



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

Town of Lunenburg

Let us help get your business
moving forward.

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Introduction

The Town of Lunenburg has developed the Business Development Guidebook to assist current and prospective businesses in navigating the various approval processes in Lunenburg for locating and/or expanding businesses. This Guidebook will provide an overview of the permitting process and provide a general summary of the requirements for a variety of the more common businesses with respect to permitting, licensing, and zoning. The Town of Lunenburg looks forward to welcoming you as a member of our business community.



The Business Development Guidebook is an excellent starting point for anyone considering opening or expanding a business in Lunenburg. This guide is a general overview of the process some of the more typical businesses may face as they move through the development and permitting prior to opening.

It is important to note that every business, location, and application have differences that may not be covered in this Guidebook. Please take a moment after reviewing this Guidebook to review the applicable regulations for specific technical and procedural requirements. In many instances you will require the assistance of professionals in legal, engineering, survey, architecture, and/or transportation planning. We have found that many people find it helpful to schedule a meeting with us while they are developing their business plans to identify potential issues and/or permitting requirements. Please know that we are always happy to assist and encourage people to meet with us at any point in their business development. Identifying issues early can save both business owners and the Town a lot of stress and confusion later on.

We are here to provide assistance and information that will allow you to become a strong and active member of the Lunenburg Business Community.

How to Open Your New Small Business

Let's Get Started

Contact the **Land Use Department** at 978.582.4146 ext. 5 for information about locations that may be suitable for your potential business and general guidance on the overall permitting process that may be required.

We are also happy to provide a **Permitting Guide** to assist small businesses and professionals in progressing through the permitting process. The Town of Lunenburg [Permitting Guide](#) can be accessed through the Town's website.

First Steps

You will need to obtain a **Business Certificate**, which is the public registration of the name and address of the owner(s) of a business, also known as a "DBA" (Doing Business As) or a "Sole Proprietorship." The main purpose for this is to provide consumer protection and public information. You may obtain a Business Certificate from the **Town Clerk** if you are not filing as a corporation with the Secretary of State's Office.



If you are renovating a building or commercial space, you will need to apply for a **Building Permit**. If you are not renovating, you will need to apply for a **Certificate of Occupancy** from the **Building Department**.

If your project involves the construction or expansion of a building or parking lot you may require Site Plan Approval and/or Stormwater Permits. You can contact the **Planning Board** at 978.582.41446 ext. 5.

Your New Business Location

If your proposed business location requires construction of a new building or renovations, either interior or exterior, contact the **Building Department** for information about applying for **Building Permit** and/or a **Sign Permit**. The Building Department and/or Land Use Department can alert you to any additional approvals you may require. For more information, contact the **Land Use Director** at 978.582.4146 ext. 5.

How to Open a Retail Store

First Steps

The first thing you will need is a location for your business. Contact the **Land Use Department** at 978.582.4146 ext. 5 to review your selected location or to inquire about potential locations for your business in Lunenburg. We may have some great recommendations for you.

Land Use Director Adam Burney can offer guidance on the required permits and/or approvals and steps you should take to get your retail store open. Contact him at 978.582.4146 ext. 5.

Check with the Building Department and Land Use Department, however, typically new retail stores require the following process, licenses, and permits:



What You May Need to Do	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consult the Building Department for information on zoning and parking requirements. You may need to provide specific information related to parking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Apply for a Business Certificate . As previously noted, you may obtain a Business Certificate from the Town Clerk if you are not filing as a corporation with the Secretary of State's Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	You will need a Building Permit and/or a Sign Permit if your business location requires renovations and/or a new or renovated sign. The Town's Sign Bylaw regulates the location, number, and size of signs. Most signs (including renovations) require a sign permit from the Building Inspector .
<input type="checkbox"/>	You will need Site Plan Approval from the Planning Board , unless your business is locating in an existing building which was most recently a retail location.
<input type="checkbox"/>	A Certificate of Occupancy from the Building Department will need to be issued prior to opening your business regardless of whether the location was renovated.
<input type="checkbox"/>	If you plan to sell food, including pre-packaged food and/or drink, you will need to speak with the Board of Health to apply for a Retail Food Permit. You may require additional health and/or sanitary-related inspections and/or permits. For additional information, call the Board of Health at 978.582.4146 ext. 430 and/or the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health at 800-427-9762.

