

BUSINESS LICENSE FAQs

What happens if I don't get a license?

POSSIBLE FINES AND LEGAL ACTION

If you are in the unincorporated areas of the County or in the cities of Malibu, Santa Clarita, or Westlake Village, and plan to start a business that requires a Business License, you must contact the Treasurer and Tax Collector (TTC) and complete the steps to obtain a Business License.

Failure to obtain a Business License is a violation of Title 7 of the County of Los Angeles Code and a misdemeanor. Continued failure to comply with the requirements of Title 7 will result in fines and possible legal action.

What do you mean by jurisdiction and why is it important to be aware of my jurisdiction?

Jurisdiction is the limits or territory within which the local government can exercise its authority. It is important to be aware of your jurisdiction since the location of your business determines if you are subject to the County of Los Angeles' Business License requirements, or if you are in another County/City.

Is a Business License fee a tax?

The County of Los Angeles' Business License fee is neither a tax on your business nor based on your gross receipts. The fee covers the County of Los Angeles' cost to process your application and for periodic inspections to ensure that the public's health, welfare, and safety is not adversely impacted; whereas, a license or tax issued by a city is often imposed to generate revenue.

What do you mean by unincorporated area?

There are 88 incorporated cities within the County of Los Angeles, each with its own city council. More than 65 percent of the County of Los Angeles is unincorporated. For the 1 million people living in these areas, the Board of Supervisors and County departments provide municipal services. The list of incorporated cities can be found on the County of Los Angeles' homepage at <http://www.lacounty.gov/government/geography-statistics/cities-and-communities>. The areas that are not part of these cities are considered to be unincorporated County territory. Since there are more than 60 zip codes in the County of Los Angeles that cross county/city boundaries, zip codes cannot always accurately indicate if your business is located in an unincorporated area.

How long does it take to obtain a County of Los Angeles Business License?

This depends upon the type of Business License required. Some Business Licenses are granted immediately, while others may require the approval of County agencies, such as the Fire Department, Sheriff's Department, Department of Health Services, and Department of Regional Planning. In addition, some Business Licenses require final approval by the [Business License Commission](#).

What is the County of Los Angeles Code that governs Business License?

Business License regulations are outlined in Title 7 of the County of Los Angeles Code. To view Title 7, please click [here](#).

Can I file a County of Los Angeles Business License application online?

You may start the application process through our website by completing the basic information about your business on the online application form. However, you must come into our office to submit your Business License application. You may [schedule an appointment](#) through the online application form prior to coming into our office.

What types of documents are required to file a County of Los Angeles Business License application?

Depending on the nature of the business activity to be conducted, you may be required to submit photographs, fingerprints, documents, proof of insurance and/or special forms in addition to a Business License application. Please contact one of our offices for more information.

What if I have additional questions about Business License application requirements?

For more information concerning the Business License application requirements, please contact any Business License Office during regular business hours. For Office Locations and Contact Information, please click [here](#).