



# Helpful Information for Businesses in San Bruno

CITY OF SAN BRUNO  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

San Bruno's Community Development Department is comprised of both the City's Planning and Building Divisions. The City of San Bruno Community Development Department provides efficient and proactive customer service to enhance the safety and quality of life for all citizens and acts as a catalyst for innovative economic development and public policy development. The Department is responsible for planning the physical development of the community, providing information to citizens, commissions, and developers regarding codes, ordinances and ensuring that new development is completed in compliance with City and State laws.

## FAQs for Opening a Business in San Bruno

Listed below are a number of frequently asked questions (FAQs) with responses that serve as a guide to individuals seeking to operate businesses with San Bruno.

### Opening a Business

#### 1. How can I check to ensure that my proposed business is permitted at a particular location?

The best way to obtain this information is to consult with a planner at the Community Development Counter. A quick conversation with a planner may validate whether or not a particular business is permitted at a specific location. Once you have determined that your business is permitted at a particular location you will need to obtain a business license from the City of San Bruno.

#### 2. What is a business license?

A business license is an annual fee for doing business within the incorporated area of the City of San Bruno. The San Bruno Municipal Code requires that you obtain a registration when you conduct any business activity within the City - even if your business is located OUTSIDE the city limits or you have a business registration from another city.

#### 3. Who needs a business license?

You need a business license in the City of San Bruno if:

- You are conducting any kind of business for profit or for your livelihood within the City of San Bruno.
- You have a fictitious business name certificate.
- You have a State Board of Equalization resale permit.
- You have a listing in the Commercial Directory Yellow Pages, Business White Pages, the newspaper, local business guides, real estate multiple listing books or any other similar listings
- You have a home based business.

#### 4. How do I get a business license?

Follow the steps listed below to obtain a business license:

- You may obtain a business license application at: City of San Bruno City Hall at 567 El Camino Real. The counter hours for the Finance Division are 8a.m. - 5p.m. Monday - Friday and by appointment. You may also receive an application by mail, fax or from the City website.
- Always check with our Planning Department to ensure that your business is permissible in the location you are considering, this includes home occupations.
- Fill out the application completely.
- Pay the required fee and return it along with your completed application to City Hall. Appropriate permits and/or approvals from Planning, Building, Police and/or any other department of the City may have to be secured before your business may start. All applicable federal, state, county and city laws, ordinances or regulations must be followed before your business may start.



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### 5. Can I start my business as soon as I pay the permit fee?

No. All the appropriate permits and/or approvals from Planning, Building, Police and/or any other City department may have to be secured before your business can start. All federal, state, county and city laws, ordinances and regulations must be complied with as well.

### 6. Can I open my business before the site inspection?

No. Your business location must be inspected by the necessary city departments before your license is issued and it is open to the general public. In certain circumstances, a prospective business location may not pass the initial inspection which could delay the issuance of your business license.

### 7. What is the fee for changes to an existing business license?

If the ownership changes, the business registration is not transferable and you will need to apply for a new business registration and pay the appropriate fees. There is no charge to change a mailing address or business name on a business registration. If your business address is changing, it will require new zoning clearance and payment of zoning clearance fees. Business registration fees are non-refundable.

### 8. How long does my business license last?

Your business registration is a non-refundable annual fee. The business registration needs to be renewed annually. It is your responsibility to renew the business registration on time.

### 9. Do I need a permit to install a business sign?

Yes. Check with the Planning Department before using or installing ANY type of sign, flag or banner, even balloons. Permanent and temporary signs require review and approval prior to issuance of permits and installations.

### 10. I just purchased this business. Can I use the business license from the previous owner?

No. A business registration cannot be transferred or re-assigned. As a new owner, you need to apply for a business registration in your name.

### 11. What if I have more than one business or more than one location?

If you own more than one business, a separate business license is required for each type of business and for each location.

### 12. How do I schedule a site inspection?

New businesses often require site inspections by multiple city departments. You will need to contact the different departments directly to schedule the appropriate inspections. Please call (650) 616-7020 to schedule an inspection with a building inspector. Please do not attempt to schedule an inspection by a building inspector by calling the inspector directly.

## Starting Construction

### 13. What is a Tenant Improvement?

When a new business moves into an existing tenant space and interior alterations or additions (both structural and nonstructural) are proposed to the commercial or industrial space. This applies to new buildings after completion of the shell construction or when an existing business changes or modifies its use and/or expands within an existing building.



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### 14. Do I need a building permit to construct tenant improvements?

A building permit is required for any proposed alterations or additions to the interior elements of an existing space which includes building components, electrical, mechanical and plumbing fixtures and equipment. **OR** When a change in the permitted use ("Change in Use") or an increase in the permitted number of occupants ("Occupant Load") is proposed. The Community Development Department's Building Division is only one of the departments and/or agencies that may be involved in the approval process. Depending on the scope of your project, multiple departments and agencies could be involved in the approval process.

