



# New Business & Tenant Improvement Guide



When looking at a location for your business, whether leasing or buying, there are a number of items to consider before signing your agreement. Some of these may include:

- If the property and/or building is suitable for your business activity
- What kinds of interior or exterior improvements may be required
- Whether improvements to existing or future signage is required

This volume of the Business Start-up Series is designed to help understand what should be considered before opening your business in West Kelowna, undergoing any work, and how to navigate the City's permitting processes.

**Please note that your business requires an occupancy permit and the correct licenses prior to opening.**

**Before entering into a lease or purchase agreement, ensure that you complete the 4 following steps:**

## 1 Zoning: Verify that your business will be located in the correct zone.

Prior to looking for a site, verify which zone permits the business or use that you are proposing for your business. Use the City's online mapping tool, WestMap, to determine the zoning of areas in West Kelowna, or contact Development Services to determine which zone is appropriate for your business.

## 2 Meeting Provincial Codes: Verify that all building improvements and renovation work will be completed using/with a permit.

The provincially set BC Building Code, Fire Code, and Plumbing Codes consider a wide range of components within the building including structural, air movement (HVAC), electrical and plumbing, access, washrooms, fire safety, etc. You should confirm with your leasing or real estate agent that previous renovations were completed to meet Provincial Building, Plumbing, and Fire Code requirements. Any previous work completed without permits will require a subsequent permit, may require alterations to meet appropriate Building and Plumbing Code requirements, and may affect your ability to obtain a business licence.

### Types of work and alterations that will likely require a building, plumbing, or fire sprinkler permit before starting work (beyond repainting or new flooring):

- Interior improvements including construction on structural and/or non-structural walls, removal, installation, or relocation of interior walls, doorways, and windows, or the subdivision of a unit
- Plumbing and electrical improvements or changes (permits and inspections fall under Technical Safety BC)
- HVAC and mechanical changes
- Exterior improvements (beyond repainting)
- Discharging of liquids into the City's sewer system
- Installation of new exterior or free-standing signage
- Alterations to an existing fire sprinkler system

Some changes of use require additional time and fees associated with the involvement of a Professional Engineer.

### Types of changes to a building or to the activity happening within a building which may require building upgrades or improvements to meet the Fire Code, commonly referred to as 'occupancy':

- Increase or decrease in the number of people using a building
- Types of activities or uses happening within a building
- Types of materials that will be stored or handled within a building

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### 3 Signage: Confirm what types of signs you can install and the type of sign permits required.

Before designing, purchasing or installing any signs, check with Development Services to ensure that they will be permitted on your building. A sign permit is required for any fascia (sign affixed to or painted on a building or structure, except windows) projecting, or freestanding sign.

The following are required with a sign permit application:

- A completed sign application form
- \$30 application fee + sign specific fee
- A site plan of the property, including property lines, access/egress, and location of the proposed sign
- Photos of the property and existing signage
- Rendering of the proposed sign, including colours
- Proof of ownership of the property
- Engineered detail drawings of the sign

### 4 Other Agencies: Depending on the type of business you are operating, you may require other permits or licences that are not regulated by the City of West Kelowna. Examples include liquor licences or health licences.

#### Interior Health

The following business operations will require approval from Interior Health.

- Restaurants, cafes, grocery stores, and other businesses that handle food and/or beverages
- Personal and beauty care services, such as hair cutting, estheticians, skin care, nail care, and/or tanning salons
- All programs and facilities providing care to three or more children

#### Interior Health West Kelowna

2300 Carrington Rd, West Kelowna, BC V4T 2N6  
P: 250-980-5150  
W: interiorhealth.ca

#### Motor Vehicle Sales Authority

Any person, partnership, or company planning to sell or lease motor vehicles to retail consumers in BC must apply to become a licensed motor dealer.

A licensed dealership must also have at least one licensed salesperson. If you are a sole proprietor, you will need a motor dealer licence and a salesperson licence.

#### Motor Vehicle Sales Authority of BC

Suite 208—5455 152 Street, Surrey, BC V3S 5A5  
P: 604-574-5050  
E: licensing@mvsabc.com  
W: mvsabc.com

#### Technical Safety BC

Contact Technical Safety BC if you require a Gas or Electric permit or inspection. You also may require an operating permit from the Safety Authority if you are operating or require any of the following:

- Gas and Electric permits or inspections
- High voltage electrical equipment
- Hot water boilers
- Steam boilers
- Pressure vessels
- Air conditioning
- Refrigeration systems
- Dispensing propane, natural gas, or hydrogen

#### Technical Safety BC Office

1905 Kent Rd, Kelowna, BC V1Y 7S6  
P: 1-866-566-7233  
E: contact@technicalssafetybc.ca  
W: technicalssafetybc.ca

#### Liquor & Cannabis Regulation Branch

The Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch regulates British Columbia's liquor industries and private retail non-medical cannabis industries. Restaurants, bars and pubs serving liquor, liquor manufacturers, liquor retail stores, and private cannabis retail stores require licences.

#### Liquor & Cannabis Regulation Branch Office

400-645 Tyee Road, Victoria, BC V9A 6X5  
P: 1-866-209-2111 (toll free)  
E: lclb.lclb@gov.bc.ca

### Once the previous steps have been confirmed and completed, you can:

- Apply for a building, fire sprinkler, or plumbing permit for any renovations that you are planning.
- Apply for a Business Licence.
- Apply for a Sign Permit.

