



Business Permit Process

Overview: Key Jurisdictions & Laws

- **City of Richmond** — codes enforcement, zoning, building permits, business license/occupational license within the city limits.
- **Madison County** — if your business is outside Richmond city limits, county business licensing and regulations may apply.
- **State of Kentucky** — for any required state occupational or professional licenses, tax registration, environmental permits, etc.
- **Federal** — if your business involves regulated activities, taxes/employment, etc.

Step-by-Step Process

Step	What You Do	Who's Involved / Agencies	Documents & Info Needed	Timing & Fees
1. Decide on Business Structure	Choose whether you are sole proprietorship, partnership, LLC, or corporation. This influences liability, taxes, and registration.	State of Kentucky – Secretary of State	Name of business, registered agent (if applicable), owners' info	Usually takes a few days; fees at state level for incorporation / registration.
2. Choose & Register Business Name ("Doing	If using a name different from the owner's legal name, register a "DBA" or	Kentucky Secretary of State; also check local city/county	Proposed name; check name availability; filing form	Varies, often under a week; moderate fee.

Business As”)	trade name.	if needed		
3. Obtain Federal and State Tax IDs	Get an EIN from the IRS (if hiring, or entity not sole proprietor). Register with Kentucky Department of Revenue for state taxes (sales tax, withholding, etc.).	IRS; KY Dept of Revenue	Business structure, owner info, address, purpose of business	EIN is usually instant online; state tax registration may take days.
4. Verify Zoning & Location Requirements	Find out if the location (address) is zoned for your business’s use. If building or modifying the location, you will likely need building permits, inspections, possibly site plan approval.	City of Richmond Planning & Zoning; Building Inspections; Codes Enforcement	Address, site plan, drawings of construction, business type/use, parking, signage, etc.	Time depends on complexity — simple checks may be a few days; larger changes weeks. Fees for plan review, inspection, etc.
5. Apply for Richmond City Business / Occupational License	If operating within city limits, you must apply for a business license via the City’s Codes Enforcement / Finance Department. Richmond refers to this as a “Business License” or “Occupational License.”	City of Richmond, KY – Codes Enforcement / Business License division	Completed application; business name, owner info, address, nature of business; sometimes expected gross receipts/sales projections (for determining fee)	Application during normal city office hours; fee depends on business, minimum fees; deadline for renewal yearly.
6. Check County License If Applicable	If business is outside Richmond city limits, or you are subject to county licensing, apply through Madison County. The county has a business license	Madison County Planning & Development or similar	Similar info: business name, location, owner, business activity, etc.	County fee: e.g. Madison County requires a \$50 one-time business license fee.

	requirement for businesses in unincorporated areas.			
7. Special Permits or Licenses (Industry-Specific)	<p>Depending on what you do, there may be additional licenses or permits needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health permits (restaurants, food preparation) • Alcohol/Mixed beverage permits from the Kentucky Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control if you serve alcohol • Professional licensing (e.g. contractor, medical, cosmetology) • Sign permits • Environmental permits • Fire inspections and safety permits • ABC (Alcohol Beverage Control) license if needed. 	State agencies (KY Dept. of Health, KY ABC, Professional Licensing Boards), local health department, Fire Marshall, Environmental agencies	Industry-specific documentation; layout plans; proof of inspections; sometimes financial solvency or credentials; insurance; sometimes liability etc.	Can add several days to weeks; fees vary widely based on industry.
8. Building Permits & Inspections (If needed)	If you need to build or modify a structure, add signage, or change electrical, plumbing, etc., you must file for building permits, pass inspections.	City of Richmond Building Inspections; possibly county if outside city; local fire department; codes	Plans, contractor info, structural drawings, mechanical, electrical, plumbing layout etc.	Depends on scope; review, plan corrections, inspections etc. Each phase may incur fees.

		enforcement.		
9. Collect & Remit Taxes	Once business is operating, you'll need to collect and remit any sales tax, payroll tax, occupational taxes or license-tax specific to Richmond or county, as applicable.	Kentucky Dept. of Revenue; City of Richmond Finance Dept.; Madison County if county tax applicable	Your tax IDs; knowledge of tax rates; bookkeeping; records.	Sales tax filing (monthly/quarterly per state rules), city occupational tax/license renewal (annual), etc.
10. Renewal & Compliance	Most business licenses/occupational licenses need renewal (city), annual reporting, inspections, payments, and maintaining compliance (zoning, safety, professional rules).	City of Richmond; any relevant state/professional boards; public health/environment; fire dept.	Renewal applications; updated documentation; inspection reports; payment of fees/taxes.	Deadline usually once a year; missing renewal can incur penalties or business closure.

Richmond Specific Details

- The **City Business License Application** is handled through the **Codes Enforcement Department**. richmondky.gov
- Richmond requires business licenses for any business operating for profit (or any that must file with the IRS or Kentucky Revenue Cabinet) within the city.
- Building permits are required if you are doing any construction or structural changes.
- The hours for the city office for business licensing/permits are Monday–Friday, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.
- There may be an **occupational (license) tax** or fee tied to gross receipts, business type, or other metrics.

Fees, Deadlines & Time

- Richmond’s **minimum business license fee** is at least **\$25**, depending on gross receipts, type of business etc.

- Renewals: city licensure usually renews annually (with deadlines, often around late spring depending on their schedule).
- County license (Madison County) is one-time for unincorporated areas: \$50 fee.
- Time to approval varies: simple businesses with no special requirements might get a license the same or next business day, more complex (requiring inspections, plan reviews, environmental or health permits) take weeks.

Common Challenges & Tips

- **Zoning surprises:** you might find your planned location isn't zoned for your business type, or there are restrictions on signage, parking, signage size, etc. Always check zoning early.
- **Plan & design early:** if building modifications are required, having drawings ready will speed up building permit reviews.
- **Know all required state/professional licenses ahead of time:** e.g., preparing food, beauty salons, medical services etc. These often have separate boards and rules.
- **Budget for inspections / safety / health / fire:** these may come with additional fees and modifications (for fire suppression, restrooms, etc.).
- **Do not forget local taxes / occupational license taxes:** even if your state paperwork is done, the city or county often requires additional licensing/tax.
- **Renewals & compliance:** stay on top of annual renewals, taxes, inspections. Missed renewals can lead to fines or feel like starting over.