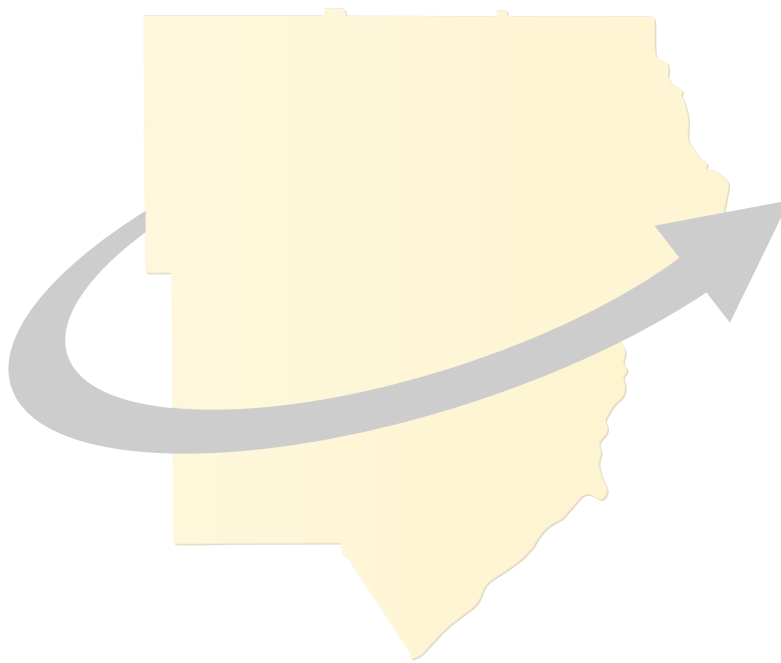


New Business Guide

A checklist for doing business in Cobb County



Cobb County Community Development

Physical Address: 1150 Powder Springs Street Suite 400

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 649 Marietta, Georgia 30068

www.cobbcounty.org
comdev@cobbcounty.org

“Welcome!

Thank you for considering Cobb County for the location of your business. This New Business Guide is provided as a convenient tool for approaching sequential questions and issues as you take your business from an idea, to initial planning, to the commencement of business activities.

While this guide covers most of the topics relevant to starting your business, there are variables that may require additional attention. Our team is prepared to answer your questions and to work with you every step of the way.

For those of you already familiar with operating in Cobb County, this guide serves as a checklist for addressing and completing the steps necessary to properly develop and register your business. The Cobb County Economic Development Division offers a concierge service to assist you through the process of opening a new business in unincorporated Cobb County. Our team is ready and willing to assist you – *please do not hesitate to contact us!*

We look forward to speaking with you and are here to help. *Again, thank you for considering Cobb County.”*

- *Dr. Jackie McMorris*
County Manager

The Community Development Agency is the development-coordinating agency for Cobb County. It is responsible for implementing federal and state environmental mandates; it advises the Board of Commissioners and the general public on development and planning issues as they affect the environment, financial, economic, legal, and social welfare of Cobb County. The Agency has a responsibility to maintain and increase the quality of life in the County as deemed necessary by the Board of Commissioners and County residents; it fulfills its role by providing and, when necessary, enhancing programs as administered by its six divisions:

Business License	(770) 528-2051
Code Enforcement	(770) 528-2180
Development and Inspections	(770) 528-2041
Erosion Control	(770) 528-2190
Planning & Economic Development	(770) 528-2018
Zoning	(770) 528-2027

Jessica Guinn, Community Development Agency Director

Physical Location: 1150 Powder Springs St, Ste 400
Marietta, GA 30064 (no mail accepted at this address)

Mailing Address: Cobb County Community Development
Division Name or Contact
PO Box 649
Marietta, GA. 30061

New Business Checklist

I. Have you registered your business with the Georgia Secretary of State's Office?

- State Registration
 - All businesses operating within the State of Georgia must register with the Georgia Department of Revenue. Please call (404) 656-2817 or visit sos.ga.gov.

- Business Names and Trademarks
 - Prior to publicizing and circulating the name of your business and/or graphics, check the name's availability with the Georgia Secretary of State to assure it is not already in use within the state. To trademark the name, you must register it with the Secretary of State's Trademarks Division. Call (404) 656-2817, or visit sos.ga.gov.

- Incorporation
 - To incorporate your business, contact the Corporations Division of the Georgia Secretary of State at (404) 656-2817, or visit sos.ga.gov.

