



Starting a Business in Cape Coral: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Got questions? You've come to the right place. Here are the answers to the Top 20 frequently asked questions about starting a business in Cape Coral. If you don't find the answers to your questions, call the Cape Coral Economic Development Office—we are here for you.

- 1. How do I start a business in Cape Coral?**
- 2. How do I get a Business Tax Receipt (business license) in Cape Coral?**
- 3. Can I apply for a Business Tax Receipt (business license) online?**
- 4. Do I need a Lee County license to do business in Cape Coral?**
- 5. How do I find a location for my business in Cape Coral?**
- 6. What documents do I need to open a business in Cape Coral?**
- 7. What fees do I have to pay to open a business in Cape Coral?**
- 8. What are the zoning districts in Cape Coral and how do I find out which zoning district is appropriate for my business?**
- 9. Who do I call about zoning questions?**
- 10. How many parking spaces do I need at my business location?**
- 11. What impact fees do I need to pay for my business location?**
- 12. What are the permit fees for remodeling or building out my place of business?**
- 13. Which City Departments need to inspect my business location before I can open my business?**
- 14. What is a Certificate of Use (CU)?**
- 15. What is a Certificate of Occupancy (CO)?**
- 16. What is the Cape Coral Economic Development Office (EDO)?**
- 17. How do I contact the Cape Coral EDO?**
- 18. What is the Small Business Development Center (SBDC)?**
- 19. Are there demographic reports available for Cape Coral?**
- 20. How do I request a speaker for my group?**

1. How do I start a business in Cape Coral?

The Cape Coral EDO offers these resources:

- “Permitting Guide: Opening a Business” is a comprehensive, downloadable guide with step-by-step instructions on how to start a commercial business in Cape Coral. From the Cape Coral EDO homepage, go to the “Start a Business” tab and click on “Business Support Resources.” Click on “Business Guides” then click on “Permitting Guide: Opening a Business.”
- “Licensing a Home-Based Business” is a comprehensive, downloadable guide with step-by-step instructions on how to start a home-based business in Cape Coral. From the Cape Coral EDO homepage, go to the “Start a Business” tab and click on “Business Support Resources.” Click on “Business Guides” then click on “Licensing a Home-Based Business.”

2. How do I get a Business Tax Receipt (business license) in Cape Coral?

The **Business Tax Receipt (BTR)** is a mandatory, annual tax for exercising the privilege of engaging in business. The BTR is issued by the Licensing Office at the Department of Community Development (DCD).

Licensing Office:

City Hall
1015 Cultural Park Blvd.
Cape Coral, FL 33990

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 150027
Cape Coral, FL 33915-0027

[Licensing](#)

Business Tax Receipt / Licensing: (239) 574-0430 or licensing@capecoral.net

3. Can I apply for a Business Tax Receipt (business license) online?

No, because the City must verify appropriate professional licenses and that the business will be operating in an appropriate location. However, BTR's may be easily renewed online.

4. Do I need a Lee County license to do business in Cape Coral?

Yes. Lee County requires a Business Tax Receipt (BTR) before opening a business in Lee County. The first step is to obtain a BTR from the City, then apply for the county BTR.

5. How do I find a location for my business in Cape Coral?

Contact the Cape Coral Zoning Office to determine your business classification. Be sure to tell them *exactly what operations will take place at your Cape Coral location*. Businesses may have split operations (between sales offices and manufacturing, for example). The Zoning Office can advise what zoning districts would be appropriate for your business.

City zoning maps are available at [Virtual Zoning Map](#) so you can review which areas of the City you should concentrate on. The zoning districts are listed for each property, and by clicking on a site, you will see the Permitted Uses for that zoning category under the City Code of Ordinances.

Zoning Office: (239) 574-0553 or planningquestions@capecoral.net

6. What documents do I need to open a business in Cape Coral?

- Federal Tax ID# (Employee Identification Number) can be obtained for free: [IRS](#) with your Social Security number
- Competency or professional licenses from the State of Florida (if applicable) for the type of work being performed

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- Business Tax Receipts from Cape Coral and Lee County
 - Required Fire and/or Building Department inspections of the business location (if not home-based)
 - Certificate of Use from the City of Cape Coral (if not home-based)

If you are engaged in business activity for profit within the City of Cape Coral, you must apply for a **Business Tax Receipt (BTR)**. The **BTR** is an annual tax for exercising the privilege of engaging in business. The BTR is issued by the Licensing Office at the Department of Community Development.

Department of Community Development

Licensing Office:

City Hall
1015 Cultural Park Blvd.
Cape Coral, FL 33990

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 150027
Cape Coral, FL 33915-0027

Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday

Phone: (239) 574-0430

Questions: licensing@capecoral.net

If you are renewing your BTR, download the Business Tax Receipt application at [Business Tax Receipt](#)

7. What fees are required to open a business in Cape Coral?

*Business Tax Receipt (BTR) [Chapter 11-16: Schedule of Business Taxes](#)

Impact Fees (if applicable) – check here for your situation: [Permit and Impact Fee Schedule](#)

8. What are the zoning categories in Cape Coral and how do I determine which zoning district is appropriate for my business? [Zoning Districts Map](#)

Review the [Code of Regulations Article II District Regulations](#) for permitted uses in each Zoning District.

