



Things to Know when Starting a Business in Hood River

Whether you are opening a new business, moving to a new location, expanding the size of your business, or changing what your business does, we are here to assist you through the process.

What to be Aware of Before You Start Your Project:

Business Permits and Licenses

Most businesses are not required to register with the City of Hood River. You can find information regarding state licensing, Oregon withholding, Workers Comp, how to obtain Federal Tax ID numbers, etc. through the State of Oregon Business Information Center or by calling (503) 986-2200.

The City does require licenses for:

- ✓ Taxi companies and taxicab drivers
- ✓ Door-to-door solicitors
- ✓ Second-hand merchants
- ✓ Transient merchants (seasonal) who operate outside permanent structures
- ✓ Special events held within City limits
- ✓ Short-term rentals (hosted home shares and vacation home rentals)

Please contact the City Recorder with questions regarding these licenses, or call (541) 387-5212.

Land Use and Zoning

City zoning allows for businesses to operate in specific areas. Please see the City's Zoning Map on the City website and contact the City of Hood River Planning Department to verify the zoning designation that applies to the property where you intend to open a business. Planning Department staff can confirm permissible uses, development standards and any approval processes required before the business can begin operation.

Permits and Change of Use

Depending on the nature of your project, there may be several permits required prior to starting construction or opening your business:

- ✓ Building, construction, and site permits are required for projects involving building and property modifications, stockpiling or grading. Any change in the existing character, use or occupancy classification of a building/suite requires a building permit: structural, mechanical or both.
- ✓ Right-of-Way permits are required for any work in the public right of way.
- ✓ A Change-of-Use land use permit may also be required through the City of Hood River Planning Department.
- ✓ A Stormwater Management Plan and/or DEQ 1200-c permit may be required depending upon scope and scale of the project.



Please note: Plumbing and Electrical Permits are issued through Hood River County Community Development

For detailed information regarding City of Hood River Building Department permits, please visit the Building Permits web page. Contact the City of Hood River Public Works and Engineering Department for questions regarding site development, access and right-of-way permits.

System Development Charges (SDC)

SDC are one-time fees to help fund capacity upgrades to city infrastructure necessary to accommodate growth and new development. These fees are evaluated any time new development, renovations, or change of use occurs. SDC differ from standard utility hook-up charges and remain with the building/suite after a change of tenant. If you are looking to invest in a new business or renovation, we suggest you research the fees that may apply to your project. Remember, all fees must be paid in full before permits can be issued. More information about SDC is available on the Engineering Department webpage. Contact City of Hood River Public Works and Engineering with questions.

Proportionate Share / Interchange Zones Fees

City of Hood River standards require new development to be served by adequate public facilities (transportation, water, storm and sanitary sewers). In most cases, the required system upgrades are covered by the SDC but, in some areas, there are unique projects that require a smaller group of properties to share in the cost of upgrades. For example, increased traffic volumes at an intersection may be causing significant delays. Rather than requiring a new business near that intersection to install a traffic signal, the applicant may be allowed to pay a proportionate share of the cost of the signalization project based on its share of the additional traffic they are expected to generate. Please contact City of Hood River Engineering Department to confirm proportionate share costs, and whether you will need to provide supporting documents.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliances

Many buildings in Hood River outdate the Americans with Disabilities Act, especially in the historic commercial zone of the downtown. The standards developed within the Act are constantly updated to help improve access for everyone. As a business owner, your space may not be meet current ADA standards. The City of Hood River will need to receive ADA compliant site plans and designs before permits and certificates of occupancy can be granted. Contact City of Hood River Building Department with questions or visit the following agencies for further information.

- ✓ **2019 Oregon Structural Specialty Code; Chapter 11**
- ✓ <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/OSSC2019P1>
- ✓ **United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division**
- ✓ <https://www.ada.gov/index.html>

Street Frontage Responsibilities

Depending on the size, location and valuation of your project, the City of Hood River may require that you make a number of upgrades to your property's frontage. These improvements may include sidewalk upgrades, curbs, ADA ramps, gutters, street trees, etc. Contact the City of Hood River Public Works and Engineering to determine the possible frontage requirements.

