

START-UP PACKET *for* New Businesses





WELCOME TO THE CITY OF FAIRFIELD

We welcome you to our city and appreciate your investment in our community. There are many steps to opening a business, and the city wants to be your partner to make the process as straightforward as possible for you.

In this packet, we have explained the processes you will need to follow in order to occupy your business location. We have also included additional information that you may find helpful. The packet begins with a checklist to consider as you find a location and open your business.

We wish you many years of success in the City of Fairfield!



Table of Contents

Business Opening Checklist	2
Change of Occupancy Permit Process	4
Building and Signage Permit Process	5
Promotion Signage	6
Small Business Resources	7
State and Federal Considerations	8
<u>Attachments</u>	
Application for Vendor's License	9
Income Tax Registration Form	10
Commercial Application for Water and Sewer Services	12



Business Opening Checklist

- ☐ **Find Your Location:** Fairfield has a variety of commercial and industrial properties to meet various business needs. You are encouraged to engage a commercial real estate broker or other professional to assist you in finding a suitable business location. The city may also be aware of available real estate for you to consider.
- ☐ **Verify the property has appropriate zoning:** Prior to signing a lease or purchasing a property, verify that your business can operate at the property. To verify the existing zoning, contact the Development Services Department at 513-867-5345 with the property address.
- ☐ **Apply for necessary permits:**
 - ☐ **Change of occupancy:** All businesses new to the city or to a property must receive a certificate of occupancy, which includes applying for a permit and inspection of the space. Review the Change of Occupancy Process on page 4 for more information.
 - ☐ **Building:** Interior or exterior changes to a building may require a building permit. All permits must be issued before any work is performed. Review the Building Permit Process on page 5 for more information.
 - ☐ **Plumbing:** Plumbing work, including water, sanitary sewer, or storm drain work, may require a plumbing permit from the Butler County General Health District. For more information, visit http://health.bcoho.us/our_services/plumbing.php or contact the Health District at 513-863-1770.
 - ☐ **Signage:** Most business signage in the city requires a permit. This includes permanent signs, promotional signs, banners, and tents. The permitted size and location of permanent signage is based on the zoning and building and/or lot size. Review the Promotional Signage information on page 6 for more information on grand opening and other promotional signs, banners, and tents.
- ☐ **Apply for a vendor's license:** Most businesses that are selling a product or providing a service must collect and remit sales tax. Accordingly, a vendor's license from the Butler County Auditor's Office is required to make taxable sales. The application is attached on page 9 and available as a fillable PDF at www.butlercountyauditor.org. Complete the form and return to the Butler County Auditor's Office with the application fee of \$25. Checks should be made payable to the Butler County Treasurer's Office.
- ☐ **Apply for a food service license:** Restaurants and other businesses that serve or produce food must obtain a license from the Butler County General Health District. Such businesses should contact the Health District at 513-863-1770 to discuss the appropriate license for your operation. For additional information, visit www.health.bcoho.us.



☐ **Register for income tax:** The city collects a 1.5% income tax on the gross wages of employees and net profits of businesses operating within the city. Businesses are required to register by completing a business registration form and submitting it to the Income Tax Division at 701 Wessel Drive. The registration form is attached on pages 10-11 and available as a fillable PDF at fairfield-city.org/254/Business-Tax-Forms.

☐ **Establish utility accounts:** Businesses seeking water and sewer service from the City of Fairfield must apply to establish an account. Applicants should complete a Commercial Application and submit it to the Utility Billing Division at 5350 Pleasant Avenue. If you are renting, you will need to bring a copy of your lease agreement, a photo ID, and a deposit for \$125. The application is attached on page 12.

Most properties in the city receive electric and gas service from Duke Energy. Additionally, Cincinnati Bell and Spectrum provide internet and landline telephone service in the city.

