



## CITY OF BELL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BUSINESS LICENSE INFORMATION

### ESTABLISHING A NEW BUSINESS IN BELL:

1. What is a "business license"? A business license is a permit issued by a public agency, such as the City of Bell, which authorizes individuals or companies to establish and conduct business within the agency's jurisdiction.
2. Who needs to obtain a business license? Anyone operating a business in Bell must obtain a business license. Also, businesses must comply with the City's Municipal Codes which are available at City Hall for review. Businesses exempted by State or Federal statute are not required to obtain a business license; however, proof of exemption is needed. Business licenses are non-transferable and expire if there is a change in ownership.
3. How may I obtain a business license? To obtain a new business license you must complete the Business License Application Packet available at Bell City Hall. Once the packet is complete, please submit it to the Business License Department, at City Hall.

NOTE: Prior to signing a lease or occupying a new location, prospective business owners should verify the zoning classification with the Planning Department and submit a Business License Application to prevent any unnecessary financial risk.

4. What type of *IDENTIFICATION* do I need to provide the City when I submit my business license application? All business applicants must provide Proof of Owner's Identity including: A) Sole Proprietors must demonstrate a California Driver License or Identification; or Matricula Consular; B) Partnerships must demonstrate a CA Driver License or Identification for both owners; and C) Corporations must demonstrate "Articles of Incorporation" and a CA Drivers License or identification for the company president or responsible party
5. What type of *DOCUMENTS* do I need to provide the City when I submit my business license application? All new business owners must submit the following: 1) Business License Application; 2) Certificate of Occupancy Application; 3) Statement of Intended Use Application; 4) California Sellers's Permit for Retail Businesses Only; 5) Health Permit for Restaurants, Grocery, and Food Related Businesses only; and 6) Submit a copy of an Official Statement of Fictitious name.
6. How much does it cost to process a business license application? It costs an applicant \$200 to process a new business license application which includes a \$100 Business License Application fee and a \$100 Certificate of Application fee.
7. What does the City do with the business license revenue collected? These revenues are deposited into the City of Bell General Fund account. A copy of the City's budget can be reviewed online on the City of Bell website at [www.bellcityclerk.org/publicrecords/](http://www.bellcityclerk.org/publicrecords/) or at the City Clerk's Counter.

### BUSINESS LICENSE RENEWALS:

8. How do I renew my business license? At the beginning of the calendar year, the City will mail all Business Owners a Business License Renewal Form including a pre-printed fee which is based on the gross receipts generated by each respective business. A Business License Tax Sheet is included.
9. When is the annual business license renewal due? Annual business licenses expire on December 31 of each calendar year. Renewals are mailed to the business owners on the third week of January. Payment is due to the City prior to April 16, 2012.
10. How does the City calculate the fees for the annual *Business License Renewal*? According to Bell Municipal Codes, the business license fee tax is based on gross receipts. The City also factors an annual cost of living adjustment based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the current year, which may fluctuate year-to-year.
11. Why do businesses need to provide Income Tax Returns to the City? Similar to other cities, the City of Bell needs to verify that the reported gross receipts are consistent with that which is reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

### OTHER GENERAL QUESTIONS:

12. Why does it take so long for a Provisional License to become Permanent? The issuance of a provisional license is a joint certification process between Los Angeles County Fire Department and the City of Bell. While the City of Bell issues this provisional license within 15 business days; the County of Los Angeles is often delayed, which prolongs the issuance of a permanent license.
13. I've purchased an existing business in Bell. How do I register as the new owner? If you have purchased an existing business in Bell, a new Business License Package must be submitted to the City along with one of the following; A) Original notarized bill of sale; B) Original notarized transfer letter; or C) An original escrow document. Also, the existing business must be closed by prior owner.
14. What is the process for moving my business to a different location within the City? The process for changing a business address is the same as applying for a new business. A new Business License Application must be submitted, along with an address change fee of \$5. Also, a new Certificate of Occupancy application must be submitted along with a fee of \$100.

15. How would I change the name of an existing Bell business? The process to change the name of an existing Bell business is as follows; 1) Fill out a new Business License Application and pay a "name change" fee of \$5; and 2) Return the original business license issued by the City.
16. How do I obtain a Business License to work from my home, otherwise known as a Home Occupancy License? To obtain a Home Occupancy License you must; 1) Submit a Business License Application with a fee of \$100; 2) Submit a Certificate of Occupancy application with a fee of \$100; 3) Submit a Home Occupancy Affidavit; and 4) Submit a copy of an Official Statement of Fictitious name.
17. How do I change my business' signage? A Commercial Sign Review will be required for a new business sign or a change to an existing business sign. You will also have to submit a fee that varies on the signage you plan to install. See the Planning Department for information and fees.
18. How do I obtain the following:
  - A) California Sellers Permit? State Board of Equalization at 12440 E. Imperial Highway, Suite 200, Norwalk, CA 90650 or call (562) 466-1694.
  - B) Health Permit? LA County Health Licensing Facility at 245 S Fetterly Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90022 or call (323) 780-2272.
  - C) Fictitious Business Name? LA County Register Recorder/County Clerk at 12440 E. Imperial Hwy, # 1007, Norwalk, CA 90650 or call (562) 462-2177.
  - D) Federal Tax ID number? Apply by calling the IRS at (800) 829-4933 or by fax, mail or Internet at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).
  - E) California State Tax ID number? Contact the Employment Development Department at (916) 654-8706 or view their website at [www.edd.cagov](http://www.edd.cagov).