

Opening an Auto Garage

Your Starter Guide

This tool can be used to navigate through various requirements of opening a business. This is only a guide. It is the responsibility of the business owner to ensure they are compliant with all legislative and legal requirements.

Table of Contents

Opening an Auto Garage	1
Your Starter Guide	1
Create Your Business	2
Plan Your Location	3
Apply for Your Building Permit	4
Begin Construction	5
Apply for a Business Licence	6
Prepare to Open	7
Open Your Doors	8
Staying Open	9
Your Small Business Phonebook.....	10
Business Advisor, Small Business Centre.....	10
Zoning Coordinator.....	10
Building Department Permits & Inspections	10
Fire Prevention Office Windsor Fire Department.....	10
Business Licences	10
Grease Interceptor Contact.....	10

Create Your Business

Create a plan for the type of auto garage you will open. [The Small Business Centre](#) can help you write your plan. [Book a meeting with the Small Business Centre team today.](#)

Determine your legal structure. Starting a new business means choosing a legal structure that will suit your business needs. The Small Business Centre can help you determine what structure is right for you. [Book a meeting with the Small Business Centre team today.](#)

Register your business name. Once you have determined the right business structure for you, [visit Service Ontario online](#) or in person to register your business name and obtain your Master Business Licence. **TIP:** [Register online at Service Ontario](#) to beat the lines.

Identify early what **permits and licences you require.** [BizPaL helps entrepreneurs generate a personalized list of the business permits and licences](#) they need, for all levels of government, to start up or grow their business.

Apply for a Business Number. [The Canada Revenue Agency's Business Registration Online](#) is a one-stop, online, self-serve application that allows you to register for a Business Number, as well as four program accounts: Corporation income tax, GST/HST, and payroll.

Research the insurance you will need, such as employment insurance, worker's compensation, etc. Some are required for permits and licenses. **TIP:** [The Canadian Business Network outlines many insurance types.](#)

Plan to operate a gas station? Be sure to register with the Ministry of Finance as a Fuel Retailer. 1-866-ONT-TAXS (1-866-668-8297).

Be sure to comply with all applicable wage laws. [Visit the Canada Business Network to learn more about wage laws.](#)

If you plan to **hire and train an apprentice,** ensure that you understand the benefits and responsibilities. [To learn more on how to hire and train an apprentice, visit Employment Ontario.](#)



Plan Your Location

Find a location zoned for your business. [The City of Windsor's zoning Coordinators can help you find a location zoned for your business.](#) Call (519) 255-6543 to book a free consultation. **TIP**

- Taking over a space that was previously an auto garage can save time and construction costs, but only if the auto garage had passed inspections and was in compliance with existing regulations.

There are different processes for heritage properties. [Consult a Heritage Coordinator to learn more about the different processes for heritage properties](#) (519) 255-6543 or email planningdept@citywindsor.ca.

Thinking of locating in a Business Improvement Area? [Some Windsor Business Improvement Areas have programs like facade improvement and broken window programs that you may be able to access.](#)

You may wish to have a licensed professional **review your plan** before any construction. **TIP** - Cosmetic changes can add time and paperwork, so consider the impact of each change on your timeline.

Sign your lease. [Before signing your lease, speak with the City of Windsor Zoning coordinator.](#)

There are many Fire Code requirements for this type of business. Speak to a Fire Inspector early to avoid delay and unexpected costs. [The City of Windsor Consolidated Inspector's Checklist](#) can help with some Fire Code requirements, but you should speak with a Fire Inspector about your property to avoid potential fines.

[The City of Windsor offers financial incentives for building improvements that increase your assessed value.](#) Speak with the Planning Division to learn more at (519) 255-6543.

Changes to your business model such as a gas station, auto sales and repair, tobacco, food, lottery, towing service, emissions testing, etc. may require additional licences and permits.

Make sure you are licensed for the specific services you are providing.

Apply for Your Building Permit

[Submit your building permit application](#) in person (2nd Floor, 350 City Hall). The permit application requires information about the construction project, so be sure to include all relevant information. [To better understand building permit submission requirements, consult the City of Windsor.](#)

Monitor the status of your application on [the City's E-Services System](#).

Know the utility requirements for your property (gas, electric, water, sewer) and consider the potential costs.

