

## Forms, Permits & Licenses

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Unless you plan to go it alone — as a sole proprietor with no employees, for example — you will need to obtain certificates, licenses and permits in order to legally operate. Here's what you need to get started.

### LOCAL

**Check websites or call city and county government offices in your area** to determine if you need a local business tax receipt (formerly called “occupational license”) and/or a zoning permit. Florida Small Business Development Centers also have information on licensing and permitting for cities and counties within their jurisdictions. Visit [www.floridasbdc.org](http://www.floridasbdc.org) to find a center near you.

### STATE

**Visit [www.MyFlorida.com](http://www.MyFlorida.com)** Florida's official website provides links to state agencies and all types of information for new and existing businesses.

**File a “Fictitious Name” registration** with the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations. Owners conducting business under a name other than their own must file, even if the name seems very similar. Corporations, partnerships, limited liability companies and trademarked names do not have to file. For filing fees and to register a name online, visit [www.sunbiz.org](http://www.sunbiz.org).

**Obtain a state business or professional license**, if necessary. Check with the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation or the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to learn about license requirements, apply for or renew licenses, search records and find exam information.

**Collect state sales tax** (and county discretionary sales surtax, if applicable) for applicable products and services and obtain a Certificate of Registration. The Florida Department of Revenue (DOR) issues certificates and payment booklets. Register online for free, or file Form DR-1. If the DOR tells you your business isn't taxable, get it in writing.

**File a “New Hire Reporting Form”** for every newly hired and rehired employee, full- or part-time.

**File quarterly unemployment tax reports** and make payments to the Florida Department of Revenue if you have employees (apart from yourself). [Read more about taxes.](#)

### FEDERAL

**Visit [www.business.usa.gov](http://www.business.usa.gov)** The U.S. government's official website for small business owners provides resources you'll need to comply with applicable laws and regulations and to take advantage of government programs and services aimed at helping start, expand and run your businesses.

**Obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN).** Go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and search for “EIN” to begin the process. Once you have completed the application online, your information will be validated and an EIN will be issued. If you prefer a hard copy form and don’t mind waiting one to four weeks to receive your EIN, [download form SS-4](#). Fax your completed form to (859) 669-5760, or mail it to: Internal Revenue Service, Attn: EIN Operation, Cincinnati, OH 45999. **Note: Applying for an EIN is a free service offered by the IRS; avoid websites that want to charge you for obtaining an EIN.**

**File quarterly or annual federal tax returns** and an annual unemployment tax return. This is a requirement for most businesses with employees. [Read more about taxes.](#)

**Verify employee eligibility.** Each new employee must complete form I-9 from the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, to verify his/her identity and eligibility to work in the United States. Visit [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov) for a downloadable form and instructions.