

# Starting a Business in Calistoga

## ***Where Do I Begin?***

The City of Calistoga and the Calistoga Chamber of Commerce are anxious to assist new businesses to assure their successful location in Calistoga. We understand that starting a new business requires a major commitment of time, energy, and capital and a part of that commitment is meeting regulatory requirements. You will be required to obtain a business license, and other required zoning, planning, conditional use permits and building permits, depending on the location and nature of your business. We will try to facilitate that process by promptly providing the regulatory information you need. Also important to your future success is the development of a business plan, which describes how your business will be managed, operated and marketed. A business plan may also be required if you are seeking financing for your business. An excellent source of information and educational material for the entrepreneur is the Napa Valley College Small Business Development Center <http://www.napasbdc.org/services.html>

## ***Is Calistoga the Right Place For Your Business***

Calistoga is a unique City and its residents have expressed a desire to maintain the old-fashioned small town qualities which draw people to the area. To maintain that expectation, regulations have been instituted to restrict “cookie cutter” businesses. If you are set on developing a food or lodging franchise, Calistoga is probably not the place for you. Because of Calistoga’s size, you must also seriously consider the market for your product or service. For instance will your business require the customer to be physically present or can mail, telephone or internet provide an alternative? If the customer must be present, how many customers buying how many widgets a year are required in order for you to make a living? Is that a reasonable expectation given Calistoga’s demographics?

## ***Locating Your Business***

As they say, location, location, location. However, while looking for the location perfect for your business in addition to the rental expense and potential customer traffic, keep in mind the local zoning restrictions and ordinances

## ***Zoning***

Before selecting a particular location, check with the City’s Planning and Building Department to make sure that your business meets the Zoning requirements. Calistoga is divided into zoning districts that govern the types of uses permitted on a property. Some uses are permitted, some prohibited and others permitted with a conditional use permit. Additional requirements for the operations of a business may also be included in City Ordinances. You need to verify that the zoning classification of your proposed location allows the kind of business you plan to operate. Contact the Planning and Building Department at 942-2827 for more information.

## ***Conditional Use Permits***

Some commercial businesses must obtain a Conditional Use Permit to operate in Calistoga. Use Permits enable the City to review and control the operations of businesses which might have a detrimental impact on other nearby businesses or residents. Such businesses include fast food restaurants, overnight accommodations, businesses providing live entertainment, and/or businesses with late hours of operation adjacent to residential areas. Contact the Planning and Building Department at 942-2827 to determine whether or not you will need to obtain a Use Permit.

## ***Home Occupation Permits***

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Some businesses which have few or no impacts are allowed to be operated out of an existing residence. Such businesses must obtain a Home Occupation Permit. Additional information can be obtained from the Planning and Building Department at 942-2827 .

## ***Sign Permits***

All commercial signs, permanent or temporary, require a sign permit, and new construction or unusual designs may require approval by Design Review. Information on signage requirements can be obtained from the Planning and Building Department at 942-2827

## ***New Construction***

Construction of a new building or an addition to or remodeling of an existing building will require approval of the Design Review (Planning Commission) and building permits. Planning Staff can provide you with information regarding Planning and Building Code requirements for your proposed business. Contact the Planning and Building Department at 942-2827 for more information.

## ***Building Permits***

Once your project has been approved, you need to contact the Building Safety Division to make sure your proposed project meets current building code and fire safety requirements. All new construction must be approved by the Planning and Building Department and may require review by the Fire Marshall before you can occupy your new or improved space and open your business. For more info contact the Planning and Building Department at 942-2827

## ***Obtaining A Business License***

If you plan to conduct business in the City of Calistoga, you must apply for your business license. Business license fees established and a fee schedule is available. Business licenses are renewed annually in July of each year at the beginning of the fiscal year. Please see the City Finance Office at 1328 Washington St.

## ***Filing a Fictitious Business Name Statement***

If the name of your business is different from your own legal name or a corporate name, you must file a Fictitious Business Name Statement. This will be required in order to open a bank account in the name of the business. The Fictitious Business Name Statement is filed with the Napa County Clerk. It may be necessary for you to go to the County Clerk's office in Napa and fill out the forms establishing the name of your company. If you need to file, you should do so within 40 days of starting your business.

## ***Other Information***

The City of Calistoga has maintains a website <http://www.ci.calistoga.ca.us> which has a directory of the City's departments and Services as well as a variety valuable public information

The Calistoga Chamber of Commerce provides a variety of services to businesses throughout the greater Calistoga area. For more information and membership information call the Calistoga Chamber of Commerce at 707 942 6333 or visit <http://www.calistogachamber.com>.

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## "Starting A Business" Checklist

**Disclaimer:** This Checklist was developed by the California Secretary of State and is provided to help you to start your business. Due to the various Federal, State and Local policy and legislative changes that occur frequently, some of these steps may not apply to your business. Additionally, there may be other steps that are required by your business that are not covered here. As always, legal counsel is strongly advised.

- Choose a business.
- Research the business idea:

Are you selling a product or services?

- What will you sell?
- Is it legal?
- Who will buy it and how often?
- Are you willing to do what it takes to sell the product?
- What will it cost to produce, advertise, sell & deliver?
- With what laws will you have to comply?
- Can you make a profit?
- How long will it take to make a profit?

- Write a business plan and marketing plan.
- Choose a business name.
- See if the business name is available for use as a domain name.
- Register the domain name even if you aren't ready to use it yet.
- Choose a location for the business.
- Check zoning laws.
- File partnership, corporate or limited liability company papers with the Secretary of State's office.
- File state tax forms with the Franchise Tax Board.
- Check CalGOLD and the Department of Consumers Affairs sites to get any required business licenses or permits.  
<http://www.ss.ca.gov/business/business.htm>

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- Contact the Internal Revenue Service for information on filing your federal tax schedules.
- Apply for a seller's permit with the State Board of Equalization if you are going to sell tangible personal property. Examples of tangible personal property include such items as furniture, giftware, toys, antiques, clothing, cars, staples, etc.
- Contact the State Board of Equalization to see if you are responsible for any fuel, alcohol, tobacco, or other special taxes and fees.
- Apply for an employer identification number with the Employment Development Department (EDD) if you will have employees.
- Find out about workers' compensation if you will have employees.
- Register or reserve federal trademark/servicemark.
- Register copyrights.
- Apply for patent if you will be marketing an invention.
- Order any required notices (advertisements you have to place) of your intent to do business in the community.
- Have business phone or extra residential phone lines installed.
- Check into business insurance needs.
- Get adequate business insurance or a business rider to a homeowner's policy.
- Get tax information such as record keeping requirements, information on withholding taxes if you will have employees, information on hiring independent contractors, facts about estimating taxes, forms of organization, etc.
- Open a bank account for the business.
- Have business cards and stationery printed.
- Purchase equipment or supplies.
- Order inventory, signage and fixtures.
- Get an email address.
- Find a web hosting company.
- Get your Website set up.

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- Have sales literature prepared.
- Call for information about Yellow Pages advertising.
- Place advertising in newspapers or other media if yours is the type of business that will benefit from paid advertising.
- Call everyone you know and let them know you are in business.
- Ask others in similar businesses what you have forgotten.