Begin Construction

After your plans have been approved your Building Permit will be issued. **All permits must be displayed at the worksite.**

Begin construction. TIP - Be aware of construction overruns. They can add time and cost to your project. [Know your rights when hiring a contractor.](#)

Mandatory inspections will be made throughout construction. Your Building Permit will include a list of the required inspections for your project. **TIP** - It is your responsibility to book inspections for your property. If you have a contractor completing the work be sure to include who will schedule the inspections in your contract. [Book inspections early and avoid delays by contacting the City's Building Inspection team.](#)

If you want to **install a canopy or signs** on the outside of the building, ensure you comply with [the City of Windsor's Sign By-law.](#)



Apply for a Business Licence

Make sure that all permits related to your property are closed. Access [the City's E-Services System](#) online or contact the Building Division at (519) 255-6267 for more help.

When completing your [Business Licence application](#), don't forget to bring:

- Two pieces of government-issued identification including one photo I.D. (one of the forms must show proof of entitlement to work in Canada i.e. birth certificate, passport, working papers).
- A copy of your lease or property ownership confirmation
- Master Business Licence or Articles of Incorporation

TIP - A Business Licence Application is valid for 60 days. Make sure that you plan to open within 60 days of your application date as licence fees are non-refundable once an application has expired.

Business Licences for auto garages **must be renewed** every year on October 31st.

Prepare to Open

Obtain your Business Licence. The Licensing Office will mail this to you once all inspections are complete. **TIP** - Hire a private hauler for recycling and waste removal services. Resources such as [the Yellow Pages](#) can provide a list of service providers.

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training will be required for any employees handling controlled products (chemicals) such as solvents, thinners, flammable liquids, paints, etc.

Make sure you have all required permits and licences (Fire, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Finance, Technical Standards & Safety Authority, etc.).

Ensure you have a health and safety program in place. As of July 1, 2014, every Ontario worker must undergo health and safety awareness training. [Contact Workplace Safety & Prevention Services](#) at 1-877-494-9777 to get started.

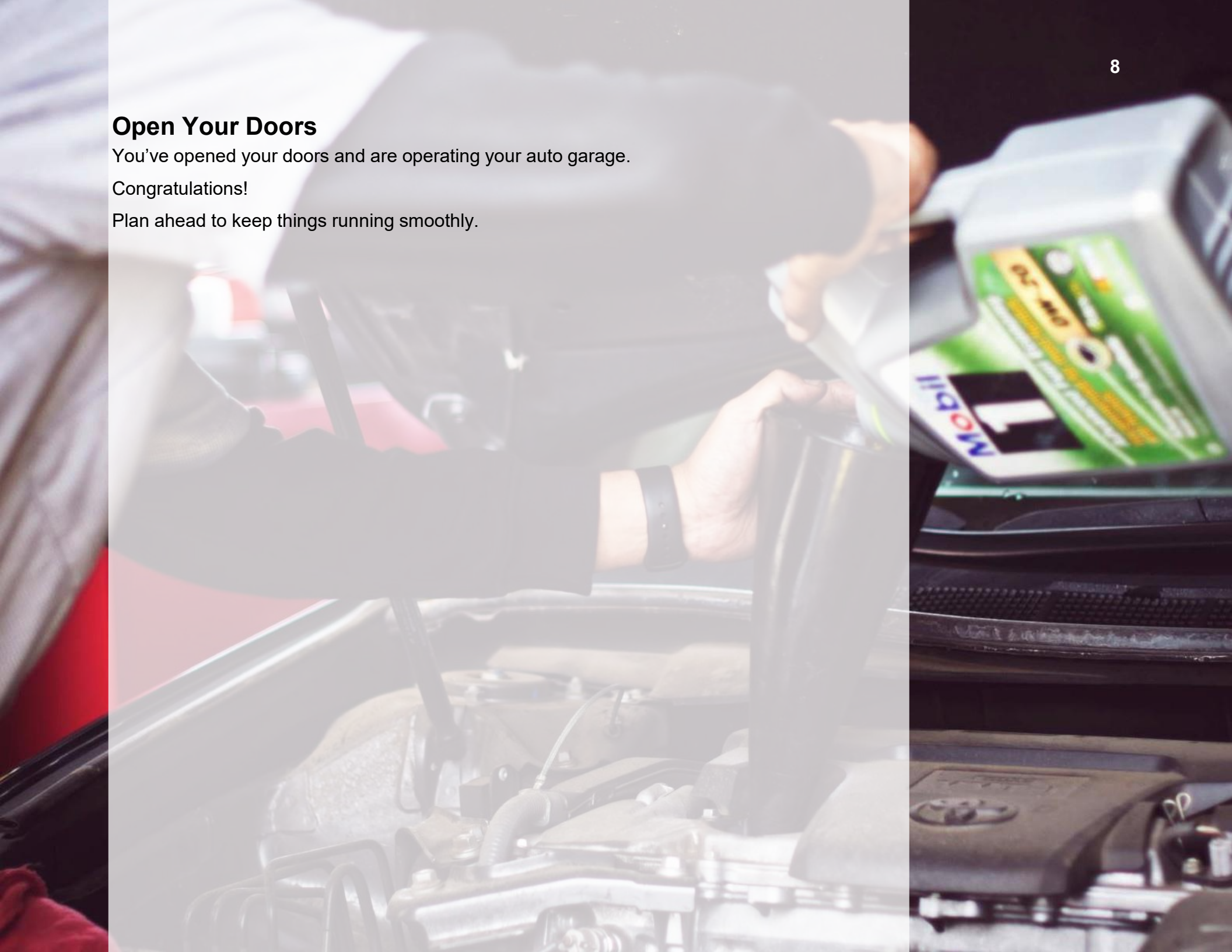
Auto repair establishments that generate waste oil are required to have an oil interceptor in working order and a waste oil tank for recycling. Proper disposal of waste auto antifreeze and gasoline is crucial. [See the City of Windsor for more information on oil interceptors.](#) To better understand what is required of your businesses, see [the Proper Disposal of Mechanical Grease brochure](#).

Open Your Doors

You've opened your doors and are operating your auto garage.

Congratulations!

Plan ahead to keep things running smoothly.



Staying Open

Post all required permits and signs. Check federal, provincial and local requirements.

Mark your calendar. Schedule equipment maintenance and set reminders to renew your licences and certifications.

Avoid violations and be ready for inspections. Violations put employees and customers at risk, and cost you time and money.

Be ready for inspections. Random inspections can take place any time throughout the year.

Show **prices** and print your **business name and address on receipts.**

Work with your accountant to **prepare your income tax return.** [Visit the Canada Revenue Agency to learn more about how to prepare your income tax return.](#)

If you own your space - be prepared to pay **property taxes.** Installment due dates are noted on your tax bill. [Contact the City of Windsor Tax Division to learn more about property taxes.](#)

Avoid sewer backups by properly maintaining your grease interceptor or take advantage of [the Downspout Disconnection Program.](#)

Thinking of making changes to your space? A new building permit will be required when making further changes. [Contact the Building Division to learn more about making changes to your space](#) at (519) 255-6267.

Your Small Business Phonebook

Business Advisor, Small Business Centre

[Send an email to the Small Business Centre: info@windsoressexsmallbusiness.com](mailto:info@windsoressexsmallbusiness.com)

Call the Small Business Centre: (519) 253-6900 ex. 2231

Zoning Coordinator

[Send an email to the City of Windsor Zoning Coordinator: planningdept@citywindsor.ca](mailto:planningdept@citywindsor.ca)

Call the Zoning Coordinator: (519) 255-6543

Building Department Permits & Inspections

[Send an email to the City of Windsor Building Department Permits and Inspections: buildingdept@citywindsor.ca](mailto:buildingdept@citywindsor.ca)

Call the Building Department Permits & Inspections: (519) 255-6267

Fire Prevention Office Windsor Fire Department

[Send an email to the City of Windsor Fire Prevention Office: wfd@citywindsor.ca](mailto:wfd@citywindsor.ca)

Call the Fire Prevention Office: (519) 253-6573

Business Licences

[Send an email to the City of Windsor Licensing Division: licenses@citywindsor.ca](mailto:licenses@citywindsor.ca)

Call the Licensing Division: (519) 255-6200

Grease Interceptor Contact

[Send an email to the City of Windsor Engineering Department: engineeringdept@citywindsor.ca](mailto:engineeringdept@citywindsor.ca)

Call the Engineering Department: (519) 253-7214