



STARTING OR OPERATING A BUSINESS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Starting a Business

All businesses in the Town of Bonavista require a permit to operate. Before making an application for a permit, there are several things you should know and prepare for as the requirements vary depending on the type of business you wish to operate and the zoning of the proposed business location.

Where to submit your application:

Completed application forms can be dropped off in person at the Town Office at 95 Church Street, faxed to 709-468-2495 or emailed to echo@townofbonavista.com

Commercial Tenants

Any application which involves renovations and/or the change of use to a building must comply with provincial requirements or be eligible for an exemption. Service NL processes approvals and conducts inspections on behalf of several provincial departments. Some of the approvals which fall under the responsibility of Service NL include building accessibility; fire, life & safety; food establishment and liquor licensing.

Your application will be forwarded to Service NL (Government Services). The Town requires their approval and/or exemption if you are intending on any of the following:

- Opening a new business
- Exterior Renovations
- Changing the type of use of a building

Please note that prior to a Business Permit being issued by the Town, the following information is required:

- Business Permit Application Form with all supporting documentation
- Government Services Certificate of Approval and/or Exemption (if applicable)
- Government Services Building Inspector's Order of Acceptance (if applicable)

Building Accessibility and Fire, Life & Safety Plan Review application forms are available online at <http://www.servicenl.gov.nl.ca>

Home-based Businesses

Depending on the nature of your business and if you have clients who visit the home, an application may need to be made to Government Services for their approval and/or exemption before a permit to operate can be issued by the Town.

Please contact the Town Office and Service NL for more information on home offices (no clients on-site) and/or home occupations (clients on-site).

Prior to a Business Permit being issued by the Town, the following information is required:

- Business Permit Application Form with all supporting documentation
- Government Services Certificate of Approval and/or Exemption (if applicable)
- Government Services Building Inspector's Order of Acceptance (if applicable)

If you are a tenant in a rental dwelling, the property owner must sign your application.

- Business Permit Application Form with all supporting documentation
- Government Services Certificate of Approval and/or Exemption (if applicable)

Discretionary Uses:

Depending on the zoning of your proposed business location, your business may or may not be permitted. Please consult the Town of Bonavista Plan for zoning and discretionary uses.

Signs:

If you are planning on erecting an exterior sign other than the building façade, please complete and submit a Sign Application Form to the Town Office for approval prior to placement. Please refer to our Permit Rates for applicable sign permit fees.

Heritage Structures and Heritage Districts:

Any application which involves renovations and/or the change of use to a building in a heritage building or district must comply with Municipal Heritage Regulations and/or Policies. Please note that your application may be required to be reviewed by the Heritage Advisory Committee to ensure that Heritage Guidelines and Policies are followed.

Application Processing Time:

Applicants should allow adequate time for the application process, particularly if other government agencies are involved. It is not unusual for a full application review process to take 6-8 weeks. Please be advised that every effort is made by Town staff to ensure your proposed occupancy date is met. However, the length of time involved in processing an application can vary depending on the application type and your requirements from the Town or other government agencies.

Occupancy Permit Fees & Business Tax:

The minimum Business Permit fee depends on the classification of your business, please refer to the Tax Rates for more information on applicable fees.

For business tax purposes, the Municipal Assessment Agency (MAA) will visit the business to complete an assessment. The MAA provides professional, independent property assessments throughout Newfoundland and Labrador in accordance with the [Assessment Act, 2006](#). The Assessment Act is legislation that provides rules and procedures for assessing commercial and residential properties. More information on the MAA can be found on their website: <https://maa.ca/>

Relocating a Business

A Business Permit is required to be issued by the Town before you relocate and re-open your business. Application forms can be dropped off in person at the Town Office at 95 Church Street, faxed to 709-468-2495 or emailed to echo@townofbonavista.com

Depending on the zoning of the building and/or if you plan to complete interior renovations, exterior renovations, erect new signage, etc., additional application steps may be required. See “Starting a Business” above.

There is no fee associated with the Occupancy Permit if you are relocating your business; provided you are remaining under the same legal entity name. For business tax purposes, the Town requires written confirmation of the day business operations ceased from the existing location. The Municipal Assessment Agency will assess the new tenant space and your business taxes will be adjusted accordingly by the Accounts Receivable Department.

Closing a Business

The Town requires written confirmation of the day on which the business ceased to operate. If necessary, your business taxes will be adjusted accordingly by the Accounts Receivable Department. If you have any questions regarding your Business Tax, please contact A/R at 709-468-7747.

Street Vendors

A Street Vendor is an individual or business peddling, vending, selling, or displaying for sale on a seasonal or one-time basis any merchandise or food that is presented from a mobile setting including a vehicle, cart, tent, table, or stand (non-permanent structure).

A Street Vendor **can not open or operate** until all appropriate approvals have been granted and a vendor permit is obtained from the municipality. Application forms can be dropped off in person at the Town Office at 95 Church Street, faxed to 709-468-2495 or emailed to info@townofboanvista.com