

BUSINESS REGISTRATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



City of San Carlos Business Registrations

600 Elm Street
San Carlos, CA 94070
(650) 802-4213
businessreg@cityofsancarlos.org

1. What is a business registration?

A business registration is an annual tax for doing business within the incorporated area of the City of San Carlos. The San Carlos Municipal Code requires that you obtain a registration when you conduct any business activity within the City - even if your business is located OUTSIDE the city limits or you have a business registration from another city.

2. Who needs a business registration?

You need a business registration in the City of San Carlos if:

- You are conducting **any** kind of business for profit or for your livelihood within the City of San Carlos
- You have a fictitious business name certificate
- You have a State Board of Equalization resale permit
- You have a listing in the Commercial Directory Yellow Pages, Business White Pages, the newspaper, local business guides, real estate multiple listing books or any other similar listings
- You have a home based business

3. How do I get a business registration?

Follow the steps listed below to obtain or renew a business registration:

a) You must apply for a business registration. You can do this a few ways:

- You may apply **in person or through US mail** at:

City of San Carlos City Hall
Finance Division
600 Elm Street
San Carlos, CA 94070

The Finance Department counter hours are:

Monday – Friday, 9 am - 12 pm and 1 pm - 5 pm

- You may apply or renew **online**:
 - ✓ You may apply online at <http://bit.ly/2rUyGFO> for In Town Businesses
 - ✓ You may apply online at <http://bit.ly/2qbYMrA> for Out of Town Businesses
 - ✓ You may renew online at <http://bit.ly/2nWrNgc>

b) Fill out the all information on the form or online **completely**. Incomplete information provided can delay the approval process.

c) Pay the required fees.

- d) The application will be processed. Please see #7 for information on length of processing.
- e) Business registration fees are non-refundable.
- f) Always check with the City's Planning Department to ensure that your business is permissible in the location you are considering, including home occupations. planning@cityofsancarlos.org or (650) 802-4263

Appropriate permits and/or approvals from Planning, Building, Police and/or any other department of the City may have to be secured before your business may start. All applicable federal, state, county and city laws, ordinances or regulations must be followed before your business may start.

4. Do I need a business registration to sell pumpkins or Christmas trees once a year?

Yes, a business registration is required for a temporary business location to sell any vegetables, fruits or Christmas trees. Before a registration is issued the Planning Department will review all applications.

5. I am a solicitor/peddler, what must I do?

It is unlawful for any person to engage in commercial solicitation within the City without both a valid solicitation permit issued by the San Carlos Chief of Police and a valid business registration issued by the City. Solicitors must also review & comply with the "Do Not Knock" registry available on the city website or via the City Clerk.

After receiving a Solicitor's Permit, you must obtain a business registration from City Hall and pay the business registration fee. Once you have both documents in hand and have reviewed the "Do Not Knock" registry, then you may start soliciting. It takes approximately 3-6 weeks to obtain a solicitor's permit because a Live Scan criminal background check is required. ***Please refer to our Solicitors Information Packet for more information about obtaining a Solicitor's Permit.***

6. I want to do massage therapy in San Carlos. What do I need to do?

You must apply for a Massage Therapy Business Registration using the city Massage Therapy Business Registration Application. You must apply for a business registration and have a Live Scan criminal background check completed through the San Mateo County Sheriff's office. When the San Mateo County Sheriff's office has completed your Live Scan criminal background check, the city will release your business registration. The process can take 3-6 weeks or longer as a Live Scan criminal background check is required. ***Please refer to our Massage Therapy Information Packet*** for complete information about obtaining a Massage Therapy Business Registration.

7. Once I've applied for my business registration and paid the fee, how long before I receive the actual business registration?

This depends on the type and location of the business, required department approvals and permits, completeness of application, etc. For applications that require additional City review (Massage, Solicitation, etc.) the time frame can be several weeks but generally, applications are approved within 2-4 weeks. The business registration will be mailed to the mailing address you indicate on the application.

8. What is the fee to get a replacement copy of a business registration?

Please see the City Fee Schedule for the most current cost of a replacement copy.

9. What is the fee for changes to an existing business registration?

If the ownership changes, the business registration is not transferable and you will need to apply for a new business registration and pay the appropriate fees. There is no charge to change a mailing address or business name on a business registration. If your business address is changing, it will require new zoning clearance and payment of zoning clearance fees.

10. How long does my business registration last?

Your business registration is a non-refundable annual tax. The business registration needs to be renewed annually. You will receive a renewal notice 30 days before its expiration; however, it is your responsibility to renew the business registration on time even if the renewal notice is not received. Penalties are assessed for delinquent accounts, regardless of whether you received a renewal notice.

11. What happens if I pay late?

The penalty for a delinquent registration is 20% of the business registration fee applied every month being late until 100%.

12. What if my business is in my home?

You are still required to obtain a business registration if your residence is in San Carlos city limits. Check with the Planning Department to ensure that your business is permissible from your home as certain Home Occupation businesses are prohibited.

13. Can I start my business as soon as I pay the fee?

No. All the appropriate permits and/or approvals from Planning, Building, Police and/or any other City department may have to be secured before your business can start. All federal, state, county and city laws, ordinances and regulations must be complied with as well.

