



A Guide to Starting Your Business in Bedford County

Bedford County, Virginia

Starting Your Business

This publication is designed to provide information on a wide variety of resources available to new and existing businesses in Bedford County. Information on the responsibilities and regulations governing business in Virginia is also included. We hope you find this booklet helpful.

Starting a Business in Bedford is also available on the Bedford County Economic Development's website www.bedfordeconomicdevelopment.com.

Steps to Starting Your Business in Bedford County

Bedford County **requires no** Business License.

All individuals or organizations wishing to start a business in Bedford County must contact the County's Department of Planning and Zoning regarding zoning issues, the County's Commissioner of the Revenue regarding tax structure, and the County's Circuit Court regarding business name registration.

NOTE: Applicants formed as sole proprietor businesses are required to file at the local municipality at which the business will be located only. Applicants formed as legal entities other than a sole proprietorship are required to **FIRST** file their paperwork with the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) prior to filing with the local municipality. (These entities include General or Limited Partnerships, Corporations, Business Trusts, and Limited Liability Company). For more information on SCC filing, and/or to obtain a copy of the Virginia Business Registration Guide, go to www.scc.virginia.gov.

Sole proprietor businesses are not required to file with the Virginia State Corporation Commission.

Step One: Zoning Office

The first step in selecting a location for your business is to determine if that location is appropriately zoned for your business purposes or if it would require a special use permit or rezoning. In order to help determine if a location or lot is zoned for a particular use, input the specific address into the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) at:

<http://www.bedfordcountyva.gov/Res/GIS/index.htm> or obtain this information over the phone by calling the County's Planning Department at (540) 586-7616 and providing the lot address.

Home Occupation Permit

Home-based business must complete an *Application for a Home Occupation Permit*. (Note: The type of application to be completed depends on whether the home is in an urban (Type I) or rural/agricultural (Type II) area of the county). The applicant's signature on this application certifies that he/she agrees to comply with all Bedford County home occupancy permit regulations as set-forth by the Bedford County code.

Applicant Information Required:

1. Sketch with the layout of the dwelling providing the following:
 - a. Number of stories
 - b. Indicate the area and square footage for the portion of the dwelling to be used for the Home Occupation
 - c. Total square footage of finished area of dwelling
 - d. If an accessory building is to be used, the sketch should also reflect the following: layout of the accessory structure; number of stories; square footage of the area of the structure to be used for the Home Occupation.
2. Notarized owner authority letter in cases where the applicant is not the landowner. Fee of \$50.00 either paid in cash or check.

Occupancy Permit

Commercial businesses with development of fewer than 1000 sq. ft. are required to submit a *Plot Plan* prepared by a professional site planner as part of the application for applying for a zoning permit. See the *Plot Plan Checklist* for additional information. There is no fee associated with this permit.

Commercial businesses with development of over 1000 sq. ft are required to submit a *Site Plan* prior to approval of a zoning permit. The fee associated with this permit is \$300 plus \$10 per acre of development.

Applicant Information Required:

1. Applicant information and name of development

2. Date, scale and north point of plan
3. Lot size in acres or square feet and dimensions
4. Location, names of owners, and tax map numbers of adjacent properties
5. Physical features such as ground cover, natural watercourses, floodplain, etc.
6. Zoning and land use of all adjacent properties
7. All property lines and easements
8. All buildings, existing and proposed, and dimensions, floor area, and heights
9. Location, widths, and names of all existing or platted streets or other public ways within or adjacent to the development.
10. Dimensions and location of all driveways, parking space, and loading spaces
11. Notarized owner authority letter in cases where the applicant is not the landowner, certifying the owner is aware of the site plan requirements and will comply with local zoning laws.

NOTE: Prospective business owners may consult the *Bedford County Zoning Ordinance* for additional regulatory details. The ordinance can be obtained from the Bedford County Department of Planning's website <http://www.bedfordcountyva.gov/planning/index.htm> under the Zoning section. However, pertinent sections of the ordinance concerning small businesses and relevant forms and applications are listed below and can be downloaded as needed (to be made available on website and CD):

Section 30-79 Permitted Use Table by Zoning District

Article II Definitions of Uses for Classification

Application Requirements and Fees

Plot Plan Requirements (for developments under 1,000 square feet)

Site Plan Requirements (for developments 1,000 square feet or more)

Section 30-92 Screening, Landscaping, and Buffer Yards

Section 30-91 Off Street Parking, Stacking, and Loading

Section 30-93 Signs

Application for a Sign Permit

Section 30-19 Special Use Permits

Application for Rezoning/Special Use/Variance/Special Project Review

Section 30-82-3 Home Occupation, Type I and Type II

Application for a Home Occupation Permit

CONTACT INFORMATION

Bedford County Department of Planning

122 East Main Street, Suite G-03

Bedford, VA 24523

(540) 586-7616

Step Two: Commissioner of Revenue's Office

Bedford County **requires no** Business License.

Individuals or organizations starting a new business, should contact the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office to register their business and to receive information concerning the following:

Business Personal Property Tax – Equipment, furniture and tools on January 1st and used in a business are taxed as personal property tax. After registration, a form is mailed each year, which requests the type of equipment, date purchased and original cost. Depreciation is applied and the tax is based on a 20% ratio at a tax rate of \$8.50 per hundred (effective rate \$1.70).

Machinery and Tools Tax – Equipment used by a manufacturer owned on January 1st is taxed at the machinery and tools tax rate. Forms are mailed in January each year, requesting the type of equipment, date purchased and original cost. Depreciation is applied and the tax is based on a 20% ratio, at a rate of \$6.00 per hundred (effective rate \$1.20).

