

Business Registration Checklist

A general checklist to legally register a new business step by step.

Choose a legal structure

- Compare common structures such as sole trader, partnership and company.
- Weigh liability protection against complexity and cost.
- Consider how each structure is taxed.
Tax treatment varies by country and state — confirm with your official authority.
- Decide on ownership shares if you have co-founders.
- Confirm the structure suits your growth and funding plans.
- Get professional advice if the choice is unclear.
This is general guidance, not legal or tax advice.

Choose and check your name

- Brainstorm names that fit your brand and are easy to recall.
- Search the official business registry for name availability.
Naming rules and registries differ by jurisdiction.
- Check trademark databases for conflicts.
- Confirm a matching domain name is available.
- Check social media handle availability.
- Reserve the name if your jurisdiction allows it.

Register the business

- Identify the correct authority to register with for your location.
- Gather the required documents and owner details.
- Complete and submit the registration application.
- Pay any registration fees.
- Register a trading or doing-business-as name if needed.
- Save your registration confirmation and reference numbers.

Get your tax ID

- Apply for a federal or national tax identification number such as an EIN.
The name and process vary by jurisdiction — check your official tax authority.
- Register for any regional or state tax accounts that apply.
- Register for sales tax or VAT if your sales require it.
- Register as an employer if you plan to hire staff.
- Note your filing deadlines and obligations.
- Store your tax registration details securely.

Licenses and permits

- List the licenses your industry typically requires.
- Check local, regional and national permit rules.
Requirements vary widely by location and sector — verify with each authority.
- Apply for any general business operating license.
- Apply for specialized permits such as food, health or signage.

- Confirm zoning rules allow your activity at your location.
- Note renewal dates so licenses don't lapse.

Bank account and finishing up

- Gather the documents your bank requires to open an account.
- Open a dedicated business bank account.
- Set up a payment processor to accept customer payments.
- Arrange any required business insurance.
- Set up bookkeeping or accounting from the start.
- File copies of all registration documents in one place.