

Opening a Nightclub

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.

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Create Your Business

Create a plan for the type of nightclub 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.](#)

Become familiar with provincial and municipal laws governing food safety and tobacco. [Review the City of Windsor Smoking By-Law for more information.](#) All food premises in the City of Windsor must [notify the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit of their intention to operate.](#) Once notified, a Public Health Inspector (PHI) from the Health Unit will review the food premises regulation with the operator before and during opening. A pre-opening inspection must be arranged with the PHI prior to opening.

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

Create Your Business (cont.)

Apply for your Liquor Licence early in order to avoid delays. [Visit the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario to download your Liquor Sales Licence application](#) or call 1-800-522-2876. Registration Online is a one-stop, online, self-serve application that allows.





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 a nightclub can save time and construction costs, but only if the nightclub 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. Be sure to check your kitchen's grease interceptor, or plan to install one. All commercial kitchens must capture grease from sinks, woks, floor drains, and other fixtures to prevent clogged pipes and sewer backups. For more information, [consult the online City of Windsor Proper Disposal of Restaurant Grease brochure](#).

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

To learn what Building, Fire and Public Health inspectors often look for check out [the City of Windsor Consolidated Inspector's Checklist](#). Health violations are sometimes identified after you open your business. Pay attention now to avoid costly changes after you are open. [Contact the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit](#) early to have them review your building plans.

[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.

Do you plan to have a patio? [Contact the Windsor Essex Health Unit](#) to learn about tobacco regulations for patios at (519) 258-2146 ext. 3100.

Apply for Your Building Permit

Cooking on stoves or with gas ovens requires a range hood and fire suppression system. [If you are unsure of stove or oven requirements, consult a Fire Inspector.](#) **TIP** – Know the utility requirements for your property (gas, electric, water, sewer) and consider the potential costs.

[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](#).

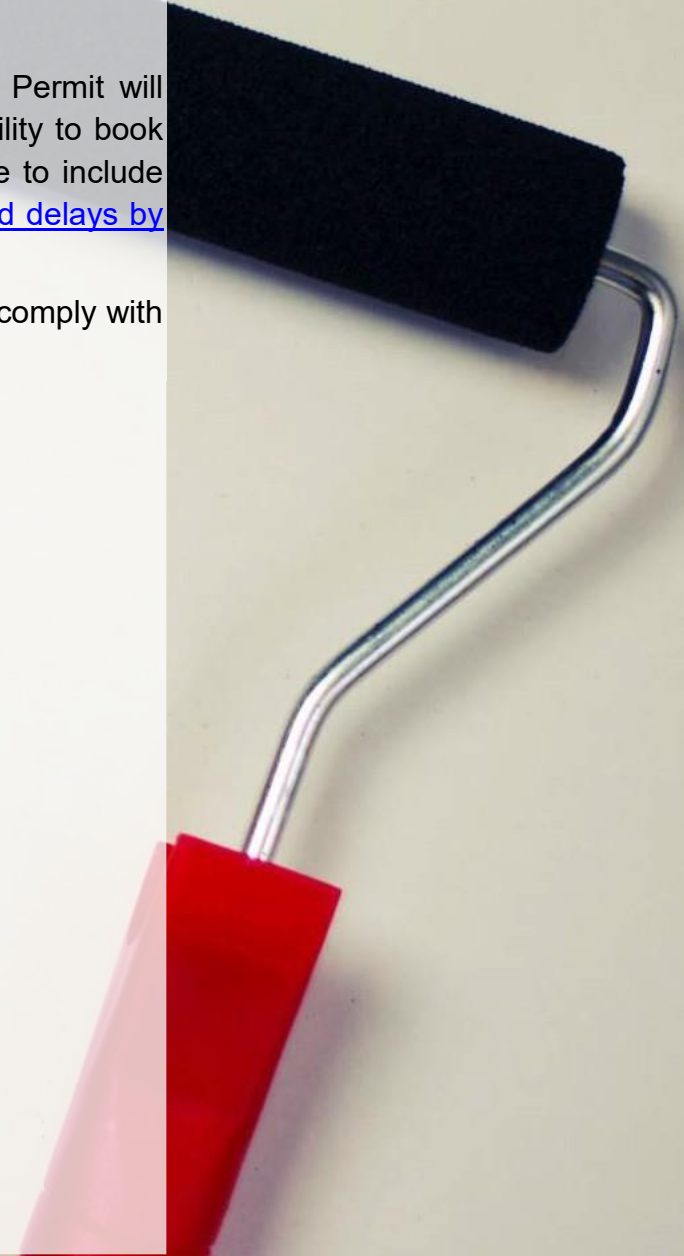
Begin Construction

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
- Site Plan (if you are planning to request a liquor licence for an outside patio)

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 nightclubs **must be renewed** every year on February 28th.

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.

Make sure you or one of your employees has taken the Food Handler Course – a certified food handler is strongly recommended to be on the premises when preparing or handling food. Certification can be obtained through [the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit](#).

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training will be required for any employees handling controlled products (chemicals) used in dishwashing equipment, cleaning and disinfectants, etc.

Ensure that anyone serving alcohol in your establishment has obtained their Smart Serve Training Program certificate. [Visit Smart Serve Ontario for more information on training.](#)

Thinking about opening a sidewalk café? Consult [the Engineering Department](#) or call (519) 255-6257

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.

All security guards working in your establishment must be licensed by the Province of Ontario. Be sure to register as an employer or hire from a Licensed Security Guard Agency. [Visit Service Ontario to learn more about the Security guard licence.](#)

Open Your Doors

You've opened your doors and are operating your nightclub.

Congratulations!

Plan ahead to keep things running smoothly.



Staying Open

Post all required permits and signs, such as your Liquor Licence, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit's Safe Food Counts star rating sign, No Smoking signs, municipal business licence, etc. Check federal, provincial and local requirements.

TIP: Remember, your food safety inspection results will be posted online on [the Safe Food Counts website](#).

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

Windsor Essex County Health Unit

[Send an email to the Windsor Essex County Health Unit: crd@wechu.org](mailto:crd@wechu.org)

Call the Windsor Essex County Health Unit: (519) 258-2146 ex.1424

Sidewalk Cafe Contact

[Send an email to the City of Windsor Engineering Department: engineeringdept@citywindsor.ca](mailto:engineeringdept@citywindsor.ca)
(519) 255-6257

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