



CITY OF CAPITOLA

NEW BUSINESS WELCOME GUIDE

420 CAPITOLA AVENUE, CAPITOLA, CA 95010

<https://www.cityofcapitola.org/communitydevelopment/page/capitola-new-businesses>



Welcome to Capitola

We would like to welcome you as a new business owner in Capitola. We created this information guide to help make your transition as smooth as possible and offer a brief overview of common topics related to establishing a new business. We wish you success in your new endeavor! For more information, please follow the link or scan the QR code above to visit Capitola's New Business webpage for guidance on all the topics below and more.

Business License

The City of Capitola requires all organizations conducting business within city limits to have a business license. Each business license is valid for one calendar year (January-December). Business Licenses are issued by the Finance Department and annual fees vary depending on the type of business being conducted. If you are proposing a home-based business, a Home Occupation Permit will also be required.

Zoning Clearance

Each property in the City has a zoning designation that pre-determines the types of uses and activities that can be conducted at the location. Prior to signing a lease or entering into a purchase contract, please contact the Planning Department to ensure that the location is zoned for the proposed business activity and whether permits are required before opening the business. More intense land uses typically require a Conditional Use Permit. The Planning Department can investigate property permits and occupancy history. Parking requirements, change of use, and intensification of use are other questions that can be answered during this inquiry.

Eating and Drinking Establishments

If your business involves food or alcoholic beverage sales, in addition to obtaining Capitola permits, you will need to coordinate directly with the Santa Cruz County Department of Environmental Health and, if alcohol is proposed, the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to obtain permits and/or approvals.

Outdoor Dining

Outdoor dining is allowed in certain areas of the City but permits are required.

Tenant Improvements (TI)

New businesses often have a need to modify the interior or exterior of a new tenant space when moving in. Building Permits are typically required to ensure that zoning requirements, ADA, fire, structural safety standards and other building code standards are met. Please contact the Building Department to discuss permit requirements for any tenant improvement or building modifications being considered.

Exterior Alterations to Building Design

Most exterior alterations to commercial structures require a Design Permit before applying for a building permit. Planning Department staff can assist you in determining design review requirements.

Sign Permits

Most new and replacement signs that are permanent require permits. Permanent signs such as monument signs or wall signs have specific location and size requirements that are reviewed by the Planning Department during a plan check. The Building Department is responsible for reviewing electrical connections, structural design, and anchoring of new signs.

Temporary signs, such as banners, are permitted in specific locations or for limited durations with a planning permit. A-frame signs are prohibited in Capitola. Sidewalk signs are only allowed in the Capitola Village and are limited to a specific design that was authorized by the Planning Commission. Please contact the Planning Department prior to installing new signs.

Outdoor Display

Outdoor display is allowed in some commercial areas of Capitola with a Conditional Use Permit. Outdoor display is prohibited within the Capitola Village.

Outside Agency and Resources Contacts

Some municipal services such as environmental health, fire, water, and sanitation are provided by partner agencies. Also, there are additional resources in the region to assist new businesses. A list of those agencies and resources is on the Capitola New Business webpage.