

BUSINESS LICENSING GUIDE



CITY OF SYRACUSE

CENTRAL PERMIT OFFICE

Overview: The Business Licensing Guide will help you determine if a license is required for your business in the city of Syracuse and provide details related to the application process. It provides a summary of who needs to apply, the fees associated with the license, how often the license needs to be renewed, and additional license requirements. Please note that depending on your business, other permitting, licensing, and inspection requirements may apply.

How to Apply: Access Business License Applications from the City’s website at syr.gov/licensing. Most license applications must be submitted using the City’s Online Application Portal. For more information about how to sign-in and navigate the online application portal, visit syr.gov/onlineapplications.

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Certificate of Use

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Certificate of Use	This license is required for any bar, restaurant, neighborhood market (under 10,000 square feet), drugstore, or smoking establishment.	Business owner or property owner	\$500	Every two years. Expires on date of issuance. Renewal application must be submitted 60 days before certificate expiration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need proof of Workers' Compensation Insurance Coverage and a copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent). Be prepared to provide additional documentation depending on the type of establishment including but not limited to organizational legal documents and state / county certificate, license or permit information.

Entertainment / Event Licenses

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Amusement Device Location	This license is required for the owner of the establishment when amusement devices are present.	The owner of the establishment	\$75 per location, plus \$25 per game / jukebox	Per year. License certificate expires on December 31. If issued after October 31, it will expire on December 31 of the following year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need a copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent). Amusement devices are not permitted to be held in a location that is within 200 feet of the lot line of a public or private school, church, or playground. Gambling devices and adult entertainment devices are not permitted.
Amusement Device Operator	This license is required for the operator who owns, places, distributes, or locates amusement devices in any public place.	Operators of amusement devices	\$100, plus \$5 certification fee for each amusement center location	Per year. License certificate expires on December 31. If issued after October 31, it will expire on December 31 of the following year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If your establishment requires a Certificate of Use, this business license must be up to date to operate. If you own the device and it is in an establishment you own, you are responsible for obtaining both the amusement device location and operator licenses.
Charitable Gaming	Licenses required for New York State Gaming Commission regulated games including bell jar, bingo, casino nights and raffle. Applications are through NYS but must be submitted to the Central Permit Office.	Organization / Organizer	Bell Jar: \$25 Bingo: \$18.75 per occasion Casino Nights: \$25 (max 12 events per year) Raffle: \$25	Per year. License certificate expires on December 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional License Fees due to the City: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell Jar: 5% of ideal net proceeds every quarter (form GC-7Q) Casino Night: 5% of net profits due within seven days of event (forms GC-7 & GC-7B) Raffle: 2% of net profits over \$30,000. File financial statement of raffle operations by January 30 of the following year (form GC-7R)

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Concert	This license is required for a one-time singular musical event / concert.	Business owner or property owner	\$15 per concert. The maximum amount collected per year is \$150 (10 concerts). Applications are still required for additional shows.	Per day / event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need a copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent). One-day applications must be submitted at least 14 days prior to the concert or event. Separate applications are required for each event. The Department of Fire, Police, and Zoning will conduct a review before issuing these licenses. Premises must comply with all relevant laws, ordinances, and regulations. The applicant must obtain good order and sufficient security during the event. Outdoor entertainment must cease by 10 p.m. Certificate must be posted conspicuously during the event or inside the business. If your establishment requires a Certificate of Use, this business license must be up to date to operate. Food vendors must obtain a separate food vendor license from the City of Syracuse.
Entertainment (Annual)	This license is required for restaurants, bars and hotel establishments offering consistent live entertainment (e.g., live music, dancing).	Business owner or property owner	Based on capacity: 250+: \$300 150-249: \$250 75-149: \$200 1-74: \$75	Per year. License certificate expires on December 31.	
Entertainment (One-Day)	This license is required for one-time events or exhibitions (not concerts).	Business owner or property owner	\$55 per event.	Per day / event	
Open Air Cultural Event	This license is required for outdoor cultural events sponsored by a nonprofit organization to display and/or sell paintings, jewelry, crafts, etc.	Organizer of cultural event	\$15 per event.	Per day / event	

