

City Fact Sheet



Resources for Starting a Business

Before you sign a lease or purchase property

Contact Debbie Brenner, Associate Planner for the City, to schedule an on-site Pre-Lease meeting- (360) 487-7894 or debbie.brenner@cityofvancouver.us Obtain City of Vancouver Business License/Special License and State of Washington Business License

**Pre-lease meetings are subject to staff availability and focus on businesses locating in downtown*

[Obtain City of Vancouver Business License/Special License and State of Washington Business License](#)

Business and Special Licenses

- The State of Washington has business licensing requirements, and partners with the city to create a one-stop-shop where you can apply for, or renew, both your state and city licenses, if not exempt. For more information about city business license requirements, including exemption criteria, and links to the state's licensing website, visit: [Business and Special Licenses](#).
- The City of Vancouver requires any firm that conducts business in the city to either (1) hold a valid city business license, or (2) claim an exemption from the city business license, if qualified. Apply for both State and City business licenses through the [State Business Licensing Service](#).
 - Business License Application fee: \$125 base fee + \$60 per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee
 - If the business estimates earning less than \$12,000 in annual gross receipts, it may claim an exemption from the Business License by filing a Determination of [Exemption Checklist](#). For more information about Business License exemptions, contact Jack Allemang at (360) 487-8410 option 3 or email: business.licenses@cityofvancouver.us
- Business Licenses are valid for 1 year from date of issuance; annual renewal is required

www.cityofvancouver.us

(360) 487-8600 | WA Relay 711

415 W. 6th St. | PO Box 1995, Vancouver, WA 98668-1995

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Home Occupation Permits

- A business that is conducted from a residence located in the city limits is required to hold a valid Home Occupation Permit issued by the city's Community & Economic Development Department (CEDD). For more information about home occupation requirements, contact Sandy Wozny at (360) 487-7820, email: sandy.wozny@cityofvancouver.us, or visit: [Home Occupation Permit](#).
 - Cost for a home occupation permit is \$140.00 annually

Submit Building and Planning Permit & Approval Applications

Land Use/Planning Approval Process

- Design Review is required for all major façade improvements and signs in the Downtown Design Area
 - Application- [Land Use Preliminary Application \(LUP\)](#)
 - Development review fee: \$421.00
 - Review period: Depends on complexity but typically two weeks or less
 - Submit sign and façade improvements together in one design review application
- Site Plan Review is required for building additions and permanent mobile vending units locating on private property
 - Application- [Land Use Preliminary Application \(LUP\)](#)
 - Development review fee: \$967.00
 - Review period: Type I Review- Approximately 40 days

Commercial Tenant Improvement Permit (renovations to interior space):

- A commercial building permit is required for interior renovations/tenant improvements to the space
 - Building permit application- [Commercial, Multi-Family, Industrial \(CMI\)](#)
 - Contractor(s) are required to have valid State of Washington contractor's license
 - Building permit fee: based on valuation of improvements (see Building Permit Fee Chart)
 - Review Period: Determined by permit specialist at time application received
 - Permit fees and any applicable system development charges are due at time the permit is issued



To request other formats, please contact:
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Rebecca.kennedy@cityofvancouver.us



Signage Permit

- New signage requires a separate sign permit
 - Sign permit application- [Commercial, Multi-Family, Industrial \(CMI\)](#)
 - Development standards: Exterior Signage may not exceed 12% of the building elevation; Signage on windows is allowed but may not cover more than 50% of the total area of the window; Up to 2 sandwich boards are allowed.
 - Development review fee: \$239.00 non-illuminated; \$278.72 illuminated
 - Review period: See a permit specialist in the permit center; Often can be done same day that application is received; if it requires design review, may take up to 2 weeks.

