



New Business Planning Guide

City of Clinton Inspections and Planning Department

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Inspections and Planning Department

211 North Broad Street, Suite A
P.O. Drawer 748
Clinton, South Carolina 29325
Phone: 864-833-7517
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New Business Information

We are excited you are considering opening a business in Clinton and we want to help you succeed! We have developed this step by step guide to provide you with information about services the city can offer to help you with your new business as well as city guidelines and procedures you will need to follow during the process.

We are here to answer your questions and work with you to open your doors for business!

AN IMPORTANT NOTE: *We **strongly advise** before leasing, purchasing or otherwise committing to a property, you confirm that the zoning and physical layout of the building and site are appropriate for the use intended. This includes having a clear understanding of any code restrictions or limitations that may affect your operation, and any building and site modifications that may be necessary to open for business.*

CITY PERFORMS PRE-INSPECTION AS NEEDED:

After you have decided on your proposed location, we can offer you a pre-inspection of the building before you decide on leasing/buying to give you an overall idea of any improvements or modifications that may be required to meet City codes so you can determine anticipated costs and expenses to finalize your budget and plans. **This inspection is not intended as a construction inspection and in no way certifies the overall soundness or suitability of the building, structure, site or other elements.**

The pre-inspection covers the site (parking, landscaping, dumpster, etc.) and the building to see what changes, if any, will be required for compliance with City codes.

There are basically two scenarios with differing requirements:

1. Change of Tenant with the same type of business

If you are occupying or relocating to a building or space that was previously occupied within the past 6 months by the same type business as yours, there are generally no changes required to the building or site unless the building has been damaged or altered without permits. There may be some exceptions to that rule when there is a serious or life safety code violation, or certain maintenance needs to be performed such as replacing dead landscaping, patching potholes or striping parking spaces.

2. Change of the “Type of Use” in a Commercial Building or changing a building to commercial from another Category (for example: changing a residence to an office)

Change of use almost always requires compliance with current codes which in turn usually requires changes to the building and site. Some of the things that **may** be required are:



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Building changes:

- handicap access
- additional restrooms
- handicap accessible facilities
- exit lights
- emergency lighting
- electrical changes and estimate of electrical usage

Site changes:

- additional parking
- handicap parking and signage
- paving parking lot
- widening driveway/access
- provision/screening of dumpster pad
- storm water/drainage improvements
- additional landscaping
- sign location (all signage must be approved – see *Sign Permit Overview and Application*)

PRE-INSPECTION RESULTS

After the inspection, you will receive a copy of your pre-inspection results to help you prepare plans for any necessary construction or changes. We will explain your next steps in your process.

PREPARING CONSTRUCTION PLANS FOR SUBMITTAL

If the inspection shows that significant changes or improvements are required, your next step would be to prepare the site and/or building plans. You should use your pre-inspection results provided to prepare complete plans for your specific project. Some plans are required to be prepared by a South Carolina registered architect and/or engineer, and we will advise you if that is the case.

SUBMITTING PLANS FOR APPROVAL

When your plans are complete, submit the site and building plans to the **Inspections and Planning Department located on the 2nd floor of the M.S. Bailey Municipal Center**. The plans will be reviewed within 10 business days. You will be notified if the plans are approved or if the plans require revision. If revisions are required you will be provided a detailed list of review comments.

SELECTING THE RIGHT LICENSED CONTRACTOR

If you have not already done so, when your plans have been approved, you will want to begin your contractor selection. Having an approved set of plans to put out for bids or estimates is helpful in avoiding costly surprises and unexpected expenditures. It also gives your contractor a more complete picture of the work necessary, which generally means a more accurate estimate and better pricing.

You can visit www.llr.state.sc.us to check on a license status of contractors you are considering for hire.



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YOUR CONTRACTOR OBTAINS THE PERMITS AND CALLS FOR INSPECTIONS

Permits can only be obtained by an appropriately licensed South Carolina general contractor who must also hold a current City business license. The general contractor must also provide a list of any subcontractors that he/she plans to use, which must also be appropriately licensed and hold a current City business license as well. Plans must be kept at the job site until the project has been completed. The general contractor must call for required inspections of the work as it progresses. Please call the Inspections and Planning Department at 864-833-7517 for inspections.

