



Starting a Business in the City of Perry

Regulatory and Licensing Requirements

Navigating the maze of regulations and requirements for licenses, permits, and taxes among the various city and state government agencies can be confusing and overwhelming. This guide is designed to help you through that maze as you start your business in Perry.

All fee schedules, zoning restrictions, development regulations, signage requirements, permits, applications, etc. mentioned in this guide are available on the City of Perry website at www.perry-ga.gov.

Prior to opening a business a City of Perry occupational tax license is required.

Please note that no guide can address regulations pertaining to every business; contact the appropriate agency or department directly to identify the appropriate process for your particular business.

Financial Assistance

Depending on the proposed location, your business may be eligible for Opportunity Zone tax credits. These credits are available if your business is located in the Opportunity Zone and creates two jobs. In addition, your business may be eligible for other state and federal programs. Please contact Chan Layson of the Middle Georgia Regional Development Center at (478) 751-6160 for more information.

Zoning – Full disclosure of your proposed uses is requested prior to a zoning determination by the city to assist you in avoiding prohibited uses. Please contact the Community Development Department at (478) 988-2720 for zoning information. For example:

- Is the property zoned properly for the proposed use(s)
- Is there sufficient parking available
- Are there any setback requirements from other uses
- Has property been vacant for longer than one year
- May require a public hearing process

Do not invest any money in a location until zoning has been thoroughly researched.

Zoning Districts and examples of their permitted uses –

- C-1 - Commercial Highway District – Auto Sales, Big Box Retail, Gas Stations, etc.
- C-2 - General Commercial District – Retail, Restaurants, Multi-Family, etc.
- C-3 - Central Business District – Office Uses, Retail, Service Businesses, etc.
- M-1 - Wholesale and Light Industrial District – Light Manufacturing, Retail, etc.
- M-2 - Industrial District – Heavy Manufacturing, Retail, Office Uses, etc.
- CPD - Convention Plaza District – Motels, Restaurants, Tourist Businesses, etc.
- OC - Office Commercial – Offices, Professional Uses, Multi-Family, etc.
- LC - Limited Commercial – Small Retail, Service Businesses, etc.
- IN - Institutional District – Medical Uses, Long Term Care Facilities, etc.

Signs – If your business plans to use any type of signage please contact the Community Development Department at (478) 988-2720 prior to ordering business signs. The City of Perry has a number of different overlay zoning districts regulating signage. All of which have certain variation requirements and restrictions of signage.

Home Occupation – Home based businesses may be approved by the Department of Community Development without City Council approval, if certain conditions are met:

- No customers or clients at the home
- No noise, dust, vibration, odor, smoke, glare, electrical interference, or other nuisances from the business
- No more than 25% of the home may be used for the business
- No changes or alterations to the home to facilitate the business
- No outside storage or display
- No outside employees working in the home
- No business vehicle larger than a van or pick-up truck at the home
- No more than two deliveries per week
- No business signs

If these conditions cannot be met, a home based business is possible, but it may require City Council approval.

Food Service Business – If your business involves the sale of food, you may require Houston County Health Department approval in addition to meeting all City of Perry requirements. Please contact the Houston County Health Department at (478) 218-2020 for more information.

Alcohol Sales – If your business involves the sale of alcohol you may have certain restrictions. For example:

- Proper zoning
- May require a public hearing process
- Setbacks from schools, churches, etc. may apply
- State license may be required

Coin Operated Machines – If your business has coin operated amusement machines operating which give reward tickets, tabs, tokens, etc. a coin operated amusement

machine license is required. In addition, coin operated amusement machines giving a reward may have to meet certain setbacks. For example:

- 100 yards from a church and
- 200 yards from a school.

Remodeling Activity – If your business requires any structural changes to the building it will require a building permit and inspections from the Community Development and/or Public Safety departments. Cosmetic alterations, such as painting, new carpet, etc., do not require a building permit. Please contact Community Development at (478) 988-2720 and Public Safety at (478) 988-2850 for additional information regarding building permits and/or inspections.

New Construction – If you are developing a site relative to your business, there are a series of requirements the city has relative to zoning, land use, parking, signs, building codes, soil erosion control, stormwater management, etc. which could impact your proposal. The more detail you provide the quicker your application will be processed. Additionally, depending on your business location, Georgia Department of Transportation and/or US Army Corps of Engineers permits may be required. Please contact the Community Development Department at (478) 988-2720 for guidelines to assist you.

Business License Inspection – Prior to being issued a business license, an inspection at the business location must be performed by the Community Development and Public Safety departments. Both departments will be checking to make sure the location is safe for the public. For example:

Community Development

- Visible Structural Deficiencies
- Operational Bathroom Facilities
- ADA Compliance
- Outlet Covers
- Labeling of Panel Box
- Visible Wiring Deficiencies
- Switch Covers

Public Safety

- Exit Signs
- Fire Extinguishers
- Smoke Detectors
- Sprinkler Systems
- Egress
- Hazardous Storage
- Security Cameras
- Distance Requirements

The above list is not inclusive. Additional items may be in need of corrections.

Business License – After the business license inspection is approved by both the Community Development and Public Safety departments and all other permits and/or licenses are obtained, a City of Perry occupational tax license may be issued. There is a fee based on the number of employees.

Downtown Façade Grant – If your business is located in the Downtown Development District, and funding is available, it may be possible to receive a façade grant from the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) of the City of Perry. The façade improvements must meet the criteria established by and be approved by the DDA.

Utilities – The City of Perry offers the following utilities:

- Natural Gas
- Water
- Sewer
- Grease trap servicing
- Garbage collection

These utilities can be activated by contacting the City of Perry Utilities Department at (478) 988-2741, -2743, or -2744.

The City of Perry has two electricity providers depending on the location of your business:

Georgia Power – 1-888-660-5890

Flint EMC – (478) 988-3500 or 1-800-342-3616

Telephone/Television/Internet – Windstream Communications – 1-800-501-1776

Telephone/Television/Internet – ComSouth Communications – (478) 987-0172

City of Perry Contact Numbers - www.perry-ga.gov

Community Development Department – (478) 988-2720

Public Safety Department – (478) 988-2850

Business License Office – (478) 988-2740

Utilities – (478) 988-2741, -2743, -2744

Houston County Health Department – (478) 218-2020

Georgia Power – 1-888-660-5890

Flint EMC – (478) 988-3500 or 1-800-342-3616

Windstream Communications – 1-800-501-1776

ComSouth Communications – (478) 987-0172

Perry Area Chamber of Commerce – (478) 987-1234