☐ **Coordinate with partners and plan your opening:** Well in advance of your business opening (greater than one month, if possible), you may want to consider coordinating with local partners and planning a grand opening event. This can include the following:

☐ **Development Services Department:** The Department is here to support businesses in the city. You are encouraged to contact the Economic Development Manager at 513-867-5345 or nkaelin@fairfieldoh.gov to share your plans, discuss potential resources, and coordinate publicity and assistance for your grand opening.

☐ **Fairfield Chamber of Commerce:** The Chamber is an excellent resource for connecting with businesses and opportunities in the community. Additionally, the Chamber can assist with coordination of a grand opening. For information, call (513) 881-5500 or visit www.fairfieldchamber.com.

☐ **Grand opening signage:** Special promotional signage is permitted within 60 days of a business opening, with appropriate permits. Review the Promotional Signage information on page 6 for more information.



Change of Occupancy Permit Process

Building and zoning codes have been enacted to protect the public health, safety and welfare. Permits ensure that these codes are followed. Building permits provide the means for Building and Zoning officials to inspect a business location to ensure minimum standards are met and appropriate materials are used.

The permitting process for a change of occupancy is detailed below. Successful completion of this process results in the receipt of a Certificate of Occupancy. No new building shall be occupied, nor any change of building use made, until inspection and a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued by the city.

1. **Contact the Building and Zoning Division:** Visit or contact the Building and Zoning Division to discuss what you are planning. This initial contact will provide the resources and information you will need to make your project a success and avoid potential problems, which could cost you time and money. The Division is located at 5350 Pleasant Avenue and can be reached at 513-867-5318.
2. **Submit an Application:** You or your contractor can obtain a permit application at the Building and Zoning Division office or you can download a copy. The permit application asks for detailed information about the project. There is a \$51.50 fee for a Change of Occupancy permit. Cash, check, Mastercard, or Visa are accepted as payment.

Drawings, plans, or other documentation will be required with the application, depending on the complexity of the project. At a minimum, a floor plan of the entire building (in a multi-tenant scenario); floor plan of the proposed space; and documentation of intended layout of furniture, shelving, and/or equipment and machinery will be required. Drawings must be clean, accurate, and drawn to scale. Depending on the complexity of the project, drawings may need to be prepared by an architect or engineer.

3. **City Review Process:** The majority of permit applications are processed with little delay. The Building and Zoning Division will review the application to check compliance with all building codes, zoning codes, and other municipal or state regulations.
4. **Inspection:** Contact the Building and Zoning Division to schedule a Change of Occupancy inspection. This inspection is performed to ensure compliance with all building codes and zoning codes as written in Chapters 11 and 13 of the Fairfield Codified Ordinances. A Building Inspector will coordinate any other departments involved in the inspection, which may include the Public Utilities, Fire, or Development Services departments.
5. **Corrections:** If necessary during the inspection, the Building Inspector will compile a list of issues that need to be remedied before a Certificate of Occupancy can be issued. At the end of the inspection, you will receive a copy of this list.

6. **Conditional Certificate of Occupancy:** Under certain circumstances, the Building and Zoning Division may issue a Conditional Certificate of Occupancy if the conditions that need to be remedied are determined not to be too serious in nature. Under this conditional occupancy you may occupy the property temporarily while you are working on correcting the outstanding work items.
7. **Re-inspection:** After you have remedied all of the conditions noted, if any, during the previous inspection, you need to contact the Building and Zoning Division for a re-inspection. The Inspector will again compile a list of any remaining conditions that need to be corrected. This process will continue until all conditions are completed. If you do not contact the Building and Zoning Division to re-inspect the project within 60 days, the Building Inspector will send a letter notifying you of the expired permit and denial of occupancy.
8. **Certificate of Occupancy Issued:** When code compliance is determined, the Building and Zoning Division will issue a Certificate of Occupancy. This certificate is the formal document that marks the completion of your construction project and gives you permission to occupy your new or renovated building with the knowledge that it has met Fairfield safety standards.

Building and Signage Permit Process

Similar to the Change of Occupancy Permit Process detailed above, an application, review, and inspection process is also followed for building and permanent signage permits. Staff of the Building and Zoning Division will help you understand if a building permit is required during the certificate of occupancy process. Fees are based on the type of permit and scale of the work involved.

