



**NEW BUSINESS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**How do I know my desired location has the correct zoning for what I want to do?**

We recommend that you obtain zoning approval prior to signing a lease. You can inquire about the zoning of any property by calling (239) 574-0553 or email [planning@capecoral.gov](mailto:planning@capecoral.gov).

**Should I sign a lease without checking the zoning?**

No.

**How do I start my business in Cape Coral?**

Once your registered name is posted on the Division of Corporations website, you are ready to submit your Zoning Compliance application. Please follow the checklist on the first page of the application.

**How do I file a Legal Business Name and Fictitious Name?**

You will need to register your Legal Business Name with the Division of Corporations. If entity is a Corporation or LLC, and you are using a Fictitious Name (DBA), this must also be registered with the Division of Corporations.

You can register online at [www.sunbiz.org](http://www.sunbiz.org) or contact the Secretary of State at (850) 245-6058.

**What is a Change of Occupancy?**

A Change of Occupancy is when the previous tenant's business use is different from the new tenant's business use.

**Do I need a Change of Occupancy?**

This is determined by our Planning Division, in consultation with the Building Division, during the zoning approval process.

**How do I apply for a Change of Occupancy?**

Change of Occupancy applications are prepared by the Planning Division and submitted to the Building Division, even if no alterations are being done.

NOTE: A Change of Occupancy applies to the use of a building or unit only, per The Florida Building Code. This should not be confused with any process required by the City of Cape Coral Planning Division.

**Do I need a Fire Inspection?**

Yes, whenever you apply for a Zoning Compliance Certificate a fire inspection is required before we can issue the certificate. You may request a courtesy fire inspection prior to signing a lease by calling (239) 242-3264.



**How do I obtain my City of Cape Coral Business Tax Receipt?**

After your Zoning Compliance Certificate has been issued, our licensing department will contact you to complete your Business Tax Receipt.

Any questions regarding Business Tax Receipt please contact Licensing at (239) 574-0430 or [licensing@capecoral.gov](mailto:licensing@capecoral.gov).

**How do I obtain my Lee County Business Tax Receipt?**

Lee County Tax Collector  
1039 SE 9<sup>th</sup> Place  
Cape Coral, FL 33990  
PH: (239) 533-6000

**How do I obtain my retail alcohol license?**

To obtain a retail alcohol license you need to contact:  
ABT Licensing District Office  
2295 Victoria Ave. Suite 145 Fort Myers, FL 33901  
PH: (239) 344-0885

Once you receive your application you must bring the application to our Planning Division for zoning approval. Please allow 24 to 48 hours for review and approval.

**Do I need a permit for outdoor dining?**

Yes, for a new business or for an existing restaurant location, you must apply for an Outdoor Dining Permit with the Planning Division.

**Do I need a permit for a business sign?**

Yes, all businesses require a sign permit to be obtained through our Planning Division.

**Can I apply and install my business sign?**

No, business signs must be applied for and installed by a licensed sign contractor.

**When can I apply for a business sign?**

Sign permit can be applied for after Zoning Compliance application has been submitted.

**When can my sign be installed?**

After the sign permit has been issued.