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Juice Bar	This license is required for any business that does not serve alcohol / food but allows music and/or dancing.	Business owner or operator	\$250	Per year. License certificate expires on December 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To apply, you will need a copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent). • Juice bars cannot operate past 11 p.m. • A City review, including inspection of the premises during normal business hours, must be conducted before the license is issued. • The business must have all required licenses and permits to operate.
Movie Theater	This license is required for movie theaters and any other owner / operator of a motion picture device used to show movies to the public for a sum of money.	Business owner or operator	Based on capacity: 1401+: \$200 1201-1400: \$110 1001-1200: \$85 801-1000: \$60 601-800: \$50 1-600: \$35 <i>Half price after July 1</i>	Per year. License certificate expires on December 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To apply, you will need a copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent). • You must schedule an inspection with the Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB) before the license is issued. Please have the following information and documents available during the inspection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Capacity sign issued by the FPB. ○ Copies of the most recent sprinkler system report, smoke detector and fire alarm certification, and fire suppression system inspection report if applicable. ○ Ensure all exit signs and emergency lighting devices are functioning properly.

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Professional Basketball and Hockey	This license is required for professional basketball or hockey events.	Business owner or property owner	\$25 per event \$100 per year. If you are paying the yearly fee, you must file an application for each event occurrence.	Per event or per year. Annual license certificate expires on December 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need a copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent). The application must be submitted at least 14 days before the event. A City review must be conducted before the license is issued. Premises must comply with all relevant laws, ordinances, and regulations. The applicant must obtain good order and sufficient security during the event. Certificate must be posted conspicuously during the event.

Food / Vending / Retail Licenses

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Auctioneer	This license is required for any person or entity acting as an auctioneer of personal property and engaging in public auctions.	Auctioneers	\$100, plus \$5,000 bond to be posted and approved	Per year. License certificate expires on December 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need a copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent). A background check and City review must be conducted before issuing this license.

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Food Vendor	This license is required for a food vendor (including food trucks, pushcarts, and food stands) operating on City property, including the Right-of-Way and City parks.	Business owner or operator	Based on location / duration: Class A: \$1,500 Class B: \$1,000 Class C: \$500 Mobile: \$500 Unprepared Foods: \$300 1 Day Event: \$20	Per event or per year. Annual license certificate expires on December 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent) Onondaga County Health Department Inspection and Approval. Certificate of General Liability Insurance, \$500,000 policy listing the City of Syracuse as additionally insured. Proof of New York State Certificate of Authority. Proof of Vehicle Insurance A background check and City review must be conducted before issuing this license. Additional permit requirements may apply.
<p>The following Fire Prevention Permits are on the City's Online Application Portal and are required for the following uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile Food Preparation Vehicle Permit: Any vendor cooking, prepping, or serving food in or from a food truck or trailer. Propane Permit: If propane will be used on the premises (not required if completing the Mobile Food Preparation Vehicle Permit). 					
Tobacco Retail	This license is required for any person or entity selling tobacco products out of a building.	Entity / State License Holder selling the product	\$250	Per year. License certificate expires one year after issuance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need a copy of your New York State issued driver's license. You are required to submit proof of your New York State Certificate of Registration and City of Syracuse Certificate of Use.

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Peddler Non-Food	This license is required to vend non-food items on the streets or City property.	Vendor	\$20 per day \$50 per week \$75 per month	Daily, Weekly or Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need a copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent) and two passport quality photographs (Dimensions: 2" x 2"). The vending area is limited to 20 square feet and one 4x4 card table per location. A vendor must have the license certificate on location and the name on the license must match the operator. If you are requesting more than one location, please fill out an application for each location. No person shall suspend or place any wares, goods, or merchandise in front of any store, or place anything to obstruct the free passing of any sidewalk or crosswalk. Vending is only allowed between 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. in a business district or 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in a residential neighborhood. A City review must be conducted to issue the license. You must choose a location before submitting your application. We cannot choose a location for you. Contacting the Department of Public Works by phone at 315-448-2489 for location approval before applying is recommended.

