain a business license. Should a non-profit organization choose to obtain a business license, the business license tax will be waived upon presentation of proof that the business has a non-profit status. However, some processing fees may apply and must be paid at the time of application/renewal.

❖ **Do I need a Fictitious Business Name?**

Check with the San Diego County Clerk Recorder's office to see if you need a Fictitious Business Name (also known as a "Doing Business As" or "DBA").



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❖ Do I need a seller's permit?

Most businesses engaged in the sale of tangible goods require a California Seller's Permit in addition to obtaining a business license. To apply, contact the State Board of Equalization. www.boe.ca.gov

❖ Is my business information confidential?

Only certain information is available to the public – for example, business and owner names, physical and mailing addresses, and business types. This information is printed on your business license tax certificate. We do not disclose personal information such as owner phone number, tax ID number, or financial information to the public, except as required by law.