

## ABOUT BUSINESS LICENSES...

Welcome to the City of Huntington Beach business community. This information guide is intended as a summary of information you will need to know in order to operate a business in Huntington Beach. This guide is provided as a public service. It is not all-inclusive and any specific questions should be directed to the Business License Division at (714) 536-5267. Clarification and definition can also be found in the Huntington Beach Municipal Code, Title 5. A City of Huntington Beach business license is not a regulatory license but is a tax to help pay for the public safety needs of the people of Huntington Beach.

### Who Needs a Business License?

The City of Huntington Beach Municipal Code requires most businesses operating in Huntington Beach to pay an annual business license tax. Business Licenses are not transferable between owners; however, they may be transferred to a new location upon notification to Business License and approval by the City Planning and Building Department. All businesses, trades, professions, callings, or occupations operating in the City need a Business License. These include but are not limited to:

- ✓ Any business in a commercial or industrial location.
- ✓ Persons who have a home office or use their home as the headquarters of their business.
- ✓ Businesses, which are located outside the city, but transact business in the city such as contractors, cleaners, repair people, gardening services, fumigators, telemarketers etc.
- ✓ Independent contractors such as doctors, real estate brokers, hairdressers, janitorial contractors, and home party demonstrators.
- ✓ Apartment owners of three or more units.
- ✓ Mobile Vendors who sell merchandise from their vehicles, such as gourmet food trucks and ice cream trucks.
- ✓ Temporary businesses such as a one-day or weekend event in the city, or a short-term seasonal business.

### How Do I Obtain a Business License?

You can obtain an application from City Hall, or download one from our website at [www.huntingtonbeachca.gov](http://www.huntingtonbeachca.gov). Look under the Finance Dept. for Business License. Complete the application and bring it to City Hall on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 2000 Main Street or mail it to Business License, P.O. Box 190, Huntington Beach, CA 92648. If you are in a commercial location in the city, you will need to fill out an application for a Certificate of Occupancy for the Planning and Building Department, who can be reached at (714) 536-5271.

### How Much Does It Cost?

The business license cost is based on a flat tax plus additional amounts if there are more than 3 employees, more than 1 business vehicle or coin operated machines. A typical business license starts at \$75 plus a non-refundable processing fee. Additional amounts added are as follows:

Additional Employees: 4 - 12	\$4.00 each
13 – 52	\$3.00 each
> 52	\$2.00 each
Additional vehicles: Under 1 ton:	\$12.00 each
1 to 3 tons:	\$35.00 each
Over 3 tons:	\$46.00 each

Home-based businesses are required to pay a one-time fee of \$2.00 for a Home Occupation Permit, in addition to their license.

Some business licenses are calculated differently (apartment rental, hotels, carnivals, special events, vending machines, out of town contractors, pool halls). Call (714) 536-5267 for these licenses.

### How Long Does It Take to Apply?

A business license may be issued at City Hall while you wait. Your application must be complete and include all necessary documents. You may need to bring the following: Seller's Permit showing a Huntington Beach location; Health Permit; Certificate of Occupancy or receipt. Your application may also be mailed to City Hall. Be sure to complete all relevant items on the application.

### What Other Things May I Need?

- **Certificate of Occupancy** – required by the Planning and Building Dept. for businesses in a commercial or industrial location. Call (714) 536-5271 or pick up an application from City Hall.
- **Fictitious Name (dba)** – must be filed if you choose a business name that does not include your own last name. Contact the County Clerk's office at (714) 834-2889, go online at <http://www.oc.ca.gov/recorder> or contact your local newspaper office
- **Special Permits** – required by the Police Dept for certain types of business activities. Some examples are firearm dealers, pawnbrokers, psychic reading, massage, live entertainment, and bingo. Call (714) 536-5267 for more information.
- **Seller's Permit (Resale #)** – required by the State Board of Equalization if you sell merchandise. Call (949) 440-3473 or visit [www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov).
- **Health Permit** – required for food handling including cottage foods, permanent make-up, tattooing or body piercing. Contact O.C. Environmental Health at (714) 433-6000.
- **Federal Tax ID #** – required if you have employees, are incorporated, or have a registered partnership. Call (800) 829-4933 or visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).
- **Worker's Compensation Insurance** – required if you have employees. Contact your local insurance agent, state fund or visit [www.dir.ca.gov](http://www.dir.ca.gov).
- **Liquor License** – required by the State Dept. of Alcoholic Beverage Control if you sell or serve alcohol. Contact (714) 558-4101 or visit [www.abc.ca.gov](http://www.abc.ca.gov).
- **Conditional Use Permit** – required by the Planning and Building Dept. for some businesses such as live entertainment, dance schools, internet cafes, or alcohol sales. Call (714) 536-5271