### 15. How do I apply for a building permit?

To apply for a tenant improvement permit application, please visit our Community Development Department Customer Service Counter located at 567 El Camino Real.

### 16. What does a complete tenant improvement permit application package consist of?

A complete tenant improvement permit application package consists of the following:

1. A completed tenant improvement permit application.
2. Three copies of a Plot/Site Plan showing the general layout of the existing building site, location of the tenant improvement, address, and an accessible path of travel from accessible parking and public transportation to accessible entrance(s).
3. Three copies of construction plans and details, including but not limited to; floor plan, exiting plan, California accessibility requirements and details, CALGreen requirements, reflected ceiling plan, framing details, lighting plan, electrical/plumbing/mechanical plans, and other applicable detail sheets.
4. Two sets of Title 24 energy compliance documents when changes are proposed to the mechanical system, lighting or building envelope.
5. A completed Hazardous Materials Questionnaire (If you answer "Yes" to any of the items in Part II or III, you must obtain approval from the appropriate County office as listed under Part II or III of the Questionnaire.)
6. Food service requires County Health Department approval prior to issuance of the building permit.
  - Apply at County Health Department for their plan review.
  - Where oil separator/grease interceptors are required, obtain approval from the City's Public Services Department for type/size proposed.

### 17. What is the typical plan review process and time?

After a Community Development Department Technician verifies that the application package is complete, and you pay the Plan Check Fees, they will forward a set of plans/documents to each of the departments/divisions; Building Safety, Planning, Public Services and Fire. Approval from all departments/divisions is required prior to permit issuance. The plan check process is then tracked in our Automated Tracking System and the project is assigned a standard turn-around-time. The standard turn-around-time for an initial review is 10 calendar days. The standard turn-around-time for follow-up reviews (rechecks) is 5 calendar days.

### 18. What's happens after my tenant improvement plans are approved and when can I start construction work?

After you obtain all the required approvals and pay the Permit Fee, a Community Development Department Technician will issue you a building permit. Now you can start construction. At certain stages of the construction, your contractor must request an inspection from Building Safety. The following list represents the typical sequence of required inspections for a Tenant Improvement:

1. Demolition.
2. Installation of under slab/ ground plumbing and electrical.
3. Foundation placement of reinforcement steel (rebar).



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4. Interior wall framing and rough electric, plumbing & mechanical.
5. T-Bar ceiling and rough trades (electrical, plumbing & mechanical).
6. Drywall nailing.
7. Utility Release of electrical and or gas service.
8. Final Inspection.
9. After all required inspections are approved and required approvals from other divisions and/or departments are obtained, our Building Inspector will notify the utility company to release the electric meter and a Certificate of Occupancy will be issued. The issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy authorizes you to occupy and use the facility based on the permitted use shown on the Certificate of Occupancy.

### 19. What disability accessibility upgrades are typically required (California Title 24 and ADA)?

One of the evaluations that Building Safety conducts is verification of conformance with applicable Disabled Access requirements as it applies to existing buildings and tenant improvements in existing buildings. Per State law (California Building Standards Code - Title 24), existing buildings and facilities must comply when alterations, additions or repairs are to be made. Verification of compliance includes:

1. The area of remodel, alteration, addition or repair.
2. A primary entrance to the building or facility; the path of travel to the area of remodel, alteration, addition or repair.
3. Sanitary facilities serving the area of remodel, alteration, addition or repair.
4. Drinking fountains serving the area of remodel, alteration, addition or repair.
5. Public telephones serving the area of remodel, alteration, addition or repair.
6. Accessible parking and path of travel to accessible entrances.

Small projects (2015 construction valuation up to \$147,863) may qualify for an unreasonable hardship exception. See [Application for Unreasonable Hardship Exception, Form](#). Granting an unreasonable hardship exception does not exempt all non-complying features. You still need to spend an amount equal to 20% of the project cost, and only that amount, on making some or all of the non-complying features comply. Existing non-complying features that will cost more than 20% of the project cost to make them comply, or will push the cumulative cost above the 20% limit, may qualify for an exemption. Your plans must show those accessibility features that will be brought to compliance and those existing non-complying features that may qualify for an exemption. For additional information or clarification contact our Chief Building Official at (650) 616-7020.

### 20. When can I submit my application or speak with a staff member?

The Community Development Department is open 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday and remains staffed during lunch hours. During these hours we can answer questions, accept applications and plans checks for review, and accept re-submittals and revisions.

#### Community Development Contact Information

Address	San Bruno City Hall, 567 El Camino Real	
Planning Division	Voice:(650) 616-7074 Fax: (650) 873-6749	
Building Division	Voice:(650) 616-7076 Fax: (650) 873-6749	
Counter Hours	Monday - Friday	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM