NEW BUSINESS GUIDE

LEASING AND SIGNAGE

LEASE

1. Do Not Sign a Lease before verifying the property location is zoned appropriately for the desired use of property. 
   Call the Zoning Office to discuss zoning regulations and requirements. (770) 528-2035 
   - *Zoning consultations are free of charge. 
   - You may call zoning to ask what zoning designation is required for your business type. 
   - You must have a property address to confirm the property location is zoned appropriately for the desired use of property. 
   - Additional zoning restrictions apply for alcohol establishments. See No. 5 for details.

2. Cobb County Water System (CCWS) Requirements – PRIOR TO SIGNING LEASE 
   - *For large water users such as restaurants, contact the CCWS to discuss potential water/sewer fees. 
     - (770) 419-6324 | ccwsplanreview@cobbcounty.org 
   - For any business serving food, contact the Water System’s Grease Management Office to discuss existing grease trap and county requirements. 
     - (770) 419-6430 | https://www.cobbcounty.org/water/compliance/grease-management

BUSINESS SIGNAGE

2. *Any signs that are to be installed will require a Sign Permit. Associated fees for sign permitting services start at $150. Please call the Zoning Office to discuss potential needs and requirements. (770) 528-2035

LEASE AGREEMENT

3. Read your lease in its entirety. It is highly recommended to consult with a commercial real estate agent to negotiate any terms covered in a commercial lease, i.e.: sewer system development fees, environmental compliance requirements, mechanical/equipment maintenance, security, etc.

AFTER LEASE IS SIGNED

GEORGIA SECRETARY OF STATE (GA SOS) REGISTRATION

4. If your business is operating as a Limited Liability Company (LLC) or Corporation (CORP): 
   - Register your Business with GA SOS. Visit sos.ga.gov 
   - *Annual Fees apply and are regulated by GA SOS. 
   - This is NOT your Business License. Proceed to No. 6 after completing your GA SOS New Business Registration.

TRADE NAME REGISTRATION

5. If your business is operating as a Sole Proprietor: 
   - Register your Business Name (Trade Name) with the Cobb County Superior Court Clerk. 
   - Submit a copy of your Certificate of Incorporation with your Business License Application (No.6) 
   - *Fees for Trade Name Registration include a Recording Fee and Publication Fee and are regulated by Cobb Superior Court. 
     - https://www.cobbsuperiorcourtclerk.com/real-estate-information/ucc-trade-names/ | 770-528-1360

*Fee information

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BUSINESS LICENSE

6. Obtain a business license (Occupation Tax Certificate)
   • You may not operate your business unless a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) is obtained.
   • Business Licenses (Occupation Tax Certificates) expire every year on December 31st. Penalties and late fees may accrue if a business does not renew its Occupation Tax Certificate by February 1st.
   • *The Business License/Occupation Tax starts at $112 - $119 (depending on business activity) and is determined by annual revenue (gross receipts).

ALCOHOL REQUIREMENTS

7. Complete the Alcohol Beverage Establishment Application. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.
   • *The non-refundable alcohol beverage establishment application fee is $600.00 for New Applications.
   • The Alcoholic Beverage License Application may be up to 30 pages long.
   • Read the checklist in its entirety located in the front of the Alcohol Beverage Establishment Application.
   • *Annual fees are located on this application.
   • Applications are accepted by appointment only. Call (770) 528-8410 to schedule an appointment for application review.
   • Approval of the Alcohol Beverage Establishment Application, from start to finish, may take up to 6-8 weeks or longer in certain circumstances.
   • Additional Zoning Department verification is required within this application. This may include, but are not limited to:
     o Past zoning case stipulations may affect the applicant’s use of property.
     o Proof of adequate parking facilities may be required.
     o A separate permit is required for the Sunday sale of alcoholic beverages for consumption on the premises.
     o An Alcohol Beverage Establishment may not be located within 600 ft from the property line of any church, school, park, or library.
     o An Alcohol Beverage Establishment may not be located within 300 ft from the nearest single-family residence or condominium.

START THE CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY (CO) PROCESS

8. Complete a Commercial Permit Application
   • The Commercial Permit Application (CPA) is located at www.cobbcounty.org/comdev
   • Please read and review all pages of the CPA.
   • Required documents may include but are not limited:
     • Scope of Work letter (1 page)
     • Copy of General Contractor’s GEORGIA business license and state license (if applicable)
     • Authorized agent form
     • Copy of applicant’s driver’s license
     • Virtual set of plans
   • Any business serving food, should also submit a food service establishments (FSE) application with the Commercial Permit Application. Form can be found at https://www.cobbcounty.org/water/compliance/grease-management/fse
   • *Permitting fees will apply and are based on type of permit, inspections required, etc.
   • (770) 528-2071 | commbldgapplication@cobbcounty.org

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9. Cobb County Water System Approval
   • *During the permitting process, CCWS plan review will contact the applicant if more information is needed, or to discuss any applicable water/sewer fees.
     o (770) 419-6324 | ccwsplanreview@cobbcounty.org
     o Every commercial water service (domestic, irrigation, and fire) will need a testable backflow assembly installed after the water meter. Plans will be reviewed by CCWS’ Backflow Program to verify containment and isolation of cross connections.
     o To schedule inspection of new assemblies, contact the Backflow Program. (770) 528-3343
     o To schedule inspection of oil/water separators, contact CCWS’ Industrial Pretreatment Program. (770) 528-8216
     • Food service establishments must contact CCWS’ Grease Management Office to schedule a new trap inspection prior to installation. For exterior traps, another inspection should be scheduled before trap is covered.
       o (770) 419-6430 | FOG@cobbcounty.org
   • Prior to issuance of CO, all fees must be paid, and all inspections must be completed.

10. Contact the Cobb & Douglas Public Health office for approval. *(Not required for all businesses.)*
    • (770) 435-7815 | https://cobbanddouglaspublichealth.com/environmental-health/
    • *Fees may apply.

11. Fire Marshal Review and Approval
    • Submit Commercial Permit Application and all drawings to the Fire Marshal’s Office (FMO) online at www.cobbfmo.org
      o All Fire Marshal inspections are schedule through the FMO’s ‘Mobile Eyes Contractor Portal’
      o Plan Reviews are generally scheduled within 2 weeks of when all documents are received.
    • *FMO fees may include, but not limited to new tenant plan review and inspections (fee determined by square feet of building/facility, type of plan review, etc.), re-reviews, consultations, expedited review, etc.
      o *Plan Review and Inspection Fees and additional resources are available on the Cobb County FMO Website: https://www.cobbcounty.org/public-safety/fire/fire-marshals/certificate-occupancy
    • (770) 528-8310 | www.cobbfmo.org
    • Scan this QR Code for a video about the FMO process:

**OBTAIN A CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY (CO)**

12. Once ALL applicable final inspections (including building, FMO, arborist, and special inspections) have been completed and passed, the CO may be obtained from the Community Development Agency via email at subpermits@cobbcounty.org
    • *A fee is applied when requesting your final CO. This fee starts at $50.
    • Display or store your CO and Business License in an easily accessible location.