Commercial permits can now be submitted online at <https://fairfieldoh.viewpointcloud.com/>.

Contractor Licensing: Any contractor that is working on electrical, heating, air conditioning or permanent signage projects in the City of Fairfield must be licensed by the Building and Zoning Division before a permit will be granted. You should inquire as to whether the contractor working on your project is licensed to work in the city and has obtained the proper permits.

For more information, visit www.fairfield-city.org/164/Building-Zoning-Division or contact the Building and Zoning Division at 513-867-5318.



Promotional Signage

The city recognizes that businesses may want to use additional signage to draw attention for a grand opening or for special promotions throughout the year. To accommodate this business need, the city has established codes for promotional signs, banners, and tents. Each requires a permit and are described below. These permits are issued over the counter and do not require a sign erector's license like permanent signage.

Grand Opening Sign: New businesses may apply for one-time temporary signage that can be displayed for 60 days. This signage cannot flash or exceed 32 sq. ft. in size.

If grand opening signage is used, a business may seek promotional signs or banners after a 30-day waiting period from when the grand opening signage is removed.

Promotional Signs and Banners: Operating businesses may apply up to 12 times per calendar year (prorated if opening mid-year) for a promotional sign or banner which can be displayed for 10 days. Additional requirements include the following:

- Only one promotional sign or banner may be displayed at a time
- Promotional signs cannot exceed 24 sq. ft. in size (measured on one side) and should be mounted on posts or as an "a-frame" with a maximum height of six feet off the ground
- Promotional signs should be manufactured with lettering that is not hand painted
- Banners cannot exceed 30 sq. ft. in size and should be mounted on buildings, canopies, or existing canopy or sign supports
- Banners must be silk-screened, stenciled, sewn, or created with vinyl letters
- Feather or flutter flags can be used as promotional signs; no more than two flags not exceeding 24 sq. ft. in size may be flown

Tents: Businesses may apply up to two times per calendar year for a tent to be used for special events or sale promotions. This permit requires a Certificate of Flame Retardancy and allows the tent to be in place for 30 days.

Temporary Signs: With the exception of the above, temporary signs are generally prohibited. These include: portable signs, special event signs, pennants, streamers, captive balloons, cardboard signs, and other temporary signs.

Rope Lights: Rope lights or ribbon lighting, flashing or not, are prohibited in the city.

The above information is for general information purposes. Contact the Building and Zoning Division at 513-867-5318 and review the zoning codes as written in Chapter 11 of the Fairfield Codified Ordinances for full requirements, as well as requirements regarding permanent signs.



Small Business Resources

Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

Our local SBDC is housed at Miami University Regionals. Working in partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA), the goal of the center is to assist any small business in the fields of manufacturing, technology, international trade, government contracting, and minority and women business ownership.

State Certified Business Advisors provide consulting, training, and research assistance for the start-up, successful operation and expansion of small businesses. Specific services include one-on-one counseling, business planning, cash flow analysis, capital identification, financial projections, and referrals. Regular training course, forums, and seminars are held on topics that support the successful operation of any business, such as entrepreneurship, marketing, bookkeeping, access to capital and taxes. Clients also have the opportunity to obtain business technical assistance from our network of attorneys, accountants, insurance agents, business consultants and other professionals. Services are offered at no charge to those who own, operate, or wish to start a for-profit small business. All consultations are confidential.

For more information, visit <https://www.miamioh.edu/regionals/sbdc/> or contact the center at 513-727-3686.

Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE)

SCORE is a national volunteer organization whose mission is to foster vibrant small business communities through mentoring and education. SCORE volunteers are experienced business people who volunteer their time and money to assist new and established business owners. With more than 80 such volunteers in Southwest Ohio, SCORE makes available expertise from a wide range of industries and disciplines. This large number of volunteers, referred to as "mentors," ensures that SCORE can offer expertise in any aspect of business operations.