How to Open a Restaurant

First Steps

Lunenburg residents, business people, and visitors enjoy having a variety of options for both dine-in and take-out available to provide daily meals and/or special occasions. Lunenburg welcomes new restaurants to our community.

If you have questions about the permitting process or would like to discuss possible locations to locate your restaurant in Lunenburg, contact the **Land Use Department** at 978.582.4146 ext. 5.

The chart below outlines the general steps you should follow to open a new restaurant in Lunenburg. More detailed information on many of the permits and licenses are located later in this Guidebook.

Select Location	Seek Approvals	Construction or Renovation	Open for Business!
Consult with the Land Use/Building Department on potential locations	Apply for Special Permit (if needed) with the Zoning Board of Appeals and/or Site Plan Approval (if needed) with the Planning Board.	Apply for Building Permit	Join the North Central MA Chamber of Commerce
Check with the Building Department or the Code of Lunenburg for Parking Requirements	Apply to the Select Board for Common Victualler License and Alcohol License (if you plan to serve alcohol)	Apply for Sign Permit	Schedule your ribbon cutting ceremony and invite guests
	Apply to the Board of Health for Food Service and other required permits.	Apply to the Fire Department for hood system, fire alarm, sprinkler system, etc.	Welcome your customers!
		Apply to DPW for sewer connection, and/or grease trap	

Below are some of the permits, licenses, and inspections you may need to obtain to open a restaurant, café, catering service, and/or mobile food operation.

➤ Food Establishment Permit

- Contact the **Board of Health** for a **Food Service Permit** for serving food. Contact the **Board of Health** before construction of a food establishment, change of ownership, remodeling of an establishment, and/or any change in the type of food establishment or operation, such as adding outdoor seating. The Board of Health can be reached at 978.582.4146 ext. 431.

➤ **Common Victualler's License**

A Common Victualler's License is required under Massachusetts General Laws, Ch. 140 Sec. 2 through 20 for any person or business with the facilities for cooking, preparing and serving food for strangers and travelers. Submit an application to the **Town Manager's Office** for a Select Board review for a **Common Victualler's License**.

➤ **Alcoholic Beverage License**

An Alcoholic Beverage License is required for any business to sell, serve, store, distribute, deliver, or produce any type of alcoholic beverage. Complete an application with the state Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission to submit to the **Town Manager's Office** for Select Board Approval.

➤ **Fire Safety Inspections**

Contact the **Fire Department** to schedule inspections for the fire alarm system, sprinklers system, storage of flammables, smoke detectors, and other life safety devices. You can contact the Fire Department at 978.582.4155.

➤ **Grease Trap and Backflow Prevention Requirements**

Contact the **Department of Public Works** for grease trap and backflow prevention requirements at 978.582.4160.

Help Your Customers Enjoy the Outdoors

Providing outdoor seating at your restaurant can be an attractive and fun option for diners during the warm weather months. Lunenburg encourages the use of outdoor seating, but there are a few steps required for the protection of your customers, employees, and pedestrians.

To have your outdoor seating plan reviewed for safety as required, include it in the **Special Permit** and **Site Plan Review** applications you submit to the **Zoning Board of Appeals** and **Planning Board**.

If you would like to add outdoor seating to your already existing restaurant or cafe, contact Casey Burlingame, **Building Commissioner/Zoning Enforcement**, at 978.582.4146 ext. 420.

Business Certificate

What is a Business Certificate?

