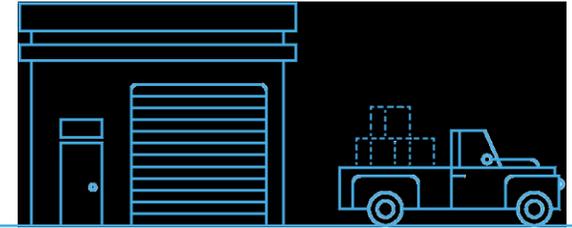




Restaurant / Bar Checklist

This guide tells you which forms you need to fill out, offices you need to visit, and decisions you need to make.



Get Going

These things are crucial to accomplishing other steps, so get them in motion now.

Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN), also known as a Federal Tax ID Number from the IRS. This is used to identify your business and allows you to hire employees. If you are a sole proprietor without employees, you may choose to use your Social Security Number instead.

Apply for a Seller's Permit from the CA State Board of Equalization. Every location must have this permit to sell taxable goods.

Choose and file a business name. File a Fictitious Business Name (FBN) Statement at the Office of the County Clerk if you will be using a name other than your given name, the names of your partners, or the officially registered name of your LLC or corporation.



Visit

Talking to people at these offices will help you figure out what you need.

Office of Finance
Special Desk Unit
200 North Spring St. Room 205
(844) 663-4411

Dept. of Building and Safety
221 N. Figueroa St. 8th Floor,
Room 800
Los Angeles, CA. 90012
(213) 473-3231

Dept. of City Planning
201 N. Figueroa St. 4th Floor
Los Angeles, CA. 90012
(213) 482-7077

Los Angeles Police Dept.
Police Permit Processing
100 W. First St. Room 147
Los Angeles, CA. 90012
(213) 996-1210

Los Angeles County Clerk
12400 Imperial Highway
Los Angeles, CA. 90650
(800) 201-8999



Read

Reading up on these materials will prepare you for opening your restaurant.

Review Americans with Disability Act (ADA) guidelines to make sure your business is accessible.

Review the City of Los Angeles Minimum Wage Frequently Asked Questions to make sure your business is compliant.

Visit finance.lacity.org for essential reading about permits and taxes.

Find a location

- ❑ Don't know where to begin looking for a potential location? Try [LocateLA](#) which can help you find the best commercial buildings for rent and offers robust economic and demographic data to help you decide.
- ❑ Found a prospective location for your business? Great! Make sure it has the right zoning for a restaurant by looking on [ZIMAS](#). Also look to see if there are any overlay zones or other special planning zones - these may suggest additional restrictions above and beyond the zoning requirements.



Tip: If the location you are considering was a restaurant before, it will be much faster to get up and running - assuming the previous owner was legally operating with the right permits. You can check by reviewing the building's [Certificate of Occupancy](#). Otherwise, a Change of Use permit may be required from the Department of Building and Safety.

- ❑ Once you know the zoning for the property, verify that your business is allowed within the [property's zoning category](#).
- ❑ Identify the parking requirements for your business type and ask the landlord if the lease includes enough parking spaces to [meet those requirements](#).

Tip: If you need a change of zoning or there are inadequate parking spaces for your customers, may need to apply for a Change of Zoning or a Variance with the Department of City Planning.



This can be a costly process that takes several months; be sure to visit the City's Development Services Center for more information and assess whether this is still the right location for you.

- ❑ If the property doesn't meet the zoning or parking requirements for a restaurant, submit an application to the Department of City Planning and undergo a public hearing to obtain a Change of Zoning or Variance. This can be a costly process that takes several months; be sure to visit the city's Development Services Center to get more information and assess whether it's still the right location for you.
- ❑ Ask the landlord whether the unit meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements so you are aware of and can negotiate and budget for any needed renovations.
- ❑ Review your lease closely before signing it and keep in mind that it may take several months to obtain the permits you need to start running your business and bring in paying customers.
- ❑ Have questions? We recommend visiting the City's Development Services Center or calling (213) 482-7077 to connect with city staff who can help you review the zoning and physical requirements of your property location.

