

Registering Your Business in Ontario

Although you can register your business in person by going to one of the Ontario Government's ServiceOntario Centers, or by mail, it's easy to skip the paperwork and quickly register your business online.

You can avoid confusion and paperwork by registering online through the Government of Ontario, ServiceOntario web site. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and the process takes about 30 minutes. At the same time, you can apply to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) and Employer Health Tax (EHT), if needed.

Once you've completed the online form and payment, you will receive your Master Business License (MBL) within two business days. This is your official proof of registration and will contain your business identification number and expiration date.

Instructions

Choose a name:

Make sure that you choose a name for your new business that does not infringe on another existing business. If possible, pick a name that is distinctive and reflects the type of products and/or services you offer. If all else fails, you can use your own personal name as a business name (i.e. Fred Smith Solar).

Register

Do a name search to see if your business name has already been taken. You do this by going to the business name registration page at ontario.ca and click on "Do It Online Now" button. Upon starting registration, you can search the business name within the first step, where you'll be prompted to select a name search or skip ahead to register. Although online registration is available 24/7, you can only do a name search Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and not on statutory holidays.

Fill out all information in each step of the online form as prompted, including specifying the type of business ownership (sole proprietorship or partnership). The registration process will also ask you for details such as business name, address, and names and addresses of yourself and partners, if applicable.

Visit the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) website to separately register for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), Harmonized Sales Tax (HST), payroll deductions, corporate income tax and import/export accounts. To find out if you need to register for GST and HST, click on "Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax," then click on

“Registering (Opening) Your GST/HST Account.” Under the *“Topics for Business”* tab, set up and/or find information on payroll and other accounts.

Notes:

There is a fee for the business name search, depending on the type of report you require. The different fees and report types are explained upon starting the search.

When registering online, VISA, MasterCard or American Express are the only accepted forms of payment.

If registering in person at a ServiceOntario Centers you can pay with cash, cheque or money order.

If you complete a registration during regular business hours, you will receive a printable Master Business License immediately.

The Business Names Act does not protect exclusivity of a business name. You may be able to protect it by getting a trademark.

Renewal of your Master Business License (MBL) is required every five years.

Web Resources: For Fee business registration services.

There are a number of on-line companies who will complete the registration process for you for a fee. Two such Canadian companies are:

Corporation Centre

<http://www.corporationcentre.ca/docen/pbr/home.asp>

Business Development Centre

http://www.bdc-canada.com/BDC/Corporate/Business_Registration_ON.htm