

BUSINESS START-UP CHECKLIST

Portland, Maine

- √ Before establishing your business in Portland, you should be aware of a variety of Federal, State, and municipal governmental resources that can assist you. The following list can be used as a general reference guide:

- √ **Business Assistance:** Contact the **Economic Development Department** in Room 308, City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8683, for business assistance programs, services, financial incentives and referrals.

- √ To operate as a **sole proprietorship or partnership**, you must file a d/b/a (“doing business as”) with the Portland City Clerk’s office, Room 203, telephone (207) 874-8557. You can download the application from the website at <http://www.portlandmaine.gov/150/Business-Licensing>. In order to file, you must show picture identification.

- √ If you wish to **incorporate** or become a limited partnership or a **limited liability company**, you will need to register your entity with the State of Maine Bureau of Corporations at the Office of the Secretary of State. You can access information needed online at www.maine.gov/sos/cec/corp/ or by calling (207) 624-7736.

- √ If you want to determine whether your company name is in use and protected by **trademark, service mark**, or incorporation, again, contact the Secretary of State’s Bureau of Corporations at (207) 624-7736 or online at [www.maine.gov/sos/cec/corp.](http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/corp/)

- √ If you will be hiring employees, you will need to:
 1. Obtain a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service Office (FORM SS-4, EIN). This can be done by an online application at [http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed/Employer-ID-Numbers-\(EINs\)](http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&-Self-Employed/Employer-ID-Numbers-(EINs)) or call the toll-free Business and Specialty Tax Line at 1-800- 829-4933.

 2. If you already have an EIN, you will need to notify the IRS that you wish to activate as an employer by calling 1-800-829-4933. This will start the process of setting you up with federal withholding and unemployment.

 3. Sign up with the State of Maine Income Tax Withholding. This can be done online at <https://www.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/suwtaxreg/index>, or for questions call (207) 621-5129.

 4. Obtain Worker’s Compensation Insurance on your employees. Check with the company that provides you with business insurance. Information regarding the

Workers' Compensation Act can be obtained by contacting the Maine Workers' Compensation Board Portland Regional Office at (207) 822-0840, or toll free (Maine only) at 1-888-801-9087, or by accessing its website at <http://www.maine.gov/wcb>.

5. Register your business for unemployment tax by either calling the Maine Department of Labor at (207) 621-5120 or by applying online at <https://gateway.maine.gov/dol/meris/>

- ✓ To determine whether you need a **State license** or permit to conduct your business, try the free online Business Answers Service at <http://www.maine.gov/online/businessanswers/> or the Maine.gov Business Licensing page at <http://www.maine.gov/portal/business/licensing.html> for more information and links. You can also call the State's Business Answers line at 1-800-872-3838 in-state or 1-800-541-5872 out-of-state.
- ✓ To determine whether your business is required to hold a **municipal business license**, refer to the business license section in this guide or go online at <http://www.portlandmaine.gov/149/City-Clerk>
- ✓ To determine **compliance** with Portland's **Land Use ordinances**, check with Portland's Inspection Division, Room 315, City Hall, (207) 874-8703. The Land Use Ordinance can be viewed on line at <http://www.portlandmaine.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1080> and click on "Codes, Regulations and Ordinances" on the left side of the web page, then click on "Land Use Code".
- ✓ To apply for a **State of Maine Sales Tax Identification Number** if you plan to sell a taxable product or service, contact the State Bureau of Taxation at (207) 624-9693. You can access the application online at <http://www.state.me.us/revenue/salesuse/homepage.html> and click on "Application for Tax Registration". This application is also used to register for State of Maine income tax withholding.
- ✓ To determine compliance with the **Occupational Safety and Health Act** (www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_id=2743&p_table=OSHA), contact the Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards, at (207) 623-7900 or online at <http://www.maine.gov/labor/bls/>.
- ✓ For information on **real estate** and **personal property tax assessments**, contact the Tax Assessor's office in Room 115, City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8486, or online at <http://www.portlandmaine.gov/135/Assessor>
- ✓ For **registration of vehicles**, including special arrangements for fleet registration, contact the Treasury office in Room 102, City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8490, or online at <http://www.portlandmaine.gov/238/Treasury>
- ✓ During your site selection process, contact the Finance Department, City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8856, to determine any **outstanding taxes or sewer fees** on the property. Any outstanding fees will affect your ability to obtain any licenses or permits for your business.
- ✓ Contact the Parking Division in Room 20, City Hall, telephone (207) 874-8443, for parking regulations, as well as assistance with your business parking needs, or go online at <http://www.portlandmaine.gov/351/Parking>