



The Corporation of **THE CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER**

Business License Approval Process (Commercial) Non-Residential

Non-residential – Property Use Information Handout #PUI3

Introduction

The City of North Vancouver has prepared this handout to assist you in understanding the City's Business License approval process and to provide you with other important information with regards to starting a home based business in the City of North Vancouver. Upon review of this material, anyone intending to submit a license application is urged to contact the License Office of the Community Development Department at 604.983.7356 for further information.

What is a Business?

The Community Charter defines a business as “ (a) *carrying on a commercial or industrial undertaking of any kind, and (b) providing professional, personal, or other services for the purpose of gain or profit*”.

Every business operating in the City of North Vancouver, including those located in private residences, are required to have a Business License.

What is the Purpose of a Business License?

The City of North Vancouver issues a Business License as the approval of a business activity. Approval is required for the protection and safety of the public and to minimize nuisances and misleading business practices. The issuance of a Business License is a privilege, not a right, and may be suspended or cancelled at any time at the discretion of City Council.

When is a Business License Required?

A Business License is required in the City of North Vancouver to:

- conduct a business activity within the City without a fixed place of business within the municipality; or
- operate a business in a fixed location with the City (e.g. retail store, business office); or
- when an existing business changes ownership or location.

There is provision in some residential zones for business activity to be licensed out of a place of residence in accordance with the Accessory Home Occupation Use within the City of North Vancouver Zoning Bylaw. Please see the 'Home Occupation Approval Guidelines' handout for details for the approval for a home-based business.

How and Where to Apply for a Business License

Business License applications are submitted to the Community Development counter located on the ground floor of North Vancouver City Hall.

Applicants are required to:

- specify the exact nature of the business,
- provide the address where the business will be carried out,
- clearly identify the applicant (e.g. person vs. corporate entity),
- provide the correct size in square feet of the business premise and the number of persons employed by the business,
- provide any certificate of trade qualifications if required by the Provincial Government,
- provide a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation if applicable,
- provide a license fee payable to the City of North Vancouver, the amount of which is based upon a fee schedule available from the License Clerk, and
- any other additional information that may be deemed by City licensing staff as pertinent to the submission and approval of the application.

Application Review

The Business License application will be forwarded to the Planning Division to determine if the use is permitted under the regulations contained within the City of North Vancouver Zoning Bylaw. If the business is not considered a permitted use, the approval process will not proceed further for the business at the specified location indicated on the application.

Once it has been determined that the use is permitted under the Zoning Bylaw and the Planning Division has provided approval, the application is distributed to the relevant City Inspectors. A letter will be forwarded to the applicant outlining the required inspections and providing contact details.

Required Approvals

In order to obtain a Business License, some or all of the following approvals may be required:

- *Building Division:* An inspection by the Building Inspector will confirm that the premise satisfies the requirements of the British Columbia Building Code. Please arrange for an inspection at 604.983.7355.
- *Electrical Division:* An inspection by the Electrical Safety Officer will confirm that the premise satisfies the requirements of the Canadian Electrical Code. Please arrange for an inspection at 604.983.7355.
- *Plumbing and Gas Division:* An inspection by the Plumbing and Gas Safety Officer will confirm that the premise satisfies the requirements of the British Columbia Plumbing and Gas Codes. Please arrange for an inspection at 604.983.7355.
- *Fire Prevention Office:* An inspection by the Fire Prevention Office will confirm that the premise satisfies the requirements of the British Columbia Fire Code. Please arrange for an inspection at 604.980.5021.
- *Vancouver Coastal Health:* A Health Permit is required if the business is involved in personal services or with the handling of food. Please arrange for an inspection at 604.983.6700.

Applications may be referred to other City Departments for approval and businesses must also conform to all applicable Provincial and Federal statutory requirements. Typically, there is no charge for these inspections.

The Issuance of a Business License

When the approved referrals are returned to the Business License Inspector, a final review is conducted taking into consideration all of the comments received. A Business License will only be issued once all of the requirements and outstanding concerns are satisfied. The processing time depends largely on the complexity of the business proposal and the ability of the applicant to meet the Business License requirements.

Required Permits

Building Permits:

Most new businesses will require a Building Permit. If the new business entails new construction, additions to the building, renovations, a change of use (e.g. retail premise to a restaurant) or an increase in the intensity of use, a Building Permit is required. A Building Permit will ensure that the proposed premise complies with the B.C. Building Code and municipal bylaws. Once an application is submitted and a Building Permit issued, the construction may proceed, subject to inspection at various stages. The Building Inspector will approve the Business License only when the requirements of the Building Permit are satisfied.

Electrical, Plumbing and Gas Permits:

If any electrical, plumbing or gas work is to be done on the premise, a certified contractor must apply for a permit prior to commencing work. The Electrical and Plumbing and Gas Safety Officers will approve the Business License only when the requirements of the permits are satisfied.

Sign Permits:

All signs advertising a place of business require City approval and may also require a Sign Permit, a Building Permit and an Electrical Permit. Structural, electrical and other alterations to existing signs will require approval and permits. For details of the requirements of the City of North Vancouver Sign Bylaw, please contact the Building Division at 604.983.7355.

Sandwich board signs are currently permitted in certain commercial areas within the City. Please contact the City Engineering Department for details with regards to the size, siting and permitted locations for sandwich boards.

Health Permit:

Any business that will be involved in providing services of a personal nature or in the preparation of food will be required to seek Vancouver Coastal Health approval and may be required to apply for a Health Permit.

Other Approvals:

The permits and approvals mentioned in this handout are requirements of the Community Development Department only. Other City, Provincial and Federal Government Departments may have additional requirements that must be met before a business can legally operate.

Please refer to the 'One Stop Business Registration Centre' at the North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce for business start-up information and registration.

Provincial Licensing

Provincial legislation requires that workers in certain trades hold T.Q. Certification, while other trades are regulated through Provincial Associations. In either case, the City will require proof of certification prior to issuing or renewing Business Licenses to members of such regulated industries.

Other Provincial licensing and approval is required for the following:

- liquor licensing is regulated through the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch at 604.775.0100,
- talent agencies and employment agencies are required to register with the Employment Standards Branch at 604.660.9954,
- tobacco sales are regulated through the Consumer Taxation Tobacco Branch at 604.660.4524,

Please ensure that proper documentation is provided with the Business License application.

Disclaimer

This guide has been prepared to provide convenient information only. It is neither a bylaw nor a legal document. If any contradictions between this guide and the relevant Municipal Bylaws and/or applicable codes are found, then the text of the bylaws and codes shall be the legal authority. The public is advised to review the applicable legislation and bylaws and conduct its own inquiries with City Staff.