A **Business Certificate** is a legal document that registers businesses under the laws of the Commonwealth and identifies the name and address of the owner(s) of a business. Any person, partnership, or corporation operating or planning to operate a business under a name other than the complete real name of the person, partnership, or corporation conducting the business (Doing Business As or “DBA”) must file a Business Certificate with the Town Clerk. The purpose of a Business Certificate is primarily for customer protection and public information. Lenders and banks handling the business’ funds will request a copy of your Business Certificate as part of financing and/or setting up business checking accounts.

Who Must File a Business Certificate?

In accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 110, §5, any person conducting business in the Commonwealth under any title other than the real name of the person conducting the business, whether individually or as a partnership, shall file a **Business Certificate** in every city or town where an office of any such person or partnership is located.

Under Chapter 110, §6 a business certificate is not required if a corporation is doing business in its true corporate name, or if a partnership is doing business under any title which includes the true surname of any partner. Businesses who file with the Secretary of State’s Office do not need to file.



How Do I File or Renew My Business Certificate?

Business Certificates can be obtained at the **Town Clerk’s Office** in Town Hall at 17 Main St. If you are using your residence as your business address you must first confirm that your business and residence conform to Section 250-4.2A(4) of the Code of Lunenburg. Before finalizing the Business Certificate you will need to submit a **Form of Intent** to the **Building Commissioner** for confirmation that your proposed business use and location are compliant with the Town’s Zoning Bylaws.

What If I Discontinue My Business or Move Out of Town?

You should file a **Withdrawal from Business Form** obtained at the office of the **Town Clerk**, if you discontinue your business or move out of Town. This should be done as soon as possible as personal property taxes on your business cannot be adjusted until the Assessors receive your withdrawal form. It is effective from the date you file this form, not the date you terminated your business. You should file before the date of expiration.

Building Permit

What is a Building Permit?

Building Permits are issued to licensed contractors and property owners to allow construction work on a specific residential or commercial property. You should consult a licensed professional to review your location and plan any proposed construction. It should be noted that only licenses contractors may be issued building permits on commercial properties.

Do I Need a Building Permit?

Building Permits are required whenever a project includes construction, addition, reconstruction, alteration, repair, removal, demolition, or relocation of a building or structure; change of use or occupancy of a building or structure; or installation of alteration of equipment regulated by the International Building Code and any amendments adopted by the Commonwealth.

Who Issues Building Permits?

A Building Permit can be obtained from the **Building Department** or through the Town of [Lunenburg's Online Permitting System](#). The Building Department accepts and reviews physical and digital Building Permit applications and approves them resulting in the issuance of a Building Permit. The Building Commissioner follows the permit from start to finish, generally, this process involves insuring the proposed construction meets local zoning requirements in addition to the Building Code; post approval the Commissioner will perform a series of inspections to ensure that the proposed work is done in compliance with the issued permit(s) and the Building Code. The number and extend of permits will vary depending on the extent of the work being performed. There may be permits that are required prior to the issuance of a Building Permit, i.e. sewer/septic permits or fire permits.

Do I Need Any Other Related Permits?

Any changes to the electrical or plumbing layout of the building or structure will require an Electrical Permit and a Plumbing Permit. Even if you are doing no work, a Certificate of Occupancy is needed to assess the existing building systems and ensure that they have been properly maintained and will provide the appropriate level of public safety for anyone entering the building or structure.

How Do I Get a Building Permit	
Apply	The Town of Lunenburg uses ViewPoint Cloud for digital permit applications. You can access our portal at https://lunenburgma.viewpointcloud.com . If you are uncomfortable or unable to complete the forms online you can get a physical application at the Building Department Offices.
Next Steps	After submittal, review, and approval of your application and plans, a Building Permit can be issued. Systems, such as, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing are permitted separately. Periodic inspections must be scheduled as specific milestones are completed. A final inspection and review is required prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy or Certificate of Completion .
Certificate of Occupancy	After your Building Permit work is completed, the project will receive a Certificate of Occupancy , which is required to occupy and use the building.