## Other Important Information:

**Before you buy or lease a location:** Before you secure a location for your business or decide to operate a home-based business, it is vital to conduct a business name search, register your proposed company name, prepare a business plan, and secure financing. Use the resources below for more information:

**BizPal:** BizPal is an online service that simplifies the business license and other compliance regulation process for entrepreneurs, governments, and other compliance regulation processes.

**OneStop Business Registry:** If your business is not registered, visit the OneStop Business Registry website to have your name and company registered in BC.

**Greater Westside Board of Trade:** The Greater Westside Board of Trade can help you to grow and promote your business by advocating opportunities, economic sustainability, and collaboration among Greater Westside businesses and various levels of government.

**Business Licenses:** The City of West Kelowna requires all businesses who operate within the City to hold and display a valid business licence each year. As part of a business licence application process, land use zoning, Fire Code and Building Code requirements will be reviewed to ensure that the business meets the appropriate regulations and safety requirements.

The City of West Kelowna has a three tiered licence fee system; with fees being pro-rated quarterly for new applications.

**Tier 1:** Annual fee of \$60.00, applies to most home based businesses and commercial/industrial office subleases.

**Tier 2:** Annual fee of \$135.00, applies to home based daycares, bed and breakfasts, and businesses in commercial and industrial locations, except subleases.

**Tier 3:** Annual fee of \$360.00, applies to pawn shops and pubs.

**Inter-Community Business Licence:** Annual fee of \$150.00 in addition to the business license fee. Businesses which operate in more than one community may be eligible for an Inter-Community Business Licence. This program allows businesses to purchase their municipal licence and only one additional licence, instead of having to purchase a licence with each municipality in which they operate.

**Home Based Businesses:** A standard home based business is one that operates within the principal residential dwelling. A home based business must hold a licence and comply with bylaw requirements. If any type of construction is required at the premises for which a business licence is being sought, the process may then also involve obtaining a Building Permit. Please note that Home Based Daycares are required to have Interior Health approval, as well as a mandatory inspection by the Fire and Building Departments.

## Contact Us:

### **Bylaws and Licensing**

*Phone: 778-797-8810*

*Email: [bylaws@westkelownacity.ca](mailto:bylaws@westkelownacity.ca)*

### **Fire Services:** Fire inspections

*Phone: 778-797-3200*

*Email: [fireinspector@westkelownacity.ca](mailto:fireinspector@westkelownacity.ca)*

### **Economic Development:** Business advising services

*Phone: 778-797-2215*

*Email: [economicdevelopmentofficer@westkelownacity.ca](mailto:economicdevelopmentofficer@westkelownacity.ca)*

### **Engineering:** Transportation development

*Phone: 778-797-8840*

*Email: [engineering@westkelownacity.ca](mailto:engineering@westkelownacity.ca)*

### **Development Services:** Land use inquiries, development permits, site services, zoning, property use

*Phone: 778-797-8830*

*Email: [dev.services@westkelownacity.ca](mailto:dev.services@westkelownacity.ca)*

### **Building Department:** Building, Safe Premises and Sign Bylaws, Building Permits, Building and Plumbing Inspections

*Phone: 778-797-8820*

*Email: [building@westkelownacity.ca](mailto:building@westkelownacity.ca)*

# Definitions and Frequently Asked Questions:

## Zoning (Land Use):

The Zoning Bylaw divides parcels of land into certain zones that regulate the use and density of land and the siting, size, and dimensions of buildings and structures allowed in a specific area. Zoning also establishes and promotes minimum standards for health, safety, convenience, and public welfare. Through the use of density parameters, zoning can prevent overcrowding of land and ensure appropriate building forms.

## Occupant Load:

The BC Building Code defines occupant load as meaning the number of people for which a building or part thereof is designed. The BC Building Code design occupant load is based on the intended use as determined by the designer. The occupant load determined under the Fire Code is the maximum number of people permitted in a space under any condition. When an occupant load is determined for the purposes of applying the BC Fire Code, it may be referred to as the operational occupant load. Occupant loads determined under the two codes will likely be different since they are determined for different reasons.

## Building Use:

Building use classifications categorize various intended use types of building spaces. Each building is designed to meet certain safety and BC Code regulations as set by their classification. Applicants will need to ensure their intended use conforms with the building use classification. If it is not certain how the building was designed, a code analysis by an engineer may be required, and some changes of use require Professional Engineer involvement. Building use class is different than zoning designation.

## When is a Development Permit required?

In general, a Development Permit is required for:

- Most new developments including industrial, commercial, institutional, and multi-family (two or more dwelling units)
- A new development when the property is located within a Development Permit Area designated in the Official Community Plan
- Development within environmentally-sensitive and riparian (waterfront) areas
- Changes to an existing Development Permit, except specified exterior modifications in permitted areas

## When is a Sign Permit required?

Anyone planning to place a sign on the exterior of a building or structure or on any property in the City must apply for a sign permit with Development Services. A sign permit is required for any fascia, projecting, or freestanding sign. Once submitted, the sign permit application will be reviewed for compliance with the City's Sign Bylaw. If the proposed sign meets the Bylaw requirements, a Sign Permit will be issued to allow for installation of the proposed sign.



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