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### What if I Don't Obtain a License?

Conducting business in the city without a license can result in penalties, Notices of Violations, and Administrative Citations. It is a misdemeanor to violate the City Business License ordinances.

### Do I Need to Display My Business License?

Yes, all business licenses must be posted in public view at the fixed location of the business. For those businesses without a fixed location, the responsible party must carry the business license with them while conducting business in Huntington Beach.

### How Often Do I Need to Renew It?

Business licenses are renewed annually. A courtesy notice is mailed approximately 3 weeks before the due date. However, you are responsible for renewing your license whether or not the renewal notice is received. If the payment is received more than 30 days past the due date, a 10% per month penalty is charged. Notices of Violation and Administrative Citations may also be issued.

### I am Moving to a New Location in the City.

Please notify us of your new address, phone number, and any other changes to your business. After compliance with any applicable city requirements, your business license may be transferred to the new location for a small fee. If you are moving to a new commercial location, you will need to apply for a new Certificate of Occupancy.

### What if I Stop Doing Business or Move Away?

Let us know in writing if you want your license cancelled. No refunds are given when the business ceases.

### Can I Transfer My License to Someone Else?

Business Licenses are not transferable from one owner to another. The new owner must apply for a business license in their name.

### Where Do I Find You?

We are located at 2000 Main St on the corner of Yorktown and Main, in the Civic Center on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. Enter the main Administration Building and follow the signs to the Business License counter.

## Who Else Can Help Me Get Started?

- How To Do Business in the City of Huntington Beach - a guide to Business Development [www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/government/departments/ed](http://www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/government/departments/ed)
- Huntington Beach Small Business Assistance Center located at the Huntington Beach Chamber of Commerce 2134 Main Street #100, Huntington Beach (714) 536-8888.
- U.S. Small Business Administration – provides financial assistance programs, guide to resources and workshops. (714) 550-7420 or [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov).
- S.C.O.R.E Service Corps of Retired Executives. Workshops and counselors for small businesses. Call (714) 550-7369 or visit [www.score114.org](http://www.score114.org).
- California Permit Assistance Center - information on local, state & federal permits. [www.calgold.ca.gov](http://www.calgold.ca.gov).
- Small Business Corner - helpful information about taxes from the IRS. [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).
- Small Business Development Center - provides help to small businesses through 1-on-1 counseling, workshops and education seminars. Call (714) 564-5200 or visit [www.ocsbdc.com](http://www.ocsbdc.com).

## Additional Telephone Numbers:

Better Business Bureau..... (714) 985-8922  
Building Permits..... (714) 536-5241  
Chamber of Commerce.....(714) 536-8888  
Community Services Dept..... (714) 536-5486  
Consumer Affairs Dept..... (800) 952-5210  
Contractors State License Board... (800) 321-2752  
Employment Development Dept..... (888) 745-3886  
Franchise Tax Board..... (800) 852-5711  
Office of Secretary of State..... (916) 653-6814  
Sign Permits..... (714) 536-5271  
State Compensation Ins. Fund..... (888) 782-8338  
Zoning Department.....(714) 536-5271

# How to Obtain a Business License in Huntington Beach



City of Huntington Beach  
Business License

2000 Main Street  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor of City Hall  
Huntington Beach  
CA 92648

Phone: (714) 536-5267  
Fax: (714) 536-5934

Hours: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Monday to Friday

[www.huntingtonbeachca.gov](http://www.huntingtonbeachca.gov)