

## STEP #3: BUILD

### PERMITS

At the City of El Cerrito Building Division counter ask which building code, building permits and state handicap access requirements apply to your business and the building in which it will be located.

Some of the code requirements are expensive, and some older buildings may need major changes to meet handicap access standards. You need to get this information early in your business planning! Please note a licensed architect must approve all building plans.

Tenants need written permission from the property owner to make any changes to their building if authorization is not already written into the lease agreement.

### SANITARY DISTRICT

El Cerrito is within the Stege Sanitary District. All building plans must be reviewed by the Sanitary District. You are encouraged to contact the District during the planning stage to ensure that all requirements are met. Projects in the San Pablo Ave Specific Plan Area will be subject to the upcoming San Pablo Avenue Sewer Capacity Improvement Impact Fee Program, other projects may be required to complete a sewer capacity study. Contact Stege at (510) 524-4668 or visit [stegesan.org](http://stegesan.org) for more information.

### SIGNS

Before ordering and installing a new sign or modifying an existing sign for your business, please contact the Planning Division. The installation, alteration, or relocation of all permanent signs shall be subject to design review and approval by the Zoning Administrator. A copy of the Sign Ordinance is available in the Planning Division.

### FOR EMPLOYERS

Businesses with employees are required to file a form DE-1 with the Employment Tax section of the California Employment Development Department at [www.edd.ca.gov](http://www.edd.ca.gov).

Additionally, employers need Workers' Compensation Insurance coverage for employees. Visit [www.scif.com](http://www.scif.com) for more information.

Please note the City of El Cerrito has a minimum wage ordinance. To check the current wage standards visit <http://www.el-cerrito.org/wages>.

### FOR RESTAURANTS & FOOD SERVICE

Contra Costa County Environmental Health Department issues all licenses associated with the safe preparation and handling of food. Restaurants must get all plans approved by the Contra Costa Environmental Health Department before the City can sign off on any building permits. Contact the Department at (925) 646-5225. ([cchealth.org/eh/retail-food/](http://cchealth.org/eh/retail-food/))

Alcohol Sales - If your business includes the sale of alcohol, a license must be obtained from the State Alcoholic Beverage Control Department ([www.abc.ca.gov](http://www.abc.ca.gov)) in addition to an Administrative Use Permit from the City of El Cerrito Planning Division.

Before you open, make sure you post all required posters and permits including No Smoking signs, minimum wage information, health inspection results, etc.

*Looking for additional support? Kitchen@812 helps food entrepreneurs with business assistance and access to a shared commercial kitchen. Visit [wccbdc.org](http://wccbdc.org) for more information.*

*Contra Costa Small Business Development Center offers courses on accounting, marketing, customer service, web design and more. For more information check out the SBDC course calendars: [contracostasbdc.org/calendar](http://contracostasbdc.org/calendar)*

# How to Start a Business in EL CERRITO

If you are opening a new business, taking over an existing business, moving your business to a new location within the City, or starting a new business in your home, before signing a lease or business agreement, come talk to us at City Hall.

El Cerrito City Hall  
10890 San Pablo Avenue  
El Cerrito, C.A. 94530  
[www.el-cerrito.org](http://www.el-cerrito.org)



Contact the Community Development  
Department at (510) 215-4361

## WELCOME TO THE CITY OF

### EL CERRITO!

The information in this handout is meant as a guide, please contact City Staff with any questions.

#### CITY CONTACT INFORMATION

##### Community Development Dept.

Contact for help finding a location

[www.el-cerrito.org/commdev](http://www.el-cerrito.org/commdev)

(510) 215-4361

##### Planning Division

Contact for zoning requirements

[www.el-cerrito.org/planning](http://www.el-cerrito.org/planning)

(510) 215-4330

##### Building Division

Contact for build requirements

[www.el-cerrito.org/building](http://www.el-cerrito.org/building)

(510) 215-4360

##### Financial Services Division

Contact for a City business license

[www.el-cerrito.org/buisnesslicenses](http://www.el-cerrito.org/buisnesslicenses)

(510) 215-4335

##### Fire Department

Contact for hazardous materials

[www.el-cerrito.org/fire](http://www.el-cerrito.org/fire)

(510) 215-4450

## STEP #1: LOCATE

### ZONING REQUIREMENTS

All businesses must fill out a [Zoning Information Form](#) when applying for a business license to make certain that your proposed business location is zoned for the type of business you wish to start.

If your proposed business does not meet with residential or commercial business requirements, you should consider changing your plans, or you may apply for special consideration under a [Conditional Use Permit](#). Contact the City of El Cerrito Planning Division at (510)215-4330 for more information.

*If you would like assistance finding a location for your business please contact the City of El Cerrito Community Development Department at (510)215-4361 or visit [www.el-cerrito.org/commdev](http://www.el-cerrito.org/commdev).*

### SAN PABLO AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN

The recently enacted San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan establishes a form based code to encourage development and business growth along the San Pablo through flexible land use. New developments on designated commercial streets will require ground floor commercial space.

Additionally, many uses are now allowed by right along the Avenue, reducing the cost and time required for the City to approve your business. The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan can be found on-line at [www.el-cerrito.org/SPASP](http://www.el-cerrito.org/SPASP) Contact the Planning Division at (510) 215-4330 for more information.

### FIRE DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

All applicants for a business license are required to complete a Hazardous Materials Inquiry form. Please call the El Cerrito Fire Department at (510)215-4450 for more information.

## STEP #2: LICENSE

### CITY OF EL CERRITO

If your business is in El Cerrito or if you are based in another city and do business in El Cerrito, you will need a City of El Cerrito Business License from the Financial Services Division. Download an application at [www.el-cerrito.org/buisnesslicenses](http://www.el-cerrito.org/buisnesslicenses)

### CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

File for a Fictitious Business Name with the County Clerk's office in Martinez. Forms can be obtained by mail or in person from the County Clerk's office. [www.ccclerkrec.us/clerk/fictitious-business-name](http://www.ccclerkrec.us/clerk/fictitious-business-name)

### CALIFORNIA STATE

Corporations, nonprofits, limited liability companies and partnerships must file with the California Secretary of State's Office. [www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov)

Businesses selling taxable goods need a seller's permits from the California State Board of Equalization. [www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov)

Additionally, all businesses in California are required to submit an annual tax statement to the Franchise Tax Board. [www.ftb.ca.gov](http://www.ftb.ca.gov)

### FEDERAL

If you are a partnership, corporation or have employees you need to file a form SS-4 with the Internal Revenue Service to receive an Employer Identification Number. [www.irs.ustreas.gov](http://www.irs.ustreas.gov)

*Certain professions and businesses require additional licenses. Visit [www.calgold.ca.gov](http://www.calgold.ca.gov) for more information.*