



How to Start a Business in Colorado Checklist

1. Form your business.

1.1. Review Colorado formation options.

There are nine main types of business structures in Colorado. Choose the one that suits your business best.

1.2. Conduct a name availability search.

This is the first of two searches you'll perform on the Colorado Secretary of State's database of business names. The results will indicate whether the specific name is available, but it won't show you similar names.

1.3. Conduct a business database search.

This second search will indicate whether there are registered business names that are similar to yours. However, it won't indicate whether your exact name is available.

1.4. Reserve your business's name.

While you prepare to register your business, you can file a name reservation. This will prevent another business from claiming the name as their own.

1.5. Get an employer identification number.

There are three main filing options: electronic, fax, and mail. International applicants can apply over the phone. All applications should be submitted to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

1.6. Register your business in Colorado.

Almost all types of business formation documents must be submitted on the Colorado Secretary of State website. Sole proprietorships and general

partnerships don't have any such documents to file but must register a trade name if using something other than their legal first and last names.

1.7. Obtain necessary permits and licenses.

The Colorado Boards and Commissions Directory contains information about which businesses are licensed at the state level. Your local small business development center can offer guidance in this regard, too. You should also check with them to find out which local licenses and/or permits you need, and then proceed to apply for each of them.

2. Register your business for taxes.

2.1. Create an account with MyBizColorado.

MyBizColorado is the state's official filing tool for businesses. It can streamline your process of applying for the key tax accounts you'll need.

2.2. Register for sales tax.

This can be done online via MyBizColorado or by submitting a hard copy application.

2.3. Register for withholding tax.

Businesses that have employees must register to withhold income tax. This can also be done online via MyBizColorado or by submitting a hard copy application.

2.4. Register for unemployment insurance tax.

Businesses that have employees must register to pay unemployment insurance tax. You'll need to register via MyBizColorado or by submitting a hard copy application.

3. Comply with employee-related regulations.

3.1. Report your employees to the state.

This applies to newly hired and rehired staff, whether permanent, temporary, or seasonal. Reports must be submitted to the Colorado State Directory of New Hires.

3.2. Obtain workers' compensation insurance.

Almost all businesses that employ one or more individuals are required to offer this form of coverage.

3.3. Display all mandatory posters and notices in your workplace.

Federal and state laws dictate the posters you will need to display. You will be able to find these online.