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Transient Retail Business	This license is required for any retail business selling goods, wares, or merchandise (not food products) for a period of six months or less.	Business owner or operator	No application fee: cash bond of \$500 to \$1,000 is required	One-time, per transient business period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need a copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent). The licensee shall file a verified report of the stock on hand before a license is issued, and report any stock received after the license is issued. Business shall not be conducted for a period of more than 6 (six) months. The licensee shall file a report of the stock sold during each week and the amount in which it was sold. At the completion of the transient retail business, the licensee shall file a report stating the total amount of stock sold and total amount for which it was sold.

Junk / Secondhand Goods Licenses

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Junk Collector Without a Yard	This license is required for the business of collecting and / or dealing junk (worn goods) but does not own or maintain a yard or similar fixed premises for such business.	Person collecting and / or dealing junk	\$25	Per year. License certificate expires on December 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need a copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent). No license will be given to a person who has been convicted of larceny or knowingly receiving stolen property.
Junk Dealer	This license is required for the business of collecting and/or dealing junk (worn goods) from or within a yard or other fixed premises.	Business owner or operator	\$150	Per year. License certificate expires on December 31.	
Secondhand Auto Dealer	This license is required for any person or entity engaged in the commercial exchange / resale of secondhand automobiles (does not apply to non-profit charitable organizations).	Business owner or operator	\$50 per day \$250 per year	Per day or per year. Annual license certificate expires on December 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need a copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent) and proof of New York State Certificate of Authority. A background check and City review must be conducted before the license is issued.

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Secondhand Dealer	This license is required for any person or entity engaged in the commercial exchange / resale of certain secondhand goods.	Business owner or operator	\$50 per day \$250 per year	Per day or per year. Annual license certificate expires on December 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need a copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent) and proof of New York State Certificate of Authority. A background check and City review must be conducted before the license is issued.

Distribution / Solicitation Licenses

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Bill and Sample Distribution	This license is required for any person or entity distributing pamphlets, brochures, samples, or similar items in a free manner that is not door-to-door.	Distributors of free materials	\$10 per month \$35 per year	Per month or per year. Annual license certificate expires on December 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need a copy of photo identification (Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent).
Bill Posting	This license is required for any person or entity posting or carrying advertising boards, signs, or placards in the City Right-of-Way.	Advertisers	\$50	Per year. License certificate expires on December 31.	

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Solicitor	This license is required for any person or entity engaged in door-to-door sales of goods or services. This includes the solicitation of items or services to be performed in the future or for making, manufacturing, or repairing any article or thing for future delivery. This does not include the delivery of newspapers or periodicals.	Business owner or operator	\$350	Per year. License certificate expires on December 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of photo identification: Driver's License, Passport, or equivalent. Copy of NYS Driver's License, Vehicle Registration, and Insurance (if using a motor vehicle). Two passport quality photographs (Dimensions: 2" x 2"). Proof of NYS Certificate of Authority. Each representative / assistant soliciting under this license must obtain a separate Solicitors Assistant License. A background check and City review must be conducted for each applicant before the license is issued.
Solicitor Assistant	This license is required for any representative / assistant engaged in door-to-door sales of goods or services.	Representative or assistant to the solicitor	\$100	Per year. License certificate expires on December 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disorderliness by licensees is prohibited. A badge issued with the license must be worn in a conspicuous place on the solicitor while engaged in business transactions under the license.

Transportation Licenses

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Booting on Private Property	This license is required anytime a vehicle is booted on private property.	Owner of business / private lot	\$200	Per year. License certificate expires on December 31.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate for General Liability Insurance: \$1,000,000 minimum policy listing the City of Syracuse as additionally insured. NYS Vehicle Registration and Auto Insurance Policy (if using a vehicle or tow truck). Copy of NYS Driver's License for each listed partner, member, or officer of the business. Warning signs must be posted at all entrances and exits of the lot stating parking and booting policies and fees. Booting Fee shall not exceed \$100. A City review and background check must be conducted before the license is issued. If the use of vehicles is present, please provide vehicle information, registration, and insurance. If the use of privately-owned tow trucks is present, a City of Syracuse Towing Company license is required, as well as all vehicle information, registrations, and insurances. The license certificate provided must be posted conspicuously on the premises.