Sign Permit

What is a Sign Permit?

A Sign Permit allows a business to install and awning, wall, or freestanding sign on their property. This permit covers signs on private property. The Sign Bylaw (Section 250-6.5 of the Code of Lunenburg) regulates both temporary and permanent signs.

Who Needs a Sign Permit?

Most permanent signs will require a **Sign Permit** prior to installation. This may include existing signs that are being refaced.

How Do I Get a Sign Permit?



A **Sign Permit** can be obtained from the **Building Department**. Signs are permitted in Lunenburg in accordance with the guidelines in the Town's [Sign Bylaw](#). In some cases, additional approval may be necessary from the **Planning Board** or **Zoning Board of Appeals**.

How Do I Get a Sign Permit?	
Review	Review the Sign Bylaw to ensure your proposed sign adheres to the requirements. Regulations vary depending on whether the sign will located on a building or freestanding and which Zoning District the property is located in.
Apply	Submit a completed sign permit application with a depiction of the sign, including dimensions, size, and location to the Building Department .
Remember	The Town of Lunenburg does not permit flashing, moving, and/or animated signs.

Signs Exempted from Permitting

Most business signs require a Sign Permit with the exception of signs that are temporary, for the sale of real estate, political signs, flags, constructions signs, and others as outlined in the [Sign Bylaw](#).

For additional details, contact the Building Department at 978.582.4146 ext. 4.

Site Plan Approval



What is a Site Plan?

A **Site Plan** is a detailed professionally prepared plan the depicts how a parcel, or portion thereof, will be developed and/or used. Site Plans are typically prepared by an engineer and include such items as roads, building footprints, driveways, parking areas, lighting, signage, landscaping, and utilities.

What is Site Plan Approval?

Site Plan Approval is a process for the **Planning Board** to review the physical development of a site to ensure that it meets the standards of the Zoning Bylaw and minimizes impacts on the neighborhood, the environment, and Town services.

Do I Need a Site Plan Approval?

Typically, **Site Plan Approval** is required for new construction of commercial uses or the addition/alteration of a building that increases the gross floor area of a building by 25% or 5,000 square feet (about the area of a basketball court). Site Plan Approval is also triggered by alterations to parking areas, change of use, and the issuance of a **Special Permit** for use by the **Zoning Board of Appeals**.

In Lunenburg, the Land Use Department, and the Planning Board conduct Site Plan Approval. Contact the Land Use Department at 978.582.4146 ext. 5 with any questions.

How Do I Get Site Plan Approval	
Apply	Submit your application and the supporting documentation the Land Use Department. Larger projects will require more detailed information, which may include a traffic study or other impact mitigation measures.
Public Hearing	Upon confirmation that the submitted application is complete the Land Use Department will schedule a Public Hearing with the Planning Board. At this hearing you will be given the opportunity to describe your project to the Planning Board and answer any questions they or the public may have regarding your proposal. This process will typically take 60-90 days (about 3 months) from filing to the issuance of a decision.
Site Plan Approval	Following the Planning Board's review and approval, the final Site Plan Approval is issued. This document must be recorded at the Fitchburg Registry of Deeds.

Alcoholic Beverage License

An **Alcoholic Beverage License** allows an establishment to distribute alcoholic beverages through retail pouring or beverage sales. There is a limited number of alcoholic licenses that may be issued in each municipality based on state-approved quotas. Check with the **Town Manager's Office** regarding the availability of licenses in Lunenburg.

Does My Business Need an Alcoholic Beverage License?

Any business that sells, serves, stores, distributes, delivers, or produces any type of alcoholic beverage is required to have an Alcoholic Beverage License. If you plan to offer your customers the ability to purchase alcoholic beverages of any type, you must apply for an Alcoholic Beverage License.

How Do I Apply for an Alcoholic Beverage License?

