

General Occupational Tax Information

Occupational Tax General Information: This information is provided as a public service to assist those persons interested in establishing and conducting a business in the City of Dunwoody. It is not deemed to be all-inclusive. Any error or omissions herein will not relieve the business owner of responsibility, obligation or liability in fulfilling all legal requirements.

Presented here is general information that applies to all business and some that applies to only specific activities. You will also find a directory of governmental and non-governmental agencies that you may be required to comply with or who can offer businesses assistance.

Authority to License: The State of Georgia permits cities to license for both revenue and regulation (Official Code of Georgia, Chapter 13 of Title 48). Municipalities license businesses for revenue to broaden the tax base because a business uses, or causes to be used, more municipal services than a residence. Dunwoody's business tax ordinance is detailed in Chapter 10 of the Dunwoody City Code.

When the occupational tax is paid, an Occupational Tax Certificate is issued. This is commonly called a business license and the terms "business license", "business certificate" and "business regulation" are used interchangeably. If you have any questions concerning your registration or other requirements, our staff members will gladly assist you.

Who Needs an Occupational Tax Certificate: A separate license/certificate is required for each branch or separate location of business. Any person, including but not limited to an individual, partnership, corporation or limited liability company, who wishes to conduct either directly or indirectly, any business within City of Dunwoody must secure an Occupational Tax Certificate. City law states that no person shall engage in business or transact and carry on a business activity, show, or exhibition, without complying with any and all applicable provisions of Chapter 10 of the City Code.

All businesses require our Zoning Department's approval, while regulated businesses require some additional approvals prior to obtaining an Occupational Tax Certificate.

Home-Based Business: Home-based businesses are allowed if it merely serves as the base of operations and the activity does not create any traffic or noise, does not involve customers at the home, and there are no identifying signs. The use of residential property for business purposes requires the completion of our Home Occupation form (HOP). For information or questions regarding Home-Based Business and Zoning please contact the Planning/Development Department at (678) 382-6700.

Owners of Residential or Commercial Property: Owners of residential and/or commercial rental properties must have an Occupational Tax Certificate.

Independent Contractors: Independent Contractors are in business for themselves and must obtain an Occupational Tax Certificate prior to commencing work. Generally, if payroll taxes are not deducted from your pay, you are an Independent Contractor.

Business Basics for the New Business Owner

Planning/Zoning & Sign Approvals: The Zoning Department reviews all new applications and change of addresses to ensure compliance with zoning regulations for that business location. They must approve the business activity to be conducted at that location prior to issuance of an Occupational Tax Certificate.

Signs are strictly regulated. For information about Zoning and Signs, contact the Community Development Department at (678) 382-6800.

Ownership Types: Business ownership is classified into one of the following types of ownership entities (legal business structures): Sole Proprietor, Partnership, Limited Partnership, Limited Liability Company/Corporation. To determine which type of organization best suits your needs contact your legal or tax professional.

Important Information about Occupational Tax Certificates

Change of Business Activity, Business Location or Ownership: An occupational tax certificate is nontransferable. The certificate is terminated when business ownership changes. Changes in location or business activity/description require zoning approval. Advise the Finance Department immediately of any changes to your business registration application, especially if the business has ceased to operate. Applicable forms are located on our website at www.dunwoodyga.gov.

Posting of Occupational Tax Certificate: All occupational tax certificates must be displayed on the premise of the place of business. It must be posted in a conspicuous place and open to public viewing.

Occupational Tax is Payable in Advance: Payment must be made on or before commencement of business activity. Payment is for the privilege of conducting business in the periods ahead. Applicants shall provide an estimate of their gross receipts and number of employees for the rest of the year. The estimate will be changed to actual figures when renewed for the following year.

Occupational Tax Renewals: Once your business has obtained an occupational tax certificate, a courtesy renewal notice will automatically be mailed to you at the beginning of each year, generally the first week in January. Renewal Forms should be completed and returned prior to the date on the renewal form. If you do not receive a renewal notice, please contact the Finance Department. ***Failure to receive a renewal notice does not relieve the business ownership of responsibility to renew the business registration.***

Occupational Tax Certificate renewal payments are due by April 15th of each year and the tax must be paid by April 15th to avoid late penalties of 10% and interest of 1.5%.

Regulated Businesses & Privilege Licenses

Alcoholic Beverages: The business licensing section processes all alcohol beverage licenses and annual renewals. In addition to zoning approval and other requirements, alcohol related business must have an occupational tax certificate. The applicant/licensee and all owners with ten percent (10%) or more must pass a background investigation as conducted by the City of Dunwoody. All information must be provided in duplicate. Other documentation required includes: 1) drivers' license, and 2) two original pictures. Public Safety and the Finance Department enforce the alcohol rules and regulation, and the Finance Department issues permits for employees to work in alcohol related businesses. If your business plans to sell or serve alcohol beverages, please contact the Finance Department at (678) 382-6700.

Adult Establishment License: In addition to zoning approval requirements, all applications for sexually oriented businesses, as defined by Dunwoody City Code, will be reviewed by the Finance Department. For additional information, please contact the Finance Department at (678) 382-6700.