



Registering Your Business Name What to know before registering

Registration of your business name (Master Business License) is mandatory under the Business Names Act if you operate a business under a name other than your own.* This registration is also required to open a business bank account. **Registration costs \$60.00** and is good for 5 years. You have the option of performing a name search for **\$8 per name** searched.

Registering a business name does NOT give you exclusive use of the name.

Unincorporated business names are not protected, and registering your Business Name does not give you exclusive use. Likewise, the *Business Names Act* does not prevented you from registering a name that is already in use. However, a unique name will help identify your business to customers.

Before making a final decision on your business name, you may want to check to see if someone else is already using the same name within the area you plan to serve. You can search unincorporated business names at an OBC workstation.

Provincially and federally incorporated business names are protected and you may be sued if you use a name that is the same as the legal name or a registered trademark of an incorporated business. You can get protection for your business name through a trademark. For more information on trademarks, talk to a lawyer or Industry Canada (1-800-567-2345).

There are 3 ways you can register your business name:

Online: Hotline: 1-800-565-1921
www.serviceontario.ca
Under 'SERVICEONTARIO' located on the left side, select
'Gateway for Business'
Cost: \$60, plus optional \$8 name search

Mail: Ontario Business Connects
PO Box 1028, Stn B
Toronto, Ontario M5T 3H3

Cost: \$80, plus optional \$12 name search

In Person: **Niagara Fall Area Small Business Enterprise Centre**
(An appointment is not necessary, but is recommended)
City Hall, 4310 Queen Street, 2nd Floor
905-356-7521 x 5001
Cost: \$60, plus optional \$8 name search

In order to use the Self-help workstation at City Hall, your business must be one of the following:

- A sole proprietorship (one owner)
- A partnership (two or more owners)
- An existing corporation (already incorporated)

For further information visit: www.serviceontario.ca

What will I be asked?

Please note: some questions may not be asked based on previous answers given.

- > Basic personal information is required regardless of the form of business such as:
 - Name of the business owner(s)
 - Address(es) (both home and business)
 - phone number(s) (both home and business)
- > The business name you wish to register as well as your business activity (*ie: selling clothing, operating a restaurant*) and products sold/services provided.
- > Will your business be operating under your EXACT personal name?
 - **For example: John Smith would not need to register his business name if he calls his business "John Smith". However, if he wishes to operate as "John Smith's Shoes" then he would be required to register the business name.*
- > Do you sell taxable goods or offer a taxable service?
 - *This question pertains to PST and qualifies you for a Vendor's Permit.*
 - *Vendor's Permits are issued through the Ministry of Finance and can be applied for through this process.*

- > Do you have a Business Number (BN)?
 - *Your BN is for GST, payroll deductions, import/export, and corporate income tax.*
 - *The BN is issued through the Canada Revenue Agency and can not be applied for through this process.*

- > Do you want to apply for personal coverage through the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board?
 - *As the owner of the business it is your choice whether or not you have coverage. Should you opt for the coverage, you will be charged at a rate that reflects your earnings.*

- > Are you buying an existing business?
 - *If yes, what was the previous owner's trade/business name?*
 - *Have you paid Retail Sales Tax on the business equipment?*
 - *If no, what is the value of the equipment?*

- > Has the ownership of the business changed?
 - *For example: Sole proprietorship to corporation, partnership to sole proprietorship, etc.*

Employees

- > Will/have you hire(d) employees or contractors?
 - *The following questions will be asked if you answer yes to the above:*
 - *What is the date you first employed help?*
 - *Have you applied for Employer Health Tax?*
 - *Do you have payroll every month of the year?*