The issuance of an Alcoholic Beverage License is a multi-stage process. You must receive primary approval by the Lunenburg Select Board and secondary approval by the Massachusetts Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission. Applications can be located online at the Commission's website at <https://www.mass.gov/abcc/forms.htm>. If both approvals are received, the Select Board, acting as the local licensing authority, will issue the license following the payment of the license fee.

Additional Requirements

To apply for an on-premise Alcoholic Beverage License, you must provide proof of required liquor liability insurance. You may also need to have a certification from a responsible alcohol training program (TIPS or ServSafe are two well-known programs).

The general license process is as follows.

Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Process	
Apply	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Complete the ABCC's online application◆ Print and sign it◆ Submit the application to the Town Manager's Office
Local Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ You will be asked to attend a Select Board meeting at which your application will be discussed.◆ If the Board approves your application, it will be sent to the state ABCC for review.
State Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ The ABCC will review your application◆ The Town will be notified of the State's decision.
Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ If approved by the ABCC, the Select Board will issue your business the Alcoholic Beverage License.

Special Permit

Sometimes the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals must issue a Special Permit for a particular use or uses before a building permit can be issued. If the Special Permit is not approved, the building permit cannot be issued.

What is a Special Permit?

A special permit is an approval for a use or structure this is not allowed by-right in a particular zoning district, but the use or structure may be permitted if certain criteria are met and the conditions of the specific proposal are not detrimental to the specific neighborhood in which they are located.

Does My Business Need a Special Permit?

Property owners or developers may file for a Special Permit if the use they intend for a property requires such. Special Permits may be requested for a variety of uses as classified in the [Use Table](#) (Section 250-4.1 of the Code of Lunenburg). Sometimes a Special Permit may be required for alterations to a pre-existing non-conforming use, lot, or structure.

How Do I Get a Special Permit?	
Consultation	You are encouraged to speak with the Building Commissioner or Land Use Director prior to completing your application. They may assist in identifying the required Special Permit(s) and in filling out the application.
Apply	You will need to submit an application and the required supplemental materials to the Special Permit Granting Authority. Check with the Land Use Department for additional information.
Public Hearing	Special Permit petitions are heard by the respective Board at a scheduled hearing which you or a designated representative(s) must attend. It is important to allow up to five weeks between the time of the application to the public hearing for public noticing requirements.

When Can I Expect a Decision?

The Special Permit Granting Authority is required to open hearings within 65 days (about 2 months) of the date the petition is filed and must either approve or deny the petition within 90-days of closing the hearing. Upon a decision being rendered a written document must be filed with the Town Clerk in 14-days.

Key Contacts in Lunenburg

Town Manager Town Hall, 17 Main St. Heather Lemieux, Town Manager Elaine Peterson, Executive Assistant	978.582.4130
Planning Office Ritter Building 960 Massachusetts Ave. Adam Burney, Land Use Director , Administrative Assistant	978.582.4146
Building Department/Zoning Board of Appeals Ritter Building 960 Massachusetts Ave. , Building Commissioner Lisa Normandin, Administrative Assistant	978.582.4146
Board of Health Ritter Building 960 Massachusetts Ave. Andrea Schnepf, Administrative Assistant	978.582.4146
Department of Public Works Bill Bernard, Director Samantha Tucker, Executive Assistant	978.582.4152
Town Clerk Town Hall, 17 Main St. Kathy Herrick, Town Clerk Ellen Griffin, Assistant Town Clerk	978.582.4130
Conservation Commission Ritter Building 960 Massachusetts Ave. Anna Petrie, Conservation Administrator	978.582.4146
Sewer Commission Paula Bertram, Business Manager , Assistant to the Business Manager	978.582.4160
Lunenburg Business Association Wendy Drennan, President Pat Callahan, Vice President	info@lunenburgbusinessassociation.com
North Central Chamber of Commerce Roy Nascimento President & CEO	978.353.7600
Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce Melissa Fetterhoff, President & CEO	978.425.5764