

Before opening a business in Edmonton, you're required to obtain both a business licence and a development permit.

A person found operating without a licence or permit may receive a bylaw fine ranging from \$400 to \$10,000.

### Why does Edmonton require business licences and development permits?

A **business licence** shows the public that your business meets the City's safety requirements and is permitted to operate in Edmonton. A **development permit** verifies that zoning bylaws allow particular business activity in a specific location. You can't operate a business without first obtaining both documents from the City of Edmonton.

### How do I obtain a licence and a permit?

You may apply for a business licence and permit from the City online, by mail, by fax or in person. Apply for a business licence and development permit at the same time.

### Does every business need a development permit?

Commercial, industrial and home-based businesses all require development permits. Acquire a development permit from the City of Edmonton before you commit to a location to be sure your planned activity is permitted in a specific location. If you plan to purchase an existing business without making any alterations, the original development permit may be valid.

### Which businesses are exempt from City licence requirements?

Very few businesses are exempt. Some occupations and professions are exempt because they are regulated by provincial or federal legislation. In most cases, exempt businesses still require a development permit to ensure their business activity is allowed at a particular location.



### Do other agencies need to approve my licence application?

Depending on the business type, a licence application may be referred to the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, Alberta Health, Edmonton Police Service, Emergency Response Department or the Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council. Applications are automatically referred for these approvals.

### How long does it take to get a licence?

A licence approval can take several weeks depending on the number and availability of agencies the application has been referred to for approvals.

### How do I renew my licence?

You may pay for a business licence renewal online, by mail, by fax or in person. A City of Edmonton business licence must be renewed yearly. Renewal notices are sent to the business address on file when the current licence expires. You then have 30 days to pay the renewal fee.

### What is the cost of a licence?

Licence fees change yearly and are based on the type of business activity. Referral fees for other agencies are added to the cost. However, referrals are a one-time cost if neither the operations nor ownership has changed. Check the City's website for current fee listings.

### What if I don't live in Edmonton?

When a business operates within Edmonton, but is located in another community, the owner needs a **non-resident licence**. A higher fee ensures that the business pays for the use of municipal roads and services otherwise covered by property taxes.

### Can my licence be suspended or cancelled?

The City of Edmonton is committed to creating a safe and clean environment for the people who live here or visit. The City can suspend or cancel a business licence if the **Business Licence Bylaw** is violated or the business isn't operating in the public interest.

### What if I move or sell my business?

Advise the City of Edmonton in writing if you move, alter or close your business. Records aren't automatically removed from the municipal tax roll when a licence isn't renewed, so you will still be assessed business taxes. A business licence can't be transferred to a new location or owner.

### What happens if my licence application is turned down?

Owners may appeal licence decisions within 14 business days to the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board at:

Subdivision and Development Appeal Board  
City Hall, 1 Sir Winston Churchill Square  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2R7  
Phone: 780-496-6079

### Do my employees need a business licence?

Businesses that employ construction sub-trade contractors, massage practitioners, escorts or alarm installers and some courier service drivers require their employees to licence separately.

### How do I receive my licence?

The business licence will be mailed to you once all of the required information, payments, and approvals have been received.

The City will contact you if any information or payments are missing. A business licence won't be issued until all information and payments have been received.

### What is BizPal?

BizPal is an online service offered by the federal government. It helps Canadian businesses save time when accessing licence and permit information from multiple levels of government. You just need to answer a series of questions on the type of business you want to start. BizPal will automatically generate a list of all required permits and licences from the three levels of government, along with other basic information.





## Home-Based Businesses

### Does my Home-Based Business require a licence or development permit?

Home-based businesses aren't exempt from the City of Edmonton's business licensing and permit requirements. Owners require a development permit and business licence before they can operate a business from their home.

The City may refuse a development permit when a business should be located in a commercial or industrial district.

### Is every Home-Based Business the same?

A business that operates from your home is either a **Minor** or **Major Home-based business** depending on the type of business activity involved. Retail sales and professional practices can't be home-based businesses.

All home-based businesses must follow these guidelines:

- Mechanical or electrical equipment can't create outside noise or interfere with electronic equipment in neighbouring homes.
- Outdoor activities and storage of equipment isn't allowed on the site.
- Outside appearance or character of the home or accessory buildings can't be altered.
- All alterations to a home-based business location require a **Building Permit**.
- One commercial vehicle of 4,000 kg or less may park at the home for only as long as is reasonable to load or unload the vehicle.
- A commercial vehicle that exceeds 4,500 kg, either unloaded or loaded, isn't permitted.

### What are the specific guidelines for Minor Home-Based Businesses?

Minor home-based businesses have no impact on neighbours and are basically invisible. Typical businesses would be service oriented businesses where the proprietor goes to the customer rather than the customer coming to the home.

- The business can only employ a resident of the home.
- One business visit or customer per day is allowed to the home.
- Only one sign no larger than 10 cm (4") x 30.5 cm (12") may be attached to the home.

### What are the specific guidelines for Major Home-Based Businesses?

A major home-based business isn't invisible to the community. It involves customers routinely coming to the home or some other use of the property that isn't typical of a residential area.

The licence for a major home-based business will allow more business visits and allow you to have employees.

All major home-based businesses have an impact on the neighbourhood and require notification of the surrounding property owners. If your neighbours object, they may appeal to the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board.

- Non-resident employees or partners working on site can't exceed two at one time.
- Business visits can't create more pedestrian, vehicle or parking traffic than is common to the area.
- A garage may be used for the business.
- Bed and Breakfast locations may have no more than two sleeping units (free of cooking amenities). Each sleeping unit requires a parking space.
- Only one sign no larger than 20 cm (8") x 30.5 cm (12") may be attached to the home.

If your licence application is refused, you may appeal to the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board.

## Contact Us

### IN PERSON

Planning & Development Department  
Customer Information and Support Services  
5th floor, 10250 – 101 Street  
Edmonton, AB  
T5J 3P6

### PHONE

311  
Or if outside Edmonton  
780-442-5311

### FAX

780-496-6054

# Business Licences