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Buses	This license is required for the operation of a passenger bus in the city (interstate, intrastate, or city-only). This excludes buses used solely for sightseeing, hotel buses, or any taxicab or airport buses.	Bus operator	\$150 (intrastate / interstate) \$300 (city-only)	Per year. License certificate expires on June 30. The license must be renewed in June of each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liability Insurance policy, minimum of \$5,000 for injury or death of one person, and minimum of \$25,000 for any one accident. Policy shall be in favor of the City and the licensee(s), and shall cover the City of Syracuse, the public, and passenger liability. Copies of Vehicle Registration(s) and Auto insurance policy for each bus. Copy of applicant's driver's license and copy of each additional driver's license that will be operating a bus. The applicant must obey the laws of the state, all ordinances and traffic regulations of the city regarding traffic in and over the streets and public places of the city, and all laws, ordinances and regulations relating to the operation of motor vehicles and the carrying of passengers for hire in such vehicles. A license may be revoked at any time by the chief of police should the ordinance be considered violated. The license certificate provided must be posted conspicuously on the premises.

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Ground Transportation	This license is required for any taxicab or airbus operating within city limits.	Owner or operator of motor vehicle involved in passenger transport	\$300	Per year. License certificate expires on June 30.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valid NYS Registration Document, Title Document and proof of For-Hire Insurance for the vehicle. Certified copies of certificates of Partnership, Corporation or Association. Certificate indicating operation under an assumed name (DBA). Former Ground Transportation License and Medallion (if requesting license transfer).
Taxi (Hack License)	This license is required for any owner or operator of a taxicab or airbus.	Owner or operator of taxicab	\$50	Per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of NYS Driver's License (Class E minimum). Two passport quality photographs (Dimensions: 2" x 2"). Medical Certification Form (Medical exam must be within past three years). Receipt confirming fingerprints taken for their NYS Criminal History report.
Business Licenses for Ground Transportation and Taxi Drivers are paper only. Applications are available at syr.gov/licensing or by visiting the Central Permit Office at 300 South State Street, 1st floor. Applications must be submitted in person or by mail to the Central Permit Office.					

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Snow Plowing and Removal	This license is required for any person or entity engaged in snow plowing and / or removal services.	Business owner or operator	\$50 per year, plus \$10 per each additional piece of equipment	Per year. License certificate expires on June 30. The license must be renewed in June of each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate for General Liability Insurance: \$1,000,000 policy listing the City of Syracuse as additionally insured. Auto Insurance Policy: \$500,000 minimum limit with \$50,000 minimum property damage coverage listing the City of Syracuse as additionally insured. Copy of Vehicle Registration for each vehicle being used. Copy of New York State Driver's License for the applicant and each vehicle driver. Proof of Worker's Compensation and/or Disability Coverage (if applicable). Any violations of the Ordinance may result in tickets, fines, or the revocation of this license. You must account for all pieces of equipment in the application. To add a piece of equipment to the license, you must provide written documentation / executed agreement to confirm employment status for employees and/or subcontractor vehicles. A decal issued with the license must be placed on the piece of equipment being used. Each additional piece of equipment will be issued a separate decal.

License Type	Description	Who needs to apply?	Fee	Frequency (Date of expiration is on each license once issued)	Notes / Requirements
Towing Company	This license is required for any person or entity engaged in vehicle towing.	Business owner or operator	\$200 per year, plus \$25 per each additional vehicle	Per year. License certificate expires on April 15. The license must be renewed in April of each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To apply, you will need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of Insurance Policies Required by NYS (minimum limits of \$100,000, \$200,000 bodily injury, and \$50,000 property damage with the City of Syracuse listed as additionally insured). Copy of Applicant's NYS Driver's License Copy of NYS Driver's License for each additional driver (if applicable). A background check and City review must be conducted before the license is issued. An inspection of the location of the towing company and of the premises where towed vehicles are stored will take place during normal business hours to determine whether public safety problems exist. The license must be posted in a conspicuous place on the premises of the towing company as well as a copy of the license in each towing vehicle used by the company. The license decal(s) provided must be posted in the back window of each vehicle being used for towing. The license does not put you on the Syracuse Police Towing List.