II. Have you confirmed that the building/structure of where the business will be operating meets all zoning requirements?

- Zoning
 - Confirm zoning and required parking for the proposed business.

Please check with Zoning Division to verify if the business activity may be conducted at the designated address of your intended business location **prior to submitting your business license application**.

Please call (770) 528-2027 or visit our office at 1150 Powder Springs Street to speak with Zoning staff.

- Will your business be installing signage?
 - All business signage or banners must be permitted through the County prior to any fabrication or installation of signage.

Submittal of plans and an application for a Sign Permit should be made a minimum of four weeks before the anticipated opening of your business in order to allow for review and the subsequent fabrication and installation of signage.

Allow five working days from the time of plans submittal to the return of comments.
Application for a sign permit along with drawings/plans must be submitted to:
Cobb County Community Development, Zoning Division
1150 Powder Springs Street, Suite 400, Marietta, GA 30064

III. Have you applied for a Business License?

Business License

Any business located within unincorporated Cobb County that engages in, causes to be in, and/or represents itself/himself/herself to be engaged in **any occupation or activity** with the object of gain, benefit, or advantage, either directly or indirectly, is **required to obtain an Occupational Tax Certificate (OTC)**, otherwise known as a business license, annually. Please contact the County's Business License Division at (770) 528-8410 or visit their website at www.cobbcounty.org/community-development/business-license for specific questions or concerns.

Please fill out an application, which can be obtained online or in person at the Community Development Agency located at 1150 Powder Springs Street, Marietta, GA 30064.

To obtain the fee amount for a new business establishment, please e-mail your completed application to businesslicense@cobbcounty.org.

Prior to being issued a Business License, the applicant's place of business should meet all applicable Zoning requirements. Please check with the Zoning Division to verify whether the business activity is allowable at the designated address prior to submitting your application.

Renewals

Cobb County businesses are notified annually prior to renewals season. If you have not received your renewal instructions you may email BLRenewal@cobbcounty.org with your Occupation Tax Certificate / Business License number and your business name requesting a copy of your renewal form to be emailed to you. All licenses expire on December 31 of each year.

Alcohol

Any individual, partnership, corporation or entity which engages in the sale of alcohol with the objective of gain, profit, benefit, or advantage in the unincorporated area of Cobb County **must obtain a Cobb County Alcoholic Beverage License for each of its locations in Cobb County** prior to engaging in these activities.

To apply for a Cobb County Alcoholic Beverage License, you may download an application at www.cobbcounty.org/community-development/business-license/alcohol-licenses.

You must also schedule a mandatory appointment by calling (770) 528-8410.

An application must also be filed with the Georgia Department of Revenue Alcohol Unit to obtain a State Alcoholic Beverage License. A state license **cannot be processed** until the County alcohol license has been obtained. For more information, visit the Alcohol and Tobacco - Georgia Department of Revenue's website: <https://dor.georgia.gov/alcohol-tobacco>.

All businesses with a county Alcoholic Beverage License, pouring and package, are required to pay an annual Federal Special Tax to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

*New applications within 600 feet of a church, school, park, or library, or within 300 feet of a private residence, must be approved by the License Review Board and Board of Commissioners. The approval process takes approximately 12-16 weeks.

Tobacco

Businesses that sell tobacco products must obtain a license from the Georgia Department of Revenue. Call (877) 423-6711, or visit <https://dor.georgia.gov/tobacco-licensing>.

Development and Inspections

The Inspections office is responsible for administering and enforcing all applicable building codes regarding residential and commercial construction in the permitting jurisdiction of the unincorporated areas of Cobb County. The Inspections office aids our customers so that they may understand and meet the code requirements for their project.

To protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens in the permitting jurisdiction of the unincorporated areas of Cobb County, all construction must meet a series of requirements set forth by specific building codes. This includes new construction, additions to existing structures, and remodeling.

Please visit our website for more information regarding Cobb County Development standards at <https://www.cobbcounty.org/building-inspections>.

IV. Are you planning on constructing or making renovations to an existing building?

Acquiring a Building Permit: *Most structures in Unincorporated Cobb County require a building permit.*

Zoning Division approval is required for all sheds, carports, shops, gazebos, arbors, pergolas, porches, decks (covered and uncovered), sunrooms, greenhouses, attached and detached garages, house additions, building additions, interior renovations, basement finishes, pools (in-ground and above ground), pool houses, storage buildings, playhouses, barns, riding arenas, retaining walls, basketball courts, and tennis courts.

