

YesSuffolk



HOW TO START A BUSINESS IN THE CITY OF SUFFOLK



A Step-by-Step Guide to Starting Your New Business



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The City of Suffolk, Virginia is a thriving destination to start, expand, or relocate your business. Suffolk's central location in both Hampton Roads and the overall mid-Atlantic region make it a strategic choice to grow a business and improve your quality of life. Discover Suffolk, Virginia: Where Quality of Life Meets Economic Prosperity. In Suffolk, You're in Good Company.



DEVELOPMENT GUIDE FOR COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE HOW TO DO BUSINESS IN THE CITY OF SUFFOLK

1. Due Diligence

Due diligence is the process of researching and understanding all the potential implications of your business decision. It may involve conducting a site feasibility study to understand the physical and environmental conditions of the building or site and ensure it suits your business needs. You should also conduct a financial feasibility study to ensure the business will be economically viable. Additionally, consider regulatory due diligence to confirm that your business will be compliant with all relevant laws and regulations.

2. Development

The development stage involves preparing a comprehensive business plan. This includes conducting market research, identifying the target market, studying competition, understanding local regulations, assessing potential risks and rewards, and setting your business's goals and objectives. You will also need to determine the business structure (LLC, Corporation, Partnership, etc.) most beneficial to you and how your business will be financed. More information about business plans, resources, and templates can be found here: <https://www.sba.gov/business-guide/plan-your-business/write-your-business-plan>.

3. Location

Your business location determines the taxes, zoning laws, and regulations your business will be subject to. Where you locate your business depends in part on the location of your target market, business partners, and your personal preferences. More information about available properties for lease or sale can be found here: <https://yessuffolk.com/available-properties>.

4. Zoning

Once you have chosen a potential location, you will need to confirm the zoning regulations for that area. The zoning of a property determines what kind of businesses can be operated on the premises. You can check the zoning of a property through the Suffolk Department of Planning & Community Development. More information about Zoning can be found here: <https://www.suffolkva.us/497/Zoning-Administration>.

5. Public Utilities

If your property needs access to public utilities (water, sewage, electricity, gas, etc.), you will need to work with the relevant public utility providers in Suffolk. This may involve installing necessary infrastructure, and you will need to comply with relevant regulations and standards. More information about Public Utilities can be found here: <https://www.suffolkva.us/215/Start-Stop-Service>.

6. Licensing and Permitting

You will need to apply for a business license from the Suffolk Commissioner of the Revenue and potentially other permits depending on your business's nature. These may include permits from the Health Department, Fire Department, or other federal, state, and local agencies. More information about Business Licenses can be found here: <https://www.suffolkva.us/183/Business-Tax-License>. More information about Fire Department Inspections can be found here: <https://www.suffolkva.us/1635/Inspections>.

7. Construction Permits

If your business involves building or modifying a structure, you will need to apply for a building permit. The construction process involves hiring a contractor and potentially other subcontractors. They will need to comply with local construction codes, and their work will be subject to inspections. More information about Construction Permits can be found here: <https://www.suffolkva.us/423/Application-Procedures>.

8. Occupancy

Once construction is complete, you can apply for a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) from the Planning and Community Development department. This certificate signifies that the building is ready and safe for occupancy. Before issuing a CO, the building will have to pass a final inspection. Once you have your CO, you can officially open your business. More information about a Certificate of Occupancy can be found here: <https://www.suffolkva.us/392/Applications>.

*Remember that these are general steps and may not apply exactly as described to your situation. Each business and property is unique and may require additional steps or considerations. Always consider seeking advice from local business advisors, attorneys, or accountants who are familiar with the specific local laws and regulations.

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“Owning and operating a small business in Suffolk has given us a sense of community. It’s the neighborly love that our customers have shown that make us proud to work here.”

– Mandi and Jason Stephenson,
Owners, Danny’s Downtown Dogs



City of Suffolk Department Contact Information

Economic Development: 757-514-4040

Commissioner of Revenue: 757-514-4260

Community Development: 757-514-4150

Planning: 757-514-4060

Suffolk Economic Development
442 West Washington Street, 2nd floor
Suffolk, VA 23434
www.YesSuffolk.com