Waste Disposal Regulations

How a business handles its waste matters. If your business plans to prepare and/or serve food or drinks, the State of Oregon's plumbing code requires you to install appropriate grease interceptors at all drainage points. Even if the establishment was formerly a food service, its plumbing may not be up to current code requirements and could require significant replumbing before occupancy can be granted.

When food waste is stored outside, specific safety measures are required. Storage enclosures need to be designed to ensure spill and leak concerns are addressed with proper pad drainage, piping into the sanitary sewer system, grease interceptors, and in some cases, monitoring and sampling ports. Contact City of Hood River Public Works and Engineering Department for further details.

If your business will store/dispose of any hazardous materials you will need to contact the State of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and City of Hood River Fire/EMS. Each type of material will have its own regulations.

Sign Permits

Drawing attention to your business is important. The City of Hood River has a Sign Code that helps business owners maintain identity and messaging, while also preserving the City's scenic heritage and public safety. Permits are required for all signs. Along with the sign permit application, include a site plan showing the location and dimensions of proposed signs, existing signs, and building dimensions. An engineered site plan and structural building permit may also be required for wall-mounted, projecting and free-standing signs. Contact the City of Hood River Engineering Department with questions. Remember, the City prohibits any signage placed in the public right-of-way.

See the Sign Permit Application for more information at: <https://cityofhoodriver.gov/SignApp>

Often overlooked details to have with you when you apply:

The permitting process can be lengthy. The City of Hood River recognizes the impact this process can have on your business and is constantly working to improve how we can better serve you. Here are a series of things you can do before beginning the application process that can significantly reduce the processing time:

Site Plan

Whether undergoing a small interior renovation, planting a tree in the right of way, or constructing a new building, every project is required to submit a site plan with your permit application. The City of Hood River requires that the site plan to be drawn to-scale, detailing the size and location of the project, distances to lot lines, established and finished grades, proposed finishes, etc. Plans must be drawn in accordance with an accurate boundary line survey. Please provide three (3) copies at the time of application.

An example site plan can be found at:
<https://cityofhoodriver.gov/SitePlan>

Architectural/Engineer Stamps

Don't forget to seek out your project architect or engineer early in the process. Oregon State Codes often require that construction documents need to be prepared and stamped by a registered design professional. For example, if your work impacts the structural support system within a building, you will need to have a registered

engineer design that part of the project. Finding and contracting with the right professionals may take more time than you expect. Plan ahead. If you are unsure if you need a design professional stamp, contact City of Hood River Building Department.

Waiver of Remonstrance

This notarized document is required to be signed by the property owner and recorded before any building permit can be issued. These waivers are an agreement between property owners/tenants and the City that acknowledge that a Local Improvement District (LID) may be established at any point in the future to construct public improvements benefitting the property. A LID is established by the City to coordinate public improvements across multiple property owners and avoid a patchwork of improvements installed by each applicant at varying points of time. For more information on what your future LID may be, and how to obtain the waiver's paperwork, contact City of Hood River Public Works and Engineering.

City Contact Information

Planning Department: (541) 387-5210

- ✓ Conditional Use
- ✓ Site Plan Review Requirements
- ✓ Home Occupations
- ✓ Change of Use

Building Department: (541) 387-5202

- ✓ Building Inspections
- ✓ Demolition Permits
- ✓ Building Code Requirements

Public Works and Engineering

Department: (541) 386-2383

- ✓ Stormwater Management
- ✓ Backflow Mitigation
- ✓ Water Meter Installation

Fire Department: (541) 386-3939

- ✓ Fire Safety Inspections
- ✓ Pre-Fire Planning
- ✓ Occupancy Limits

Regional Information

Mid-Columbia Economic Development

District (MCEDD): (541) 296-2266

- ✓ <https://www.mcedd.org>

Hood River County Chamber of

Commerce: (541) 386-2000

- ✓ <https://visithoodriver.com/economic-development-resources/>