

Key Steps to Opening a New Business in the City of El Cajon

1. Confirm that the proposed use is allowed on the property you intend to lease/purchase. Please call Planning Division staff at 619.441.1741 to confirm. Provide them the address or parcel number and a description of the proposed use when you call.
2. If a conditional use permit is required, apply and obtain the permit, before establishing your business.
3. Obtain a business license and any applicable special operations permit to operate your business in El Cajon before establishing your business. Please call the Business License Inspector at 619.441.1668 to obtain needed applications. You may also download these applications from City's website.
4. Building permits are required for a change in use, and any electrical, plumbing, mechanical, or structural changes made to the property. Please contact the Community Development Department Building and Fire Safety Division at 619.441.1726, stop by their office, or review the Building and Fire Safety Division webpage to obtain appropriate application(s).
5. There are regulations governing the size and location of business signs. Many signs require both planning and building permit approval. Please call Planning Division staff at 619.441.1741 to determine the signing allowed for your business before hiring a sign contractor/designer.
6. A new establishment or new management of an existing establishment may display temporary advertising devices for a maximum period of 30 days. Permanent signing should be planned for in advance so that it can be installed within 30 days of a business opening.
7. Building improvements totaling \$80,000 or more may trigger site improvements related to storm water (including installing a covered trash enclosure) and ADA accessibility. Please contact the Public Works Department Storm Water Section at 619.441.1653 and the Public Works Engineering Section at 619.441.1653 to learn more about these regulations.