Merchants Capital Tax – Eliminated in 2011

Meals Tax – Meals tax of 4% is collected on all prepared foods and beverages and remitted each month on forms supplied by the Commissioner of the Revenue.

Lodging Tax – Lodging tax of 5% is collected from individuals who rent facilities for less than 30 days. Tax is remitted each month on forms supplied by the Commissioner of the Revenue.

Sales Tax – Forms are available in the Commissioner's office for registration of businesses collecting sales tax.

Virginia Withholding Tax – Forms are available in the Commissioner's Office for registration for employers to report withholding from employee wages.

Federal Employer Identification Number – Forms are available in the Commissioner's Office for registration to obtain this number.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Bedford County Commissioner of the Revenue
122 E. Main St., Ste 103
Bedford, Va. 24523
540-586-7621

Step Three: Circuit Court Clerk's Office

Once the business license application is submitted with the required fee, the applicant must register his/her Trade or Fictitious Name with the Bedford County Circuit Court Clerk's Office if the business will be operated under a name other than that listed on the business license application.

Register the Trade or Fictitious Name – Information Required

1. The trade name
 2. Name and address of the applicant
 3. Physical address of the business operation
 4. The entity type (sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation)
 5. Signature notarized or signed before Deputy Circuit Court Clerk
- Submit name registration form to the Circuit Court Clerk's Office with \$10.00 fee. Payment by cash, check or money order.
Corporations must also submit an attested copy of the trade name registration form to the State Corporation Commission.

Forms are available at the Bedford County Circuit Court Clerk's Office.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Bedford Circuit Court
123 East Main St., Suite 201
Bedford, VA 24523
(540) 586-7632

Permits and License Contact Information

Air Pollution Control Hazardous Materials Permits	Facilities emitting gases or particles. Facilities with air emission units (Incinerators, dry cleaners, certain fuel burners, etc). Facilities using/operating with any hazardous material.	Bedford County Department of Health Environmental Services Phone 540-586-7952 Virginia Dept. of Environmental Quality 434-582-5120 Bedford County Fire & Rescue 540-587-0700
Alcoholic Beverage Licenses	All selling alcoholic beverages.	Virginia ABC Board 804-213-4400
Building Permits	Anyone erecting or modifying building structures.	Bedford County Building Inspections 540-586-7616
Tax Structure – Personal Property, Real Estate, Sales Tax, Meals	All businesses located or operating in Bedford County are required to contact the	Commissioner of the Revenue's Office 540-586-7621

Tax, Business furniture, fixtures & Equipment, Machinery & Tools Tax	Commissioner of Revenue's Office in filing the applicable tax documents	
Certificates of Authority	Corporations doing business in VA but incorporated elsewhere.	Virginia State Corporation Commission 804-371-9733
Contractor Licenses	Practicing electrical, mechanical (heating, ventilation and air conditioning), plumbing and home improvement contractors.	Virginia Dept. of Professional & Occupational Regulation 804-367-8511
Electrical Permits	Those installing or replacing electrical equipment.	Bedford County Building Inspections 540-586-7616
Employer ID Number	Businesses required filing federal tax documents.	US Internal Revenue Service 800-829-1040 or 800-829-3676
Food Service Permits	All food establishments.	Bedford County Department of Health 540-586-7952 US Dept. of Agriculture 800-233-3935
Home Occupation Permit	Businesses located in residential dwellings.	Planning & Zoning Office 540-586-7616
Mechanical Permits	Those installing or replacing mechanical equipment.	Bedford County Building Inspections 540-586-7612
Plumbing Permits	Those installing or replacing plumbing equipment.	Bedford County Building Inspections 540-586-7616
Occupancy Permit	Those building new facilities for business use, changing the use of a building or changing the business of an existing commercial building.	Planning & Zoning Office 540-586-7616
State Occupation/Business License	Occupations and professions that require state licensure.	Various state agencies 804-786-0000
Trade Name Registration	Business operating under a trade or fictitious name.	Bedford County Circuit Court Clerk's Office 540-586-7632
Trademark Registration	Any person who owns/uses a trademark in Virginia.	Virginia State Corporation Commission 804-371-9051

Phone and Website Directory

Bedford County Circuit Court Clerk's Office

Trade Name Registration..... 540-586-7632

Bedford County Commissioner of the Revenue's Office

Tax Structure..... 540-586-7621

Bedford County Community Development

Building Inspections..... 540-586-7616

Zoning..... 540-586-7616

Addressing..... 540-587-5678

Bedford County Economic Development

Economic Development..... 540-587-5670

Bedford County Health Department

Environmental Services..... 540-586-7952

Bedford County Public Safety

Fire & Rescue..... 540-587-0700

US Internal Revenue Service

Employer ID Number..... 800-829-1040

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

Lynchburg Office..... 434-582-5120

Virginia Department of Taxation

Virginia Tax ID Number..... 804-367-8036

Virginia State Corporation Commission

SCC..... 800-552-7945

Bedford County

www.bedfordcountyva.gov

Bedford Co. Econ Development

www.bedfordeconomicdevelopment.com

Region 2000 Small Business Dev. Centre

www.lbdc.com

US Small Business Administration

www.sba.gov

US Dept. of Agriculture

www.usda.gov

US Internal Revenue Service

www.irs.gov

Virginia Dept. of Business Assistance

www.vdba.virginia.gov

Virginia Dept. of Environmental Quality

www.deq.virginia.gov

Virginia Dept. of Taxation

www.tax.virginia.gov

Virginia State Corporation Commission

www.scc.virginia.gov