



City of Aliso Viejo

New Business Information

Welcome to the City of Aliso Viejo! We're happy you have chosen to operate your business in our City and wish you many years of prosperity. The following information will help you through the process of conducting or starting your business in the City of Aliso Viejo.

The City of Aliso Viejo does not have a Business License program; therefore, a Business License is not required. However, a business operating in the City requires to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy in lieu of a business license.

Exemption: Home based businesses. Please refer to "Businesses located at your Residence" for rules and regulations.

Business In Commercial Location:

A Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) is required for ALL new businesses in the City. In addition, existing businesses that change the business name and/or change ownership are required to obtain a new C of O. C of Os are issued by the Building Department, and they are not required to be renewed on a yearly basis.

There are two ways to obtain a C of O:

- A) Through a Tenant Improvement/Building permit. This means any change in design, remodel, and construction of any kind, building, electrical, mechanical, or plumbing. Plans are required to be submitted to the City for review and approval. Once the plans are approved a permit may be issued at which point construction begins. After the construction is completed and the City Inspector performs the final inspection a C of O is then processed and mailed to the business.

Please refer to the "Tenant Improvement Submittal Checklist" and the "Permit/Plan Review Application" under Forms and Permits for permit procedures and requirements:
<https://avcity.org/279/Forms-Permits-and-Regulations>

OR

- B) When no tenant improvements are being constructed and a previous C of O was issued for the same use. In this case, a C of O application is submitted with a copy of a site plan and a floor plan of the existing space (other items may be required depending on the type of business). The application is then reviewed by the Planning Department for zoning clearance. Upon Planning Department approval, your application is processed and an inspection is scheduled for a City Inspector to visit the site and verify that no modifications were made to the space with out proper permits, and no code violations are in existence. After the final inspection is performed and passed, the C of O is processed and mailed to the business location.

Please refer to the “Certificate of Occupancy Requirements” and “Certificate of Occupancy Application” handouts under Forms and Permits for details and procedures, see link below:

<https://avcity.org/279/Forms-Permits-and-Regulations>

It is recommended to check the zoning of a commercial building for your proposed use *prior* to signing any agreement. Be sure to check with the Planning Department for zoning information as your business operation may be subject to City codes and requirements. Factors that determine whether you will need a special permit include the nature of the business, hours of operation, outdoor storage, parking requirements, signage, and change-in-use of the establishment.

Please note C of O applications may only be submitted in person during Building Department counter hours, 7:30 am to 12:00 pm, Monday through Friday, closed every other Friday.

For zoning questions please contact the Planning Department at (949) 425-2525 between 7:30 am and 1:00 pm, and by appointment in the afternoons, Monday through Friday, closed every other Friday.

For Building Code questions please contact the Building Department at (949) 425-2540 between 7:30 am and 12:00 pm, Monday through Friday, closed every other Friday.

Business Located At Your Residence:

The regulations contained in Aliso Viejo Municipal Code Section 15.14.150 Home Occupations are provided so that certain incidental and accessory home occupation uses may be established in residential neighborhoods under conditions that will ensure their compatibility with the neighborhood. In addition to the development standards and other requirements for each residential district, the following standards shall apply to the establishment and operation of home occupations:

1. The establishment and conduct of a home occupation shall be incidental and accessory and shall not change the principal character or use of the dwelling unit involved.
2. Only residents of the dwelling unit may participate in the home occupation.
3. A home occupation shall be conducted only within the enclosed living area of the dwelling unit or within the garage, provided no garage space required for off-street parking is used. The home occupation shall not occupy more than 15 percent of the combined floor area of the house and garage.
4. There shall be no signs, outdoor storage, parked vehicles, or other exterior evidence of the conduct of the home occupation. Neither the dwelling nor the lot shall be altered in appearance so that it appears other than a residence, either by color, materials, construction, lighting, sounds, vibrations, or other characteristics.
5. Electrical or mechanical equipment which creates interference in radio, television or telephone receivers or causes fluctuations in line voltage outside the dwelling unit are prohibited.

6. The home occupation shall not create dust, noise or odors in excess of that normally associated with residential use.
7. No sales activity shall be conducted from the dwelling except for mail order sales. The dwelling unit shall not be the point of customer pickup or delivery of products or services, other than by mail or parcel service, nor shall a home occupation create greater vehicular or pedestrian traffic than normal for the district in which it is located.
8. Medical, dental, massage or other service occupations in which patrons are seen in the home are prohibited.

To register for a Home Occupation, click on the “Forms, Permits and Regulations” link below and go to the Planning Department handout section for the “Notification of Home Occupation” form. For more information call (949) 425-2529.

<https://avcity.org/279/Forms-Permits-and-Regulations>

The City does not require a Business License nor a C of O for businesses located in another city that is conducting business within the City of Aliso Viejo.

Other References:

Voluntary Business Watch Program:

Contact the City’s Police Services at (949) 425-2563 for the voluntary Business Watch Program. There is no cost to the applicant. Business Watch provides educational resources and after hour notification in the event that an emergency occurs at your business.

Be sure to check Orange County Sheriff Department (OCSD) and/or Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) safety requirements, including information regarding the transport or use of hazardous materials:

Orange County Fire Authority
1 Fire Authority Road, Building A, Irvine, CA 92606
(714) 573-6100 or www.ocfa.org

Orange County Sheriff’s Department
Business License/Permits
550 N. Flower, Ste. 101, Santa Ana, CA 92703
(714) 647-1868 or www.ocsd.org
Click on General Info at bottom of website

The following information is provided for your convenience and you may contact the respective agencies directly if you have questions or require additional information.

Alcohol & Beverage Control (ABC) License
28 Civic Center Plaza, Ste. 369, Santa Ana, CA 92701
(714) 558-4101 or www.abc.ca.gov

The City's Planning Department will review your application for compliance with the zoning code; be sure to include the business address where the alcohol sales will occur.

Aliso Viejo and South Orange County Regional Chambers of Commerce
26111 Antonio Parkway, Ste. 400, Las Flores, CA 92688
(949) 600-5470 or <http://socchamber.com>

Federal Employer Tax and Account Information
Internal Revenue Service
801 Civic Center West, Ste. 200, Santa Ana, CA 92703
Closest Office: 24000 Avila Road, 3rd Floor, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677
(800) 829-1040 or www.irs.gov

Fictitious Business Name
Orange County Clerk-Recorder
12 Civic Center Plaza, Room 106, Santa Ana, CA 92701
(714) 834-2500 or www.ocgov.com/recorder

Health Permits for Food Related Services
County of Orange, Division of Environmental Health
1241 E. Dyer Rd. Suite 120, Santa Ana, CA 92705
(714) 433-6070 or <http://ocgov.com/gov/health>

Secretary of State, Corporate Filing Division
1500 11th Street, 3rd Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814
(213) 897-3062 or www.ss.ca.gov/business/business.htm

Sellers Permit/Re-sale License
State Board of Equalization
23141 Moulton Parkway, Ste. 100, Laguna Hills, CA 92653
(949) 461-5711, Info (800) 400-7115 or www.boe.ca.gov

Small Business Development Center
Free or low-cost business consulting advice (by appointment only)
(714) 564-5200 or www.ocsbdc.com

State Employer Tax and Account Information
State of CA Employment Development Department (EDD)
2099 S. State College Blvd., Ste. 401, Anaheim, CA 92806
(888) 745-3886 or www.edd.ca.gov