

Opening a Business in Winter Haven

Planning on opening a business in the City of Winter Haven? Here are some helpful steps to make that happen.

- Step One: Select a location**
- Step Two: Is the business allowed in the zoning district?**
- Step Three: Inspections**
- Step Four: Remodeling**
- Step Five: Business Tax Receipt**
 - a. State Licensing**
 - b. Fictitious Name Filing**
 - c. Department of Revenue**
 - d. Polk County Business Tax Receipt**
- Step Six: Turning on Utilities**

Step One: Select a location.

Is that location located in the City limits of Winter Haven? To check, please contact either the Business Tax Receipt office at 863-291-5695, the Planning Division at 863-291-5600, or the Property Appraisers office at 863-534-4777. If your business is not located inside the city of Winter Haven, you will not need a city license, however, you may still need a state license and you will always need a county occupational license when operating in Polk.

Step Two: Zoning

All businesses, no matter where they are located, must be properly zoned (including residential locations). In order to determine if your business meets zoning requirements contact:

Planning and Zoning Division

City of Winter Haven
451 Third Street NW
Winter Haven, FL 33881
(863) 291-5600

Step Three: Inspections

Fire Inspections:

If you open your business at a commercial location you will also need to have your building inspected by the City's fire department. The fire department can be reached at 863-291-5693 to set up an inspection time.

Step Four: Remodeling

If there will be any remodeling done to the building, site, etc. contact the Building Division at (863)291-5695 to determine if a permit or plan review is required.

Step Five: Obtain a Business Tax Receipt

To receive a Business Tax Receipt from the City, the following information is needed. For questions concerning this information or to receive an application contact the Building Division's office at: (863)291-5695.

1. State Licensing

Florida requires state licenses or certificates of competency for many professions and occupations, ranging from hairdressers to accountants to day care workers. Many require special training and prior examinations. The Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation has jurisdiction over most occupations, but some fall under the jurisdiction of other state agencies.

For information contact:
Department of Business and Professional Regulation
Tallahassee, FL
(850) 487-2252
www.myfloridalicense.com

2. Fictitious Name

A Fictitious Name registration is required of individuals who do business under any name other than their legal personal name or under a properly registered corporate name, partnership, trademark or service mark. Applicants may contact the Division of Corporations or check the website for a complete index to see if the name is already in use. (Keep in mind that if you are going to put your business on the web, you may want a business name that is also an available website domain name. You can easily check this by searching for your proposed ".com" name.)

Contact:
Polk County Indexing Dept. Recording Dept.
(850)245-6058 or
(850)245-6051
www.sunbiz.org

Fictitious name applications can be filed online or are available for download from the above website.

3. Department of Revenue (Sales Tax Number)

Obtain a sale tax number from:

Department of Revenue
230 S. Florida Avenue, #401
Lakeland, Florida
(863)499-2260

4. Polk County Business Tax Receipt

If the business is located in the city of Winter Haven, a county business tax receipt must be obtained. The business tax receipt can be obtained at:

Polk County Tax Collector:
430 E. Main Street
Bartow, FL
(863) 534-4700

Step Six: Turning on Utilities:

Contact the Engineering Division at (863)291-5851 to obtain an application for utility service. Please review the Commercial Utility Application Process on the City's website at http://www.mywinterhaven.com/technical_services.htm. Depending on the type of business, the payment of impact fees may be required.