The above list includes any pre-assembled, pre-constructed and/or movable items. Please call the Zoning Division at (770) 528-2035 for any questions relating to whether a building permit is required.

For commercial permitting, call (770) 528-2071

To obtain a building permit in most cases, applicants must submit a scaled site plan drawn by a Georgia Registered Land Surveyor, Engineer, or Architect. There is nominal cost and delay when obtaining a building permit.

Acquiring a Land Disturbance Permit

Cobb County generally does not require a Land Disturbance Permit (LDP) for individual residential building lots; however, all other forms of land disturbing activities do require such permits.

When someone desires to conduct land disturbing activities (i.e. grading, adding paved surfaces, tree removal (in some instances)), it is necessary to submit site plan documents prepared by a registered civil engineer for review.

The Site Plan Review Section of the Community Development Agency coordinates the review and approval process for all site construction documents submitted to Cobb County for permitting under this section. Acceptance of plans by Cobb County shall not constitute or guarantee any rights unless such plans are prepared in accordance with the Development Standards.

For permitting a structure (i.e. a building permit), a separate structural plan submittal is necessary.

LDP applicants may submit hard copies of their site construction documents directly to the Site Plan Review Section, or they may upload plans through the Accela Citizens Access (ACA) portal on the Cobb County website for electronic plan review (ePlan).

Each hard copy project submitted for review shall be allotted a 30-minute appointment with the Site Plan Review Committee.

Site Plan Review conferences are scheduled for every Thursday.

Hard copy construction documents submitted for Site Plan Review must be presented to the Site Plan Review Section no later than 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday of the week preceding the week of which a Site Plan Review conference is desired.

Appointment times will be assigned on a first come, first serve basis. Comments and recommendations will be discussed during the scheduled meeting. Detailed parameters for document submittal can be obtained from the Site Plan Review Section.

- Following completion of the initial Site Plan Review cycle, the applicant must incorporate all comments and recommendations into a revised set of plans. For hard copy projects, Cobb County offers a simplified 'One-Stop' approval meeting at which a Land Disturbance Permit may be issued.
- The One-Stop meeting provides the opportunity to obtain the signatures of all agency/department/division representatives at one location at a specified time. Requests for appointments for the One-Stop conference may be made with the Site Plan Review Section no later than 12:00 p.m. on Friday of the preceding week. Appointment times will be scheduled on a first come, first serve basis.
- At this meeting, the sets of amended site construction plans must be presented to the individual County agency/department/division for approval and sign-off. The agency/department/division shall evidence its approval by signature on the plans.
- Once comments for ePlan projects have been addressed, the applicant will upload revised plans into the ePlan system. The plans will receive approval stamps electronically and the approved plans will be available for download by the applicant and the general public.
- Upon receiving approval as outlined above from all agencies/departments/divisions and affected outside jurisdictions, the applicant is granted a Land Disturbance Permit. This permit will allow the applicant to install sediment and erosion control measures shown on the soil erosion/sediment control plan. Some minimal clearing may be required to complete the installation of these devices.
- When soil erosion/sediment control devices have been properly installed, the Site Inspections Section shall issue a grading permit to the applicant or his/her designee. The grading permit allows the on-site construction activity to commence.

□ Certificate of Occupancy

- Every new business, tenant, or building is required to have a Certificate of Occupancy (CO). This certificate indicates that the building or tenant meets the minimum adopted building and fire codes. Plan review is a step in the permitting process which typically leads to the issuance of a CO. See checklists and other information related to plan review and permits for repair of fire protection systems by visiting the Fire Marshal's website: <https://www.cobbcounty.org/public-safety/fire/fire-marshal/certificate-occupancy>.
- All plan reviews are performed by appointment only. Schedule an appointment for plan review by using the online Plan Review Appointment Request button located on the Fire Marshal's website: <https://www.cobbcounty.org/public-safety/fire/fire-marshal/certificate-occupancy>. We strive to maintain a window of 10-14 business days for all plan reviews. This is subject to staffing levels and work load.
- For a commercial CO please call (770) 528-2051 or the Fire Marshall's Office at 770-528-8310. Please allow two days following final plan approvals and inspections prior to picking up the CO.

□ Establishing Water Service

- Business Accounts: Non-Residential customers requesting new service should contact the Cobb County Water System Customer Service Center at 770-419-6200, or visit the Customer Service Facility located at 660 South Cobb Dr. Marietta, GA 30060.

Business hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.



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