For more information, visit www.greatercincinnati.score.org or contact the organization at 513-954-5004. Glenn Clevenger is the SCORE mentor for the Fairfield area. You may also contact Glenn at glenn.clevenger@scorevolunteer.org or 513-668-0634.

Supports to Encourage Low-Income Families (SELF) Microenterprise and Microloan Program

SELF's Microenterprise and Microloan program provides comprehensive instruction and resources to start or expand a small business. Services include a 10-week course on business planning, financial management, marketing; individual business plan review and mentoring; and access to a microloan up to \$5,000. This program is available for Butler County residents with household income up to 80% of the Area Median Income.

For more information, visit www.selfhelps.org/microenterprise or contact the Jerry Brown at 513-820-5023 or jbrown@selfhelps.org.



State and Federal Considerations

State and Federal Taxes and Registrations: Depending on the nature of your business, various state and federal requirements may be relevant. Most businesses will need to register with the Ohio Secretary of State, the Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation (OBWC), and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

If your business has employees, additional registration processes with the Ohio Department of Taxation and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) may apply.

For additional information on state and federal considerations for starting a business, review these resources:

Ohio Small Business Development Center: Starting Your Business in Ohio

www.clients.ohiosbdc.ohio.gov/DocumentMaster.aspx?doc=2462

Ohio Secretary of State: Ohio Small Business Roadmap:

www.sos.state.oh.us/businesses/information-on-starting-and-maintaining-a-business/starting-a-business/#gref



**Department of
Taxation**

P.O. Box 182215
Columbus, OH 43218-2215
(888) 405-4089



07100100

ST 1 Rev. 12/10

**Application for Vendor's
License to Make Taxable Sales**

To the County Auditor of _____ County

Vendor's license no. _____
(For department use only)

Federal employer identification no.

Social Security no. / ITIN

Ohio corporate charter no. / certificate no.

If you file under cumulative return authority, what is your master number? _____

1. Check type of ownership: (10) Sole owner ☐ (20) Partnership ☐ (30) Corporation ☐ (150) Nonprofit ☐
(50) LLC ☐ (70) LLP ☐ (80) LTD ☐ Other (please specify) _____

2. When did you or will you start making taxable sales at this location? (MM/DD/YY) _____

3. Provide NAICS code and state nature of business activity _____
(For the most current listings, search NAICS on our Web site at tax.ohio.gov.)

4. Legal name _____
(Corporation, sole owner, partnership, etc.)

5. Trade name or DBA _____

6. Primary address _____
Address of corporation, sole owner, partnership, etc. City State ZIP code

Business phone no. Fax no. Secondary phone no.

7. Mailing address _____
(If different from above) City State ZIP code

8. Business location _____
Address City State ZIP code

9. How much sales tax do you expect to collect each month? Less than \$200 ☐ \$200 or greater ☐

10. Have you applied for a liquor permit transfer? Yes ☐ No ☐

Vendor's license number _____ Liquor permit no. _____

11a. Have you applied for a new liquor permit? Yes ☐ No ☐ Date applied for _____

11b. Do you intend to make nonliquor sales prior to the issuance of your new liquor permit? Yes ☐ No ☐
Date business will or did begin _____

12. If you operate as a corporation or partnership, list appropriate names, addresses and identification numbers below.

Title	Name	Street	City	State	ZIP code	SSN / ITIN / FEIN

13. Name, phone number, fax number and e-mail address of individual the department should contact regarding this account

Name	Phone no.	Fax no.	E-mail address

Note: The county auditor shall not issue a vendor's license until all questions on this application are answered. Application and payment of the \$25 fee must accompany this application.

Date Signature of applicant County auditor By deputy

City of Fairfield



Business and/or Withholding Account for Fairfield, Ohio

Employees working in Fairfield: It is required to withhold taxes on all employee qualifying wages at the rate of 1.5%. Qualifying wages are wages as defined by Internal Revenue Code Section 3121 (a) or generally the Medicare Wage box on the W-2. The remittance of the tax withheld from employees must be filed either on a quarterly or monthly basis. If the tax liability is greater than ***\$200.00 in any given month***, the remittance is due monthly ***by the fifteenth of the following month***. Otherwise, it must be filed quarterly due by the fifteenth of the following month after the quarter. Failure to withhold local tax for employees will result in interest and penalty assessments on the tax owed and legal action by the City against the employer.

