

NYC Starter Guide to Opening Your RETAIL STORE



CREATE YOUR BUSINESS

- **Create a plan** for the type of retail store you will open.
- **Register your business.** LLCs, Corporations, and Limited Partnerships register with NY State (visit <http://on.nyc.gov/state>). General Partnerships and Sole Proprietorships register with the County Clerk (visit <http://on.nyc.gov/clerk>).
- **Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN)**, also known as a Federal Tax ID Number. This is used to identify your business. If you are a sole proprietor, you may be able to use your Social Security Number instead. Learn more at <http://on.nyc.gov/ein>.
- **Research the insurance you will need**, such as workers' compensation, liability, and disability insurance. Some are required for permits and licenses.



You will need to get a **Sales Tax ID** from NY State. Apply early to avoid delays in receiving other permits. Learn more at <http://on.nyc.gov/taxid>.



PLAN YOUR SPACE

- **Find a location** zoned for your business. Learn more at <http://on.nyc.gov/zoning>.
- **Consult a licensed professional** to review your location and plan any construction. Only a registered architect or professional engineer may submit plans to the NYC Department of Buildings. Changes to your space must comply with NYC Department of Buildings and Fire Department regulations.
- **Sign your lease.** Before you sign, review your location with a licensed professional and a lawyer to make sure it is right for your business.



Allow for time to receive approval from the Landmarks Preservation Commission before performing work on a location that is landmarked or located in an historic district. Learn more at <http://on.nyc.gov/landmarks>.



Identify any hazardous materials that you will store, handle, or use. Storing hazardous materials may require modifications to your space and approval from the Fire Department. Your staff will also need to be licensed to handle or use any hazardous materials.



APPLY FOR CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

- Have your licensed professional submit plans and required documents to the NYC Department of Buildings.
- **Change and resubmit plans as needed.** If there are objections to the proposed work due to safety or compliance issues, your licensed professional will receive notice by email and resubmit the drawings with the necessary changes.
- Monitor your job on **NYC Department of Buildings BISWeb** (<http://on.nyc.gov/bis>). Your status will be listed as "Assigned to P/E (Plan Examiner)," "P/E in Process," "P/E Disapproved," or "Approved." The status does not reflect whether or not your licensed professional has resubmitted plans.



A licensed professional may self-certify minor alterations online through a process called "professional certification" ("Pro Cert"). The application does not receive an initial NYC Department of Buildings plan review, but is subject to an audit. **Pro Cert could save you weeks in receiving your approvals and permits to start construction.**

Accelerate the plan review process for new buildings or major alterations that change a building's egress by directing your licensed professional to submit digital plans to the NYC Department of Buildings Hub. Learn more at <http://on.nyc.gov/hub>.



Consult with your licensed professional to identify utility requirements for your property (gas, electric, water, and sewer).

Use this starter guide to help you plan your way to success. Get started today at <http://on.nyc.gov/express>.



BEGIN CONSTRUCTION

- After your plans are approved, your architect or general contractor must apply for and receive all necessary permits. All permits **must be displayed** at the worksite.
- Begin construction.
- **Progress inspections will be made throughout construction.** Consult with your licensed professional about any required progress inspections.



If you **want to install a canopy or signs** on the outside of the building, ensure you comply with the NYC Department of Transportation (for a canopy over the sidewalk) or the NYC Department of Buildings (if you nail or screw into the outside of the building).



PREPARE TO OPEN

- When the job is almost complete, your architect should arrange for final inspections and sign-off. To avoid violations, **you must obtain a Certificate of Occupancy, Temporary Certificate of Occupancy, or Letter of Completion** before opening your doors.
- The types of items you sell, such as electronics, pets, and used equipment, will affect which permits and licenses you need. The NYC Business Express Wizard (<http://on.nyc.gov/express>) can help you determine which permits and licenses are necessary for you.
- Make sure your register is equipped to print your **business name and address** on your receipts.
- **Hire a private carting service** for waste removal. For information, go to <http://on.nyc.gov/carter>.



If you are selling anything that you will weigh on site, make sure to receive an inspection from the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs. Learn more at <http://on.nyc.gov/weight>.



OPEN YOUR DOORS

You've opened your doors and are operating your store. **Congratulations!** Plan ahead to keep things running smoothly.



STAYING OPEN

Post all required posters and permits, such as a No Smoking sign and an occupational health and safety (OSHA) poster.

Mark your calendar and set reminders to **update your professional licenses**.

Be ready for inspections. These happen throughout the year, sometimes unannounced.

Work with your accountant to **prepare to pay taxes**. Learn More at <http://on.nyc.gov/biztax>.

For comprehensive information, visit **NYC Business Express** at <http://on.nyc.gov/express>.

NYC Business Solutions, a set of services offered by the NYC Department of Small Business Services, can help resolve questions and move your business forward through permit and license approvals. Visit <http://on.nyc.gov/navigate> or call 311 and ask for "NYC Business Solutions Navigating Government."