9. Who do I call with zoning questions?

The zoning staff is happy to answer your questions: (239) 574-0553.

10. How many parking spaces do I need at my business location?

This is determined by your business classification and zoning district. Contact the Zoning Office at (239) 574-0553 for more information.

11. What impact fees do I need to pay for my business location?

A schedule of Permit and Impact Fees is available at the “Permitting Fees” at [Permit and Impact Fees](#)
For new building construction and other activities: [Building and Other Permit Fees](#)

For Road Impact Fees: (239) 573-3172 (DCD)

For Utility Impact Fees: (239) 242-3851 (Financial Services)

12. What are the permit fees for remodeling or building out my place of business?

The permit fees you may need to pay depend upon your situation. Check here at: [Miscellaneous Permit Fees](#)

To calculate estimated fees, use the online Commercial Building Permit Fee Estimator at: [Permit Fee Calculator](#)

13. Which City Departments need to inspect my potential business location before I rent/lease or purchase a property? Before you sign a lease:

- Call zoning first to verify the site is properly zoned and has adequate parking if applicable (if change of use is required).
- Request a free inspection by the Cape Coral Fire Department to determine if there are any interior changes that must be made to comply with the Fire Code. This is a *free courtesy inspection*.
- A building permit will be required if changes to your space need to be made to accommodate your business. A building inspector must inspect all work completed by your contractors. The Fire Department must *do the final inspection* after you have moved into the space before you open for business.
- If your business is a different type than the one that previously occupied the space, you will need a Building Permit and an inspection by the Building Inspector from the Department of Community Development (DCD). All businesses require a Fire Department inspection before opening for business, regardless of whether they had work done inside the space.
- If you plan any build-out or changes to the interior of the structure, you will need a Building Permit and a building inspection by the Department of Community Development (DCD).

14. What is a Certificate of Use (CU)?

The **Certificate of Use (CU)** is issued by the City to indicate that the business location is consistent with zoning regulations and that inspections have been completed. You may apply for the CU at the Department of Community Development (DCD) after approval by the Zoning office.

Cape Coral Department of Community Development:

City Hall
1015 Cultural Park Blvd.
Cape Coral, FL 33990

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 150027
Cape Coral, FL 33915-0027

Certificate of Use/Zoning: (239) 574-0553

15. What is a Certificate of Occupancy (CO)?

The **Certificate of Occupancy (CO)** indicates that the structure in which the business is housed is habitable. The CO is issued by the Building Division of the Department of Community Development (DCD) to the building owner.

Department of Community Development: (239) 574-0606

16. What is the Cape Coral Economic Development Office (EDO)?

The Cape Coral Economic Development Office (EDO) encourages the creation of new businesses, supports the expansion of existing businesses and attracts new firms from outside the area in order to create a balanced and diversified economy in Cape Coral.

The EDO creates and administers financial incentives, promotes the City through advertising and public relations programs, and serves as business ombudsman to assist with permitting, licensing, zoning and other government-related questions in Cape Coral.

Please use our office as a resource and sign up for the monthly EDO e-newsletter to stay up-to-date with current

business-development events. We welcome your call or email.

17. How do I contact Cape Coral EDO?

Cape Coral Economic Development Office:

City Hall
1015 Cultural Park Blvd.
Cape Coral, FL 33990

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 150027
Cape Coral, FL 33915-0027

Phone: (239) 574-0444

Questions: ecodev@capecoral.net

[Cape Coral EDO](#)

18. What is the Small Business Development Center (SBDC)?

The EDO assists in the funding of the Cape Coral satellite office of Florida Gulf Coast University's Small Business Development Center, (SBDC). The SBDC offers free counseling services to individuals who have questions or need assistance in starting or growing their business. These sessions are conducted by state-certified business analysts.

The SBDC is a nonprofit organization affiliated with the Center for Leadership and Innovation, a division of FGCU's Lutgert College of Business and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The SBDC is located across from Cape Coral City Hall.

The SBDC sponsors free and low-cost seminars on significant business development issues, from acquiring capital to marketing.

SBDC also provides free on-site counseling plus training and technical assistance in all aspects of small business management. The trained staff can help you with a business plan, marketing or production issues, engineering and technical problems, or with feasibility studies. The SBDC can also provide assistance in obtaining contracts with government and federal agencies, importing, exporting or international trade.

Small Business Development Center

1020 Cultural Park Blvd. S., Unit #3
Cape Coral, FL 33990
(239) 573-2737

[SBDC at FGCU](#)

19. Are there demographic reports available for Cape Coral?

Yes, the Cape Coral Economic Development Office can generate demographic reports for any address, city, county, MSA, or ZIP code in the United States.

20. How do I request a speaker for my group?

Contact the Cape Coral EDO at ecodev@capecoral.net or (239) 574-0444.