14. Are there any restrictions on where I do business?

Every business must meet zoning requirements to ensure that the business activity and site are compatible. BEFORE SIGNING any lease or rental agreement, we suggest that you check with the City's Planning Department to make sure your business activity is appropriate for the area's zoning and that it will not require a public hearing or special parking considerations. Call (650) 802-4263 or email planning@cityofsancarlos.org for additional information.

15. I have a wonderful idea for a great sign!

Check with the Building Department before using or installing ANY type of sign, flag or banner, even balloons. Permanent and temporary signs require review and approval prior to issuance of permits and installations.

16. How do I obtain a Fictitious Business Name?

The City does not issue Fictitious Business Names. You must file a Fictitious Name registration or a “doing business as” (dba) with the County of San Mateo if you are using a name other than your own. Contact the San Mateo County Clerk’s office at (650) 363-4712 or visit their website <http://www.smcare.org/clerk/fictitious/instructions.asp>

17. How can I pay for the business registration fee?

You may pay for a new registration or renewal online at the City website www.cityofsancarlos.org. If you pay via paper application, the application must be accompanied by a check, cash (in person), or money order payment. Please make the check payable to *City of San Carlos* and submit the fees and application in person or via mail, to City of San Carlos, Finance Department, 600 Elm Street, San Carlos, CA 94070. Visa or MasterCard are accepted.

18. What if I have more than one business or more than one location?

If you own more than one business, a separate business registration is required for each type of business and for each location.

19. I just purchased this business. Can I use the business registration from the previous owner?

No. A business registration cannot be transferred or re-assigned. As a new owner, you need to apply for a business registration in your name.

20. What do I need to do if my business is a nonprofit organization?

If your business is a nonprofit organization, it is exempt from the registration fee. However, tax-exempt organizations are required to provide proof of their nonprofit status in order to receive a business registration. They must provide a copy of the statement from the California Secretary of State or the Internal Revenue Service stating that the business has a nonprofit status.

21. Do state-licensed contractors also need a San Carlos business registration?

Any person licensed as a contractor by the State Contractor's Board must obtain a business registration if they are (1) conducting business in the City of San Carlos; or (2) based in the City, whether conducting business in or outside of the City.

22. Can I use my registration to do business in another city?

No. This registration is for doing business in the incorporated area of the City of San Carlos only. If you plan on doing business in another city, you must contact that city in order to obtain their requirements for a business registration.

23. What do I need to do to close my business?

Business registrations are NOT automatically canceled. When a business is sold, closed, or moved out of San Carlos, the business registration must be inactivated. You may send written notification via US mail or email at businessreg@cityofsancarlos.org. Please provide the date the business closed or sold and the name of the new owner, if applicable.

24. Who can I call with additional questions?

Finance Department
(650) 802-4213
businessreg@cityofsancarlos.org

25. Additional resources:

Federal Tax ID Number

If your business is a corporation or partnership, you need to apply for a Federal Tax ID Number.

Federal Building
450 Golden Gate Avenue, 1st Floor, Suite #5403
San Francisco, CA 94102
(800) 829-1040
www.irs.gov

State Tax Identification Number

If you will have employees, you need to obtain your Employer Identification Number or State Tax ID Number.

Employment Development Department
800 Capitol Mall, MIC 83
Sacramento, CA 95814
(888) 745-3886
www.edd.ca.gov/taxind.htm

Resale Number

When involved in selling, you need to get a Seller's Permit Number or Resale Number.

State Board of Equalization
121 Spear Street #460
San Francisco, CA 94105
(800) 400-7115
www.boe.ca.gov

Fictitious Business Name

You must file a Fictitious Name registration or a "doing business as" (dba) if you are using a name other than your own.

San Mateo County
County Clerk's Office
555 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063
(650) 363-4712
<http://www.smcare.org/clerk/fictitious/instructions.asp>
countyclerk@smcare.org

Selling Food Items

A health permit is required for businesses that dispense food to the public. A permit is needed before opening or being issued a business registration. Anything to do with food preparation is not allowed for home occupied businesses.

Environmental Board of Health
455 County Center, 4th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
(650) 363-4305
www.smhealth.org/environ/

Alcohol Beverage License

When selling any liquor, beer, or wine, you must obtain a permit.

Alcoholic Beverage Control Board
185 Berry Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 557-3660
www.abc.ca.gov

Planning Department

Before you buy or lease a building, check with the Planning Department to make sure that the proposed use is in conformance with the zoning for the property.

City of San Carlos Planning Department
600 Elm Street
San Carlos, CA 94070
(650) 802-4263
www.cityofsancarlos.org
planning@cityofsancarlos.org

Unincorporated Areas Business Licenses

San Mateo Tax Collector's Office
555 County Center, 1st Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
(650) 363-4142
www.sanmateocountytaxcollector.org
Taxmaster@co.sanmateo.ca.us

CA State Contractor's License Board

9812 Business Park Drive
Sacramento, CA 95827
(800) 321-2752 or (916) 255-3900
www.cslb.ca.gov

The Better Business Bureau

1000 Broadway #625
Oakland, CA 94607
(866) 411-2221
www.sanmateo.bbb.org

San Carlos Chamber of Commerce

For more information and additional business resources

San Carlos Chamber of Commerce
610 Elm Street, Suite 206
San Carlos, CA 94070
(650) 593-1068
www.sancarloschamber.org
staff@sancarloschamber.org