

# Business Start-Up Checklist

After researching your business idea and writing your business plan, use the checklist below to guide you through the steps of establishing your business. It is good, sound business judgment to seek advice from an accountant and/or attorney before starting a business. You can also refer to the **Start My Business** page with the *Kentucky One Stop Business Portal* for additional information and resources on any of the following topics.



## CHOOSE A NAME AND STRUCTURE.

- Businesses in Kentucky are required to **choose an available name** with the Office of the Secretary of State. A business name is not available if it is already being used by an existing registered business. There is a search tool for available names which you can access by visiting the Office of the Secretary of State's Website at: [www.sos.ky.gov](http://www.sos.ky.gov)
- One of the first decisions to make when starting a business is to **choose a legal structure** for your business. The particular structure you choose may save you money and provide greater protection of your personal assets. Visit the *Start My Business* page with the *Kentucky One Stop Business Portal* for an interactive tool that can provide you with more information on different business structures.

## REGISTER YOUR BUSINESS.

- Most types of business types must register with the Office of the Secretary of State and the Kentucky Department of Revenue to operate in Kentucky. Businesses can now complete their basic registrations with both offices using the **Kentucky One Stop Business Application** (formerly known as *FastTrack*) online. Visit the *Start My Business* page with the *Kentucky One Stop Business Portal* to get started.
- Many cities and counties also require registration for individuals and firms conducting business within their jurisdiction. Consult your local county and city clerks for any **local registration requirements**.

## GET YOUR TAX NUMBERS.

- Obtain a **Federal Employer Identification Number** from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). (You most likely completed this step while completing your basic registration with the Kentucky Department of Revenue above.)
- After you have completed your basic registration you will receive a **state tax identification number** from the Kentucky Department of Revenue.
- Upon receiving and processing your registration, the Department of Revenue will specify if you and your business will have any additional state tax requirements. Depending on your type of business there may be **additional state tax registrations** you must complete.
- Many cities and counties also impose taxes for individuals and firms conducting business within their jurisdiction. Consult your local county and city clerks for any **local tax requirements**.

## FIND INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS AND COVERAGE OPTIONS.

- If you hire employees, your business is required to register for **unemployment insurance** to operate in Kentucky. Visit <https://kewes.ky.gov/> to register.
- If you hire employees, your business is also required to obtain **workers' compensation insurance** from a private insurance carrier or self-insure. (Kentucky does not sponsor a state-run insurance program.) Visit the Department of Workers' Claims for more information.
- Insurance is a risk management tool that can help you protect your business, your employees and your customers. Visit the *Insurance* page on the *Kentucky One Stop Business Portal* for more information and resources and to make sure you **adequately protect your business** before you open.

## OBTAIN THE APPROPRIATE LICENSES AND PERMITS.

- Most businesses in Kentucky are required to have at least one license or permit to operate. Check with your occupational board or visit the Occupational Licenses/Permits page on the *Kentucky One Stop Business Portal* to search **special licenses or permits** to legally operate your business.
- If your business is involved in activities supervised/regulated by a federal agency you will also need to **obtain federal licenses** to operate. Visit the *Federal Licenses/Permits* page on the *Kentucky One Stop Business Portal* for more information.
- Acquire environmental permits:** Environmental permits are required by federal, state and sometimes local governments to ensure that business and construction minimize potential impacts on human health and the environment. Many environmental programs require that facilities and operators obtain permits or authorizations prior to engaging in certain activities.
- Many cities and counties also impose requirements for individuals and firms conducting business within their jurisdiction. Consult your local county and city clerks to find out if you must obtain a **local business license** and to check for compliance with **building codes and local zoning requirements**.

## LEARN ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES.

- Visit the *Managing Employees* page on the *Kentucky One Stop Business Portal* for more information on the topics in this section.
- Research and understand your **employer tax obligations** with the Internal Revenue Service and the Kentucky Department of Revenue.
- Display mandatory posters** in a conspicuous location in your place of business: Safety and Health on the Job; Wage and Hour; Unemployment Insurance; Equal Opportunity; and Fair Housing.
- Your business is required to **report new hires** to both Federal and Kentucky governments.
- Your employees must fill out an **Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9)**.
- Make sure you are in compliance with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**.
- Make yourself aware of **occupational safety and health regulations** that may impact your business.
- Employers involved in construction work or mining activities in Kentucky that haven't been doing business in the state for at least five consecutive years are required to **post a performance bond**.

## IDENTIFY REGULATIONS AND STATUTES FOR YOUR BUSINESS.

- Learn about **regulations and ordinances** that affect your industry and can impact your business on the *Start My Business* page with the *Kentucky One Stop Business Portal*.