

	Policy Title: Business Licence Policy	Policy No: CO-012
	Authority: Council	Classification:
	Date Adopted: February 22, 2021	Motion No:
Historical Changes: - Replaces Policy 9.5. Business Licence Policy, 2007 - June 28, 2021 – Added section 4		

Purpose:

To establish governing principles and practices regarding the issuance of business licences.

Scope:

This policy is designed to provide guidance to staff regarding the administration of business licences, and to serve as a resource for persons seeking a business licence from the District of Sooke.

Definitions:

<i>Business</i>	means the carrying on of a commercial or industrial undertaking of any kind, or the providing of professional, personal, or other services for gain or profit within the District.
<i>District</i>	means the District of Sooke.
<i>Licence</i>	means a business licence issued by the District of Sooke.
<i>Licence Inspector</i>	means a person appointed by Council to serve as the Business Licencing Inspector for the District and also any duly authorized representative lawfully acting in that capacity.

1. Business Licencing Principles:

- 1.1 Business licences promote safe and legitimate business premises and operations within the District of Sooke.
- 1.2. Under the District's Business Licence Bylaw, all businesses operating in the District are required to have a valid Business Licence.

2. Business Licence Approvals

- 2.1. Applicants must complete a business licence application form available from the District of Sooke Municipal Hall or the District website at www.sooke.ca.
- 2.2. Electronic business licence applications may be completed online using the [BizPal BC](#) or [One Stop Business Registry](#) platforms.
- 2.3. In consultation with the applicant, the Licence Inspector will ensure an application is made for the appropriate licence type.
- 2.4. The License Inspector may require additional documentation to be submitted in support of a business licence application and will advise applicants accordingly.
- 2.5. Home-based and commercial businesses are required to submit an interior floor plan and an owner's authorization form if the applicant is not the property owner.

- 2.6. Upon receipt of a completed business licence application, the Licence Inspector will determine the internal application review process required.
- 2.7. For home-based and commercial businesses, departmental approval is required as follows:
 - a) **Planning:** The Planning department will review the zoning of the subject property and ensure compliance with the District's Zoning Bylaw.
 - b) **Building:** Applicants may be required to obtain building or plumbing permits and complete repairs or alterations necessary to bring a premises into compliance with the BC Building Code. The Building department will review outstanding permits and ensure final occupancy has been granted before a business licence will be issued. The Building department may conduct on-site visits, as necessary.
 - c) **Fire:** The Fire Inspector will conduct an on-site visit to ensure fire safety requirements are met as per the *BC Fire Code*.
- 2.8. Applicants will be informed of non-compliance issues and be given the opportunity to correct any deficiencies or to withdraw the application.

3. Business Licence Compliance

- 3.1. The Licence Inspector will conduct regular inspections of residential, commercial, and industrial areas to detect new businesses that may not be licenced under the Business Licence Bylaw.
- 3.2. The Licence Inspector will conduct inspections, upon complaint or with notification from other departments, regarding new and unlicensed businesses.
- 3.3. The Licence Inspector shall issue a Business Licence Application, by email, mail, or personal delivery, to an unlicensed business. Provided an unlicensed business is zoned appropriately and a business licence application has been submitted, the business will be permitted to continue to operate until the business licence application has been approved and issued however, the business may be issued a weekly fine for operating without a licence after three weeks time from the date the complete application is received. Where applicable, the registered owner of the property shall be notified by mail that an unlicensed business is operating on their property.

4. Business Licence Renewals

- 4.1 A business licence renewal notice will be issued to each registered business in November of each year for the following year. The amount will become due and payable on January 1.
- 4.2 A reminder notice will be sent out in February of the year for which the business licence is to be renewed. If the amount due is not paid by the last day of February, the business licence fee will be subject to a late fee as defined in the District's Fees and Charges Bylaw.
- 4.3 For clarification, a business will be considered to be operating without a valid business licence if the licence fee is subject to a late fee that remains unpaid.
- 4.4 If any amount of the business licence fee remains unpaid after May 15 of the year for which the business licence is to be renewed, the Business License Inspector will issue an MTI and will continue to issue additional MTIs every two weeks until the outstanding licence fee, including any outstanding late fee, is paid in full.

4.5 The business licence late fee mentioned above will come into effect on January 1, 2022.

References:

Policy Number:	CO-012
Policy Owner:	Bylaw Enforcement
Endorsed by:	Leadership Team
Final Approval:	Council
Date Approved:	February 22, 2021
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Revision Date:	
Related Policies:	
Related Publications:	• Business Licence Bylaw • Intermunicipal Business Licence Agreement Bylaw • Inter-Community Business Licence Bylaw

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