



CITY OF RICHMOND

Department of Planning & Development Review
Division of Zoning Administration
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OBTAINING BUILDING OCCUPANCY APPROVAL TO OBTAIN A BUSINESS LICENSE IN THE CITY OF RICHMOND

The City Finance Department codes require that you obtain either a **Certificate of Occupancy (CO)** or a **Certificate of Zoning Compliance (CZC)** in order to obtain a business license. The specific form(s) and filing instructions will depend on the type of business that you are proposing. Generally, there are three types of business type requests:

- Retail, service, office and other commercial uses within a building. These require a Certificate of Zoning Compliance (CZC) if the type of business is similar in use **and** the tenant space has a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for that specific tenant space. If, however, the tenant space does not have a CO for that specific type of business, a change-of-use Building Permit (BP) may be necessary.
- Businesses within residential dwellings or apartments. These are known as a *Home Occupation* and are allowed, subject to certain rules and restrictions.
- Assembly uses. Assembly uses include, but are not limited to, restaurants and certain food preparation uses, churches, day nurseries, theaters and similar uses that allow for the gathering or concentration of persons. These types of uses MAY NOT utilize a Certificate of Zoning Compliance application, but typically require a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for a new business or tenant change. For assembly use questions, contact the Building Commissioner's Office by telephone at (804) 646-4169 or by E-mail at: PDRPermitsAndInspections@Richmondgov.com to obtain information on the filing of the required Certificate of Occupancy application.

If you are unsure of which application is necessary to establish your business, please contact the Zoning Administration Office by telephone at (840) 646-6340 or by E-mail at: PDRZoningAdministration@Richmondgov.com for Staff assistance.

Please create an account through the **Online Permit Portal (OPP)** in order to request online applications and remit online payments for certain applications. The **Online Permit Portal (OPP)** shall be used for submitting applications for all Certificates of Zoning Compliance (CZC) requests.

Instructions for submitting Certificate of Zoning Compliance applications through the Online Permit Portal:

Residential - Including Home Occupation business licensing requests.

Commercial - Including business licensing requests in most commercial tenant spaces.

Be advised that, if you are not the owner of the property, you will be required to provide the ownership information in order to utilize the OPP to request your Certificate of Zoning Compliance.

Assembly uses, which include restaurants, day nurseries and other uses that have gatherings of individuals, require a **Certificate of Occupancy (H-CO)** application and must be submitted through **One Drive**. Contact the Building Commissioner's Office by telephone at: (804) 646-4169 or by E-mail at: PDRPermitsAndInspections@richmondgov.com if you need additional information or assistance regarding the filing of the Certificate of Occupancy application.

Once your request is submitted, it will be reviewed for completeness by City Staff and, in some instances, they may contact you to provide additional information. Once all necessary information is complete and your application is determined to be complete, you will be sent an invoice for payment of the necessary application fee. After invoicing, you can pay using the OPP *My Invoices* section of the *Dashboard*. After payment is remitted, your application will be assigned for review and City Staff will process your application request. Be aware that, in certain instances, an on-site inspection may also be required. Once approved, you will be issued a printed document, which you will present to the Finance Department to obtain your City of Richmond business license. The approval, once issued, is valid for as long as you operate your business at the same location. You will need to obtain a new or updated approval if you change the address or the name of the business.

NOTE: Applications cannot be processed for any a property if delinquent real estate taxes are owed.