

# Checklist for opening new business

The following new business checklist was created with input from the City of Arcadia:

- Your very first step should be to go to the city's Development Services Department to discuss your business plans and the location. The staff there will help you apply for your **Business License** and will confirm any zoning restrictions at the location you have chosen. Certain businesses may need a **Conditional Use Permit** (such as private schools, hotel, mortuaries, bars and cocktail lounges, car washes) and the staff will help you with that process. Some businesses may require a public hearing before the **Business License and Permit Review Board** (pawn shops, taxi cabs, entertainment, etc.). If your new business has an alarm system, you must complete an **Emergency Alarm Notification Form**. Businesses operating in residential areas must obtain a **Home Occupation Permit** as well as a business license. *Arcadia City Hall, 240 W. Huntington Drive, Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.* If you need help in finding a location for your business, you may also want to contact the Economic Development office at City Hall, (626)-574-5409.

*NOTE:* The Development Services Department will let you know if your new business requires any Special Permits and will help you get them. Restaurants must have a special permit for grease traps. Gas stations will need Fire Department inspection and a Gas Storage License from L.A. County. Dry cleaners and any other businesses handling or storing hazardous materials need a permit from the Arcadia Fire Department (626-574-5104) and also must notify the Los Angeles County Fire Department (626-450-7460).

- **Before purchasing any signage for your business, check with the City's Community Development Division to find out rules & regulations.** You will have to remove any signs you put up that do not conform to the code. Don't let a sign company make your sign, banner, or awning until after your signs are approved, and the city has issued a **Sign Permit**. Sign companies don't always get the proper permits—you should do this yourself to save money, time, and aggravation.
- **Remodeling** your new business space: You will need a **Building Permit**. Once the work has been approved, you will receive a **Certificate of Occupancy** from the Building Inspection office. (If you are renting business space, read the lease carefully before signing, as it may limit what changes you can make.) *Arcadia Building Inspection Services Department, (626)-574-5416.*
- **Restaurant:** the L.A. County Health Department needs to inspect and sign off on your premises before you can open. They will continue to do periodic inspections and make your ratings public. *L.A. County Health Department, (626)-308-5357.*
- **Alcohol:** You will need to buy an Alcoholic Beverage License. *State Alcohol Beverage Control Agency, (626)-927-1060.*
- Arrange for telephone, electricity, gas, water and internet service hookups for your new location.
- **Wholesale and retail sales:** You must obtain a Sellers Permit (Re-Sale License). *State Board of Equalization, (800)-400-7115.*
- **Employees,** you need to obtain W2 federal tax forms, disability information, and other applicable information from the **Franchise Tax Board** and obtain an Employer Identification

Number (EIN) from the **Internal Revenue Service**. Even if your new business will not have employees, you need to obtain Form 540 from the Franchise Tax Board. If your business is listed as a corporation, you will need to obtain a Federal Tax Identification Number. *Franchise Tax Board, (800)-852-5711, IRS (800)-829-1040.*

- **Workers Compensation Insurance** is required for your employees. You will also need liability insurance. (Your insurance company may have a safety inspection you can request.) *Contact the Chamber office for a list of local insurance agents.*
- If you are using a **fictitious business name** or DBA (“Doing Business As”), you need to contact a local newspaper and arrange to have a **Fictitious Name Statement** published. *Arcadia Weekly, (626)-294-1090.*
- **Advertising.** Think about your target audience and how best to reach them. The Chamber of Commerce offers many effective and low-cost opportunities through traditional and new media as well as sponsoring many events in the community. Other local newspapers and web sites also provide advertising opportunities, and there are several marketing services available to provide you guidance.
- Be sure to register with the **Records Division** of the Police Department, so that your contact information will be on file in case of an emergency at your business location. You can obtain a courtesy **Security Check** of your new business, including the locks, alarm systems, windows and overall building security. *Call the Arcadia Police Department, (626)-547-5174.*
- You may need a Fire Department safety inspection. Businesses most affected are dry cleaners, gas stations, restaurants, paint dealers and manufacturing companies. *Call the Arcadia Fire Department, (626)-574-5104.*
- For a **Disaster Preparedness** kit, contact the Arcadia Chamber of commerce. *(626)-447-2159.*
- Join the **Arcadia Chamber of Commerce**. The Chamber can arrange an opening day ribbon-cutting ceremony to announce and publicize your presence in the community. Your Chamber membership will help you network so that your new business quickly becomes well known in the city. The Chamber will also send referrals your way. Hanging the Chamber plaque on your wall assures future customer respect, as now you are an active part of the community. *Call the Chamber today to learn of all the other important benefits of membership: (626)-447-2159.*

## Things You Should Know

The best advice for those planning to open a new business or buy an existing business is that you contact the Development Services Department before making costly mistakes. Find out what codes and regulations are before you invest in equipment, signs and improvements that may have to be changed.

- If you disagree with a decision made by the city staff about your business, or there are special circumstances involved in your case, you may appeal your decision. In some cases you will go to the Planning Commission or to the City Council or to the Modification Committee.

**Remember, the rules and regulations in the City of Arcadia are not necessarily the same as those in other cities nearby. Don’t assume that you already know what you can and can’t do.**

- The Arcadia Chamber of Commerce offers seminars and private consultation with experienced business people, available through SCORE (the Senior Corps of Retired Executives), the SBA (Small Business

Administration), & SBCDC (Small Business Development Center). They will give you valuable, FREE advice on such important decisions as business name, location, marketing, and financing, etc. This small investment of your time can save money, possibly save your business, and give you a better chance at success.

- Don't assume anything...contractors, realtors, awning suppliers and sign companies don't necessarily know the city regulations.
- The City offices are closed on alternate Fridays.