**Your Guide to Getting a Business Licence**

The Department of Commerce and Investment is responsible for licensing and regulating local businesses, processing some 14,500 applications for new trade and business licences and renewals in 2021. Applications for trade and business licences and renewals may be submitted online or in person. In keeping with our commitment to ensure that our licensing system is clearly understood by applicants, our ‘Guide to getting a business licence’ is divided into three sections that are key to a successful application process: know your licence types, how to apply, and keeping up with renewals.

Read the guide.

1. Know which types of business licences your startup needs and how to acquire them.

• All micro and small businesses will need business licences that grant them legal permission to operate, in compliance with the Trade and Business Licensing Act.

• The average business licence costs a few hundred dollars, plus renewal fees.

• Your business location and industry will determine which licences you need.

• It is crucial to know which ones apply to your business, and how to get them, as soon as possible.

*Industry-specific licences*

In addition to a standard business licence you may also need practising licences and certificates specific to your industry. Having considered the nature of the business it can be useful to do some research on the web for more information on any other requirements. Below are some industries and business types that require specific licences and permits:

• Architecture

• Salons

• Spas

• Child care

• Cleaning and janitorial services

• Construction

• Electrical

• Engineering

• Food and alcohol

• Pest control

• Pharmaceuticals

• Plumbing

• Temporary events

• Tobacco

• Sale of intoxicating liquor

• Real estate

• Property developer

• Retailer of precious metal and stones

For more information click [here](http://www.dhrs.gov.ky/portal/page/portal/hrshome/hpc/hpcfaqs).

1. Apply successfully for a business licence

*Know how much a licence costs*

The cost of business licenses depends on several factors, including licence type, location, processing fees and recurring fees. On average, business licenses cost between $150 and a few hundred dollars, plus a renewal fee along with the administrative fees.

*Plan for how long it takes to get a licence*

Getting a licence can take anywhere from a few days to months. Along with your business type other factors may determine how long it will take to get a license. Some requirements specific to your business, such as obtaining a trade and business licence prior to applying for the grant of a liquor licence, can take from three – six weeks, while others may five days and be approved with express fees.

*Determine which other licences you will need.*

Start by researching which licenses apply to your business. Visit the Department of Commerce & License [website](https://www.dci.gov.ky/licensing/trade-business-licensing/overview) for more information. You may need to make contact with the relevant agencies regarding pre-approvals for different aspects of your business, such as [operating from a public property](https://legislation.gov.ky/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/2017/2017-0035/PublicLandsAct_2020%20Revision.pdf) or carrying on a business that requires approval from [Department of Environmental Health](http://www.deh.gov.ky/portal/page/portal/dehhome) or the [Health Practice Commission](http://dhrs.gov.ky/portal/page/portal/hrshome/hpc).

This can be a time-intensive process, but it’s important to avoid the consequences of running an unlicensed business.

*Apply for the licence*

Once you know which license to apply for and the documents you need, you’ll need to fill out and submit your application or to avoid visiting our counter you can also submit via our [online portal](https://online.gov.ky/dci/faces/services) . Each application’s submission process is different, so be sure to follow the instructions closely.

*Receive your business license.*

After applying, you may receive approval within a few days, or you may have to wait to hear back from the licensing agency, if the Board has requested more information. At this point the application will be considered deferred.

Assuming you correctly completed the application, the licence should be emailed out in less than 30 days if it is a renewal and no more than 10 days if it is a new application.

Business owners should be prepared to contact the Department of Commerce after submitting licence materials to ensure approval and to provide any additional information that may be required.

1. Keep up with licence renewal requirements

Your business license will grant you legal permission to conduct a specific type of business for a certain period of time. Once that period is over your licences must be [renewed](https://www.dci.gov.ky/licensing/trade-business-licensing/licence-renewals), so you should note any requirements and timelines to avoid accidental expiration. The stakes are high when it comes to maintaining your license!

To assist business owners the Department sends out multiple email reminders 28 days prior to the expiry date on a license. Ignoring these notices may result in penalties being applied to the entity and/or tickets issued for operating without a valid license.

No need to waste time standing in line, check out our online portal and submit to renew anywhere 24/7!