

BUSINESS LICENSES

Town of
Wainwright

Our goal is to help you obtain your business license quickly. We are committed to making the process as simple and streamlined as possible!

Contact Us

In Person

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FREQUENTLY ASKED Questions

To operate and/or advertise a business in the Town of Wainwright you are required to obtain a business license. A person found operating without a license may receive a bylaw fine.

Why does Wainwright require business licenses?

A business license allows the Town to ensure that public health and safety regulations are addressed by businesses when the public has access.

Does every business need a development permit?



Home based occupations require development permits as this is considered a discretionary use. (The development permit is a one-time cost only.)

Do I require any other permits?

Prior to making any major renovations at your new business premises, it should be noted that a development permit is required for a change of use. A building permit may also be required.

What are the benefits for a business owner when a business license is obtained?

- It is a good investment, is relatively inexpensive and can be used as a tax write-off.
- It can protect it's owners against certain types of liability.
- It shows your customers that you are a legitimate business that complies with local laws & regulations.
- It offers validation and gives you the documentation necessary to apply for a business bank account and/or business loans if needed.
- It provides free advertising in the Wainwright business directory on the Town's website.
- It provides business knowledge and support from the Town's Economic Development Department, which wants to develop and nurture success in the business sector.

How does business licensing benefit my community?

- It provides a fair environment for all businesses operating in the Town of Wainwright.
- It provides a registration system where a community can track its economic development and businesses can use the registry as a resource for business planning.
- It allows the Town to work closely with the Provincial Government to track businesses that may require additional regulations.
- It ensures that public health and safety regulations are addressed by businesses when the public has access.
- When combined with the development approval process, it ensures that building codes have been adhered to and zoning and other restrictions have been enforced.

When do I need to get a business license?

You are required to obtain your business license prior to opening your door to the public. This license is to be prominently displayed in your place of business.

This applies to all retail and commercial establishments, management and professional firms, home based businesses and bed and breakfasts.

You should not operate your business until you receive your printed business license.

How do I obtain a business license?

You may apply for a business license from the Town in person or by mail. The business license form is available online or at the Town Office.

Payment can be made via cash, cheque or debit only.

BUSINESS LICENSE FEES

Category of Business	License (Annual)	After July 1
Resident - In Town Commercial	\$100	\$50
Resident - Home Based	\$150	\$75
Out of Town	\$200	\$100
Weekly	\$50	
Home/Office Occupation Permit	\$150	

*Credit cards cannot be used for payment, so please ensure that you have another method to pay for fees.

Who must apply for a business license?

The owner of the business, or anyone who has authority to sign on the owner's behalf, can apply for the business license. Land owner permission is required.

How long does it take to get a license?

The time required to process a business license application depends on the approvals required for your business operation. A license is typically issued within 7 to 10 business days, but may take longer.

BUSINESS LICENSES FAQ



What are the consequences if I operate a business without a valid business license?

Being out of compliance by not having the proper business license, permits and registrations can leave the business (and it's owners) with expensive penalties and could put the business at an operating risk. Jurisdictions, including local municipalities, are increasing their vigilance for businesses evading licensing.

This means that the business that evades licensure may not be able to open or stay open; may not be able to expand to a new location; add an item, a service or a structure; and may be hit with expensive penalties and interest as well as exposing the business owner to personal liabilities and liens.

Are there other consequences that I should consider?

If you conduct business without a license, and a customer decides that they are not pleased with the product or service offered to them, they can sue in small claims court, using fraud as one reason for the lawsuit.

The fact is, doing business without a license is a fraudulent act. If a plaintiff is successful in their lawsuit, and the business is found liable, the company is responsible for what the plaintiff paid for the product or service and possibly damages in regards to the fraudulent activity.



How do I renew my license?

You will be contacted with a renewal notice at the beginning of the year.

It is the business owner's responsibility to ensure the license is renewed on time whether or not a renewal notice is received. You may pay by mail or in person at the Town Office.

Failure to renew may result in fines and penalties and/or cancellation of your business license.



Can my license be suspended or cancelled?

The Town of Wainwright is committed to creating a safe and clean environment for the people who live here or visit. The Town can suspend or cancel a business license if the **Business License Bylaw** is violated or the business is not operating in the public interest.

What if I don't live in Wainwright?

When a business operates within Wainwright, but is located in another community, the owner needs an **out-of-town license**. A higher fee ensures that the business pays for the use of municipal roads and services otherwise covered by property taxes.

What if I sell or move my business?

Advise the Town of Wainwright in writing if you move, alter or close your business. A business license cannot be transferred to a new location or a new owner. No refunds will be issued.

Your notification ensures that your contact information is updated in our system for correspondence and invoicing purposes.

For home based businesses, the development permit cannot be transferred to a new home and you will be required to re-apply for the development permit.

Can I operate two businesses out of the same location?

Yes, as long as each one has the appropriate separate business license.

Do I need a second license for a second business location?

Yes. You require a separate business license for each location of your business.

Which businesses are exempt from Town license requirements?

Very few businesses are exempt. Some occupations and professions are exempt because they are regulated by provincial or federal legislation. In most cases, exempt businesses still require a development permit to ensure that their business activity is allowed at a particular location.

A community volunteer group or a registered non-profit organization conducting business or fundraising may be exempt from licensing requirements. Please contact the Town Office to confirm your status.

Do other agencies need to approve my license application?

Depending on the business type, a license application may be referred to the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC), Public Health, Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council (AMVIC) or Child and Family Services.

What happens if my business license application is turned down?

Owners may appeal license decisions within 14 business days to the Chief Administrative Officer at the Town Office - 1018 -2nd Ave, Wainwright, Alberta T9W 1R1

How do I receive my license?

The business license can be picked up or mailed. A business license won't be issued until all information and payments have been received.



FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Getting a business license can be a tedious process, especially if more than one license or permit is needed for the industry. The amount of work and effort to obtain the license is worth it in the end as the penalties for operating a business without a license far outweigh the inconvenience of attaining a license.

This pamphlet has no legal status and cannot be used as an official interpretation of the various codes and regulations currently in effect. Users are advised to contact the Planning & Development Dept. for assistance, as the Town of Wainwright accepts no responsibility to persons relying solely on this information.