

## other ZCP conditions

### What are other types of ZCP conditions?

#### *Occupancy Permit*

If you are locating your business in a building that has not previously had a tenant or if your use is a change in subclassification, you will need an Occupancy Permit. This permit is available at the Building Inspections Department. Come prepared with 2 copies of the floor plan (same as required for a Change of Use Permit).

#### *Handicapped Access*

In keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act, changing your use from one classification to another may also mean retrofitting your building for handicapped access.

## the next step

### My ZCP is approved. What's my next step?

#### *Occupational Tax License*

Anyone operating a business in the city needs an Occupational Tax License. This applies to you if you are a) opening a new business or a branch office within the city limits; or b) moving your business from one location to another within the city limits; or c) acquiring a local business through a change of ownership.

The license is available at the Finance Department and the fee varies, depending on your type of business. On the application form, you will need to supply a Federal Employer Identification Number or the social security number of the business owner, and the Fictitious Name of the business (or a signed exemption form).

The license must be renewed annually. The City will send a renewal notice each September 1, with payment due by October 1.

## related permits

### Are there any other permits related to starting a business?

#### *Sign Permits*

If you plan to put up a business sign, you will need a sign permit. Before purchasing a business sign, you should be aware that there are regulations that affect the size, location and types of signs allowed within the city limits. Depending on the type of sign, you may need a licensed sign contractor to apply for the sign permit for you.

#### *Building Permits*

If you plan to renovate or expand any portion of the exterior or interior of your building, you will need to meet building codes and obtain building permits. Depending on the type of construction, you may need a licensed contractor to apply for the building permits for you.

## where to get permits

#### **Zoning Compliance Permits** (no fee involved)

Call the [Planning Division](#) at (352) 334-5023, or stop by the Thomas Center B, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor (306 NE 6th Ave).

#### **Change of Use Permits, Occupancy Permits, Building Permits, Sign Permits** (fees involved)

Call [Building Inspections](#) at (352) 334-5050, or stop by the Thomas Center B, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor (306 NE 6th Ave).

#### **Occupational Tax License** (fee involved)

Call the [Finance Department](#) at (352) 334-5024 or stop by the Thomas Center B, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, (306 NE 6th Ave).

## City of Gainesville

guide to

# Starting a Business in Gainesville

To start a business in the city, you must get the necessary licenses and permits. Before purchasing or leasing a property for your business, you will need a:

- **Zoning Compliance Permit**
- **Occupational Tax License**

Depending on site specific issues identified during ZCP review, you may also need a:

- **Change of Use Permit**
- **Occupancy Permit**
- **Building and/or Sign Permits**

This brochure answers some common questions about the permitting process and lets you know where to begin.



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## where to begin

### **If I want to locate a business in Gainesville, where do I begin?**

If you have an address or tax parcel number for a potential property or building site, call the Planning Department at (352) 334-5023. Staff can do a preliminary check to see if your business appears compatible with the property's zoning.

If the zoning appears compatible, then your next step is to fill out a *Zoning Compliance Permit*. There is no fee or commitment involved.

If the zoning of the property does not appear compatible with the intended use, staff can give you information on compatible zoning districts or refer you to the appropriate office for assistance.

### **Why is it important to have a Zoning Compliance Permit?**

The Zoning Compliance Permit (ZCP) lets you know up front if there are any regulations or site specific issues that may affect your decision to lease or purchase a particular building/unit.

The ZCP review process verifies that a) your intended use is permitted in the zoning district; b) there is sufficient parking, as required by city codes, for the intended use; c) there are no site specific issues that may prohibit the intended use; d) the existing building is constructed in a way that is safe for the intended use; and e) the existing building, if applicable, meets federally mandated handicapped access requirements.

Through ZCP review, staff will also advise you if you need to be aware of additional permit requirements or regulations that apply to the intended use or site.

## important information

*The city strongly advises you not to enter into property lease/purchase agreements unless you have an approved ZCP or unless lease/purchase agreements are contingent on ZCP approval.*

### **What type of information do I need to fill out the ZCP form?**

You must know the address of the property, the square footage of the building and unit, the number of parking spaces available, and the previous use of the building. The realtor or property owner should be able to provide you with this data.

You must also provide a detailed description of the proposed use of the building/unit so that staff can properly classify the use.

### **What happens after I submit my ZCP form?**

After you complete your ZCP form, it is reviewed by staff. The review process usually takes 3-5 working days.

#### *Steps in Zoning Compliance Review*

1. Planning staff determines if the proposed use is allowed by the zoning or is affected by any other land development codes.
2. If the use is not allowed, you will be contacted by phone or mail that the permit is denied.
3. If the use is allowed, the ZCP is sent to Building Inspections. They determine whether a Change of Use or an Occupancy Permit is required.
4. The application goes back to Planning staff. They notify you that a) the approved ZCP is ready; or b) there are additional conditions for approval that must be addressed before a ZCP permit can be issued. The conditions for approval are provided in writing.

## approval conditions

### **What does it mean if I am notified that there are additional conditions for ZCP approval?**

It means that staff is unable to approve your ZCP unless you meet specified conditions and that you cannot legally operate your business at the proposed site until you show that these conditions have been met.

### **What is a "Change of Use" and what if it is a condition of my ZCP approval?**

Building codes vary according to how the building's use is classified. Classifications include Assembly, Business, Day Care, Educational, Factory, Industrial, Hazardous Industrial, Mercantile, Residential, and Storage.

If the previous use of the building and your proposed use of the building fall into different classifications, then you may have to meet additional building codes to operate your business safely. If your ZCP approval is contingent on a Change of Use Permit, you should contact the Building Inspections Department for a walk-thru inspection. This inspection will determine if there are code issues that need to be addressed and whether or not construction is required.

After the walk-thru, you will be directed to apply for either a Change of Use Permit/No Construction or a Change of Use Permit/with Construction. At the time of application, you must provide staff with 2 copies of a floor plan showing the layout of your space. The floor plan must show doors and bathrooms and must identify how you are going to use each area. Include the address and the proposed use of the building on the floor plan. If construction is required, you may need to work through a licensed contractor.