



# STEPS TO OPEN YOUR BUSINESS IN SANTA MONICA



## Step 1:

Before you sign a lease, please contact the **City Planning Division** to confirm:

- a) The proposed business is permitted in the zoning district, and
- b) It meets the parking requirements.\*



## Step 2:

Will the business require physical alterations to the building, or interior, including signage?

If yes...



## Step 3:

Apply for a **Business License** and applicable local regulatory permits. Call (310) 458-8745 for an application, or apply online:

[www.smgov.net/BusinessLicense/](http://www.smgov.net/BusinessLicense/)



## Step 4:

Congratulations! Once your business license certificate is issued and you are compliant with all applicable local, state and federal regulations, you may open for business.



## Step 5:

If you have 50+ employees, you will need to submit an emission reduction plan to the City's Transportation Demand Management team. For more information: [smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Transportation/Employers/](http://smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Transportation/Employers/) or call (310) 458-2201 ext. 2344 or ext. 8956.



## Step 6:

Now that you're open, we encourage you to check out these free business resources: a) Go to [GoSaMo.org](http://GoSaMo.org) to help get your employees to work. b) Sign up to [BuyLocalSM.com/signup](http://BuyLocalSM.com/signup) to promote your business in the community + reach the locals! c) Take steps to green your business by visiting [sustainableworks.org/programs/business](http://sustainableworks.org/programs/business). d) Learn more about the city where you work by signing up to an "I am SM" workshop: [santamonica.com/iam](http://santamonica.com/iam). e) For additional business/employee resources & info: [smgov.net/Business](http://smgov.net/Business) + [SantaMonicaAlliance.com](http://SantaMonicaAlliance.com).



**Planning Approval** may be as simple as an Over-the-Counter (OTC) permit, or may require approval(s) from the City's Architectural Review Board (ARB), Landmarks Commission (LC) and/or Planning Commission (PC). Note: if the property is located in the Coastal Zone, then Coastal Commission approvals may also be required.

If a **Building Permit** is required, the plans must be prepared by a licensed architect or engineer (or designer, depending on the proposed improvements) and approved by various divisions/departments before a building permit can be issued. Prior to applying for a building permit, ensure that all land use approvals from Planning (CUP, ARB, etc.) have been obtained. Contactor will be required to have a City of SM Business License. For more information, including submittal requirements and plan check processing times:

[smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Permits/Plan-Review/](http://smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Permits/Plan-Review/)

Plans may be submitted and processed online through the City's **Electronic Plan Review** system. \*\*

- For **Planning** requirements/questions: (310) 458-8341
- For **Building + Safety** code requirements/questions: (310) 458-8355, press option 1, then option 0.
- For **Plan Check** submission, routing & permit process enquiries, contact Permit Services: (310) 458-8355 press option 1, then option 3 to speak to a permit specialist
- For **Inspection Requests** (AFTER building permit is issued): (310) 458-2202.

*The initial plan check review is 3-5 weeks, and recheck is 2 weeks depending on the size and scope of the project.*

\*Contact the **City Planning Division** at (310) 458-8341 or visit [smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Zoning/](http://smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Zoning/) to verify zoning and confirm permitted uses and parking requirements. Some business operations may also require a Conditional Use Permit (CUP).

\*\* For **Electronic Plan Review** assistance, call (310) 458-8355 or email: [eplans@smgov.net](mailto:eplans@smgov.net). If you prefer to meet with staff, the City's Public Counter is open 8:00AM – 5:00PM weekdays (closed alternate Fridays). Location: City Hall, 1685 Main Street, Room 111 Santa Monica, CA 90401. For customers pulling permits or paying fees, please arrive 1.5 hours before the counter closes to allow enough time.