An Annual Reconciliation form that reconciles all the withholding payments made to Fairfield with the withholding on the W-2s is ***due by the last day of February*** of the following year. Copies of all W-2's involved with Fairfield must be attached to the reconciliation. Also, if the Medicare Wage box is not the largest wage figure on the W-2, a written explanation is required.

Doing business in Fairfield. It is required to file an annual Business Return (BR). A 1.5% tax is imposed on all net profits as determined by the company's Federal return filed with the Internal Revenue Service (e.g. Form 1120, 1120S, 1065, Schedule C...). A copy of the Federal Return is due with the Business Return. If the company is a sole proprietorship and the company's owner is a resident of the City of Fairfield, he/she will include Schedule "C" income on a Fairfield Individual Income Tax Return (IR). All other non-Fairfield residents who earn Schedule "C" or "E" income must file a separate Business Return (BR). If the company conducts business both within and outside the City, Schedule Y, "Business Appropriation Formula", determines the company's tax liability percentage for the City. In addition, Fairfield's Ordinance allows annual losses to be carried forward against future profits for up to five (5) years.

All Business Returns must be filed within four (4) months of the fiscal year end. All request for extensions shall be filed no later than the last day for filing the City's tax return. If a federal extension has been requested or granted, please submit the extension with the return. If there are any questions, please contact our office at the number listed below or visit our website: www.fairfield-city.org.

City of Fairfield



Business Registration

Application for (*Please check one*):

☐ Withholding Account

☐ Net Profit Account **

☐ Both Accounts

**** A Net Profit Account must be applied for if performing business activities and/or generating income within the City of Fairfield.**

Name of Company: _____

Doing Business as (DBA): _____ Fiscal Year End Date: _____

Business and/or Fairfield, Ohio Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone Number: (____) ____ - ____ Contact Person: _____ Business Product/Service: _____

Type of Business (*Please check one*): ☐ Corporation ☐ S-Corporation ☐ Partnership ☐ Sole Proprietorship

☐ LLC (single member) ☐ LLC (multiple members) ☐ LLP

Date Began: Doing Business in Fairfield: _____ and/or Employee Withholding: _____

Federal Id Number: _____ or Social Security Number, if sole proprietorship: _____

Federal Id Number for withholding account (if different from Net profit) _____

Number of Employees Working in Fairfield: _____ Number of Employees Residing in Fairfield: _____

Filing Payroll Taxes (*Please check one*): ☐ **Monthly** (Mandatory if over \$200.00 per month) ☐ **Quarterly**

Will a payroll company be filing the company's withholding taxes? (*Please check one*):

☐ Yes, name of the Payroll Company: _____ ☐ No

Does your company lease employees? (*Please check one*):

☐ Yes, name of leasing company _____ ☐ No

If the company is replacing another company previously registered with the City of Fairfield (e.g. due to incorporation, mergers, etc...), please indicate the name and FID number of the company: _____

Name and Address of Corporate Officers or Partners (or attach list): _____

INCOME TAX DIVISION

701 Wessel Dr, Fairfield, Ohio 45014 513-867-5327 Fax 513-867-5333



**Commercial Application
For Water and Sewer Services**

<u>OFFICE USE</u>	
Account	_____
Book	_____
CID	_____
Receipt #	_____
Clerk	_____

Date of service: _____

Service Address: _____

Name: _____

Federal tax ID: _____

Mailing address: _____
(IF DIFFERENT FROM SERVICE ADDRESS)

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Local contact name: _____

If rental property – owner's name: _____

Owner address: _____

Owner phone: _____

The above information is true to the best of my knowledge and I understand that falsification of the information contained herewith may result in the termination of my water service.

Date: _____

Signature: _____