



BUSINESS START-UP CHECKLIST



Planning to open a business in the City of Camden?

Your first step should be to contact the City's Building/ Zoning Department where — staff can assist you with every step in the process.

- Building/Zoning Department - John Burns at jburns@camdensc.org 803-432-2412
- Building/Zoning Department Assistant / City Clerk - Brenda Davis at cityclerk@camdensc.org

The following list is a convenient tool outlining a few of the most important steps required. The list is not all inclusive, and depending on your situation, other requirements may apply.

1. Your Location

Before you commit, you should confirm that the physical location / site is Zoned to accommodate your intended business. Schedule an appointment with Building Department staff who will:

- Help you determine if your physical location / site is Zoned for your intended use.
- Determine if there are any major issues that would prohibit you from meeting basic requirements. This may include conducting a “Start-Up Inspection of your intended property to review the fundamentals such as building infrastructure, parking, landscaping, dumpster, etc. to determine what changes, if any, need to be made to ensure compliance with City Code Requirements.
- Provide guidance on next steps in your Business Start-up process.

2. Your Building

Before committing to a property, you should confirm that the structure and physical layout of the facility are appropriate for your intended use. You should have a clear understanding of any Code restrictions or limitations that may affect your operation, and any building and site modifications that may be necessary to open for business.

Building Codes, Requirements & Permits vary according to whether your intended place of business is:

- An Existing Commercial Building with New Occupant with No Change in Use
- An Existing Commercial Building with Change in Use, Major Renovation or Building Addition
- New Construction of a Commercial Building.

If you are purchasing a building, it is best to secure the services of a Certified and Licensed Inspection agency.

3. Your Application for Occupancy Permit

Prior to applying for a Business License or signing a Contract for electric/water/sewer service, you must contact Building/Zoning Dept. and complete the Application for Occupancy Permit and supply a key to the building. The Application for Occupancy Permit specifies the location/address of the building and what type of business that you plan to operate.

Upon receipt of the completed Application for Occupancy Permit, the Building/Zoning Dept. and the Fire Marshall will inspect the building to identify any safety concerns, code violations, and to confirm that the location/building is zoned for the proposed use. If renovations or additions to your building are planned, then another meeting with Building/Zoning Dept. and the Fire Marshall will be required to review drawings and codes. After this inspection if there are no concerns, then you will be notified that you can return to City Hall to sign a contract to have electric and water services connected to your building. Also at this time, you can apply for a Business License.

- a. **Utilities** - Have you established utility service for your location? The City provides electric, water, sewer and trash services for all business locations in the City. You will need to apply in person at City Hall with proof of the rights to the property (lease, deed, mortgage, etc.) and a picture ID. Commercial accounts will require a deposit and service fee to setup.
- b. **Business License(s)** - You must have a Camden Business License to operate a business in the City. Business License Applications are available at City Hall in the Finance Department.
 - Fees for business licenses vary according to the type of business that you are operating.
- c. **Building Permit** - If you are planning to build or make renovations to an existing building your contractor will need to submit drawings and to apply for a Building Permit at the Building Department at City Hall. During and at the end of construction, the Building/Zoning Dept and the Fire Marshall will inspect the work and meet with the contractor for final approval before you occupy the building.

4. **Sign Permit** - Have you applied for a Sign Permit? Sign permits can be obtained in the Building/Zoning Department at City Hall.

Regulatory Agencies – Depending upon the nature of your business, there may be other government / regulatory agencies with which you must comply:

- South Carolina Department of Revenue (www.sctax.org) – state business license. Retail licenses, payroll withholding, alcohol beverage licensing, etc.
- Internal Revenue Service (www.irs.gov) FEIN#, payroll withholding, etc.
- South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control (DHEC) (www.scdhec.gov) – for food service permit, etc.

**The foregoing list is not all inclusive.
Depending upon your situation, other steps may be required.**

Representatives from following City Departments are ready to assist you, so please contact them or come in to discuss your plans if you have any questions:

- Building/Zoning Department –
 - John Burns at jburns@camdensc.org 803-432-2421
 - Building/Zoning Department Assistant / City Clerk - Brenda Davis at cityclerk@camdensc.org
- Planning Department - Shawn Putnam at putnam@camdensc.org
- Finance Department - Stephanie Bowers at sbowers@camdensc.org
- Economic Development - Suzi Sale at ssale@camdensc.org
- Downtown Camden™ Program - Kat Spadacenta at kspadacenta@camdensc.org
- Fire Marshall - Phil Elliott at pelliott@camdensc.org