Fire Protection Permit(s) (fire alarm, fire sprinklers) *Contractors shall be endorsed by the Vancouver Fire Marshal's

Office- See Listing of Endorsed Companies

- New fire protection systems require a building permit
 - Building permit application- [Fire Alarm, Fire Protection, Fire Sprinkler \(FRI\)](#)
 - Building permit fee: based on valuation of improvements (see Building Permit Fee Chart)
 - Review period: Determined by permit specialist at time application received
- For Restaurants that need to install or update a hood vent system:
 - Must use an endorsed contractor per the Listing of Endorsed Companies above, under Fire Protection Permits
 - Submit fire suppression plans with Fire Alarm, Fire Protection, Fire Sprinkler (FRI) permit application and with Commercial, Multi-Family, Industrial (CMI) permit application
 - The plan should include: an affidavit from an endorsed contractor certifying that the system complies with current code requirements and a complete listing of the equipment and type of fire suppression system that will be used.



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Systems Development Charges (SDC)

- System Development Charges help offset the impacts of new development on City infrastructure like sewer and water systems. When leasing or purchasing a commercial space, additional SDC's may be assessed depending on the use.
- For Restaurants, SDCs are calculated based on indoor seat count. SDC credits are given for SDCs paid by previous tenants/owners. For example, if SDCs for 30 seats was already paid, and the new restaurant will have 45 seats, the new tenant will pay SDCs for 15 seats.
- Fee Calculation: based on total indoor seats, approximately \$250 p/seat.
- The City recognizes that SDCs constitute a substantial upfront cost for new business owners. A sewer surcharge program is available for eligible tenants, which allows them to lease capacity rather than purchasing it up front. Lease payment is attached to monthly utility bills and is calculated as a percentage of the total SDC assessment. Please see program flyer for additional details and instructions to apply.

Contact Information & Additional Resources

City of Vancouver Business Development Contacts:

Zoning, Site Plans and Special Use Permits

(360) 487-7803

<http://www.cityofvancouver.us/ced/page/permit-and-development-applications>

Building Permits and Fees

(360) 487-7802

<http://www.cityofvancouver.us/ced/page/permit-and-development-applications>

Building Code and Plan Review

(360) 487-7828

<http://www.cityofvancouver.us/ced/page/building-codes-and-regulations>

Engineering: Water and Sewer, System Development Charges

(360) 487-7804

<http://www.cityofvancouver.us/ced/page/engineering-services>



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City of Vancouver Special Licenses & Home Occupation Permits

(360) 487-8410 *option 3

business.licenses@cityofvancouver.us

<http://www.cityofvancouver.us/fms/page/business-and-special-licenses>

City of Vancouver (City Hall) Permit Center:

415 W. 6th ST. Vancouver, WA 98660

(360) 487 7804

permitcenter@cityofvancouver.us

City of Vancouver Fire Marshal's Office

(360) 487-7260

vanfmo@cityofvancouver.us

Contractors who provide services for fire alarm systems, fire sprinkler systems, or other fire protection systems must be endorsed by the Vancouver Fire Department. Complete listing is located here: <http://www.cityofvancouver.us/fire/page/fire-protection-contractors>

Additional Business Resources: resources for starting, locating & expanding your business

<http://www.cityofvancouver.us/ced/page/additional-business-resources>

City of Vancouver Parking Services

(360) 487-8650

parking@cityofvancouver.us

<http://www.cityofvancouver.us/ced/page/parking-services>

City of Vancouver Street Use & Right of Way Permits

<http://www.cityofvancouver.us/publicworks/page/street-use-right-way-permits>

Partner Agency Business Development Contacts

Clark County Public Health, Food Establishment Inspections & Permits

(360) 397-8001

<http://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/food/index.html>



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Clark County Maps Online: get property and building information through the County's online GIS system

<http://gis.clark.wa.gov/gishome/property/>

Clark County Green Business Program: resources for increasing the energy efficiency of your business, including workshops, technical assistance, and one-on-one support.

www.clarkgreenbiz.com

Columbia River Economic Development Council

Customer Service: (360) 694-5006

<http://www.credc.org/>

Washington State Liquor Control Board, Vancouver Office

Customer Service: (360) 664-9878

Licensing: (360) 664-1600

<http://www.liq.wa.gov/>

Washington Department of Labor & Industries

Vancouver Office: (360) 896-2300

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/>

Washington Business Licensing Service

(800) 451-7985

<http://www.bls.dor.wa.gov/>



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