Tip: Sign up for the City's Restaurant and Hospitality Express Program (RHEP). This free service will provide you with a case manager who can guide you through the city's permit processes.



If you plan to serve alcohol...



- ❑ Visit the [Development Services Center](#) to apply for a Conditional Use Permit from the Department of City Planning. A CUP typically takes at least 4-5 months and requires a public hearing.

i. Tip: For a small fee, the Department of City Planning will research your property location and provide you with early notification of any zoning or permitting issues which may affect your business, and provide you with a tailored list of items you need to prepare for your application.

ii. Tip: You should also research whether the property has an existing alcohol license that could be transferred to you. Each license is different and the terms will vary.

- ❑ Obtain an Alcohol License from the [State of California Department of Alcohol and Beverage Control](#).

i. Tip: This process can take a long time – consider getting started on this early in the process!

Once you've decided on your location

- ❑ [Register your business](#) with the City, County and State and IRS to legally operate and get set up for any income, sales tax and employee taxes that you may need to pay.
- ❑ It's always a good idea to meet with your local Council Office, Neighborhood Council and community police station - getting their support and insights can be important for a smooth launch. You can find their contact information here: www.neighborhoodinfo.lacity.org.

Get ready to open

- ❑ If you are planning to make changes to the interior or exterior of your building, you will likely need to apply for building permits with the [Department of Building and Safety](#).

Tip: Depending on the extent of the changes, you will have different options to apply for the building permit.



- ❑ Minor projects can be approved online, while larger projects – for instance, significant remodeling or a change of business use – may require a more detailed “plan check” process that includes submitting architectural and structural plans. You can find more information [online](#).
- ❑ When you apply for your building permits, the Department of Building and Safety will provide you with a “clearance summary worksheet” that lets you know what additional approvals are required. This may include:
 - The Los Angeles Fire Department
 - The Los Angeles County Department of Health
 - Other Departments as applicable

- ❑ Contact the Los Angeles County Department of Health directly to obtain a [Public Health Permit](#).
- ❑ Will your restaurant generate fats, oils and grease during food preparation? If so, you will need to obtain an industrial wastewater permit from the Department of Sanitation.
- ❑ If you've received a land use or building permit from the City, make sure to follow up with the Development Services Center after any work is completed and schedule an inspection to make sure the work meets the required standards.

Tip: You can schedule the inspections online on the LADBS website!



Need help? Visit the City's Development Services Center or call (213) 482-7077.

Bring on staff

- ❑ Before you start serving food, you'll need to obtain a Manager's Food Safety Certification for yourself and/or a designated employee.
- ❑ All employees who handle food (preparation, storage or serving) must also take a food safety training course and obtain a Food Handler Permit. New employees have 30 days to obtain the permit.
- ❑ Review business.lacity.org/manage/employees for information on additional wage and employment guidelines.

If you plan to have live entertainment, music or karaoke...



- ❑ Apply for a Café Entertainment/Shows Permit with the [Police Department](#).
 - **Tip:** You will need to undergo a background check and have the Department of Building and Safety verify that your business meets the zoning requirements and sign off on the application.
 - **Tip:** Police permits need to be renewed annually at the end of the calendar year.

If you plan to have outdoor tables and chairs located on a city sidewalk...

- ❑ Apply for an R-Permit with the [Bureau of Engineering](#).

If you plan to have valet parking...

- ❑ Apply for a valet permit with the [LA Police Commission](#). The Police Commission offers classes to walk you through the application process. Typically, you will need to submit maps and parking plans for where cars will be parked, show proof of insurance and pay an annual fee. If you plan to have a permanent stand on a sidewalk, you may also need to work with the [Bureau of Engineering](#).
- ❑ Your valet drivers will also need to obtain a permit from the LA Police Commission to ensure they have a valid driver's license and insurance; they will also need to pass a background check.