DON'T FORGET YOUR SIGNS

An important part of any business is its signs. Signs are issued their own separate permits and are usually handled by a dedicated sign contractor that can often help you design the most effective signs as well as manufacture and install them. (All signage must be approved - see *Sign Permit Overview and Application*)

FINAL INSPECTION

When all your building and site improvements are complete, the general contractor will then call for the final inspection to secure the Certificate of Occupancy for you to be able to move in. This inspection includes the building and site work. **You will not be issued your Certificate of Occupancy until you visit our office to transfer utilities, secure a business license and pay all associated fees.**

SET-UP UTILITIES, BUSINESS LICENSE AND CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY ARE ISSUED

Once you have received approval from the Inspections and Planning Department and are ready to move in, you must visit our office located at 211 N. Broad St. Suite A to transfer utilities, secure your business license and pay all fees. During construction, the utilities are sometimes in the owner's or contractor's name and utility costs are paid by them. The utilities must be transferred to your new business. The business license fee is based on your type of business and your estimate of gross receipts for the coming year. The business license fee for following years will be based on your **actual** gross receipts from the previous year. You may contact us to help determine your license fee at 864-200-4505. (See – Business License Frequently Asked Questions)

OBTAIN HOSPITALITY AND ACCOMODATION TAX FORMS (IF APPLICABLE)

The City has a 2% Hospitality Tax that is required for businesses selling food and beverages prepared or modified for on-premises consumption. The tax is due on the 20th of each month. You can view more information about the Hospitality Tax in the municipal ordinance.

The City also has a 3% Accommodations Tax that is required for hotels, motels and other businesses providing accommodations to transients for consideration. This tax is also due on the 20th of each month. You can also view more information about the Accommodations Tax in the municipal ordinance.



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Helpful Resources

There are several other agencies that you may need to contact before you are ready to open, depending on the type of business you have:

SC Department of Revenue www.sctax.org

300A Outlet Pointe Blvd.
Columbia, SC 29210
(803)898-5000

All new businesses will need to register with the DOR, which administers the majority of taxes and licenses businesses will need to operate in South Carolina. You can use the **South Carolina Business One Stop** <https://scbos.sc.gov/> to help determine the other types of licenses or registrations your business might need, such as **sales tax licenses, alcoholic beverage licenses and amusement and admission licenses.**

Laurens County DHEC www.scdhec.gov

Upstate EA Greenwood
1736 S. Main St.
Greenwood, SC 29646
(864) 227-5915

Restaurants and other food service businesses will need to contact the County Health Department to get the appropriate **Food Service Permits.**

SC Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation www.llr.state.sc.us

110 Centerview Dr.
Columbia, SC 29210
(803) 896-4300

LLR administers the licensing of over 130 **regulated professions and occupations**, including such diverse groups as contractors, cosmetologists, funeral directors and a wide range of medical providers. Most people are generally aware if their profession is regulated. The LLR website is also a good way to check on the license status of contractors and other professionals you might be considering for hire.

SC Secretary of State www.scsos.com

1205 Pendleton St. Ste 525
Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 734-2158

Corporations, limited liability companies and limited partnerships must complete their **business filings** with the Secretary of State's office. This can be done directly with the SCSOS office, or through the **South Carolina Business One Stop** <https://scbos.sc.gov/>.



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SC Department of Social Services www.dss.sc.gov

2638 Two Notch Rd. Ste 220
Columbia, SC 29204
(888) 202-1469 (toll free) or (803) 898-9001

DSS provides **child care registration and licensing** for all child care businesses, including those operating out of a home.

U.S. Small Business Administration www.sba.gov

Programs and services to help you start and grow your business.

Internal Revenue Service www.irs.gov

Tax Information and Federal tax ID numbers.

Opening a new business can be both exciting and challenging. We are here to help you!



For questions or more information contact one of our team members in the Inspections and Planning or Finance Divisions:

Tink Barnes – Building Official
(864) 200-4514 Office tbarnes@cityofclintonsc.com

Renee Morrow – Director of Finance
(864) 200-4509 Office rmorrow@cityofclintonsc.com

Ashley Rochester – Assistant Building Official
(864) 200-4505 Office arochester@cityofclintonsc.com

Tammy Templeton, Accounts Payable/City Clerk
(864) 200-4544 Office ttempleton@cityofclintonsc.com